



Committing the consultant

The effects of participation on the employee's intention to stay,
through commitment

Master thesis Business Administration, University of Twente

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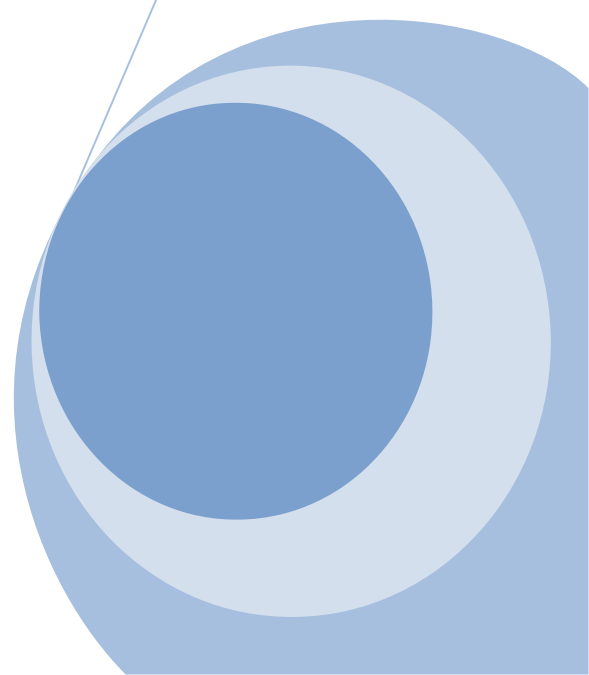
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Preface

Graduating briefly before the summer sun gets mean: I wouldn't call it a dream coming true, though it feels at least very comfortable... Mission accomplished, here it is: my graduation assignment Business Administration. Before presenting this final delivery, I want to acknowledge those persons who contributed in whatsoever manner to the completion of my thesis.

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Jan Willem Zweerink

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Summary

Achieving corporate success is strongly ascribed to a company's capacity of bringing problem solving ideas into practical use. Commitment fulfills a decisive role in doing so. The aim for commitment resulted in different approaches to employee participation, which are particularly valuable for employers of highly-qualified labor due to the effect on employee turnover. However, the *indirect* role that Human Resource (HR)-practices play in such relationships, remains unclear. We therefore defined the following research question:

What influence has participation, through commitment, on consultants' intention to stay?

The research is executed from the employee's perspective, since the *fit of HR-policies needs to be related to employees' perceived organizational needs* rather than exclusively fit the business strategy (see Kinnie *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore our research concedes to the need to understand how different participation practices function in different workplaces (see Cox *et al.*, 2007).

In the theoretical chapter the Danish industrial relations are presented, and the three research variables are conceptualized. Firstly, *participation* is defined as a process that allows employees to exercise some influence over their work and the conditions under which they work (Strauss, 2006, p. 779). The adopted pre-conditions for direct employee involvement quality (DEIQ) mainly imply that managers have to gain insight in the needs of their employees, and that policies and practices need to be scrutinized with respect to the distinct dimensions of participation (i.e. decision issue, degree of involvement, level, form and time). Furthermore has to be considered that the relation between the pre-conditions and DEIQ is moderated by the HR-function and that especially the role of the direct supervisors is important in implementing participation. Our second research variable, *commitment*, is defined as a force that binds an individual to a course of action, of relevance to one or more foci (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301). Commitment more in particular is experienced as a mind-set, in which three different bases are distinct: affective, normative and continuance. The latter basis moreover has two sub dimensions: (1) perceived sacrifices associated with leaving, and (2) recognition of a lack of alternative employment opportunities. Thirdly, *intention to stay* is the extent to which employees plan to continue membership with their organization (Price, 2001, p. 608).

Our chosen research strategy concerns a case study, which distinguishes among three aspects of participation: (1) participation as defined by the organization and recorded in policies and procedures, (2) participation as practiced by department managers, and (3) participation as perceived by the employees. Regarding commitment and intention to stay, only the employee perceptions are relevant.

The conclusions that derived from the qualitative investigation – corresponding with the first two participation aspects – state that Rambøll Denmark enables a differentiated application of HR policy on participation. This is desirable to meet employee needs. The company policy is embedded in performance criteria and company values rather than extensive procedures, hence department managers consider to have freedom to apply it. At task level, influence sometimes is fully delegated, while at department level, direct employee participation is enabled both individually and collectively. Employee influence furthermore derives from informal participation as well. For most decision issues it is clear whether employees can really (co-)decide, except for promotion. Finally, the main representatives committee, the SU, is recognized as an important channel to obtain the employees' opinion. This is ought to create suitable circumstances for effective practice of participation. The role of the HR-function in establishing DEIQ is expressed through particularly the development programs, in their role as company communication channel, and leadership training for the management.

Through quantitative research was found that the effects of participation on intention to stay only exist through affective commitment, implying that participation (1) *does have an indirect effect* on intention to stay, (2) *does not have a direct influence* on intention to stay, and (3) *only has an effect* on intention to stay through commitment *when the basis of commitment is affective*. The relation between participation and intention to stay thus is intervened by commitment, which means that the question 'How to retain employees?' is preceded by 'How to commit employees?'. These findings moreover imply that practicing participation fulfills to the preference of establishing affective commitment while minimizing adverse side-effects on the other bases. The strength of the effects does however vary per decision issue and across commitment foci. Five recommendations are made:

- (1) *Stimulate the participation of employees in the selection process*, which not only can increase commitment and intention to stay, but also contributes to the creation of consensus in interests.
- (2) *Enhance the participation of employees in determining the department strategy*. A more active approach can contribute to employee retention and a broader support for the strategy.
- (3) *Ensure that that Rambøll Denmark is the best place for employees to practice their occupation*, since this will fulfill employee needs and expectations while reaching company objectives.
- (4) *Investigate what withholds employees from influencing the comfort of their work environment*. Participation in this issue contributes to retention when the unknown restrictions are removed.
- (5) *Investigate what withholds employees from participating in promotion*, since perceptions of influence regarding an alternative role in the career paths. This can contribute to employee retention by affecting participation in competence development and in performance-related pay.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and problem definition

Achieving corporate success is strongly ascribed to a company's capacity of bringing problem solving ideas into practical use (e.g. Nielsen, 2003). Although such success certainly demands investments in technology as well, the decisive factor is how human resources are committed to among others the organization's internal relations (p. 1). Hence it is not surprising that commitment has become the key objective of people management (e.g. Benson & Brown, 2007; Walton, 1985).

The aim for commitment has been reflected in different approaches to employee participation, which are particularly valuable for employers of scarce and highly-qualified labor (Summers & Hyman, 2005). The reason that participation is presumed to be a valuable instrument is because it enables organizations to satisfy workers' needs while simultaneously achieving organizational objectives (Strauss, 2006, p. 778). Moreover, participation contributes to reducing employee turnover. The latter is a major problem for many organizations today, being often extremely costly – particularly in jobs which offer higher education and extensive training (Van Dick *et al.*, 2004, p. 3).

Several studies found that HR practices play an *indirect* role in organizational effectiveness and performance (e.g. Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2004). This role is presumed to be indirect, because 'any link goes through the incentive and motivational effects captured as *high commitment employee outcomes*' (Ramsay *et al.*, 2000, p. 501). Notwithstanding these findings, the role that HR practices play in such attitude-behavior relationships remains unclear (Paré & Tremblay, 2007, p. 327). Considering the referred turnover problem of companies with highly-qualified labor, we want to obtain insight in the relation between employee participation and the intention to stay of a specific group of highly educated employees. In doing so, we shall include the possibility of mediation by commitment. This results in the following research question:

What influence has participation, through commitment, on consultants' intention to stay?

The referred problem of employee turnover is indissoluble connected to the Danish economy, making Denmark a highly interesting country. We will carry out the research at an organization that employs our aimed target population: Rambøll Denmark, a company specialized in technical consultancy.

1.2 Relevance of the research

The research has a scientific relevance in several facets. Firstly, some authors argue that the significance of participation and commitment appears to be overlooked (e.g. Cox, Zagelmeyer & Marchington, 2006). Our research applies to the pledge for more analysis on their relationship.

Furthermore Cabrera, Cabrera & Ortega (2001) claim that less is known about the adoption of employee participation practices in Europe (p. 2). Comparable research demands exist with regard to turnover intentions, which should be ‘investigated in a variety of organizational and cultural contexts’ (Paré & Tremblay, 2007, p. 350). Paré & Tremblay pledge to carry out such research for several groups of employees, referring also to professionals in consulting firms in Europe.

The societal relevance of this research is related to characteristics of the Danish labor market. Denmark is acknowledged to be the ‘textbook example of how to combine a dynamic economy, high employment and social security’ (Bredgaard, Larsen & Madsen, 2005, p. 5). Besides that the level of education is above the average of OECD-countries¹, the market is especially characterized by having the highest employment rate of the European Union (Statistics Denmark, 2007, p. 175). A related typifying property, which concerns the services sector in particular, is the high mobility between jobs (Bredgaard *et al.*, 2005, p. 5). According to Bredgaard and colleagues, this high mobility might lead to an under-investment in training (p. 12), while an increase in the demand of highly educated and qualified personnel in the next years is already expected (CFA, 2006, p. 5). This expected scenario will have consequences for especially knowledge organizations (Nielsen, 2003). Nielsen endorses the importance of individual employee commitment and influence in this matter, concluding that employee participation is important to analyze (p. 25/6). Our research will do so.

Generally, the research is of relevance for the host company, Rambøll Denmark. The research outcomes will describe in *which way* employees are bound to *which objects* within the organization, and how this is affected by employee participation. Explaining one antecedent of this binding, as well as its nature and focus, can help the company to become more effective in retaining employees.

1.3 Structure of the research

After this introduction of research characteristics, a theoretical basis will be presented in chapter 2. Additionally, chapter 3 will present the strategy of the research: our choice of methods and techniques is explained and justified. Chapter 4 describes the organizational settings, which include the characteristics of the company and the HR policy choices. Chapter 5 will present the participation practices as actually applied. In chapter 6 the perceptions of the employees will be presented, deriving from the employee survey that is executed. The survey results will be explained and analyzed. Finally, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made in chapter 7.

¹ Countries that signed the convention on Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007)

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction: the frame of reference

The perception that employee influence can contribute to organizational effectiveness, derived from Human Resource Management (HRM). This management approach has the central assumption that policies on managing personnel have to be designed from the conception the employee is a source of benefits. Doorewaard & De Nijs (1998) claim that only the so-called Harvard-model of Beer *et al.* (1984) deserves the predicate ‘HRM’. The characterizing presumption that distinguishes this model from other models, is that HRM policy decisions have to be taken within the organization’s environmental context and its specific constellation of interests. These HRM policy choices eventually have effects on both short and long term. This is expressed in figure 2.1.

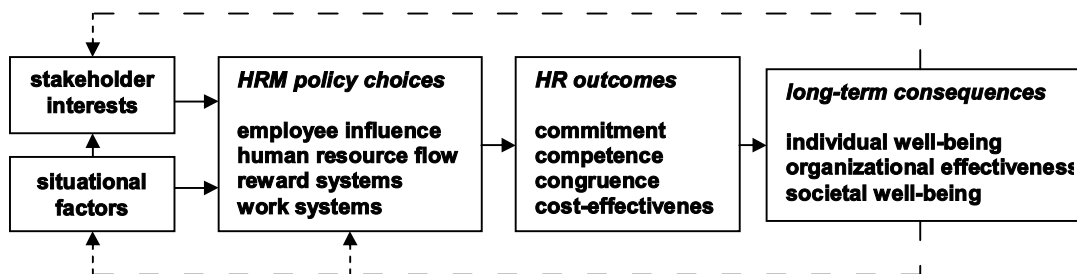


Figure 2.1: The Harvard-model (source: Beer et al., 1984)

The Harvard-approach presumes that through accurate organization and task design, commitment of the employees to the targets and strategy of the organization can be created (Doorewaard & De Nijs, 1998, p. 35). Crucial question for this design is the *dividing of influence between the management and the employees* regarding three areas of interest: work system, rewards, and the flow of employees in-through-out the organization (see figure 2.2). The amount of influence granted to the employees is namely determining for the creation of consensus in interests between the employer and the employee, while this consensus itself is essential for the development of commitment.

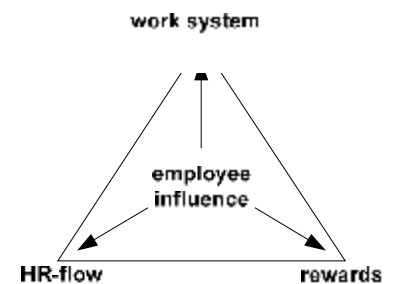


Figure 2.2: basic Harvard-model (source: Beer et al., 1984)

The model thus perceives employee influence to affect organizational effectiveness, through commitment. This concedes to our research question, as intention to stay is a measure of organizational effectiveness (e.g. Ryan *et al.*, 1996). Furthermore, the Harvard-approach particularly grants space to employee needs. Since addressing these needs enhances employee retention (e.g. Döckel, 2003) – which applies to the objective of our research – it is legitimate to adopt the Harvard-model as our frame of reference.

Before we will conceptualize our research variables, a remark is made. Some authors (e.g. Marchington & Grugulis, 2000) argue that common HRM-approaches questionably assume that adopted HR-policies will be implemented as intended, and have the same effect on *all* employees. Kinnie *et al.* (2005) however, endorse that *the fit of HR-policies needs to be related to employees' perceived organizational needs* rather than exclusively fit the business strategy (p. 23). In conformity with this prescription, our research will be carried out from the employee's perspective.

In accordance with our research question (see section 1.1), the following elements of the Harvard-model fulfill a central role in this research:

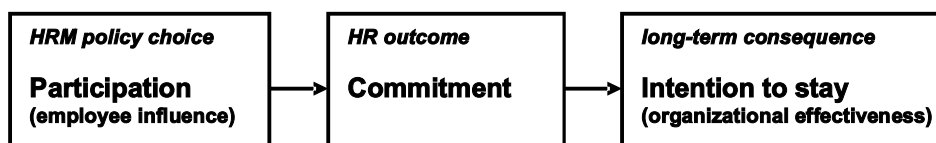


Figure 2.3 The elements of the Harvard-model that fulfill a central role in this research

This chapter will provide the theory needed to translate the frame of reference into a final research model. We will start with an introduction of the Danish industrial relations. After that, the constructs participation (section 2.3) and commitment (2.4) will be conceptualized. Based on results of earlier studies, their relation will be explored in section 2.5. The ‘intention to stay’ will be conceptualized in section 2.6, which is followed by a theoretical exploration of the relation between commitment and intention to stay (section 2.7). The final research model will be presented in section 2.8.

2.2 Industrial relations in Denmark

The majority of the employees on the Danish labor market – 77 percent – is organized in a trade union, while employer associations represent the employers of 85 percent of the workforce (DA, 2007). Collective bargaining occurs at three levels in a hierarchical manner (Plasman *et al.*, 2007). The main labor agreement is concluded between the Confederation of Danish Employers (*Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening*, DA) and the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (*Landsorganisationen i Danmark*, LO). The DA and the LO negotiate at central level, on behalf of respectively the smaller organizations and the unions of the different sectors. The main agreement is the basis for a collective agreement (concluded at industrial level), and for the local agreement between the employer and the employees (BM, 2006). Work and pay conditions are particularly arranged in these agreements: there is no legislation for minimum wage, protection against dismissal or pensioning. It is relative easy for employers to hire and fire employees, which is characterizing for the flexibility of the Danish labor market. Most employees are *in fact* ‘temporary employed’, despite that over 90 percent of the Danish

employees has a permanent job (Bredgaard, Larsen & Madsen, 2005, p. 13). The described flexibility is combined with a comprehensive social security, hence the Danish system also is addressed as the 'flexicurity model'. Its basic idea is that flexibility and security are not contradictory but mutually supportive (Bredgaard *et al.*, 2005, p. 19). For the 82.5 percent of the employees who have a full time job, the regular working weeks consist of 37 hours (OECD, 2007).

The collective bargaining system also includes rules regarding employee representatives. They have formal powers to negotiate with the management and to enter into agreements with the employer on a mandate from the other employees and the trade unions (BM, 2006, p. 4). The representatives automatically are member of the *Cooperation Council*; the Danish equivalent for the work council, in which employer- and employee representatives attempt to reach agreement on policy principles. The Cooperation Council has information and consultation rights, concerning for example the HR policy, production methods or planned reorganizations (WP, 2007). Finally, employees in Danish companies employing 35 or more employees, are entitled to elect at least two representatives in the board of directors. These representatives have the same rights and responsibilities as other board members, except for that they cannot be involved in decisions on industrial disputes (WP, 2007).

2.3 Participation

This section will conceptualize participation. The construct will be defined in subsection 2.3.1, while its dimensions will be presented in 2.3.2. Subsection 2.3.3 will introduce and explain the preconditions for participation. The final research implications will be given in subsection 2.3.4.

2.3.1 Definition of participation

Employee involvement and participation have been defined in a great variety of ways, though often is referred to joined decision-making between superior and subordinates (e.g. Leana, 1987). Recently however, Strauss (2006) claimed that there is a significant difference between involving employees and enabling them to exert influence in decision-making. He states that involvement is passive while influence is active, to which is added that involvement does not necessarily implicate the exercise of influence (p. 779). Strauss applies the following definition of *participation*:

Participation is a process that allows employees to exercise some influence over their work and the conditions under which they work (Strauss, 2006, p. 779).

Strauss endorses the importance of *actual* influence, instead of a feeling influence. This is in line with how participation is approached within HRM (see Doorewaard & De Nijs, 1998, p. 28).

Generally, the participation concept focuses on the influence that employees exert over how their work is organized and carried out (Fenton-O’Creevy, 2001). Also the Harvard-model puts the emphasis on the influence employees exert *directly* on workplace decisions (Doorewaard & De Nijs, 1998). Nevertheless should be considered that direct participation can only make limited changes to the way work is executed, because most fundamental changes affect workers outside the immediate vicinity of the participation process (Heller *et al.*, 1998, p. 27). Hence we will focus on direct participation, but include indirect participation as a condition for it (see also: Strauss, 2006, p. 799).

2.3.2 Dimensions of participation

Ever since the 80’s the multidimensionality of participation has been recognized (Black & Gregersen, 1997). Five main dimensions are distinct: decision issue, degree of involvement, level, form and time.

The *decision issue* concerns the content of participation. Four types of issues are suggested (e.g. Margulies & Black, 1987): work and task design, working conditions, strategy issues, and capital distribution. From the previous subsection derived that our focus is on the first two categories.

The *degree of involvement* indicates the amount of influence employees exert in decision-making. This can vary, from being informing in advance, to consultation, having a veto, to actual deciding.

The *level* at which participation can be practiced, can vary from task level, to department or even company level. The individual or task level includes initiatives directly related to the job, while participation at higher levels typically entails the election of representatives (Ramsay, 1991, p. 4).

The *form* of participation is also important (e.g. Cotton *et al.*, 1988). Direct participation implies immediate involvement of organizational members, while indirect participation involves a set of individuals who are elected or appointed as representatives. Within our main theme – direct participation, two sub dimensions are distinct: (1) formal/informal and (2) collective/individual. Formal participation refers to a system of rules within the organization, while the opposite informal participation is a non-statutory consensus merging among members (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978, p. 10). Next, collective direct participation refers to group-based involvement, such as team briefings and consultation committees. Individual direct participation can have a more spontaneous character, such as for example supervisors who consult a subordinate while walking the floor (Ramsay, 1991, p. 11).

Finally, *time* should also be a matter of concern, as it seems to influence the effectiveness of direct participation (Torca *et al.*, 2008). Short-term direct participation namely may indicate a less positive attitude towards direct participation (Cotton *et al.*, 1988). Moreover, a timely response to employee complaints, suggestions and demands, is of importance as well (e.g. Harlos, 2001).

2.3.3 Preconditions

Torka and colleagues (2008) pay attention to the pre-conditions for direct employee involvement quality (DEIQ). These include among others both workforce and job characteristics. To improve the DEIQ, managers have to gain insight in the specific needs of their employees. Since these needs might differ across individual characteristics and organizational positions, the latter can help the management to obtain this insight. According to Torka *et al.* (2008), need differences moreover call for differentiated HRM practices: a one fit-for-all approach does not fit at all (p. 153). Policies and practices furthermore need to be scrutinized with respect to the distinct dimensions (see subsection 2.3.2). This implies that supervisors and their subordinates should be clear about which issues workers can really (co-)decide on, and that issues should be ahead of time: the time-span between the expression of an idea and appropriate feedback on contributions should be set.

Research has shown that the relation between the pre-conditions and DEIQ is moderated by the HR function (Torka *et al.*, 2008, p. 153). HR managers hence should convince the top management of the difficulties involved in practicing participation, and should guide direct supervisors in fulfilling the delegated responsibility successfully. Especially the role of the direct supervisors is very important in implementing participation, yet they should not be made 'scapegoats' for failure (Fenton- O'Creevy, 2001, p. 37). Instead, organizations should: (1) treat direct supervisors as targets *and* implementers of participation, (2) ensure the presence of managers with significant experience in participative management, and invest in the recruitment and/or development of such experience, (3) remove constraints on supervisors' ability to implement participation, (4) ensure supervisors have sufficient time, energy, and resources for participation, and (5) engage in a dialogue with them to reach a common understanding of the barriers to change. Such barriers could imply be managerial resistance, which should be overcome. Support through the entire management namely is indispensable for successful implementation (e.g. Batt & Valcour, 2003; Ramsay, 1991).

2.3.4 Implications

Participation is defined as a process that allows employees to exercise some influence over the work and the conditions under which they work. The construct has five main dimensions. Our research focuses on direct participation: particularly it will concern decisions regarding task design and working conditions, taken at task and department level. The direct employee involvement quality (DEIQ) is determined by five pre-conditions, which particularly pay attention to the role that both the HR function and the direct supervisors fulfill in implementing participation.

2.4 Commitment

In this section commitment will be conceptualized, addressing three elements: definition (subsection 2.4.1), foci (subsection 2.4.2) and bases (2.4.3). Research implications will be given in 2.4.4.

2.4.1 Definition of commitment

Over the years, commitment has been defined and measured in many different ways. Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) made a review on earlier commitment studies, and concluded that consensus existed on the fact that commitment is experienced as a *mind-set* – a frame of mind or psychological state that compels an individual towards a course of action. Furthermore, all definitions in general make reference to the fact that commitment (a) is a stabilizing or obliging force, that (b) gives direction to behavior. Eventually, Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) proposed the following definition:

Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets. As such, commitment is distinguishable from exchange-based forms of motivation and from target-relevant attitudes, and can influence behavior even in the absence of extrinsic motivation or positive attitudes (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301).

2.4.2 Foci of commitment

Organizational commitment has been the major focus of commitment studies for a long time. The organization however, is composed of many sub-units, and recent research emphasized the value of distinguishing *multiple foci* of commitment in the workplace (Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2004, p. 48). An important reason to do so, is that outcomes desired by the organization are more often task- than organization-related (Torck, 2003). Organizations are not only interested in the employee's commitment to the organization, but also and *especially* to more tangible objects (p. 32). Research on commitment foci of professionals provides a number of relevant objects. Based on a comparison of articles (i.e. Benson & Brown, 2007; Boshoff & Mels, 2000; Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001; Kinnie *et al.*, 2005; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005; Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2002; Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2001; 2004), four foci were selected: organization, supervisor, workgroup and occupation.

Although literature pledges to distinct multiple foci, the 'global' *organization* still is of relevance, since it is the most salient entity on the employee's mind when membership decisions are at stake (Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2004, p. 59). It is legitimate to include the *supervisor* and *workgroup* as well, since entities that are closer in proximity to the employee, have the strongest influence on employee attitudes and their subsequent behaviors (e.g. Clugston *et al.*, 2000). Regarding the fourth selected focus, a differentiation in work-oriented foci is made. In the commitment literature, career,

occupation, and profession have been used interchangeably (Meyer *et al.*, 1993, p. 539). Gallagher & McLean Parks (2001) suggested the following definition for commitment to the *occupation*:

Occupational commitment is defined in terms of a workers identification with the goals and values of their occupation and line of work, and the intention of remaining within the occupation. (Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001, p. 188).

This definition transcends commitment to a set of work activities that apply to a particular job, and hence avoids the more restricted applicability of professional commitment (Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001, p. 188). While assessing commitment to a particular line of work – which we intend – the occupation is a more appropriate focus than career or profession (Meyer *et al.*, 1993, p. 540).

An additional comment is made. The importance of a mix of foci is not the same for every employee and function group (Torka & Van Riemsdijk, 2001). Although the selected foci are plausible for our research context, the list is not exhaustive and the relevance of the foci is uncertain.

2.4.3 Bases of commitment

Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) found that there is a considerable similarity in the *nature* or *origin* of commitment as represented within the different theoretical frameworks. Although being labeled different across the models, three different dimensions were often included: *desire*, *perceived cost* and *perceived obligation* (p. 308). Meyer & Herscovitch referred to the three mind-sets respectively as affective, continuance and normative commitment. This is in accordance with the distinct bases in Meyer & Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model.

Although the latter model has undergone the most extensive empirical evaluation up to date (Döckel, 2003, p. 43), there nevertheless remains some disagreement on whether affective and normative commitment are distinguishable forms of commitment, and whether continuance commitment is a unidimensional construct. Meyer *et al.* (2002) carried out a meta-analysis and found that affective and normative commitment are indeed highly correlated, but emphasize additionally that they are not identical constructs (p. 41). Regarding the dimensionality of continuance commitment, previous studies (e.g. McGee & Ford, 1987) found evidence for two basic factors: one reflecting perceived sacrifices associated with leaving, and the other a recognition of the lack of alternative employment opportunities. Meyer *et al.* (2002) argue that the most important consideration in deciding whether to treat continuance as one- or two-dimensional construct, is how the subscales relate to other constructs. Hence we initially will adopt the two subscales.

2.4.4 Implications

We now know that commitment is a force, that binds an individual to a course of action, of relevance to one or more foci. The importance of these foci is considered to differ per employee and employee group, hence that the relevance of the four selected foci is uncertain.

We also know that commitment is experienced as a mind-set, and that three natures of the mind-set were presumed to be common: desire, perceived obligation and perceived costs. To address these different natures, the Three-Component Model from Meyer & Allen (1991) was adopted, labeling the different *bases* of commitment respectively as affective, continuance and normative commitment. For continuance commitment moreover two sub dimensions are distinct: (1) perceived sacrifices associated with leaving, and (2) recognition of the lack of alternative employment opportunities. Although the model of Meyer & Allen has been extensively evaluated, still the relevance of these bases of commitment regarding the research context has to be examined.

2.5 Participation and commitment: empirical research

Participation has positive effect on satisfaction, performance and productivity (e.g. Goll & Johnson, 1997), and on commitment (e.g. Allen *et al.*, 2003; Poutsma *et al.*, 2003). Participation practices moreover contribute to improved communication between managers and employees, reduced turnover and absence, innovation and capacity to manage change (Cox *et al.*, 2007).

In the development of commitment, the perceptions of the employees are important. Meyer & Allen (1991) for example, claim that by far the strongest and most consistent relationships have been obtained with *work experiences*. Employees whose work experiences are consistent with their expectations and satisfy their basic needs, tend to develop a stronger affective attachment to the organization than do those whose experiences are less satisfying (Meyer *et al.*, 1993, p. 539). Comparable findings concern the entities in the direct work environment: employees become affectively committed to their supervisor or workgroup when they derive their identity from these targets, have values in common with them, or are personally involved in them (Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2002, p. 126). For increasing affective commitment to commitment targets (e.g. organization, occupation), participation has been shown to be a powerful tool (McElroy, 2001, p. 331).

Continuance commitment develops as employees (a) recognize that they have accumulated investments that would be lost if they were to leave the organization, or (b) recognize that the availability of comparable alternatives is limited (e.g. Meyer *et al.*, 1993). Interests in the development of continuance commitment might be stimulated by the desire to *avoid* creating it, in

attempts to foster affective commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2002, p. 42). Investment examples are specific skills developing through ongoing membership in a workgroup, or specific patterns of work interactions with one's supervisor (Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2002, p. 126). With regard to the role participation can fulfill in the development of continuance commitment, McElroy (2001) suggests that the latter increases to the extent that the employees perceives to have to give up this system of self-determination should they leave the organization (p 331). Note that here is assumed that high autonomy is positively valued and that other organizations are not forecasted to offer such practices.

A number of studies (e.g. Allen & Meyer, 1990) found that participation has a positive effect on *normative commitment* as well. Stinglhamber *et al.* (2002) found that normative commitment correlates highly across organization, supervisor, workgroup and occupation. They argue that this might be explained by the fact that the development of normative commitment results from socialization experiences encountered prior to organizational entry (p. 163). Stinglhamber *et al.* also suggest that normative commitment to supervisor and workgroup might ensue from engaging into a social exchange relationship with them or from being socialized into values of loyalty to these targets.

2.6 Intention to stay

In this section the intention to stay will be defined (subsection 2.6.1), and its dimension will be presented (2.6.2). Additionally the implications for this research will be given (subsection 2.6.3).

2.6.1 Definition of intention to stay

Intention to stay is defined as 'the extent to which employees plan to continue membership with their organization' (Price, 2001, p. 608). It addresses the employee's willingness to stay with the organization, and is a *facet* of turnover intentions (Jaros, 1997, p. 321). Turnover itself is the termination of an individual's employment with an organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993, p. 262), and can be divided in voluntary and involuntary turnover – sometimes termed 'avoidable' and 'unavoidable' turnover. Most literature however, concerns voluntary turnover (Price, 2001).

Griffeth *et al.* (2000) found that precursors in the withdrawal process were shown among the best predictors of turnover (p. 483). These precursors include job search, comparison of alternatives, and thoughts of quitting. The last in the sequence of this set of withdrawal cognitions is intention to leave, and is considered to be the strongest cognitive predictor of turnover (Meyer *et al.*, 2002, p. 28). About the composition of this set of withdrawal conditions however remains discussion. Van Dick *et al.* (2004) acknowledge that turnover has been explained with a number of psychological concepts, but claim nonetheless that the phenomenon still is far from being understood (p. 352).

2.6.2 Dimension of intention to stay

Recent empirical evidence shows that intention to leave is best represented by a single dimension (Benson, 2006, p. 175), ranging between high and low. Since leaving is the opposite of staying (Van Dick *et al.*, 2004, p. 353), its dimensionality is also valid for intention to stay.

2.6.3 Implications

Intention to stay is a unidimensional variable, that refers to the employee's intention to remain employed by an organization. It belongs to a sequence set of withdrawal cognitions.

2.7 Commitment and intention to stay: empirical research

Research shows that commitment is related to higher motivation and job performance, willingness to accept change, and lower turnover (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 123). Low turnover intentions, employee well-being, and desirable on-the-job behavior (i.e. attendance, in-role performance and organizational citizenship behavior) are particularly related to affective and normative commitment.

Affective commitment is perceived to be the strongest predictor of turnover intentions across foci, including organization, supervisor and workgroup (e.g. Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2004) and occupation (e.g. Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Although less strong, normative commitment has the same effects (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Also continuance commitment was found to have a negative effect on turnover intentions (e.g. Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), but a number of the main quantitative summaries (e.g. Meyer & Allen, 1991; Allen & Meyer, 1996) claim that this relation is less consistently. The inconsistency across foci partly can be explained while considering internal mobility. Vandenberghe *et al.* (2004) argue that if an employee has no possibility to work for another supervisor (or with another workgroup) when commitment in this focus is low, the single remaining option would be to leave

(p. 66). Continuance *occupational* commitment furthermore was found not to be related to intention to stay with the organization, whereas continuance *organizational* commitment was not found to be related to intention to stay in either occupation and organization (e.g. Meyer *et al.*, 1993).

Antecedents of turnover intentions include satisfaction (e.g. Van Dick *et al.*, 2004), years in occupation, organizational tenure (e.g. Cotton & Tuttle, 1986), base salary, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, skill variety, job autonomy and variety, quality of work/life policies (e.g. Döckel, 2003), and career-development opportunities (e.g. Batt & Valcour, 2003). Finally, several studies found that HR-practices play an indirect role in organizational effectiveness, that is, by enhancing organizational commitment they reduce turnover intentions (Paré & Tremblay 2007). This is in accordance with the presumption of our frame of reference (see section 2.1).

2.8 Research questions and the research model

We will now specify the initial questions of our research, deriving from the determined dimensions of our research variables. First we recall our ‘main’ research question:

What influence has participation, through commitment, on consultants’ intention to stay?

The section on employee participation (2.3) revealed that we want to answer the following question:

(1) What amount of influence do employees have – particularly directly, and at both task and department level – in decisions concerning their workplace, and work tasks?

Also the role that the (department) management fulfills in practicing participation has to be investigated. This concerns the following question:

(2) How is participation, in the workplace, practiced by the management?

For measuring commitment we have to consider (a) the multidimensionality of the construct, (b) the fact that commitment is related to multiple objects and (c) the fact that the relevance varies across employees (see section 2.4). Hence the following question has to be answered:

(3) Which relevance have the different bases and foci of commitment?

Additionally, the relation between participation and commitment can be investigated:

(4) Does the described amount of perceived influence affect the relevance of the different bases and foci of commitment?

In order to measure intention to stay, the following question has to be answered (see section 2.6):

(5) What level has the intention to stay?

Finally, only one remaining relation has to be described to complete the research model:

(6) Does the relevance of the different bases and foci affect the level of intention to stay?

Except for determining these initial research questions, we also have to make adaptations to the research model that include the determined dimensions. The final model is visualized in figure 2.4.



Figure 2.4: the complete research model

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction: the case study

When ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being opposed, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context, *case studies* are the preferred strategy (Yin, 2003, p. 1). This particularly applies to research that has the purpose of making participation more effective (Strauss, 2006, p. 799), making it self-evident to adopt the case study as our research strategy.

In this chapter successively the research design (section 3.2), and the techniques for data collection (sections 3.3 and 3.4) will be presented.

3.2 Research design

Essential part of the research design is the case study protocol (Yin, 2003, p. 67). The case study protocol consists of four elements:

- (1) *Research overview (i.e. objective, research question, initial questions, research model);*
- (2) *The field procedures (i.e. determined to access to field site, sources of information);*
- (3) *Case study questions (i.e. questions specified to the sources of information);* and
- (4) *A guide for the case study report.*

The *research overview* has been conducted in the previous chapter. The *field procedures* and *case study questions* have to be attuned to the sources of information. This particularly has implications for investigating participation. Firstly, we know that the HR policies on participation need to be scrutinized (see subsection 2.3.2). Therefore we have to consider the organizational settings, particularly the workforce characteristics and the role of the management. Secondly, we also need to know how participation is implemented by the line managers. Cox *et al.* (2007) express this as the ‘need to understand how formal and informal participation practices function in different workplaces’ (p. 31). Thirdly, we have to consider the employee’s perspective, as emphasized in section 2.1. This implies that not only the *actual* influence matters, but also the influence employees *perceive* to exercise. The latter is supported by Black & Gregersen (1997), who claim that an individual’s perception of participation in decision-making be more relevant than any other source (p. 873). In summary, we are factually interested in three aspects of participation: (1) participation as defined by the organization and recorded in policies and procedures, (2) participation as practiced by the department managers, and (3) participation as perceived by the employees. Note that regarding commitment and intention to stay, only employee perceptions are relevant.

For investigation employee perceptions in a large population, attitude surveys are excellent vehicles (Babbie, 2004, p. 243). Hence it is appropriate to carry out an employee survey for investigating perceived participation, commitment and intention to stay. Such surveys, however, do not tell how participation works in practice (Strauss, 2006, p. 796). For research that seeks to explore policy, local knowledge and practice, qualitative methodology is valuable (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Thus we have to split our research in a quantitative and a qualitative part.

A final remark is made regarding commitment. Before starting the execution of the quantitative research, we need to ensure that the foci apply to the work-related objects that the research population perceives to be important. To do so, an explorative, qualitative study will be carried out, investigating available documents (e.g. results of employee survey recently held at Rambøll Denmark).

3.3 Qualitative research

The qualitative research will provide a description of the research settings and how participation actually functions. Evidence will be collected through among others document study and qualitative interviews. To guarantee the quality of this part of the research, we consider its ‘trustworthiness’, which is established when findings reflect the meaning as described by participants as closely as possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following strategies will be applied:

- *Triangulation*: convergence is sought across multiple and different sources;
- *Member check*: the outcomes of the qualitative interviews will be taken back to the participants;
- *Prolonged engagement*: the researcher staid at the research site for a longer period of time; and
- *Audit trail*: clear documentation of research decisions and activities is taken to both professors.

The outcomes of the quantitative research will be presented in two chapters. Chapter 4 will describe the organizational settings, more in particular the HR policy on participation. In chapter 5 will be presented how participation practices function in different departments.

3.4 Quantitative research

The quantitative research concerns the employee attitude survey. For this survey, a questionnaire will be composed – using measures from conventional literature – and send out to a selection of our research population. An explanation and justification of the used measures, sample method, analysis techniques, quality criteria and the results of the employee survey, will be presented in chapter 6.

4 Organizational settings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on a study into policy documents, annual reviews, recent editions of recurrent HR-reports, recent employee surveys and minutes of meetings of employee representatives, and on interviews with HR-staff members (6) and employee representatives (3). Successively the organizational structure and environment (section 4.2), and the HR policy choices (section 4.3) will be described. Finally, the research implications will be given in section 4.4.

4.2 Organizational structure and environment

Rambøll was established in 1945 in Copenhagen as a consultancy company offering services within the fields of engineering, management and IT. Through the years, Rambøll obtained a leading position on the markets in Denmark and Scandinavia, and became one of the biggest consultancy companies in Europe. Nowadays Rambøll employs almost 7,000 specialists.

The basic organization consists of three levels: company management, business unit management and departmental management. The holding company, the Rambøll Group, was established in 2003 after a number of acquisitions, and now consists of eight² *Country Business Units (CBU's)*. Each of these CBU's comprises several service areas operating *within* the country, while the 'global practices' concern the operations *across countries* (e.g. Rambøll Oil & Gas, Rambøll Management and Rambøll IT). The organizational concept is carried by the Business Support and Development functions, including HR. One of the group's CBU's is Rambøll Denmark, which employs around 1,600 employees. The majority of them works in the Copenhagen area (1,000 employees); the others operate from the 21 regional offices in Funen, Jutland and Zealand.

The Danish market for consulting engineering is dominated by three major companies, of which Rambøll Denmark fulfills the leading position. Although the different market segments each have their own characteristics (e.g. sensitivity to economic or political influences), all of these segments are growing. Moreover is expected that some of the market segments will become even more important in the future, due to changes in climate, the growing demand for energy, and the desirable reduction of pollution and waste. In conformity with these market expectations, Rambøll Denmark adheres a strategy aimed at growth. Its operations increasingly involve new high growth markets such as Eastern Europe, the Middle East and India. Aim is to cover countries in these markets through alliances and joint ventures.

² Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the United Kingdom, Russia, Estonia and Lithuania

4.2.1 Internal labor market

The research is carried out within the *main service areas of Rambøll Denmark that are settled at the two offices in Virum*³. This includes 875 persons in total, divided over 58 departments. The size of the department varies widely, ranging from 2 to 49. The educational level of our research population is high; around three-quarter of the employees has an academic, mostly technical, background. Around 33 percent holds a Bachelor's degree, 38 percent holds a Master's degree, and 3 percent a PhD or Post Doctorate. Around 30 percent of the employees at Rambøll Denmark is female.

The average age of the employees is 43.1 years. Employees younger than 30 (15%) or 60 years or older (7%) proportionally are less represented than the ages between 30 and 39 (28%) and between 40 and 49 years old (27%). The average organizational tenure over 2007 was 9 years, which is lower than a year earlier (9.8). Furthermore the group of employees with a tenure that is *above the average* is considerable smaller than the group of people who have been working at Rambøll Denmark for a shorter period; the proportions are 35 to 65 percent. Of all employees at Rambøll Denmark, 22 percent is a manager. The management consists for 15 percent of females members. The average age of the management is 47.3 years, while their organizational tenure is 12.8 years.

4.3 HR policy choices

This section will explain the HR policy choices. Successively the HR-flow (subsection 4.3.1), the work system (4.3.2), the reward system (4.3.3) and employee influence (4.3.4) will be described.

4.3.1 HR-flow

This subsection will successively describe the flow of employees in-through-out the organization.

4.3.1.1 Flow in

There is a shortage of consulting engineers at the Danish labor market. Rambøll Denmark with regularity is compelled to turn customer assignments down, because they do not have the resources needed to carry it out. Evading the market's shortage by recruiting employees abroad, has not been successful so far. Denmark appeared to be relative unattractive for employees from the European mainland due to cultural barriers and the high taxes. Approaching the Scandinavian labor market was considered to be pointless, since their labor market situation is similar to the one in Denmark.

The difficulties in fulfilling vacancies is ascribed to the combination of a tight *labor* market and a growing *customer* market. The recruitment practices itself nonetheless are considered to be effective.

³ These concern Infrastructure, Water and Environment; Buildings; Energy, Industry and Telecom; and Business Support/Business Development. The vast majority of the presented statistics concerns this research population, and for the latter numbers it is reasonably assumable that they are representative for the research population as well.

For the divisions that include our research population, 273 new employees were recruited last year, through a number of ways. Vacancies are placed on the company's website, in business magazines and in news papers. Besides, personal recruiting by employees (i.e. 'bringing in an acquaintance') is quite common. Rambøll Denmark furthermore maintains relations with the technical universities of Denmark. This includes participation at educational fairs, and offering students a student job or the possibility to execute a an internship or thesis research at the company. Additional to the latter, a number of the students is offered a position within the company.

The recruitment process is initiated by the Resources Planning System (*Ressourcesplanlægning, RESPLAN*). In this system the available and demanded amount of labor are registered. Based on these data is estimated whether an extra employee is needed in a department, and what the characteristics of the vacancy are. The selection procedure mainly concerns whether candidates match the job description, which is determined at department level. There are however qualifying criteria that relate to the company's values as well. These values have to maintain the company's reputation, hence is expected that new employees accept and act in accordance with those values.

Although approval is needed from the market director, it is the head of the department who is responsible for the appointment of new employees, and who executes the negotiations on a contract. The employment agreements are concluded directly between Rambøll Denmark and the employee: no unions are involved. Whether an agreement concerns permanent or non-permanent employment, depends on criteria set by the department managers. Generally, the permanent employment agreements include more extensive rights regarding for example illness payments.

4.3.1.2 Flow through

Rambøll Denmark offers programs for personal and professional development, for both employees ('courses') and managers ('academy/leader programs'). These programs are coordinated by the HR function. Around 150 *courses* are offered every first half a year: some of them are repeated in the second half. Courses have a duration of 1 to 3 days, while *academy/leader programs*, of which annually 8 are offered, can take up to 9 months. Employees can subscribe to all courses, though enrollment has to be approved by the department manager. For the academy/leader programs, approval is needed from the market director. All programs are related to Rambøll Denmark: they concern the development of competences related to the company's values, strategy, organization, or to changes within the organization. Due to their content, these programs are not only an instrument for competence development, but function as an organizational information channel as well.

The company's *career paths* have the objective to make it more clear for the employees in which direction their competences should be developed. A number of *roles* is distinct within the company, which are positioned on four different paths (i.e. client and market, project, discipline, and line management), ranging across five different levels. The basic role of an employee is on a level 5-position. The career movement can develop in different directions across the paths.

To estimate the content of competence development *and* the direction of career movement, the Employee Development Conversation (*Medarbejderudviklingssamtale*, MUS) was introduced. The MUS replaced the annual functioning conversation, and has to support the dialogue between the employees and the department manager with regard to competence development. Once a year, the employee expresses his or her development ability, career plan, talents and potentials on the MUS-scheme. The department manager on the other hand, considers the department's strategy and competence demands, as well as the organization of the different roles. The mutual demands are discussed between the department manager and the employee during the MUS. Eventually this conversation has to result in a planned career movement, a development plan and a job description.

4.3.1.3 Flow out

The tightness of the labor market has implications for employee retention. Engineers tend to hop easily between the three major employers: the job-to-job turnover is high. In our research environment, 157 employees left the company last year, of which the vast majority (75%) asked for resign themselves. Other reasons of employment termination were dismissal and retirement (both 7%), contract expiration (6%) or a transfer within the Rambøll Group (5%). When compared with 2006, the turnover ratio in these selected divisions increased from 13.7 to 18.3 percent.

To map the outflow problem, in 2007 the then recruitment taskforce was changed into a steering committee for employee retention. Since recruitment and retention were considered to be interdependent, was chosen to maintain the composition of the group but to shift the accent of the activities along with the urgencies. The committee is composed of department managers and the heads of the functions of Competence Development, Communication and Human Resources. The committee's first project is the introduction of an exit survey, through which information will be collected about *why* and *where* employees resign. So far, exit interviews were held unstructured by the department managers, and the outcomes were not collected centrally. In the new approach, resigning employees will be asked to fill in an e-based questionnaire, which automatically will be sent to the HR-department after completion. The implementation of the system is expected soon.

4.3.2 Work system

The core business of the company is to provide engineering consultancy in several disciplines. The jobs are complex, technical and highly specialized. Jobs on a *project basis* furthermore can involve multiple of the different disciplines. Projects are executed by the project organization, consisting of a project manager and project staff members. Employees can become one of both. Consequently, the departments often include one or more project managers, and simultaneously, employees can work for one or more supervisors (i.e. project manager or department manager).

From the section on HR-flow we know that all employees fulfill a certain *role* within the company. Their regular job is their basic role. Due to the new career paths, it is possible to add a secondary – or even tertiary – role to your basic role. For all of the roles it is determined which capacities an employee needs to fulfill it. These requirements are related to task, responsibility, competences, communication, and managerial responsibility. Furthermore there are success criteria determined for each of the roles, and it is estimated whether the role has to be considered as a basic role or that it is available as an additional role as well. Whether employees can add a preferred role to their basic role, is discussed with the department manager during the MUS.

In accordance to the policy, employees should have a flexible, all-inclusive workplace. This implies amongst others that they receive the backup they need to perform their professional activities. All employees have an own desk, telephone, and a personal computer on which the software is installed that is required to carry out the job. The company furthermore provides the possibility to work outside the office: employees can opt for an internet connection at home, which enables them to be connected to the company's intranet. With regard to work *environment*, Rambøll Denmark applies the Work Environment Policy (WEP). The purpose of this policy is to focus on the health and safety of the employees through the providing of good physical and psychological frames for the employees' work. Safety committees and groups map the work environment in their workplace, while safety managers verify the application of the WEP.

4.3.3 Reward system

With regard to the compensation structure, three categories of employees are distinguished: non-permanent employees, and permanent employees *with* or *without* overtime payments. The non-permanent employees are paid per hour they work. The permanent employees on the other hand, receive a fixed, monthly salary, based on a regular working week of 37 hours. For those employees who get compensation for overtime, there are restrictions with regard to the factual payment of it.

Firstly, the overtime is stored in an ‘overtime bank’. In case too less work is available in one week, the employer can fill up the non-work hours with overtime from a previous week. Secondly, overtime cannot be claimed until a certain level is reached. And even then, only a limited amount of hours is paid out. The remaining overtime can only be admitted as days off.

Employees can increase their basic salary with a bonus, which is linked to the different roles in the career paths. Each role in each service area has an own bonus percentage, which is added to the salary when an employee fulfills that role. Besides the primary compensation element, Rambøll Denmark offers her employees a flexible wage package. This includes specific benefits (e.g. train and bridge passes, newspapers) of which the costs will be deducted from the employee’s salary before taxes, so that the employees gains the tax savings of it. Furthermore employees can make a small trip abroad once every second year for free, celebrations are being held on special occasions (e.g. Christmas), and finally do employees who celebrate jubilees become gifts from the company.

Employees working at Rambøll Denmark are ensured with regard to many themes. The first insurance is obliged by law, and covers injuries. Secondly, there is a 24-hours insurance, which ensures employees for the same things as the previous one *outside* of the working hours. Thirdly there is the ‘preventive’ health insurance, which compensates for treatment at the general practitioner, physiotherapist, and treatments at a private hospital instead of a public one. Fourthly, there is a travel insurance for those employees for whom it is desirable. Note that all the previously mentioned insurances are paid by the employer. A fifth insurance is obliged by Rambøll Denmark, though paid by the employee. This involves a threefold package of pensioning, insurance in case of deceasing or terminal illness, and insurance against (partial) physical incapability.

4.3.4 Employee influence

4.3.4.1 Direct participation

In order to discuss how direct participation formally is approached, the future view of Rambøll Denmark, Vision 2015, should be explained more in-depth. Vision 2015 is the directional guide for the long-term strategic development of the company. It is founded in the mission, vision and values of the Rambøll Group (see attachment A) and based on the Holistic Company Model (attachment B). Roughly taken, the former describe the principles of the company, while the latter describes which criteria exist in enabling and measuring company success. According to the vision, in 2015, Rambøll Denmark will have an increased client focus, the best employees and leaders, and a flexible and dynamic organization. To reach this objective, the company demands ‘holistic leadership’. This

means that the management is presumed to have the ability and the will to ensure that company's values penetrate to all levels, and are expressed in attitudes, conduct and cooperation, both internally and externally. This implies (1) delegation of responsibility and client contracts, (2) stimulating work, professionally and personally, (3) creating flexible job conditions and social security, and (4) having the best formation with regard to leadership and competence.

Vision 2015 more particularly implies that HR policy is embedded in performance criteria and company values, rather than in extensive prescriptions. Principally, jobs are predetermined by job criteria (defined by the management at department level) or role requirements (defined at CBU-level). Employees carrying out the jobs are expected to apply to its criteria. The employees can affect their job content in the sense that they can apply for another (or additional) role. Their application then would be the starting point for a dialogue with the management, the MUS. As mentioned in subsection 4.3.1.2, the MUS eventually results in the content of competence development, and possibly, a career move. Further job conditions (e.g. working hours, compensation) are part of the negotiations between department manager and the employee when he/she enters the company. When an agreement is concluded, both parties obviously are expected to apply in conformity to its content.

The decision issue for which strict procedures are determined, is dismissal. The department manager needs approval from the market director for both warning and firing employees. In both cases, the company's HR-coordinator formulates the text of the letter that is addressed to the employee. The process of recruitment of employees is less fixed, though authority still is defined clearly: the department manager initiates and appoints, while the market director is the one who has to approve it. Employees have no formal influence on recruitment and dismissal of colleagues.

4.3.4.2 Representative participation

There are four employee representing committees within the company: the Technicians Group (*Teknikergruppen*, TL), the Industry Group (*Virksomhedsgruppen*, VG), the Cooperation Council (*Samarbejdsudvalg*, SU), and the European Work Council (EWC). Similarly, all representatives:

- (1) *Are elected by the employees, for a fixed period;*
- (2) *Have formal powers to negotiate with the management; and*
- (3) *Are protected against termination of their employment or reduction in their employment conditions.*

The main differences between the committees concern the length of the period for which its members are chosen, the size and composition of the committee, and the negotiation issues of it.

The first two presented committees, the TL and the VG, each consist of 5 employees. The members are appointed for two years, and represent respectively the technical employees, and the engineers and academics. The two committees meet with the management once a year, bargaining job conditions and wages/rewards. The third referred committee, the SU, is the body through which employer- and employee representatives attempt to reach agreement on policy principles. The SU is established on CBU-level, and discusses all issues other than those that are discussed between the management and the TL and the VG. The SU meets four times a year. The committee consists of 15 persons, including management and employee representatives from several divisions within the Rambøll Denmark. The members are appointed for a four-year period.

The fourth committee, the EWC, is established at company level, in conformity with European law. Purpose of the EWC is to strengthen the dialogue between the Group Management and the employees. This committee has to ensure that all employees of the Rambøll Group are properly informed and consulted about decisions taken by a separate Country Business Unit (CBU) that affect the employees in other CBU's as well. The EWC consists of 1 employee representative per CBU, and meets with the group's Executive Board once a year. Except for the regular meetings, the Group Management should inform or consult the EWC in case of extraordinary circumstances substantially affecting the employees in more than one country. The EWC has no formal authority, but has the right to meet with the Group Management, and is entitled to recommend and provide information to all managers provided with the necessary authority to take binding decisions.

Finally, in conformity with the Danish legislation, the employees are represented in the Board of Directors as well. Three (out of the eight) members of the Group Board of Directors are elected by the employees, just like two (out of five) members of the CBU-management. These employee representatives have the same rights and responsibilities as other board members, except for that they cannot be involved in decisions on industrial disputes. Note that both referred boards are non-executive. As the four referred committees have a role of negotiating with the management, the employee representatives in the Board itself mainly fulfill a responsibility for surveillance.

4.4 Implications

This chapter described the organizational structure and HR policy choices. Participation policy is embedded in company values and performance criteria, and leadership guidelines have to ensure that these reach all organizational levels. Only for some decision issues (i.e. recruitment, dismissal) formal authority is emphasized, implying that strict procedures have to be applied.

5 Participation practices

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on interviews with heads of department (20) and employee representatives (3). The practices of direct participation will be presented in section 5.2, and those of indirect participation in section 5.3. Finally, research implications will be given in section 5.4.

5.2 Direct participation

This section describes the *influence employees exert – directly, and at task and department level – on decisions regarding their workplace and work tasks*. Preliminary, a remark is made. The differences in employee rights as founded in the employment contract, are restricted to the compensation benefits. Non-permanent employees is provided the same information as permanent employees in an equal function, and they can participate in the same manner. However, since the duration of their contract usually is not longer than a year, non-permanent employees cannot go through the career paths.

5.2.1 Working hours and workplace

Generally, employees decide themselves about their hours of work. Although most department managers prefer the employees to be in office between 9 and 15 o'clock, they barely interfere. The employees are expected to attend important meetings and to be available for clients and colleagues, which automatically comes down to the attendance in these hours. Usually employees do not have to revert to the department manager when they arrive later or leave earlier: department managers expect the employees to be responsible, and only pay attention when problems occur.

Working at home is possible. Most department managers do not object when employees work at home sometimes, especially not when personal circumstances (e.g. illness of a relative) demand this. Nonetheless almost all department managers prefer that the employees work in the office, and do not want the employees to work at home on a *regular* basis. Except that working at home is not supposed to give 'value for money', the department managers point to the social interest of working in a group. But just as with the working hours, the department barely (need to) interfere. Employees are expected to fill out their calendar, notify their colleagues and the secretary, but do not have to ask the department manager for approval in most of the departments.

Employees barely complain about their working environment to the department manager. They arrange the small things themselves, sometimes in cooperation with the housing facilities. Only in case a budget is needed (e.g. for a mobile phone or new pc), they turn to the department manager. Approval depends on the perceived necessity of the adaptation for carrying out the work.

5.2.2 Working methods and pace of work

The project manager decides how the work should be done. Note that in case the project manager is the only one involved in a project, the employee *is* the project manager. A department manager says:

I am not in the position to find what all different customers need, so the decision is up to the employee. [...] I discuss the way of working with the employee.

In this example, the department manager reverts to the employee afterwards, but many would only do so in case of problems. Projects can also be executed by a project *organization*, consisting of a project manager and a project staff. In that case, generally the project manager makes a method proposal. The project organization can respond to it, though still the project manager takes the final decision. In other departments the project manager takes the decision in cooperation with the department manager, especially when some responsibilities are carried by the department manager.

The performance targets are based on the client's demands. In many departments the project or department manager develops a framework, answering questions like 'what needs to be developed, *what* is expected from the individual employees in this department, and *when* is it expected?'. Additionally, it is up to the employee to work this framework out to a daily planning and to determine their work pace. The fulfillment that the employees give to their performance targets, is discussed during the MUS. In this conversation it often is an important parameter in establishing which competences should develop further, and which career path may suit the employee.

5.2.3 Department strategy

How the department strategy is determined, varies across the departments. Two contrasting procedures will be presented, after which will be explained which variances there are to them. First example is rather simple: the department manager decides together with the market director. Employees are not consulted, neither informed. Although this example is uncommon, it does exist. The second example is a very extended process, consisting of five steps. These are:

- (1) *A draft is made by the department manager and a core of most experienced employees.*
- (2) *The draft is discussed with the entire department, and employees can give comments.*
- (3) *The department manager considers the comments, and makes modifications to the draft.*
- (4) *A revised draft is presented to the employees, though it will not be discussed again.*
Employees can give their comments directly to the department manager.
- (5) *The department manager eventually will make a proposal for the market director.*

For the departments which apply such an extended process, the fourth step often is considered to have an symbolic character. A department manager explains:

The employees would not give comments on this [second] draft. They are too busy to consider what the department strategy says.

Many departments apply a procedure where the proposal goes to the market director straight after the third described step. Furthermore the people who make the draft in step 1 may vary: sometimes this is only the department manager, or is the core of employees selected on other criteria than experience (e.g. skills, demographic characteristics). In other departments, step 1 consists of a brainstorm with the entire department. Another difference across the processes, is the time span of the strategy determination. Some departments arrange one day inside or outside the office, while for others the strategy determination is a structural discussion issue at the regular department meetings. There are also departments that have introduced the possibility for employees to drop their ideas and suggestions continuously. These then will be discussed periodically.

A few final comments: most departments organize department meetings between once every one or two months, although highlights in frequency occur both up and down. Furthermore, most departments have a weekly informal meeting, during the Friday breakfast. During this meeting, several department themes are discussed with the people who are attending.

5.2.4 Recruitment, the employment agreement and dismissal

As we know from the previous chapter, the recruitment process is initiated by the department manager, and has to be approved by the market director. The influence that employees have once the recruitment process has started, differs per department. In several departments, the employees have no influence at all: the new employees are introduced briefly before they start working. In other departments, however, some employees participate in the recruitment process. Mostly they are involved after that the department manager has carried out a first selection among candidates, and then participate in the job interviews. Which employees do so, often depends on the main purpose of their participation. In some departments the most experienced or most skilled employees are chosen (for a profession based assessment), while in others the possible direct colleagues do (to examine the chemistry between the candidate and the work environment). Obviously combinations of the two occur as well. Those department managers who decided to let employees participate in the recruitment process, strive for an active role of the employees that attend in the process.

When the candidate is chosen, a contract offer is made. The negotiations with the prospective employee are executed by the department manager. The proposed employment agreement is pretty fixed. The only elements over which the employee could exert influence are the wage level, and sometimes additional payments for educational purposes. Whether an employee can accomplish these improved benefits, strongly depends on his or her competences, and on department-specific settings (e.g. available budget, skill/wage-proportions among the current employees). Generally it is supposed not to be desirable to have a great variety in employment contracts, hence that the department managers would not easily agree with adaptations in the content of it.

All department managers state that employees cannot exert influence over the dismissal of others. When employees have complaints about how colleagues function, they can address their critics the department manager. Its impact is restricted to attracting the attention of the department manager. Whether the dismissal process is initiated, depends fully on the assessment of him or her, while the start of the procedure itself has to be approved by the market director.

5.2.5 Competence development

Twice a year a list is published with courses that will be offered. The employees choose some courses, and propose their selection to the department manager. The department managers note that the selected courses usually are in line with what was agreed on in the employee development conversation, the MUS, and that the proposals of the employees hence are taken over. In case a department manager turns a proposal down, this often has to do with the available budget. Most departments can afford 2 to 4 courses per employee per year. To this has to be added that employees who propose less courses, grant room for those who would like to take more. Some department managers furthermore sometimes take the initiative themselves, and propose a course to the employee. In such cases the proposal is based on the need for specific competences within the department, or on courses that could develop the competences an employee needs to get promoted.

5.2.6 The new career paths/promotion

The introduction of the new career paths was supported through a number of communication channels. All heads of department were obligated to participate in a special introductory session, arranged by the HR-function. This session consisted of an extensive presentation of the career paths, and of a training session about how to conduct the MUS. The department managers furthermore were instructed to give the presentation they attended to the employees as well. Finally, information was provided to the employees on the intranet and in a booklet that each of them received.

The most department managers gave the same presentation that they received to their employees as well, while others made a summary which they discussed during regular department meetings. The new career paths were discussed with the employee during the MUS as well. The amount of provided information appeared not to differ very much across the departments, though some department managers expressed doubts about the usefulness of the information they gave to the employees. These managers considered the career paths not to succeed in appointing *all* employees: employees in ‘the big circle’ (level 5 of the career paths) would be forgotten. A department manager explains:

The new career paths were not relevant for the employees in my department, hence the introduction was given no high priority.

This reaction was not unique, and for the department managers with this perception the introducing efforts often had a dutiful character. Furthermore the presumed familiarity of employees with the career paths, differed along the departments. Several department managers claim it to be difficult for the employees to establish their position in the system, or to determine one’s own career path. A department manager explains:

Only a few employees would be interested in going through the different roles. This may change when the different ways of filling out that roles are recognized by the employees.

This explanation links two comments repeatedly given by department managers, namely that (1) there has been an insufficient explanation about how the career paths *actually function*, and (2) some employees do not consider the new career paths to be part of their working situation. This second comment expressed the impression that some department managers had about whether the roles in the career paths match what these employees demand. A department manager explains:

The new career paths did not broaden the promotional opportunities of the employees of this department. Not all employees have the ambition to become department manager; some want to be a good engineer.

For some department managers, this appeared to be a reason to explore which alternative promotional opportunities could be provided to the employees. These should involve the employees more actively. The same department manager explains:

They [the employees] do not want to be just one of the forty people who can become a department manager.

Here is referred to the fact that even if the department manager and the employee would agree on a career move, still the market director has to approve it. Hence, many department managers would discuss a promotion with the market director before starting the dialogue with the employee. At the same time, the majority of department managers notes that employees barely initiate a promotion.

5.2.7 Direct participation: the manager's vision

Vision 2015 appeared not to be playing an important role in practicing participation: the majority of the department managers appeared to be not familiar enough with the vision that he or she would consider it to influence the participation practices. With regard to a relation between participation practices and company policy, a representative remark is made by one of the heads of department:

There are formal rules estimated by the company, but there is freedom to manage these rules.

Almost all department managers answered 'no' to the question whether they follow guidelines in determining which decisions they leave to the employees, and which not. They appeal to their experiences and perceptions on employee participation. A number of these perceptions are adopted in attachment C. This gives insight in how department managers feel about shared decision-making, and probably also in what makes them practice participation as it is done currently.

5.3 Representative participation

5.3.1 The Technicians Group (TL) and the Industry Group (VG)

The TL and the VG bargain with the company on behalf of the group of employees they represent. The discussion subjects include the 'traditional' themes for collective bargaining, like job conditions and wages/rewards. However, due to the fact that there is not concluded a collective agreement at industrial level, the influence of the TL and the VG is restricted. Negotiations particularly take place at local level, which implies that employees can discuss the related subjects themselves when the employment agreement is concluded.

5.3.2 The Cooperation Council (SU)

Since the SU discusses subjects which are of interest of *all* employees in Denmark, regional or local issues are discussed by the local committees that are directly related to the SU. Furthermore, employees are ought to discuss difficulties that may occur in their workplace with the persons who are involved, or with those who are responsible otherwise (e.g. superiors of those who are involved). Examples of themes which have been discussed by the SU are the company's compliance of agreements and procedures (e.g. regarding the employment contracts and the dismissal procedure),

the functioning of systems (e.g. RESPLAN; subsection 4.3.1.1), and more recently, the work pressure. The employee members of the SU always have a meeting preliminary to the regular SU-meeting, to determine what they will put forward. Usually also an e-mail is sent out to all employees, announcing that they can put up issues for that meeting. During the meeting itself, the SU is informed by its management members about upcoming decisions. The SU's employee members can come along with requests or suggestions for the management. Some of these eventually are taken over.

The SU is recognized by the management as an important channel to retrieve the employees' opinion, due to an awareness that the explicit employee opinion might not reach the management through the formal or hierarchical ways. At the same time, the SU is recognized as an employee representative organ by the employees as well. Since it has existed already for a number of years and some of its employee representative members may be presumed to be known by the employees, the SU appeared to be accessible for employees: they approach the employee members frequently.

5.3.3 The European Work Council (EWC)

Discussion issues of the EWC include the economic and financial structure of the Rambøll Group, investments, transfer of the production, mergers, out-backs or closure of undertakings, and collective redundancy. With regard to the latter, differences in circumstances across the involved countries can be discussed on the condition that these differences are *not* caused by legal differences (i.e. national legislation). Due to its novelty, the EWC is not so well known by employees yet, and consequently employees did not address their preferences to the Danish EWC member so far. This situation is expected to change when the EWC starts to become more familiar.

5.4 Implications

This chapter revealed how direct participation practices function in different departments. Some decisions issues are approached generally similar along the organization, while for others both the decision-making process and the influence that employees exert, strongly vary per department. Also was expressed that the department managers consider to have freedom in determining the amount of influence the employees have on their workplace and work task. In doing so, the conceptions and experiences of the department manager give direction to how participation is practiced. Finally was expressed that employees can exert influence over decisions indirectly as well. Representatives take the suggestions and requests of the employees along in a discussion with the management, which takes them into account. The significance of this dialogue does however depend on the amount of recognition of the committee by both the employer and the employees.

6 Employee survey

6.1 Introduction

In this final empirical chapter, the quantitative employee research will be presented. At first, in section 6.2, the questionnaires approach is explained. Section 6.3 describes the characteristics of the investigated population. In section 6.4, the reliability and validity of the measures will be discussed, after which in section 6.5 the applied analysis techniques will be presented. Additionally the relations between the variables in our research model are presented: between participation and commitment (section 6.6), between commitment and intention to stay (6.7), and between participation and intention to stay as mediated by commitment (6.8). The implications of the employee survey for our research will be given in the final section of this chapter, section 6.9.

6.2 Approach questionnaires

6.2.1 Measures

For measuring *employee participation*, we use the scale that Holden (1996) designed for measuring the degree of involvement of employees in work policy decision issues, at task and department level. Employees had to mark the degree of influence which they felt they had over these issues on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) very little to (5) very much. The selected issues include hours of work, the way the job is carried out, performance-related pay, pace of work, comfort of the work environment, hiring of workforce, workforce dismissal, training, promotion, and department policy. Additionally, a two-item scale from Cox *et al.* (2007) is adopted to measure the employees' perspective on how the (line) management puts participation into practice. Cox *et al.* proposed this measure to capture whether managers are implementing employee participation sincerely or simply go through the motion (p. 14). Answers range from (1) very bad to (5) very good.

Commitment along the distinct categories is measured by different scales, which are directly related to the commitment scales developed by Meyer & Allen (1991). Commitment to the organization, the supervisor and the workgroup, is measured by the scales of Clugston *et al.* (2000). They developed a 5-item scale for measuring each basis for each of the foci (p. 26/7). Employees were instructed to mark on a 5-point Likert scale whether they (1) strongly disagree or (5) strongly agree with the statements given. Furthermore, to measure occupational commitment the scale from Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993) is adopted, consisting of 6 items for each basis. Meyer and colleagues referred for some items to the *nursing* profession, specifically addressing the occupation of their research population. For these items the denomination is replaced by 'my profession', as it is applied

at the majority of these measure items (see Meyer *et al.*, 1993, p. 544). This is legitimate, since Meyer and colleagues ensured that ‘the wording of the items is such that someone wanting to use scale to measure commitment to other occupations could do so simply by substituting the appropriate descriptions’ (p. 539). Employees were instructed to mark on a 5-point Likert scale whether they (1) strongly disagree or (5) strongly agree⁴ with the statements given. A final comment is made on the latter scale. After the justification and defining of ‘occupational commitment’ (see subsection 2.4.2), the term ‘profession’ might seem in contrast with the discussion outcomes. Meyer *et al.* (1993) however took this issue in consideration while developing their measures, using the term profession on purpose because the participants of the research would be considered as professionals (p. 540). This argumentation is applicable for our research population as well.

Intention to stay is assessed with three items, adapted from Van Dick *et al.* (2004). The answer possibilities concern a 5-point Likert scale, coded from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree.

6.2.2 Control variables

In several studies, *age* was found to be an antecedent of commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2002, p. 28) and a moderator of predictors of turnover (Giffith, Hom & Gaertner, 2000, p. 478). In conformity with categories as earlier applied in surveys at Rambøll Denmark, they are coded: (1) less than 30 years, (2) 30 to 39 years, (3) 40 to 49 years, (4) 50 to 59 years, and (5) 60 years or more.

Department is a relevant variable because participation policies are implemented differently by different line managers (e.g. Cox, Marchington & Suter, 2007; Heller, 2003). However, from previous experiences with surveys at Rambøll Denmark derived that asking people to fill in their department number might be experienced as a violation with the guarantee of anonymity. Hence is chosen not to adopt this control variable in the list, but to consider it in the sample composition.

Educational background was shown to be a consistent antecedent of commitment (Benson & Brown, 2007, p. 123). The distinction is made in (4) PhD or Post Doctorate, (3) Master’s degree, (2) Bachelor’s degree or Diploma, and (1) other.

Gender is a relevant control variable in investigating turnover (e.g. Batt & Valcour, 2003). The coding is 1 for women and 0 for men.

Also the *number of direct supervisors* is an important characteristic (e.g. Gallagher & Maclean Parks, 2001). The code will be 1 [respectively 2; 3] when the employee has 1 [2; 3] direct superior[s], and 4 in case the employee has more than three direct superiors.

⁴ Except for a few reverse-keyed items

Tenure (organization) is coded as the number of years between the employee's original start date at Rambøll Denmark and January 2008. Organizational tenure is included as it was found to predict among others organizational commitment and intention to turnover (Benson, 2006, p. 181).

Tenure (position) is an antecedent of commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2002, p. 28). It is coded as the number of years between the employee's start date in his/her current position, and January 2008.

6.2.3 Sample and procedure

Due to conditions determined by the management, only a limited part of our research population could be investigated. A sample was drawn based on the application of *non-proportional quota sampling*. This method 'improves the representativeness of a sample across the stratification variable' (Babbie, 2004, p. 205), which in our case is the department. In conformity with this method, a minimum number of sample units was specified and additionally a random sample was made. The referred minimum number implied 3 employees per department, except of course for those departments consisting of less members.

The selected employees were invited to participate in the survey by company e-mail. The message included an introduction to the research, and the request to complete the questionnaire within two weeks (i.e. 10 working days, starting at a Monday). A link guiding them to the website where the questionnaire was hosted, was included in the e-mail. A reminder was sent on the 6th working day, with the request to those who did not fill it out yet to do so. After the 10th working day the survey was closed down.

6.2.4 Response and non-response

198 employees were invited to participate in the employee survey, of which 86 returned the questionnaire. This is a response rate of 43.4 percent.

Some employees applied to the possibility to contact the researcher, among others to explain why they would not participate in the survey. Given reasons for non-response were:

- (1) *No time for filling it out ("too busy").*
- (2) *The estimated duration of the questionnaire is too long.*
- (3) *Individual contribution was perceived to be concise due to a low organizational tenure.*
- (4) *General survey tiredness.*

The first two reasons were suspected before the survey started. Two measures were taken to reduce the influence this would have on the response rate. Firstly, in the announcement of the questionnaire, the importance that the survey has for the company was emphasized by a member of the HR-staff.

Secondly, employees were enabled to complete the survey in parts. The requested time thus could be spread, so the survey interfered less in the employee's regular activities. This measure however had the side consequence that 14 employees handed in a uncompleted questionnaire. Among them, 2 persons just filled in the personal characteristics. These two are excluded for analysis. The others, by average, completed around two-third of the questionnaire.

The third referred reason for non-response became clear during the research. The researcher adapted to this by replying to those people who expressed this reason for their non-response. In that e-mail was explained and emphasized to these employees that their response *would* be contributive, since their input represents a substantial part of the population.

6.3 Characteristics of the research population

Eventually 53 men and 31 women responded, which represent respectively 63 and 37 percent of our group of respondents. This group consisted of 19 managers and 65 non-managers, which equals respectively 23 and 77 percent. Of all respondents, 4 have completed a PhD or Post-Doctorate (5%), 41 hold a Master's Degree (49%) and 24 a Bachelor Degree (29%), while 15 respondents have another educational background (18%). The age groups were represented as illustrated in table 6.1.

Category	Less than 30 years	30 to 39 years	40 to 49 years	50 to 59 years	60 years or more	Total
Number (percentage)	16 (19%)	18 (21%)	25 (30%)	20 (24%)	5 (6%)	84 (100%)

Table 6.1: respondents to age category

The average organizational tenure of the respondents was 7.5 years (SD = 7.90), while the average tenure in the current function is 5.4 years by average (SD = 7.01). The number of supervisors appeared to differ. Of the 82 respondents who filled this question in, 29 (35%) worked for 1 supervisor, 22 (27%) for 2 supervisors, and 11 (13%) for 3. The remaining 20 respondents (24%) addressed that they have more than 3 direct superiors. When considering the available characteristics, our group of respondents approaches those of our research population closely.

6.4 Reliability and validity of the research

There are two main criteria for measurement quality: validity and reliability (Babbie, 2004, p. 141). *Validity* refers to measuring what we think we are measuring. Since the Three-Component Model is the most widely validated multidimensional framework of commitment to date (Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2001, p. 324), we presume the validity of our measures to be sufficient. *Reliability* means that

applying the same procedure in the same way will always produce the same measure. Reliable scales are internally consistent (Knight, 1997), which can be assessed by using Cronbach's alpha (α). However, internal consistency is a necessary *though not sufficient* condition for homogeneity (Clark & Watson, 1995, p. 323). A principal component analysis (PCA) can be applied to ensure scale homogeneity/unidimensionality. A homogenous scale is determined by only one factor.

In table 6.2 the reliability and homogeneity of the used scales are presented. Generally, scales are considered to be reliable when the value of alpha is exceeds 0.6 (Fenton-O'Creevy, 2001, p. 38). A scale is homogeneous when the Eigen value of the first component is larger than 1, while the Eigen value of each of the latter components is smaller than 1. Note that the participation measures are not included in the table, since for each of the ten different decision issues a single item is used.

Scales	Item example	Items	λ_1	α
Perception about participation as practiced by the management	Overall, how good are managers at this workplace are at seeking the view from employees or employee representatives?	2	1.73	.84
Affective commitment organization	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.	5	3.13	.85
Normative commitment organization	I believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization	5	2.57	.76
Affective commitment supervisor	I enjoy discussing my supervisor with people outside of the organization.	5	2.62	.75
Normative commitment supervisor	Changing supervisors is unethical to me.	4	2.54	.80
Continuance commitment supervisor: <i>available alternatives</i>	I have too few options to consider working with another supervisor.	2	1.46	.63
Continuance commitment supervisor: <i>perceived investments</i>	I would be too costly for me to leave my supervisor in the near future.	2	1.54	.69
Affective commitment co-workers	I feel emotionally attached to my co-workers.	5	3.10	.84
Normative commitment co-workers	I feel a sense of moral obligation to remain with my co-workers.	5	2.71	.78
Continuance commitment co-workers: <i>available alternatives</i>	One of the few negative consequences of leaving my co-workers would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	2	1.50	.66
Continuance commitment co-workers: <i>perceived investments</i>	Leaving would require personal sacrifice because another group of co-workers may not match the overall benefits I have here.	2	1.48	.65

Affective commitment occupation	I am proud to be in my profession.	6	3.26	.82
Normative commitment occupation	I would feel guilty if I left my profession now.	6	3.44	.85
Continuance commitment occupation: <i>available alternatives</i>	Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do.	2	1.65	.79
Continuance commitment occupation: <i>perceived investments</i>	I have put too much into my profession to consider changing now.	4	1.98	.74
Intention to stay	I frequently think of quitting.	3	1.82	.67

Table 6.2: Eigen value (λ_1) and Cronbach's alpha (α) for the distinguished scales.

The reliability of the subscales used to measure *continuance commitment to the organization* (both 'available alternatives' and 'perceived investments') was insufficient. Attempts to improve alpha by item analysis and selection were unsuccessful, making it not legitimate to use these scales in this research. Furthermore, three scales appeared to be multidimensional. Homogeneity nonetheless could be achieved by excluding a single item in each of the scales (see also attachment D).

6.5 Analysis techniques

We will start with a *univariate analysis* to describe our variables. Additionally, we will analyze the effect of participation on intention to stay, as intervened by commitment. McKinnon *et al.* (2002) strongly recommend the 'joint significant test' for testing the effects of intervening variables. This test assesses the presence of mediation by testing the significance of the coefficients of the two paths between the three variables. We thus have to investigate two different relations, each involving two variables. This implies that we have to carry out *bivariate analyses* (Babbie, 2004). For such analysis, the level of measurement is the determining criterion in selecting a technique. Our research variables are measured on a Likert scale. De Heus *et al.* (1995) note that such variables are called *quasi-interval variables*, and may be treated as such. An appropriate bivariate analysis technique for measuring interval variables is Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, r . This technique addresses the correlation between two variables, and has the advantage that r can take either a positive or a negative sign, depending on the direction of the relationship (Babbie, 2004). Since we also want to know this direction, the choice for this technique is self-evident.

Finally, a *univariate regression analysis* will be executed to verify the effects control variables have on commitment and intention to stay. For those variables that affect, we will to calculate the *partial correlation coefficient* to test the 'controlled' effect of the antecedent research variable.

6.6 Participation and commitment

6.6.1 Participation

The descriptives of participation are presented in table 6.3. In this subsection we will reflect these per decision issue. At first, employees perceive to have much influence over their *working hours*. This was expected, since the chapter on participation practices pointed out that employees generally decide themselves. They do not have to revert to their direct supervisor when leaving earlier or arriving later, which applies to the job flexibility as determined in the policy.

Decision issues (#)	HOURS	WAY	PERF	PACE	COMF	HIRE	DISM	TRAIN	PROM	STRAT
Mean	3.89	4.06	1.88	3.65	2.83	2.16	1.60	3.00	2.17	2.76
(SD)	(.85)	(.75)	(1.12)	(.89)	(1.11)	(1.39)	(1.24)	(1.17)	(1.16)	(1.30)

Table 6.3: descriptives of participation. (#): *HOURS* = Hours of work, *WAY* = Way the job is carried out, *PERF* = Performance-related pay, *PACE* = Pace of work, *COMF* = Workplace comfort, *HIRE* = Hiring of employees, *DISM* = Workforce dismissal, *TRAIN* = Training, *PROM* = Promotion, *STRAT* = Department strategy.

Employees also perceive to have much influence over *how to do their job*. This is in accordance with the aim of the policy, striving for a stimulating role of the department manager towards the employee regarding work. The chapter on participation practice already pointed out that the responsibilities on this issue are delegated to the project manager – which often is the employee.

Regarding decisions on *performance-related pay*, employees perceived to have little influence. A prediction for this decision issue was difficult, since employees only can exercise influence over it through the career paths, in which the bonus is embedded. Principally the salary levels are fixed, as determined in the employment contract. Only through role modifications employees can increase their wages by fulfilling higher job criteria.

Employees perceive to have moderate to much influence over *the pace of their work*. This is not surprising. After all, the customer mostly determine the ‘delivery’ deadlines, though the operational planning is up to the project manager – who often is an employee. Department managers often delegate such client contacts and responsibilities, which applies to the prescribed holistic leadership.

Perceived participation in *the comfort of the work environment* is slightly beneath moderate. This was not expected, since the vast majority of the department managers addressed that employees are enabled to arrange almost every desired adaptation in the work environment themselves. Nevertheless they appear to experience restrictions of influencing it, but what it remains unclear what

these concern. After all, the practices here match the policy, and employees also barely express complaints to the department manager or employee representatives.

Employees perceive to have little influence over *hiring new employees*. From chapter 4 derived that recruitment is approached in a relative centralized manner: decisions are taken by the management at department and CBU-level, which would explain the presented perception. The influence some employees have in some departments, derives from the informal practices of the *authorized* managers. That these consultations differs *per* and *within* departments is one of the plausible explanations for the relative high standard deviation.

Employee perceive to have almost no influence at all at *workforce dismissal*. This is in conformity with the determined authority and applied practices.

Participation in *training* is perceived as moderate. We would expect this to be higher. After all, the decision over the to be selected development programs is taken through direct dialogue between the employee and his/her supervisor. Moreover, the department managers explained that program proposals – as made by the employee – barely are disapproved. This implies that employees actually decide themselves. That employees perceive their influence to be ‘only’ moderate thus is surprising.

The influence employees perceive to have on *promotion*, is low. This is remarkable when we revert to the determined purposes and structure of the career paths. All employees indirectly would be able to influence promotion, since their career move depends on desired competences – and these can be developed by participating in the development programs. From the previous chapter we do however also know that many employees have difficulties in understanding how the system functions and/or do not consider the career paths to be part of their working situation. These two arguments would make one expect a low level of perceived participation. We do however not know for how many employees this is applicable, and whether this is the only reason.

Employees perceive to have small to moderate influence on the *department strategy*. This is a little lower than we would expect after considering the applied practices. In most departments, the employees are enabled to express their opinion in the collective discussion, during a brainstorm and/or directly to the department manager. Employees nonetheless experience restrictions in their amount of influence here, which could indicate that they do not perceive that their opinion is taken into account when the final department strategy is determined.

Finally, participation employees’ perception about participation as practiced by their management has a Mean of 3.56 (SD = .75). This implies that employees feel that their supervisor seriously intend to let them participate, although this feeling is only moderately strong.

6.6.2 Commitment

From descriptives of commitment (see table 6.4) derives that the relevance of most bases and foci is 'low to moderate'. Apparently, the relevance of most commitment foci is more or less the same across our research population. This also applies to the *bases* of commitment, although the mind-set of desire is slightly stronger than those of perceived obligation, available alternatives or perceived investments. Exception on the previous two reflections is affective commitment to the occupation. The high relevance of this category implies that employees experience a strong affective connection with their occupation. Without presenting the statistical evidence is noted that affective and normative commitment appeared to correlate highly across the distinct foci, as well did the two sub dimensions of continuance commitment. This is in conformity with earlier findings (e.g. Meyer *et al.*, 2002), which however emphasize that this does not imply that the correlating bases are identical.

Bases Foci	Affective commitment	Normative commitment	Continuance commitment: <i>available alternatives</i>	Continuance commitment: <i>perceived investments</i>
Organization	3.37 (.81)	2.66 (.69)	N/A	N/A
Supervisor	2.38 (.65)	2.14 (.74)	2.37 (.78)	2.43 (.75)
Workgroup	3.28 (.70)	2.61 (.66)	2.21 (.74)	2.44 (.73)
Occupation	4.08 (.59)	2.26 (.67)	3.29 (.81)	2.96 (.76)

Table 6.4: descriptives of commitment (Notation: Mean (SD))

6.6.3 The effects of participation on commitment

For assessing the effect r of participation on commitment, we will apply the common guidelines of Cohen (1988). These assess the effect as trivial when $|r| < .1$; small when $.1 < |r| < .3$; medium when $.3 < |r| < .5$; or large when $|r| > .5$. We also have to calculate the *partial correlation coefficient* for some commitment categories, as some control variables affect commitment (see attachment E).

Participation in the working methods was found to have a *strong* influence on affective commitment to the organization ($r = .618, p < .001$) and occupation ($r = .584, p < .001$).

It furthermore has a *medium* effect on affective commitment to the workgroup ($r = .332, p < .01$), although this effect appeared to be small when we control job grade ($r = .243, p < .05$).

Participation in performance-related pay appeared to have a *medium* effect on affective commitment to the organization ($r = .421, p < .001$) only. This effect moreover is *small* when controlling job grade ($r = .264, p < .05$). Nevertheless it exists independently.

Participation in the workplace comfort has a *medium* effect on affective commitment to the organization ($r = .413, p < .001$) and supervisor ($r = .360, p < .01$), which exist independently. Next, the *medium* effects on affective commitment to the occupation ($r = .310, p < .01$), appeared to be *small* when controlling for job grade ($r = .255, p < .05$).

Participation in hiring employees was found to have a *strong* influence on affective commitment to the organization ($r = .502, p < .001$). Although the correlations differed modestly when controlling for age ($r = .451, p < .001$), job grade ($r = .291, p < .05$) and organizational tenure ($r = .443, p < .001$), the independent relation remained significant.

The effects of participation in training are *large* for affective commitment to the organization ($r = .424, p < .001$) and occupation ($r = .416, p < .001$), and *medium* regarding affective commitment to the supervisor ($r = .283, p < .05$). These effects maintained after verifying the partial coefficients.

Participation in the department strategy has a *strong* effect on affective organizational commitment *only*: ($r = .490, p < .001$). This slightly altered when controlling for gender ($r = .515, p < .001$), education ($r = .536, p < .001$), job grade ($r = .311, p < .001$), or functional tenure ($r = .508, p < .001$). The other initially found effects, appeared to not to exist independently.

Finally, all independent effects of participation in the hours of work, pace of work, dismissal of employees, and promotion, appeared to not to have a significant, independent effect.

6.7 Commitment and intention to stay

Intention to stay has a Mean of 3.37 (SD = .81), which means that it generally is just above moderate. None of the control variables affected the intention to stay significantly (attachment E). The effects commitment has on intention to stay, are presented in table 6.5. In conformity with existing literature (see Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301), the found effects are positive in sign, and the most strong for affective commitment. Remarkably no significant effects were found for any of the commitment bases related to the workgroup, neither for most of the categories with a normative or continuance basis.

Bases Foci	Affective commitment	Normative commitment	Continuance commitment: <i>available alternatives</i>	Continuance commitment: <i>perceived investments</i>
Organization	.425***	.416***	N/A	N/A
Supervisor	.368**	n.s.	n.s.	.398**
Workgroup	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Occupation	.426***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

Table 6.5: effects of commitment on intention to stay (** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, n.s. = not significant).

6.8 Participation and intention to stay, mediated by commitment

Now that we know the coefficients of both 'sub' relations of our research model, we can determine the intermediated relation easily. These effects are presented in table 6.6 (see next page). For an assessment, we will apply the standards for mediation. These note that effects are *moderate* when $|r_{\text{mediated}}|$ exceeds .12, and *fairly large* when $|r_{\text{mediated}}|$ is .24 or higher (Pituch *et al.*, 2005, p. 20). Additionally, we also calculated the *direct* effect of participation on commitment under the same research settings. However, regardless of the decision issue, no significant effects were found.

The way the job is done is the only decision issue with which participation has a *large* mediated effect on intention to stay. These effects moreover are confined to just two commitment categories: affective organizational *and* occupational commitment. The vast majority of the significant effects are moderate, a single one is small. What attracts the attention is that all significant effects are established through commitment with an *affective* basis. Normative and continuance commitment were not found to connect participation and intention to stay for any of the distinct foci. Finally, the *organization* obviously is the focus with which the most effects are established for our population.

6.9 Implications

This chapter revealed which amount of influence employees *perceive* to have directly over decisions on their workplace and work tasks. The findings were reflected, applying insights from the previous two chapters. For a few decision issues inconsistencies occurred, which are related to the comfort of the work environment, the department strategy, and training/competence development.

Particularly the relevance of the different bases and foci of commitment were presented, as well as the level of intention to stay. Based on these results, the relations between participation, commitment and intention to stay were analyzed. Eventually participation appeared to affect intention to stay by six decision issues. The strongest effects were found for participation in working methods. Apparently, the more influence employee perceive to have on how they do their work, the higher becomes their affective commitment to the organization, their occupation and – albeit to a less high extent – their workgroup. This implies that the employees' work experiences strongly derive from how they can arrange their tasks. The same is valid for competence development, the placement of new colleagues, and the department strategy, albeit to a slightly less extent. The found relations moreover existed only through three commitment categories, all having an *affective* basis. The majority of the found effects are moderate. Only participation in 'how to do the job' has a large effect on intention to stay, through both affective organizational *and* occupational commitment.

COMMITMENT:

Foci	Organization			Supervisor			Co-workers			Occupation		
	AFF	NOR	INV	AFF	NOR	INV	AFF	NOR	INV	AFF	NOR	INV
Hours (#)												
PARTICIPATION per decision issue (##)												
HOURS	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
WAY	.263***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.249***	n.s.	n.s.
PERF	.179***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
PACE	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
COMF	.176***	n.s.	.132***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.132***	n.s.	n.s.
HIRE	.215***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
DISM	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
TRAIN	.180***	n.s.	.104***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.177***	n.s.	n.s.
PROM	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
STRAT	.208***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

Table 6.6: the effects of participation on intention to stay through commitment (***) - $p < .001$, n.s. = not significant.

(#): AFF = Affective commitment, NOR = Normative commitment, ALT = Available alternatives [Continuance commitment: 'lack of alternative employment opportunities'], INV = Perceived investments [Continuance commitment: 'sacrifices associated with leaving']

(##): HOURS = Hours of work, WAY = Way the job is carried out, PERF = Performance-related pay, PACE = Pace of work, COMF = Workplace comfort, HIRE = Hiring of employees, DISM = Workforce dismissal, TRAIN = Training, PROM = Promotion, STRAT = Department strategy.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

This final chapter will present the overall conclusions (section 7.1) and recommendations (7.2). In section 7.3 research reflections will be given, and suggestions for further research are made.

7.1 Conclusions

7.1.1 Quantitative findings

Regarding participation, Rambøll Denmark enables a differentiated application of HR policy choices, which is desirable to meet employee needs (Torka *et al.*, 2008). Company policy is embedded in performance criteria and company values rather than extensive procedures, hence that department managers consider to have freedom in applying it. At task level, influence sometimes is fully delegated, for example regarding decisions on working methods, pace of work, and comfort of the workplace. At department level, direct employee participation is enabled both individually (e.g. the *MUS*, see section 4.3.1) and collectively (e.g. department meetings). Employee influence furthermore derives from informal participation as well, as for example a number of department managers consult (some) employees when new personnel is recruited. For most decision issues it is clear whether employees can really (co-)decide. Only exception is promotion, where is reported that a considerable number of employees have difficulties in understanding the systems' functioning. Simultaneously several department managers consider the new career paths not to be relevant for the employees in their department, which could indicate fragility in support. Full support throughout the management nonetheless is indispensable for successful implementation (e.g. Ramsay, 1991). Finally, the main representatives committee, the SU, is recognized as an important channel to obtain the employees' opinion. This indicates a circumstance suitable for effective practice of participation (Strauss, 2006).

Earlier studies found that the HR-function fulfills a moderating role in translating preconditions into Direct Employee Involvement Quality (Torka *et al.*, 2008). At Rambøll Denmark this role is expressed through especially the development programs. Except for being a practice for developing competences, these function as a company communication channel and as an instrument of the HR-function to provide leadership support for managers. These, and the other described circumstances, generally apply to desired organizational settings for participation (see Fenton-O'Creevy, 2001).

7.1.2 Quantitative findings

From the quantitative research derived that effects of participation on intention to stay exist through affective commitment (table 6.6; columns). This implies that participation (1) *does have an indirect effect* on intention to stay, (2) *does not have a direct influence* on intention to stay, and (3) *only has an effect* on intention to stay through commitment *when the basis of commitment is affective*. The

relation between participation and intention to stay thus is intervened by commitment, implying that the question ‘How to retain employees?’ is preceded by ‘How to commit employees?’. No significant relations were found through normative and continuance commitment, which means that practicing participation fulfills the preference of establishing affective commitment while minimizing adverse side-effects on the other two commitment bases. In conformity with findings of McElroy (2001), participation affects especially through affective commitment to the *organization* and *occupation*. This effect moreover was positive, as found earlier (e.g. Allen *et al.*, 2003; Cox *et al.*, 2007).

The research also revealed that the effects differ per decision issue (see table 6.6; rows). Participation can affect intention to stay only when it concerns the working methods, performance-related pay, workplace comfort, hiring of the workforce, competence development, and/or the department strategy. The effects of participation on intention to stay furthermore differ per commitment focus. For example, the effects of participation in ‘the way the job is carried out’ as established through affective commitment to the organization and occupation are *strong*, while the effect is insignificant for affective commitment to the supervisor. Furthermore was found that the relevance of these organization-related foci generally is not high, except for affective commitment to the occupation. Most employees thus derive a significant part of their identity from their occupation.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Recommendation 1

Stimulate the participation of employees in the employee selection process.

The mediated effect of participation in hiring new employees on intention to stay is medium/large, yet employees generally perceive to have only little influence. This indicates a considerable opportunity for improving employee retention by adapting the approach towards selection at departmental level. More in particular, the participation of employees in this process can affect the creation of consensus in interests between employee and employer, in the sense that they both benefit from cohesion in the department. Allowing the nearest ‘future colleagues’ to participate in the selection procedure, can help to select a candidate with good chemistry with the workgroup. This contributes to this cohesion.

The reason that the term ‘stimulate’ is chosen, is that the department managers should be encouraged rather than instructed. The support of the frontline managers is indispensable for effective practice. One way to fulfill establish this recommendation could be the sharing of experiences among department managers. After all, a number of department managers already allow employees to participate in this process. They may provide reasons for doing so that are convincing for others. The HR function should fulfill a coordinating and supporting role in arranging such initiatives.

7.2.2 Recommendation 2

Enhance the participation of employees in determining the department strategy.

Employees generally perceive to have only a moderate influence on the department strategy, while most department managers claim to involve the employees in the process nonetheless. Since the found participation effects on this issue are medium to large, an enhancement of these practices would contribute to employee retention. This implies that the accent should shift towards a more active approach of consultative participation, granting more influence to the employees.

Participation of employees in the strategy determination will contribute to broader support for it. This will increase the effectiveness for its eventual implementation. The department managers should be encouraged to enhance the practice of participation in determining the department strategy, for example by recurrently rather than annually discussing the strategy's content.

7.2.3 Recommendation 3

Ensure that Rambøll Denmark is the best place for employees to practice their occupation.

Employees are strongly committed to their occupation, particularly when comparing it to the other investigated foci. Fulfilling their occupation thus is in line with their expectations and basic needs. Ensuring that Rambøll Denmark is the best professional work environment, will align the fulfillment of these needs while reaching the company's objectives. An example of doing so, is maintaining the influence that employees exert over the way they carry out their job. Participation in how to execute these tasks currently is practiced delegative, which resulted in a high level of perceived influence in this issue. Indirectly this is strongly related to intention to stay, which indicates that reducing participation in working methods could have devastating effects for retention. Other examples are a stronger emphasis on the 'hard' programs for competence development, and extension of the 'discipline' career path, providing employees more promotion possibilities *within* their occupation.

7.2.4 Recommendation 4

Investigate what withholds employees from influencing the comfort of their work environment.

There is an unclear gap between the actual influence employees have – and the influence they *perceive* to have over the workplace comfort. At the same time the indirect effects of participation on intention to stay are medium to large. Hence it is advisable to verify what obstructive elements exist, in order to respond, and enhance retention. This investigation could for example be integrated in the annual satisfaction survey, or carried out in cooperation with the workplace health/safety committee.

7.2.5 Recommendation 5

Investigate what withholds employees from participating in promotion⁵.

No relation was found between participation in promotion and intention to stay. Nonetheless it is of interest to investigate the unclear reason for the low participation, since (1) the career paths are presumed to give direction to the development of competences, and (2) performance-related pay is embedded in the career paths. Participation in these two decision issues has a medium/large effect on intention to stay, and simultaneously these issues thus are indissoluble connected with promotion.

A number of department managers addresses that employees have difficulties in understanding how the career system functions, or do not consider the career paths to be part of their working situation. These reasons for sure are plausible explanations for the low participation perceptions regarding promotion. But for a complete understanding on how employees experience the career paths, an investigation is required. We propose to the HR-function to start a dialogue with the department managers on this subject. After all, these managers communicate on promotion directly with the employees during the MUS, and could initiate a collective dialogue with the department during department meetings as well. Finally, also the SU should be involved in this investigation, to capture reasons which employees would not address to their direct superior.

7.3 Reflections and suggestions for further research

Although this research contributes to several themes (see section 1.2), still many more investigations are needed to meet the demand for analysis. In first instance preferably under different *market* settings. Our research has been carried out in a highly flexible, though secured labor market. Outcomes are likely to vary when this situation would be different, for example when high unemployment is at stake (affecting recognition of available alternatives) or when the role of the union is more embedded (indirect participation, as a necessary condition for direct participation). Secondly, investigating participation, commitment and intention to stay under different *organizational* settings is desirable as well. This need derives from the fact that case studies have the disadvantage that the high internal validity often has the inevitable consequence of a low *external* validity (e.g. Strauss, 2006). Finally, according to the Harvard-model also other HRM policy choices affect commitment (see section 2.1). An investigation into the effects of these policies may deliver outcomes that contribute to retention as well. They moreover are presumed to influence congruence, competences and cost-effectiveness as well, which makes research into its outcomes very valuable.

⁵ For a description of the promotion system/career paths, see the subsections 4.3.1.2 and 5.2.6.

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Attachment A

Mission, vision and values of the Rambøll Group – additionally to subsection 4.3.4.1

Mission

The mission of the Rambøll Group is shared by Rambøll Denmark, and is defined as follows:

Our assets are knowledge and experience. We provide consultancy and services within engineering, management and IT in an international context. Our solutions contribute towards better living and working conditions for people and sustainable development of society. We scrutinize our business performance to continuously match customer needs and we develop our competence areas accordingly (Rambøll Group, 2007a, p. 4).

Vision

The Rambøll Group has the following corporate vision:

We will be the leading European general engineering consultancy company – supplemented by world class specialized competence areas. We are acknowledged as the most attractive employer within our profession we continuously strive for better economic performance with a strong focus on the longer value for our shareholders (Rambøll Group, 2007a, p. 4).

Values

The Rambøll Group defined five key values (reference: Rambøll Group, 2007a, p. 8), which reflect a strong commitment towards sustainable development. These values are:

- *Trust: honesty, integrity and openness in cooperation.*
- *Quality: providing the right solutions or services for the customer, without compromising Rambøll's professional standards.*
- *Innovation: having knowledge or access to knowledge, which gives Rambøll the opportunity to develop and use new technologies, methods or concepts when providing applied knowledge services.*
- *Commitment: Rambøll's employees are recognized as being responsible, dedicated and motivated, when knowledge services are provided and implemented.*
- *Empowerment: decentralization combined with delegation of authority.*

Attachment B

The Holistic Company Model – additionally to subsection 4.3.4.1

The Holistic Company Model contains nine key criteria that are essential for the development of the Rambøll Group. The first five criteria are enabler criteria, i.e. describing actions and processes which are necessary to achieve the overall company goals. The latter four criteria are result criteria, i.e. criteria containing concrete goals and measures in relation to customers, employees, society and finance. The complete model is illustrated in figure B.

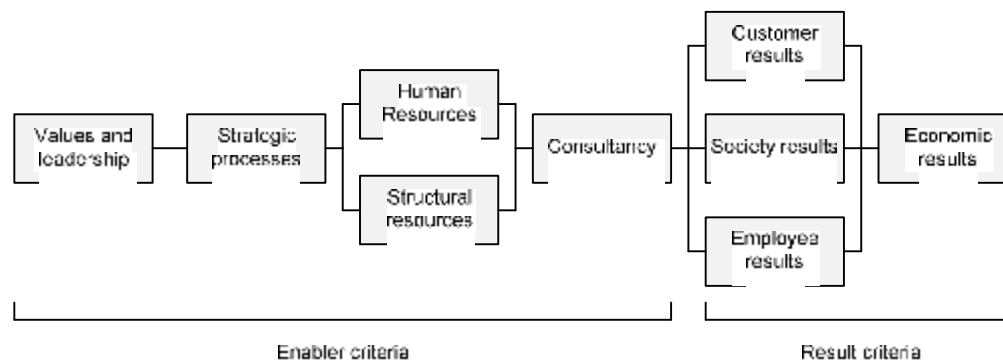


Figure B: the Holistic Company Model (source: Rambøll Group, 2006, p. 1)

Successively the enabler criteria and the result criteria will be clarified.

Enabler criteria

Values and leadership

- Developing the Group's mission, vision and values to secure common goals, common direction and mutual understanding.
- Promoting professional and value-based leadership at all organizational levels.

Strategic processes

- Developing, communicating, deploying and reviewing strategies and action plans systematically as part of the innovation process.
- Involving employees in the process to secure understanding and ownership.

Human Resources

- Securing that the Rambøll Group is the most attractive place to work in order to recruit and retain the best employees.
- Involving and empowering employees, recognizing their achievements.
- Offering constant development of competencies.

Structural resources

- Managing technology, information and knowledge efficiently.
- Promoting knowledge sharing and innovation.

Consultancy processes

- Designing and implementing solutions according to customers' needs and expectations.
- Optimizing business and commercial processes to always provide the customers with the best total quality and cost proposition.

Result criteria

Customer results

- Measuring to evaluate satisfaction and loyalty with a view to constant improvement.

Employee results

- Measuring employee results to evaluate satisfaction and loyalty with a view to identifying areas for particular efforts.

Society results

- Measuring perception and performance of Rambøll in relation to corporate social responsibility and sustainable development.

Economic results

- Measuring financial results to secure that economic targets are met.

Attachment C

Perceived advantages and disadvantages of shared decision-making

– additionally to subsection 5.2.7

At the end of each interview with the heads of department, the respondent was asked what he or she considered to be advantages and disadvantages of a *shared decision-making on all mentioned decision issues*. In other words: what positive and negative consequences would the department manager expect from a situation in which decisions – concerning workplace and work task – would be taken through an equal dialogue with the employee? The perceived advantages that were most frequently mentioned are:

- Employees will be more committed.
- People will become part of the company.
- Employees will be highly motivated.
- Employees will be more responsible.

Furthermore is presumed that the employees in that situation will be highly informed: they will be aware of both the positive and the negative sides of a decision, and will be enabled to see a decision as part of a bigger context. This is assumed to create a higher acceptance of the decision, which makes it easier to work with.

Beside the advantages, the department managers also mention a number of disadvantages of shared decision-making. Most frequently mentioned were:

- Shared decision-making means a lot of discussion, which makes it very time consuming.
- When there is no one with a final responsibility, probably no decisions will be taken at all.
- It is impossible to take decisions to which all employees agree. When the final decision conflicts with the preferences as the employee did express, this will cause disturbance.
- The final decision will be a compromise, with which no one will be satisfied eventually.
- Diversity in decision outcomes make it difficult for the department manager to keep direction.

Furthermore the heads of the departments repeatedly addressed that not all decision issues are suitable for shared decision-making. Especially decisions that involve employees on a personal basis, are difficult to take as a group because they involve people in an unpleasant, emotional way. These decisions might distinct ‘two sides’, being good for either the company or for the employee.

Attachment D

Factor analyses – additionally to section 6.4

Perception about participation as practiced by the management

Component	λ
1	1.732
2	.268

λ = Eigen value

Commitment to the organization

Affective commitment		Normative commitment	
Component	λ	Component	λ
1	3.131	1	2.566
2	.636	2	.989
3	.623	3	.614
4	.411	4	.454
5	.200	5	.377

λ = Eigen value

Commitment to the supervisor

Affective commitment		Normative commitment		Available alternatives		Perceived investments	
Component	λ	Component	λ	Component	λ	Component	λ
1	2.620	1	2.541	1	1.459	1	1.541
2	.960	2	.679	2	.541	2	.459
3	.605	3	.520				
4	.459	4	.259				
5	.355						

λ = Eigen value

Commitment to the co-workers

Affective commitment		Normative commitment		Available alternatives		Perceived investments	
Component	λ	Component	λ	Component	λ	Component	λ
1	3.097	1	2.713	1	1.496	1	1.483
2	.765	2	.921	2	.504	2	.517
3	.523	3	.552				
4	.340	4	.476				
5	.275	5	.338				

λ = Eigen value

Commitment to the occupation

Affective commitment		Normative commitment		Available alternatives		Perceived investments	
Component	λ	Component	λ	Component	λ	Component	λ
1	3.255	1	3.437	1	1.649	1	1.976
2	.830	2	.946	2	.341	2	.653
3	.708	3	.645			3	.372
4	.508	4	.437				
5	.389	5	.324				
6	.310	6	.211				

λ = Eigen value

Intention to stay

Component	λ
1	1.816
2	.752
3	.432

λ = Eigen value

Attachment E

Univariate regression analysis – additionally to subsection 6.6.3 and section 6.7

Commitment foci Commitment bases (#) Personal characteristics	Organization		Supervisor			
	AFF	NOR	AFF	NOR	ALT	INV
Age	.368**	.296**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Education	n.s.	-.224*	n.s.	-.271*	n.s.	n.s.
Job grade	.441***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Gender	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
No. of supervisors	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Tenure (org.)	.372**	.225*	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Tenure (funct.)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

Table E.1: Univariate regression analysis on commitment to the organization and commitment to the supervisor (* = $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$, n.s. = not significant).

(#):

AFF = Affective commitment

NOR = Normative commitment

ALT = Available alternatives [Continuance commitment; ‘lack of alternative employment opportunities’]

INV = Perceived investments [Continuance commitment; ‘sacrifices associated with leaving’].

Commitment foci	Co-workers				Occupation				Intention to stay
	AFF	NOR	ALT	INV	AFF	NOR	ALT	INV	
Commitment bases (#)									
Personal characteristics									
Age	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.333**	n.s.
Education	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Job grade	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.306**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Gender	n.s.	n.s.	.328**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Number of supervisors	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.256*	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Tenure (organization)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.260*	n.s.	.337**	.293*	n.s.
Tenure (function)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.243*	n.s.	n.s.

Table E.2: Univariate regression analysis on commitment to the co-workers, commitment to occupation, and intention to stay (= $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, n.s. = not significant).*

(#):

AFF = Affective commitment

NOR = Normative commitment

ALT = Available alternatives [Continuance commitment; 'lack of alternative employment opportunities']

INV = Perceived investments [Continuance commitment; 'sacrifices associated with leaving'].