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## THE IMPACT OF HRM PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

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### Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on organizational identity within the legal sector, focusing on Chinese law firms. It employs Social Exchange Theory and Social Identity Theory to evaluate how recruitment and selection, training, compensation, performance evaluation, and career advancement affect organizational identity and employee retention. A cross-sectional survey of attorneys in Hubei Province utilized known measurement instruments to evaluate views of human resource management practices and organizational identity. The findings demonstrate that HRM approaches substantially improve organizational identity by cultivating a sense of belonging, emotional attachment, and congruence between individual and company ideals. Training and career development emerged as primary factors in enhancing company identity, whereas remuneration and performance evaluation served as ancillary components. The results underscore the significance of a holistic HRM strategy in fostering company identification, thereby decreasing turnover intentions among legal practitioners. This study enhances the literature on HRM and organizational behavior by elucidating the processes by which HRM practices affect organizational identity in knowledge-intensive sectors. Law firm managers must adopt HRM methods that emphasize employee development, synchronize individual and company objectives, and cultivate a unified corporate culture. Subsequent study should broaden its geographic reach and investigate additional mediating variables to have a more thorough comprehension of this link.

### Keywords:

Employee Retention, Human Resource Management, Legal Profession, Organizational Identity, Turnover Intention

## Introduction

In the knowledge-driven economy, the legal profession is essential not only for maintaining the rule of law but also for guaranteeing that everyone has equal access to justice (Kragulj, 2022; Wen et al., 2024). Law firms are the major providers of legal services, and they depend on their talented attorneys, who are their human capital, to keep their competitive advantage and professional image (Košir et al., 2021). Effective human resource management (HRM) techniques are essential to this dynamic because they have a significant impact on employee happiness, organizational culture, and talent retention (Georgescu et al., 2024). Organizational identity is one of the most important aspects that contribute to employee commitment, among the many other factors that are involved. Organizational identity is the psychological and emotional bond that workers have with their company (Rovetta et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2025). This bond may create a sense of loyalty, belonging, and shared purpose among employees. This idea is especially important in the legal field, where there are constant difficulties due to high turnover rates and fierce rivalry for skilled workers. In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of interest in the relationship between human resource management (HRM) practices and organizational identity (Khan et al., 2023). However, there is still a lack of comprehensive insights, especially in rising economies like as China.

Although it is widely recognized that Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are vital for organizational success, current research has primarily concentrated on their effects on operational outcomes, including productivity, employee turnover, and job satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021). Nonetheless, a substantial gap exists in comprehending the impact of HRM strategies on organizational identity, especially within professional service firms such as law firms, where employee identification with their organizations is crucial for performance and retention.

Research on human resource management in the legal profession is scarce, mostly focusing on conventional HR results rather than the psychological and social dynamics that shape organizational identity. Human Resource Management methods, including recruiting, training, compensation, and career development, influence workers' sense of organizational support and belonging, hence enhancing their identification with the business (Pimenta et al., 2024). However, the degree to which these behaviors affect the formation of a robust organizational identity among legal practitioners is still little examined.

The disparity is especially evident in the Chinese legal sector, where swift economic expansion, continuous legal changes, and heightened globalization have presented both difficulties and possibilities. In contrast to law companies in Western environments, several Chinese law firms function within a fragmented framework characterized by relatively underdeveloped human resource management systems, resulting in ongoing challenges of poor lawyer retention and diminished organizational cohesion. The lack of defined HRM frameworks specific to law firms intensifies these issues, as attorneys may find it difficult to reconcile their professional identity with corporate objectives, thereby heightening turnover intentions.

Although HRM is strategically vital for cultivating corporate identity and minimizing turnover, empirical research in the Chinese legal market is limited. In the absence of evidence-based insights, law firms are deficient in the requisite HRM methods to improve employee retention and organizational stability. This highlights the pressing necessity for an extensive examination of the influence of HRM practices on organizational identity in law firms, especially within

China's changing legal landscape. This study aims to bridge this gap, contributing to the literature on HRM and legal management by offering practical insights for law firm managers focused on enhancing organizational identity and retention rates.

The main objective of this study is to examine correlation between human resource management (HRM) practices and organizational identity within the legal sector, specifically targeting law firms in China. This study examines how essential HRM strategies—recruitment and selection, training, compensation, performance evaluation, and career development—mold company identity and affect employee attitudes. Furthermore, it examines how an enhanced corporate identity fosters employee retention, diminishes turnover intentions, and improves overall organizational stability. The report seeks to offer law firms actionable ideas for enhancing HRM processes to strengthen company identity and develop a dedicated, unified team. This study aims to fulfill these objectives, therefore bridging significant gaps in the literature and providing vital insights for law firms confronting the challenges of a changing legal services market.

### **Literature Review**

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are essential for professional services businesses since these companies depend on work that requires a lot of expertise and relationships with clients. Successful human resource management (HRM) strategies have a direct impact on the performance of an organization by recruiting, maintaining, and developing talent while also promoting employee engagement (Alhajaj & Ahmad, 2024; Urme, 2023). Key HRM activities in professional services organizations include recruiting and selection, training and development, performance assessment, remuneration, and career promotion.

#### ***Recruitment And Selection***

Recruitment is not just about selecting people with technical skills but also ensuring cultural congruence (Bannikova & Mykhaylyova, 2023). For legal companies, this means choosing attorneys who share the same principles as the organization, as this type of alignment reinforces the identity of the organization. According to Alhajaj and Ahmad (2024), strict recruiting methods have been proven to dramatically minimize turnover intention because they guarantee a better fit between personnel and organizational goals (Hermawan, 2021).

#### ***Training And Development***

Training is important for improving employees' skills and abilities while also helping to build a sense of belonging inside the organization (Bhakuni & Saxena, 2023; Faiz et al., 2023). According to Hosen et al. (2024), comprehensive training programs have been shown to enhance employees' professional development and emotional attachment to their organization. Training is important for legal professionals because it not only helps them stay up to date with new rules, but it also increases their confidence in providing high-quality services, which in turn strengthens their devotion to the organization.

#### ***Compensation***

Professional services businesses have compensation schemes that are designed to reward achievement and encourage loyalty through methods like as bonuses, profit-sharing, and allowances (AKPAN & GEORGE, 2023; Akuffo-Aduamah, 2025). Compensation plans in law companies must take into account workload and performance measures, since they represent the particular demands of legal work (Hermawan, 2021). Adequate remuneration also

minimizes turnover intention by addressing employees' financial and psychological requirements.

### ***Performance Evaluation And Career Development***

Transparent performance evaluation and clear career advancement routes are important to HRM practices in these businesses. According to Küçük (2022), a fair assessment method not only increases work satisfaction but also strengthens employees' feelings of fairness and belonging inside the organization. In the same way, professional development options, such as mentorship and clearly defined promotion criteria, increase workers' commitment to the organization and decrease their desire to leave.

### ***Organizational Identity***

It is an important concept that describes the common understanding of "who we are" in an organization and shows how employees feel psychologically and emotionally connected to their job. Ribeiro et al. (2022) define organizational identity as the extent to which workers feel that their own values are in agreement with the values, culture, and aims of the organization. Organizational identity helps workers feel loyal, like they belong, and emotionally attached to their jobs in professional services organizations. It is essential for attorneys to have a strong sense of organizational identity in order to meet the demands of their profession. The identity of an organization is greatly affected by factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, and human resource management methods. For example, human resource management strategies that show the company's commitment to the well-being, growth, and recognition of its employees help to create a greater feeling of identification (Hameed et al., 2022; Salas - Vallina et al., 2021). On the other hand, a poor organizational identity is frequently associated with discontent, disengagement, and increased turnover rates (Li & Song, 2024).

In the legal profession, organizational identity is especially important since practitioners have their own personal brands (Kronblad & Jensen, 2023). A lot of law firms depend on the reputations of individual attorneys instead of creating a strong organizational brand. This can lead to a weaker sense of identity for the organization and a higher likelihood of employees leaving. Human resource management methods that link individual ambitions with organizational objectives and foster a feeling of collective purpose are necessary for strengthening organizational identity (Raza & Khan, 2022; Salvadorinho et al., 2024).

The research has demonstrated a strong connection between human resource management methods and organizational identity. HRM practices serve as indicators to workers about the values and goals of the organization, as well as the assistance it provides to its workforce (Tortia et al., 2022). These practices have an impact on how employees perceive the identity of the organization. Recruitment procedures that prioritize cultural fit, training programs that encourage advancement, and fair remuneration systems improve organizational identity by fostering a feeling of reciprocal involvement and alignment.

For example, training has a direct effect on the identity of an organization. Employees who view training as an indication that the organization supports them are more likely to have a strong feeling of belonging (Bilginoğlu & Yozgat, 2023). In the same way, performance assessment methods that are open and in line with the aims of the organization help to build trust and a sense of belonging among employees (Silva et al., 2023).

***Human Resource Management (HRM) Methods In Law***

Companies must take into account the specific issues that are present in the legal profession. For instance, Abdullahi et al. (2024) states that remuneration schemes that reward performance and workload help to create a greater feeling of justice and belonging. Career development possibilities strengthen the identity of the organization by demonstrating the company's dedication to the professional development of its personnel. Not only can these activities improve the identity of the organization, but they also lessen the likelihood of employees leaving by increasing their emotional commitment to the company.

The legal profession has its own set of issues that have a direct effect on human resource management methods and the identity of the organization. The high turnover rates, fierce rivalry for talent, and the fragmented structure of many legal firms create a vibrant but difficult environment. Dissatisfaction with pay, restricted prospects for professional progression, and a lack of alignment with the principles of the organization are common reasons for attorneys to consider leaving their jobs. Additionally, the hierarchical structure and client-driven work culture of law firms can contribute to stress, burnout, and disengagement among employees. A lot of companies depend on the personal brands of individual attorneys instead of creating a unified organizational identity. This makes it hard to keep employees and encourage loyalty. Larger companies have a hard time making their employees feel like they belong, while smaller companies sometimes have trouble providing competitive compensation and possibilities for advancement.

The COVID-19 epidemic has made these issues even worse by bringing complications like as distant work, shifting customer needs, and the requirement for adaptable human resource management solutions. Addressing these difficulties needs creative HRM techniques that promote organizational identity by developing a shared feeling of purpose and belonging among legal professionals. For instance, law firms may enhance their organizational identity by implementing better training programs, conducting fair performance reviews, and establishing remuneration systems that take into account the specific requirements of legal practice. This section emphasizes the need of implementing focused human resource management techniques that meet the unique issues faced by the legal profession. These practices should also promote a strong organizational identity in order to improve employee retention and organizational success

**Data Collection And Analytical Techniques**

**Research Design:** This study employs a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to investigate the impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on organizational identity within Chinese law firms. The cross-sectional approach allows data collection at a single point in time, making it suitable for examining relationships between HRM strategies and organizational identity, as well as assessing their influence on turnover intention. This methodological approach is particularly beneficial in understanding the associative linkages between variables and deriving insights that can guide HRM strategies to enhance employee retention in the legal sector. The study builds upon existing literature that establishes a connection between HRM practices and organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, and turnover intentions.



A mediation model is employed to analyze the indirect effects of HRM practices on turnover intention through organizational identity. Research suggests that organizational identity functions as a psychological mediator, reinforcing employees' emotional attachment and sense of belonging, thereby fostering long-term commitment. The study utilizes path analysis to assess these relationships, providing empirical validation of how HRM practices shape organizational identity and, in turn, influence turnover intention. This approach enables a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which HRM strategies contribute to organizational cohesion and retention within the legal profession.

## Results And Analysis

### *Descriptive Statistics*

The poll garnered answers from 250 attorneys from 15 legal firms in Hubei Province. The demographic characteristics of the sample are delineated as follows:

**Gender:** The sample comprised 60% male (n=150) and 40% female (n=100) individuals.

**Age Distribution:** The sampled lawyers were aged between 25 and 55 years, with 45% (n=113) aged 25-35 years, 35% (n=87) aged 36-45 years, and 20% (n=50) aged above 45 years.

**Firm Size:** 40% of participants (n=100) were affiliated with major legal firms (employing over 50 individuals), whereas 60% (n=150) were associated with smaller firms (employing less than 10 individuals).

**Years of Experience:** 55% (n=137) of respondents possessed 3 to 5 years of legal practice experience, 30% (n=75) had 6 to 10 years, and 15% (n=38) exceeded 10 years of experience.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the primary variables: HRM practices, corporate identity, and turnover intention. Respondents indicated moderate to high satisfaction with HRM processes, reporting averages of 3.6 for recruitment and selection, 3.8 for training and development, 4.1 for remuneration, 3.9 for performance assessment, and 3.7 for career advancement. Organizational identity received a favorable assessment, with a mean score of 3.8, signifying a robust affiliation with their businesses. The average turnover intention was lower (mean of 2.5), indicating that most attorneys were not actively contemplating departure from their existing roles, while the findings revealed a considerable degree of unhappiness.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics For The Primary Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Recruitment & Selection	3.6	0.85	1-5
Training & Development	3.8	0.92	1-5
Compensation	4.1	0.77	1-5
Performance Evaluation	3.9	0.82	1-5
Career Development	3.7	0.79	1-5
Organizational Identity	3.8	0.89	1-5
Turnover Intention	2.5	0.98	1-5

***Impact of HRM Practices On Organizational Identity***

Organizational identity was positively connected with all five human resource management practices: recruitment and selection, training and development, remuneration, performance assessment, and career development. The greatest relationships were reported for training and development ( $r = 0.62$ ), compensation ( $r = 0.58$ ), and performance evaluation ( $r = 0.55$ ). The results indicate that employees who believe that their company's human resource management methods are helpful, honest, and fair are more likely to build a deep emotional connection to the company and feel that they belong there.

**Table 2: Impact Of HRM Practices On Organizational Identity**

HRM Practices	Correlation with Organizational Identity (r-value)
Recruitment & Selection	0.47
Training & Development	0.62
Compensation	0.58
Performance Evaluation	0.55
Career Development	0.49

***Mediating Role Of Organizational Identity***

It was discovered that organizational identity plays a mediating role in the connection between HRM practices and turnover intention. The findings of the regression analysis showed that a stronger organizational identification was linked to a lower desire to leave the company. In particular, lawyers who had a close connection to their company were far less inclined to think about quitting, even if their human resource management procedures were not ideal. The indirect influence of HRM practices on turnover intention through organizational identity was statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.37$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3: Mediation Analysis - Organizational Identity As A Mediator Between HRM Practices And Turnover Intention**

Path	Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Significance
HRM Practices → Organizational Identity	0.61	< 0.01	Significant
Organizational Identity → Turnover Intention	-0.52	< 0.01	Significant
HRM Practices → Turnover Intention (Direct)	-0.25	< 0.05	Significant
HRM Practices → Organizational Identity → Turnover Intention (Indirect)	-0.37	< 0.05	Significant

***HRM Practices And Turnover Intention***

Compensation identified as the most significant HRM practice determining turnover intention. Lawyers who were unhappy with their pay were more inclined to think about quitting their firm. This discovery backs with other studies that indicate that competitive remuneration is essential for keeping the best legal personnel, particularly in an industry where rival companies frequently pursue individuals (Zhao & Sun, 2016). On the other side, performance review and

career growth were not as closely related to turnover intention, although they still had a moderate impact.

**Table 4: Correlation Between HRM Practices And Turnover Intention**

HRM Practices	Correlation with Turnover Intention (r-value)	Significance (p-value)
Compensation	-0.63	< 0.01 (Significant)
Training & Development	-0.42	< 0.05 (Moderate)
Performance Evaluation	-0.38	< 0.05 (Moderate)
Career Development	-0.36	< 0.05 (Moderate)
Recruitment & Selection	-0.29	< 0.05 (Weak)

### ***HRM Practices And Turnover Intention***

An interesting finding was that lawyers in bigger law firms reported greater degrees of organizational identification compared to those in smaller companies. The disparity may be explained by the fact that larger companies have more resources, which enables them to have more organized human resource management methods, clearer prospects for career growth, and higher pay. However, attorneys working at smaller companies indicated a greater desire to leave their jobs, which may be owing to their perception that there are constraints in professional advancement and pay.

**Table 5: Firm Size, Organizational Identity, And Turnover Intention**

Firm Size	Organizational Identity (Mean Score)	Turnover Intention (Mean Score)
Large Firms (50+ Lawyers)	4.1	2.3
Medium Firms (20-49 Lawyers)	3.8	2.7
Small Firms (Less than 20 Lawyers)	3.4	3.5

### **Discussion**

Attorneys expressing discontent with their remuneration were much more inclined to contemplate departing from their present business. This outcome corroborates other studies, highlighting that compensation and benefits are essential factors influencing job satisfaction and employee retention in high-skill sectors, including law.

In the competitive legal market, where businesses vie for premier talent, sufficient and competitive remuneration is a fundamental method of ensuring that attorneys perceive themselves as appreciated and justly compensated for their efforts. In a field where intellectual capital is the principal output, competitive remuneration serves not just as a financial incentive but also an indication of the firm's valuation of its legal practitioners. Akuffo-Aduamah (2025) observed that when attorneys see their remuneration as inadequate relative to their efforts and competence, they are more inclined to pursue alternative possibilities. This is especially applicable in major law firms, where competitive remuneration and extensive benefits can constitute a fundamental aspect of the firm's value offer.

Nonetheless, although pay is a critical element, it should not be the only emphasis of HRM initiatives. The research indicated those attorneys' content with their remuneration, although perceiving restricted prospects for professional advancement, still shown intentions to leave



their positions. This underscores the necessity for law firms to reconcile financial incentives with alternative support mechanisms, like career advancement and personal satisfaction, to mitigate turnover rates.

Training and development strategies had a robust positive link with corporate identity. Lawyers who recognized that their firm offered sufficient professional development opportunities were more inclined to have a sense of belonging and commitment to the business. This aligns with the research of Küçük (2022), which indicates that ongoing learning opportunities, mentorship, and skill enhancement are essential for cultivating emotional engagement and professional allegiance.

This study's most innovative element is the illustration of organizational identity as a mediator between HRM practices and turnover intention. The findings suggest that robust organizational identity can alleviate turnover intentions, even in the presence of suboptimal HRM policies. This indicates that employees who have an emotional bond with their organization and perceive their own beliefs as congruent with the firm's objective are less inclined to depart, even when confronted with difficulties related to specific HRM policies, such as suboptimal remuneration or restricted career progression. This discovery extends the research of Li & Song (2024), who suggested that organizational identification functions as a psychological safeguard that diminishes turnover intention. Attorneys who perceive their firm's identity as integral to their self-concept are more inclined to exhibit loyalty, despite suboptimal conditions in other facets of their job experience.

Notably, although compensation was the predominant HRM practice influencing turnover intention, a robust organizational identity appeared to mitigate its effect. This corresponds with Tortia et al. (2022), who discovered that personnel with a robust organizational identity are less influenced by pecuniary incentives and more driven by the company's culture, values, and long-term objectives. This also corroborates the conclusions of Raza & Khan (2022), who contended that perceived organizational support enhances commitment, hence reducing employee turnover even in less favorable circumstances. Consequently, the findings underscore the need of cultivating a robust company identity via HRM practices. Law companies have to prioritize the establishment of an inclusive culture that appreciates employees, cultivates mutual respect, and advances common objectives and values. Lawyers who connect with the firm and perceive their job as significant are less inclined to contemplate departure, even if their remuneration falls short of expectations.

## Conclusion

The results validated that salary, training and development, and career progression significantly influence company identification, hence diminishing turnover intention. Lawyers who recognized equitable and organized HRM policies were more predisposed to cultivate a robust emotional attachment to their firms, rendering them less likely to depart. In contrast, those who perceived HRM procedures as insufficient or inconsistent with their professional objectives were more inclined to contemplate seeking superior chances elsewhere. Compensation emerged as the most significant factor influencing turnover intention among HRM practices, as lawyers unsatisfied with their remuneration had a markedly increased propensity to pursue alternative job opportunities. This corresponds with other studies indicating that competitive compensation is essential for maintaining premier legal talent, especially in a fiercely competitive sector where firms routinely attract seasoned experts from competing entities. This

study emphasizes that although financial incentives are crucial, they are inadequate by themselves. Additional HRM components, like career advancement possibilities and training initiatives, significantly contribute to reinforcing company identity, hence diminishing lawyers' inclination to go.

The study indicated that organizational identity mediates the connection between HRM practices and turnover intention, suggesting that HRM techniques are more efficacious in employee retention when they concurrently cultivate a sense of belonging and commitment to the organization. Despite suboptimal HRM procedures, especially regarding compensation, lawyers who strongly identified with their firm's culture and professional principles were considerably less inclined to contemplate departure. This highlights the need of cultivating a unified workplace where employees perceive themselves as respected, supported, and essential to the organization's enduring success. The research indicated that larger legal firms exhibit superior staff retention compared to smaller companies, attributed to more organized human resource management strategies, clearer career advancement pathways, and elevated wages. Conversely, smaller firms encounter difficulties in retaining lawyers due to resource limitations, which frequently hinder their capacity to offer competitive remuneration and clearly delineated career progression opportunities. Nonetheless, smaller enterprises can alleviate these drawbacks by cultivating a cohesive, friendly workplace and providing enhanced flexibility, professional growth, and mentorship possibilities.

Law firms ought to implement a comprehensive strategy for human resource management, integrating both financial and non-financial incentives to improve employee retention. Competitive salary and appealing compensation packages must be supplemented with organized career development programs, clear promotion trajectories, mentorship activities, and a robust firm culture that matches with lawyers' professional ambitions. Moreover, companies must acknowledge the shifting expectations of legal practitioners in a swiftly transforming legal environment. Junior attorneys, specifically, may value work-life equilibrium, professional adaptability, and prospects for ongoing education equally alongside monetary compensation. Future study should investigate how smaller enterprises can adopt innovative HRM solutions despite budget constraints and how law firms of varying sizes can adjust to developing trends in workforce expectations, technological integration, and flexible work arrangements. It is essential for HRM practices to adapt to these developments to sustain a competitive legal staff in the future.

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