CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the operationalization of the research will be described, after which the actual process followed to conduct the research, will be explained. This study takes the form of a quantitative design. According to Leedy (1993), quantitative research is impersonally experimental, manipulating variables and controlling natural phenomena, by constructing hypotheses and testing them against the hard facts of reality. Christensen (1985) noted that this approach is the most appropriate one to use if the purpose of an investigation is to describe the degree of relationship which exists between the variables.

The empirical part of the research will be discussed in this chapter. The empirical objectives of the study were to explore alternative relationships between HRM Practices namely Performance Appraisal, Training and Development, Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intention in Malaysia.

This chapter will discuss the sampling, measuring instruments, data gathering and data analysis processes used in the study.

3.1 Population and Sample

Since the concepts that were discussed in the study (performance appraisal, training and development, organizational commitment, turnover intentions) are rather complex, in terms of their utilization and applicability, it was decided that only people in organization which conduct formal performance appraisal, training and development would be approached. This would mean that the samples have not only had exposure to these concepts, they may know how it affects them as individuals, their subordinates and possibly the functioning of HRM practices in their entire organization. To ensure that the sample selected did have a formal PA and training & development system in his/her organization, the sample were asked beforehand if he/she had encounter formal appraisal and training & development system in his/her current organization. As for the questionnaire sent via email, clear instructions were given to the samples - the sample selected was only requested to fill in the questionnaire if he/she had a formal PA and training & development system in place.

The method used in sampling is convenience sampling, which is a type of nonprobability sampling technique. It is the method most commonly employed in many practical situations. There are several reasons why this sampling technique was chosen. They are:

a) Data can be collected rapidly and inexpensively - quick, convenient and economical.

b) The need of enough data for quick diagnosis of the situation.

c) Time constraint which needs to be addressed.

3.2 Data Collection

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed via email and total returned questionnaires were 75 representing a response rate of approximately 30 percent.

Questionnaire was sent via email to 250 employees who are working in organizations located all over Klang Valley, Malaysia. The reason it was sent via email is because it could reach a wide geographic area quickly, which could ensure representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Moreover, by sending it via email, the respondents were able to answer the survey at their own pace.

A cover letter was attached with the questionnaire to explain the objective of the study and encouraged employees to participate in the study. The completion of these questionnaires was entirely voluntary and responses were anonymous and were treated with strictest confidentiality.

3.3 Measures

All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

3.3.1 Performance Appraisal

The measure of performance appraisal was adopted based on prior work by Meyer & Smith (2000). The scale consists of seven items concerning the overall satisfaction with PA activities within an organization (e.g. "I am satisfied with the way my organization provides me with feedback‟), the adequacy of feedback employees receive (e.g. ‘the feedback I receive on how I do my job is highly relevant‟), and employees’ perceptions of their organization’s commitment to conducting developmental performance appraisal (e.g. "My organization seems more engaged in providing positive feedback for good performance than criticizing poor performance‟ and "I think that my organization attempts to conduct performance appraisal the best possible way‟).

3.3.2 Training and Development

The measure of training and development was using scale consists of six items concerning the overall satisfaction with training and development within an organization (e.g. "My company has provided me sufficient training on products, services and functional skills", "My company has provided me sufficient training in "people skills", i.e., how to deal effectively with fellow employees" and "I am satisfied with the way my company provides me with career development") and their perceptions’ that their immediate superiors are aware of their career development needs and expectations (e.g. "My immediate superior has an understanding of my needs, expectations, and career objectives", "My immediate superior managed to establish a development plan to address my skill gaps" and "I receive helpful mentoring at my company").

3.3.3 Organizational Commitment (Dependent Variable)

The measure of organizational commitment was adopted based on prior work by Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993). Examples of items are "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me‟, "I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (reversed)‟ and "I do not feel like part of the family at my organization‟ (reversed).

3.3.4 Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)

A commonly used questionnaire (e.g. Meyer & Smith, 2000; Naresh, 2001) was adopted to measure employees' turnover intentions. The scale consists of five items. Examples of items are such as "I will probably look for a new job in the next year‟, "I do not see much prospects for the future in this organization‟ and "I often think about quitting my present job.‟

3.3.5 Summary of Measures

Each measure used in this study is reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha value for each variable is shown in Table 3.1. The lowest reported Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.909 (Performance Appraisal) where else the highest reported Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.945 (Turnover Intentions).

Table 3.1

Instrument	*Variable*	*Cronbach's Alpha*
Meyer & Smith (2000)	Performance Appraisal	0.909
7 items Likert scale		(Meyer & Smith, 2000)
	Training and	0.913
	Development	
Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993)	Organizational	0.912
6 items Likert scale	Commitment	(Kuvaas, 2007)
Meyer & Smith (2000)	Turnover	0.945
5 items Likert scale	Intentions	(Meyer & Smith, 2000)

Reliability of measures

3.4 Analysis

All statistical analyses will be carried out using the SPSS software, version 15. The analyses that are going to be examined in the study will include:

a) Descriptive analysis - to measure the distribution of the data collected across the demographic, independent and dependent variables.

b) Factor analysis - to measure whether the questionnaire contributes significantly to the factor which they measure and to group item accordingly to the factor they measure.

c) Reliability analysis - to measure the consistency of the scales used in this study.

d) Correlation analysis – to measure the relationship between HRM Practices namely performance appraisal, training and development, organizational commitment and turnover intention.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The researcher maintained scientific objectivity throughout the study, recognizing the limitations of his competence. Every person involved in the study was entitled to the right of privacy and dignity of treatment, and no personal harm was caused to subjects in the research. Information obtained was held in strict confidentiality by the researcher. All assistance, collaboration of others and sources from which information was drawn is acknowledged. The following ethical considerations were at the base of this research.

a) Fairness.

b) Honesty.

c) Openness of intent.

d) Disclosure of methods.

e) The ends for which the research was executed.

f) Respect or the integrity of the individuals

g) The obligation of the researcher to guarantee unequivocally individual privacy.

h) Informed willingness on the part of the subjects to participate voluntarily in the research activity.

Finally, all research findings will be presented honestly, without distortion.

3.6 Conclusion

Although there is a scarcity of research linking equity with the concept of commitment and turnover, the available evidence so far suggests a direct relationship between the two variables. For instance, Iverson and Roy (1994), reported that equity perception leads to increased attitudinal commitment and decreased job search. These were in turn linked to increased behavioral commitment. They reported: 'Employees who perceive that they are treated fairly…identify with and (are) involved with the organization' (p. 34). That there is a definite linkage between inequity and turnover is also reported by a few others (Scholl, Cooper and McKenna, 1987; Shore and Wayne, 1993).

This finding shows that HRM Practices have a significant influence on organizational commitment. Higher organizational commitment leads to lower intention to leave.