

A Study on the Relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Employees Emotional Response – The Moderating Effect of Multiple Employment

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Abstract

Based on multiple forms of employment, this article discussed the relationship between human resource management practices and employee emotional reactions through the social exchange theory perspective. 265 employees were randomly surveyed from Guangzhou city through questionnaires by Emotional Commitment Scale, Psychological Well-being Scale, and Organizational Justice Scale. The results show that: (1) The human resource management practices, emotional commitment, psychological well-being, organizational justice are significant differences under different forms of employment. (2) Human resource management practices (training, performance appraisal, payment management and employee involvement) all have a significant impact on the employees emotional commitment, psychological well-being and organizational justice. (3) Forms of employment have a moderate role between human resource management practices and employee emotional reactions (emotional commitment, psychological well-being, organizational justice). Finally, this study discusses the research limitations and future prospects.

Keywords

Human Resource Management Practices, Multiple Employment, Emotional Commitment, Psychological Well-being, Organizational justice.

1. Introduction

Currently, as the development of globalization has changed the competition mode of enterprises, the fuzzification of organizational boundaries, the networking of the employment relations and the diversification of employment subjects have gradually become the new characteristics of enterprises, and diversified employment has also become a market competition strategy for enterprises. Many enterprises regard the employment of diversified employees as a basic way to save personnel costs and improve operational efficiency. However, in the implementation process of the system, there are some deviations, such as the mismatch of human-position matching, the unequal pay for equal, and the increasing number of diversified employment positions, etc. This situation is relatively prominent for Chinese enterprises. In China, as the coexistence of double track system, the imperfect market and legal systems and the rapid advance of the enterprise diversified employment, the diversified employment relationship of Chinese enterprises not only concentrates the general problems on the development stages of the western employment relations (such as the protection of the rights and interests of the staff, and the unequal treatment, etc.), but also coexists with the special problems in the national conditions of China (such as identity discrimination and segregation management, etc.), forming a situation integrating multiple problems, which undoubtedly brings new challenges to the current theory and practice of human resource management of Chinese enterprises.

In the past, there were two main features of the researches on human resource management practice: first, the researches on human resource management practice mainly focused on individual human resource management behavior or module; second, attention was paid to the "organizational output", "organizational efficiency" and other variables. A large number of researches have confirmed that human resource management practice has a significant influence on organizational performance (Huang B, 2016). However, instead of existing independently, the activities of human resource management practice are interrelated and act on each other, to play the greatest effects as a whole system (Hoc, 2013). Meanwhile, in the context of diversified employment, the "unequal pay for equal", "identity discrepancy" and other factors affect the employees' cognition, emotion, attitude, etc., which will further affect the employees' work performance and the overall performance of the enterprise. Therefore, as indicated by Wright (2002) that the research of human resource management practice should pay more attention to the "employee" variables, and study the relationship between the behavior of the organization and the attitude & psychology of the employees.

Therefore, it is of significant theoretical and practical value for this study to explore the relationship between the organization's human resource management practice and the personal feelings of employees in the context of diversified employment.

2. Theoretical Basis and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Diversified Employment and Its Differential Hypothesis

Diversified employment refers to the introduction of non-standard employment modes on the basis of standard employment, such as temporary employment, business outsourcing, contractual outsourcing, etc. Standard employment and non-standard employment have also become a common division of diversified employment of the academic circle. In general, both parties of a standard employment will sign a labor relations contract, to make clear the responsibilities and obligations of both parties in the term of the contract, and the employment relation is persistent. Moreover, under normal circumstances, the employer prefers to extend the term of the employment contract even entering into contract without any fixed term, while non-standard employment refers to all types of employment modes beyond the standard employment, which should meet at least one of the following features: lack of a clear employer; a weak relationship with the employer; an unstable job; a contract that has not been expected to renewed, or a contract intervened in any third party organization, etc.

At present, the phenomenon of diversified employment in Chinese enterprises is becoming increasingly popular. In general, the factors below have led to this change: First, the reform of China's economic system has led to the change in the modes of labor employment; second, the change in the market status of the employed group promotes the transformation of employment relations mode towards diversity (Huo S.P., 2015); and again, the change of employees' self employment mentality accelerates the diversity of employment modes (Liu D.M., 2016). In addition, the common influence of the government's legislative work, the trade union functions, the organizational environment, the management strategy and other multiple factors has further amplified the complexity of employment relations. Correspondingly, the modes of human resource management of enterprises also show the characteristics of diversity, difference, complexity and flexibility, etc. (Yu J.J., 2015). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is put forward:

Hypothesis 1: enterprises will adopt differentiated human resource management practices for employees of different employment modes.

In the workplace of the mixed employment, there may easy be unfair treatment to the non-standard employees, as well as the discriminatory behaviors of typical employees to the non-standard employees (XL Liu, 2014). According to the social comparison theory, each individual will take others as the comparison object to evaluate oneself. Such comparison is carried out in two directions-upwards and downwards comparisons. Therefore, it is not difficult to speculate that in the diversified employment situation, typical employees tend to make a downward comparison, to create a sense of self superiority and thus increase their self-esteem by discriminating against non-standard employees.

On the contrary, non-standard employees may be more likely to make an upward comparison. The phenomenon of unequal pay for equal may easily increase the sense of inferiority, and reduce the sense of identity and the sense of belonging to the enterprise. Social comparison theory also holds that the social comparison is dual, containing not only in self evaluation, but also in the positive desire of the subject, that is, expecting to obtain the satisfaction from positive emotion. Obviously, social comparison will bring about the difference of employees' emotional response. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is put forward:

Hypothesis 2: Employees of different employment modes have significantly different emotional responses.

2.2 Human Resource Management Practice and Employee Emotional Responses from the Perspective of Diversified Employment.

In the context of diversified employment, no matter what human resource management practice is adopted by an organization, it may cause different responses of employees of different employment identities. Based on social exchange theory, when the organization's human resource management practice activities are perceived as being appreciated, recognized and invested by employees, there will be a positive social exchange relationship between the organization and employees, instead of purely economic relations. On the contrary, when employees feel neglected, ignored or even belittled, there may easily be negative social exchange relations. These relationships will be reflected by employees' emotional responses. In other words, human resource management practice will affect employees' emotional responses.

At present, there are two viewpoints on the definition of human resource management practice: The first view is the holistic view, believing that the human resource management practice is "the general term of the ways and system policies used in the process of human resource work"; the other view is that the dimension view, believing that human resource practice is composed of different dimensions. Dimension view has better operability. This paper is also based on this. As the emotional responses of employees are relatively broad, this study selected three variables, i.e. affective commitment, psychological well-being and organizational justice, to represent the employees' emotional response, emotional experience and emotional evaluation to enterprises respectively.

2.2.1 Human Resource Management Practice and Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is the dimension of organizational commitment, which is the degree of emotional dependence, identification and involvement of members of an organization. A large number of studies have found that human resource management practice has an influence on organizational commitments. For example, the research of EMA Tabouli et al (2016) on bank employees found that human resource practice is significantly related to employee organizational commitments; different levels of human resource management strategies can affect employee organizational commitments in addition to the employees' work performance (Hou X.J., He X.Z., 2016). Does these researches indicate that human resource practice also has a significant effect on the affective commitment dimension contained in organizational commitment? Many researches have confirmed this inference. For example, IA Peter (2014) et al found that human resource management practices (such as communication, training and development, reward and approval) can significantly affect the affective commitments. The human resource practice promoting interpersonal interactions will increase employees' affective commitments, and high performance human management practices has a positive effect on employees' affective commitments (Wang Z., 2011). Some scholars pointed out that the motivational process and the principle of reciprocity of social exchange theory can explain the relationship between human resource management practice and the organization employee affective commitments (Buch, 2015). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is proposed:

Hypothesis 3a: human resource management practice has a significant position influence on the affective commitment.

2.2.2 Human Resource Management Practice and Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a relatively stable cognitive and emotional experience produced by a comprehensive evaluation of self existence quality based on an individual standard determined by oneself, which advocates self realization and the meaning of life. Many researches have confirmed that human resource management is closely related to employee psychological well-being. For example, LMäkelä and U Kinnunen (2015) found that a supportive human resource strategy (for example, providing work resources, reducing workload and work pressure) is beneficial to improving the psychological well-being for international business passengers; adopting a family supported human resource strategy can effectively improve employees' psychological well-being (NL Yragui, 2016); internal opportunity, training, performance examination, salary, and employee participation can significantly improve the employee's psychological well-being (Liu L.F., 2015). Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed below:

Hypothesis 3b: Human resource management practice has a significant positive influence on employee psychological well-being.

2.2.3 Human Resource Management Practice and Organizational Justice

Organizational justice refers to the subjective feelings of members in an organization towards organizational justice. Western researches on organizational justice focus on instrumental relationships between individuals and organizations, and Chinese researches focus on emotional relationships. However, scholars at home and abroad have confirmed that employees' organizational justice will be influenced by human resource management practice. For example, the equal career development path, salary treatment standards and other practices make employees produce higher organizational justice; autonomously selected human resource practices will affect employee organizational justice (San, et al, 2014); enterprise performance management has a significant influence on organizational justice (Wang S.H., 2005). Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed below:

Hypothesis 3c: Human resource management practice has a significant positive influence on employees' organizational justice.

2.3 Moderating Effect of Diversified Employment Relationship.

Many scholars adopt the psychological contract to explain the relationship between employees and enterprises. The employees of standard employment prefer to establish a relatively long-term and stable relational psychological contract with enterprises, and the employees of non-standard employment are relatively inclined to establish a transaction type psychological contract with enterprises (Lin C., 2017). Obviously, different psychological contracts will affect employees' perception of human resource practices, willingness to work, and organizational emotion, etc. Meanwhile, some researches found that different cultures, ownership, and differences in philosophy, values and assumptions among different groups of employees will bring different effects on the same human resource practice (Liang X, et al, 2012). Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed below:

Hypothesis 4: The employment mode has a moderating effect, that is, for employees of different employment modes, human resource management practices have significant differences in the influence on affective commitment, psychological well-being, and organizational justice.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Object

Data of this study was mainly collected through network investigation by registering on Internet questionnaire survey websites, compiling questionnaires, screening duplicate and invalid questionnaires by setting limit programs, and collecting filled and complete questionnaires. A total of 284 questionnaires were collect. After screening, 265 valid questionnaires were obtained, and the effective rate of the questionnaire was 93.31%. In order to ensure the accuracy of the subjects' answers, the industry categories were, in the survey process, subdivided into 9 categories including financial

industry, IT/ communications / Internet, real estate / construction, government non-profit organizations, culture / media / entertainment, transportation / logistics / warehousing, medical / hotel / tourism, trade / wholesale / leasing, intermediary / advertising / exhibition / consultation, etc. But in order to make the data analysis more simple and clear, there were classified into 4 industries in the statistics, including traditional manufacturing industry, high-tech industry, traditional service industry and modern service industry.

3.2 Measuring Tools

3.2.1 Human Resource Management Practice Measurement

The scale is selected from the questionnaire compiled by Delery and Doty (1996), including five dimensions: career development, training and development, performance examination, salary management and employee participation. Each dimension contains 4 items. According to Likert's five score scale, "1" represents strongly disagree, and "5" represents strongly agree. The total scores of the scale represents the overall level of human resource management practice. The α coefficients of the five dimensions of the measurement are 0.875, 0.898, 0.89, 0.706 and 0.936 respectively, and the α coefficient of the total scale is 0.931.

3.2.2 Affective Commitment Measurement

Adopt the affective commitment scale in the organizational commitment scale improved by Mayer and Allen (1993). The scale has 6 questions. According to Likert's five score scale, the higher the score is, the higher the level of affective commitment is. The α coefficient of this measurement is 0.881.

3.2.3 Organizational Justice Measurement

Adopt the "organizational justice scale" compiled by Niehoff and Moorman (1993), which is divided into three dimensions: distribution fairness, procedural fairness and interactive fairness, with a total of 20 items. Adopt Likert's five score scale. The α coefficients of the three dimensions of this measurement are 0.960, 0.916 and 0.968 respectively, and the α coefficient of the total scale is 0.965.

3.2.4 Psychological Well-Being Measurement

The revised Ryff Multidimensional Psychological Well-Being Scale adopted is more suitable for Chinese cultural context. There are 8 items in the scale, adopting the six level scoring system. The higher the total score is, the stronger the level of psychological well-being is. The α coefficient of this measurement is 0.822.

3.2.5 Diversified Employment Mode Measurement

This study divided employee employment modes into standard employment and non-standard employment. In order to let the respondents clearly select the employment mode that they are currently engaged in, 10 employment modes are listed in the questionnaire (see Table 1). In the later period for data sorting, classify into two forms, i.e. standard employment and non-standard employment.

Table 1. Diversified Employment Measurement Item

Employment Modes	Item	
Standard Employment	Civil service / public institution establishment	Fixed contract system
Non-standard Employment	Agency/public institution temporary worker	Labor dispatch / outsourcing
	Alternate and late night holiday work	Internship / part-time short-term contract employment
	Independent self operators & freelancers	Temporary worker / hourly worker / seasonal worker

4. Research Result

4.1 Common Method Deviation Test

Refer to the common method deviation test adopted by Zhou Hao and Long Lirong (2004), this study adopted Harman single factor test. As shown in the results of exploratory factor analysis, select the first component from the 10 factors to explain 24.30% of the variation, and the eigenvalue of the first factor (13.129) to the second factor (4.217) is 3.113, which is less than the critical value 5. Therefore, it is proper to believe that the influence of common method bias is relatively limited in this study, which will not affect the validity of the result.

4.2 Analysis of Sample Composition

The numbers of men and women in this study are 136 and 129 respectively, and the proportion is very close; the main age group between 20-29 years old accounts for 67.9% of the total sample. The education levels are mainly undergraduate (36.6%), vocational degree(45.3%) and below; the main nature of the sampled enterprise is private / private enterprises, accounting for 61.1% of the total sample; the industries sampled are evenly distributed in the state-owned enterprises, private enterprises and foreign affairs, etc.; the common employee accounts for 72.1% of the total sample; the ratios of sampled standard employment and sampled non-standard employment are 43% and 57% respectively. It is not difficult to see that the sample composition is in line with the demands of this study.

4.3 Differential Description of Different Employment Modes

As found by this study, the employees of standard employment and non-standard employment show significant difference in the total score of human resource management practice, affective commitment, psychological well-being, and organizational justice, and other variables. Among them, for the specific dimensions of human resource practice, there are significant differences in training and development, career development and employee participation, while the differences in performance examination and salary management are not significant. For details, refer to Table 2 below.

Table 2. Differences of research variables between standard employment and non-standard employment (N1=114, N2=151)

variables	Employment Mode	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	t-value
Training and Development	1	14.10	4.09	4.351***
	2	11.88	4.12	
Career Development	1	13.41	3.38	2.445*
	2	12.23	4.23	
Performance Examination	1	14.03	3.90	1.331
	2	13.34	4.30	
Salary Management	1	12.04	2.56	0.297
	2	11.91	4.11	
Employee Participation	1	12.76	3.63	2.138*
	2	11.68	4.42	
Human Resource Management Practice	1	66.34	12.24	2.783**
	2	61.05	17.30	
Affective Commitment	1	20.56	6.01	2.539*

	2	18.67	6.00	
Psychological Well-being	1	32.54	6.74	2.595**
	2	29.95	8.86	
Organizational Justice	1	69.70	19.80	3.503**
	2	61.49	18.17	

Notes:1= standard employment, 2= non-standard employment.

4.4 Relationship Analysis of Each Variable

As shown in relevant analysis, the correlations between the total score of human resource management practice and the affective commitment, psychological well-being, and organizational justice of employees are 0.687, 0.925, and 0.709 respectively (P value<0.01). Moreover, each dimension of human resource management practice is also significantly related to the three emotional response variables: the correlation of affective commitment is between 0.60 and 0.5, and the correlation of that and psychological well-being is between 0.60 and 0.4, and the correlation of organizational justice and organizational justice is between 0.436—0.664.

Further, take affective commitment, psychological well-being, organizational justice as dependent variables, and five dimensions of human resource management practice as independent variables, to carry out multiple linear regression analysis, while taking gender, education and working years as control variables. The results show that the four dimensions, i.e.training, development, performance assessment, salary management and employee participation, have significant influence on affective commitment, and the regression coefficients are 0.443, 0.168, 0.473 and 0.373, respectively. Training and development, career development, performance examination, salary management and employee participation have significant influence on psychological well-being, and the coefficients are 0.346, 0.528, 0.592, 0.383 and 0.544 respectively. Training development, performance examination, salary management and employee participation have significant influence on the organizational justice, and the regression coefficients are 0.329, 0.550, 0.566 and 0.862, respectively. For details, refer to Table 3 below:

Table 3. Regression analysis of employee's emotional response in human resource management practice

Variables	Affective Commitment		Psychological Well-being		Organizational Justice	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Control Variables						
Gender	-.058	.843	-1.229	.221	-1.141	2.120
Education Years	-.311	-.853	.554	-.261	1.799	.265
Working Years	1.539	.753	1.176	.115	4.237**	1.498
Explanatory Variable						
Training and Development		.443***		.346***		.329***
Career Development		-.070		.528***		.465
Performance Examination		.168*		.592***		.550*
Salary Management		.473***		.383***		.566*
Employee Participation		.373***		.544***		0.862**

R ²	0.044	0.534	0.023	0.861	0.039	0.541
ΔR ²	0.033	0.519	0.012	0.857	0.028	0.527
F-Value	3.997	36.646	2.024	198.542	3.576	37.786
Sig.	.008	.000	.111	.000	.015	.000

Notes:*, p<0.05; **, p<0.01; ***, p<0.001.

4.5 Regulating Effect of Employment Mode

This study adopt interaction effect to examine the regulating effects. First, the independent variable human resource management practice is converted into category variable, which is divided into two groups according to the average value – a 128 people high score group (average value is 75.76, and standard deviation is 8.181), and a 137 people score group (average value is 51.71, and standard deviation is 11.148). Then, the human resource management practice and the sampled employment modes are taken as independent variables, and the employees' affective commitment, psychological well-being, organizational justice are taken as the dependent variables, to analyze the variance. The results are listed below:

(1) The main effect of multiple employment modes on affective commitment is not significant (F=95.862, p<0.001); the interaction of multiple employment modes and human resource management practice has a significant influence on emotional commitment (F=1.701, p>0.05); the interaction between multiple employment modes and human resource management practices has a significant impact on affective commitment (F=6.750, p<0.01). Further analysis shows that, for standard employment employees, the influence of human resource management practice on affective commitment is relatively little; and for non-standard employment employees, human resource is relatively more influential (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. The Boundary Average Value of The Influence Of Human Resource Management Practice and Diversified Employment Modes on Affective Commitment.

(2) The main effect of human resource management practice on psychological well-being is significant (F=226.375, p<0.001), the main effect of diversified employment mode on psychological well-being is significant(F=1.044,p>0.05),and the interaction of diversified employment mode and human resource management practice on psychological well-being is significant(F=11.895, p<0.001). Further analysis shows that, for standard employment employees, the influence of human resource management practice on psychological well-being is relatively little; and for non-standard employment employees, human resource is relatively more influential (see Figure 2).

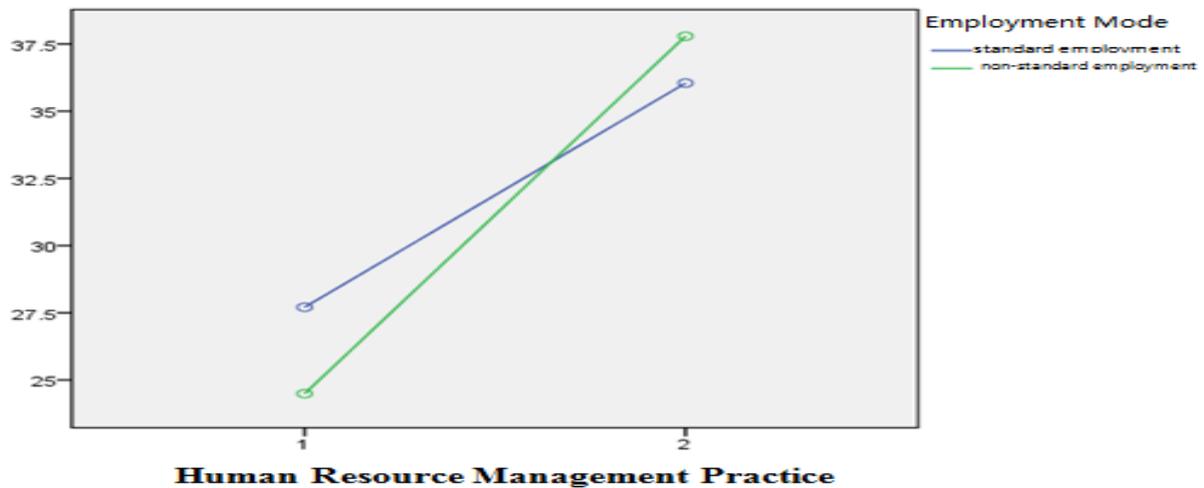


Figure 2. The Boundary Average Value of The Influence Of Human Resource Management Practice and Diversified Employment Modes on Psychological Well-being.

(3)The main effect of human resource management practice on organizational justice is significant ($F=84.777, p<0.001$), the main effect of diversified employment mode on organizational justice is significant ($F=6.261, p<0.05$), and the interaction of diversified employment mode and human resource management practice on organizational justice is also significant ($F=9.162, p<0.01$). Further analysis shows that, for standard employment employees, the influence of human resource management practice on organizational justice is relatively limited; and for non-standard employment employees, human resource has a relatively great influence on the organizational justice (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. The Boundary Average Value of The Influence Of Human Resource Management Practice and Diversified Employment Modes on Organizational Justice.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

5.1 Differences on Employee Employment Mode of Human Resource Management Practice and Employee Emotional Response

This study first confirmed the significant difference of human resource management practice between standard employment employees and non-standard employment employees. Meanwhile, the emotional responses of standard employment employees (affective commitment, psychological well-being, organizational justice) are significantly higher than those of the non-standard employees. This is in accordance with the existing research conclusions. According to the "incentives- contribution" model, the success of organization is influenced by the exchange management, and employment relation is actually the exchange between organization and employee contribution. In order to obtain

more contributions from employees, enterprises inevitably provide a series of human resource practice incentives, including wages, power, social support, participation, etc. (Tsui A S, et al 1997). Standard employment employees are mostly core employees, enjoying more incentives, so there should be more positive emotional responses. Social comparison theory, social exchange theory, psychological contract theory and other theories can also explain this phenomenon effectively. According to the social comparison theory, standard employment employees may easily make downwards comparison with non-standard employment employees, to get a more positive emotional responses. Social exchange theory believes that enterprises and typical employees tend to form a positive social exchange relationship more easily, while the relationship with non-standard employees are mostly purely economic relations. The emotional response levels of the two types of employees may easily show significant differences. According to the psychological contract theory, compared with non-standard employees, the long-term, stable psychological contract between typical employees and organizations focuses on responsibility, loyalty and commitment. Therefore, the emotional response level of typical employees is significantly higher than that of non-standard employees.

5.2 The Relationship between Human Resource Management Practice and Employee Emotional Response

This study confirmed that human resource management practice is positively correlated with employee's emotional response. Moreover, the specific dimensions of human resource management practice (training and development, performance assessment, etc.) have significant positive influences on the specific emotional response indexes such as affective commitment, psychological well-being, organizational justice, etc. This is in accordance with the existing research. For example, SM Azeem (2010) believes that human resource strategies such as training, performance assessment, and career development for employees provided by enterprises can improve employees' affective commitment well; Liu (2015) finds that internal opportunities, training, performance examination, salary, and employee participation can significantly improve the staff's psychological well-being; as found by Bies and Moag (1986), the practice of salary standard and other practices made employees feel esteemed and respected, resulting in a higher sense of fairness.

What kind of human management practice strategies should organizations choose? In China's current management situation, the control right is still in the hands of employers. On the premise of the principle of exchange and reciprocity, the employer will strive to carry out a positive human resource management strategy to mobilize the enthusiasm of the employees and ultimately improve the organizational performance. These positive human resource strategies will inevitably produce positive emotional responses of employees, bringing about higher affective commitment, higher psychological well-being, and higher organizational justice.

5.3 The Regulating Function of The Employment Mode

This study confirms that different employment modes regulate the relationship between human resource management practice and employees affective commitment, psychological well-being, and organizational justice, the reason of which may be that for most non-standard employment employees, the organization gives them much less resources and opportunities than those to the typical employees in the organization's human resource management practices. Based on the perception of identity discrepancy, non-standard employees can accept this status; Meanwhile, based on the exchange principle, they will show lower affective commitment, psychological well-being and organizational justice. However, once the organization attaches importance to the non-standard employees, the level of human resource management practice will be improved, the non-standard employees will gain more resources and opportunities, and they will be aware of more attention and appreciation. Compared with the "deserved" perception of the typical employees, the non-standard employees produce a kind of perception that transcends expectations, and the variation extent of their emotional response is naturally greater than that of the typical employees.

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