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## Original Research

# Factors Influencing Expatriate Employees' Commitment to the Private Sector in Qatar

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**Abstract:** Expatriates have made valuable contributions to the economy of Qatar through their skills and expertise; however, it has been observed that, generally, their commitment level to the organizations they work for is low. In this research, the influence of three factors—(i) job security, (ii) compensation, and (iii) Qatarization—on the commitment of expatriate employees working in Qatar has been studied. The study was conducted across the construction industry, where a large percentage of expatriate workers are employed. Out of 300 questionnaires, 273 were filled out, and among them, only 110 were women. Quantitative surveys are performed to collect data, which is then analyzed using state-of-the-art statistical tools. Pearson's correlation is used for analyzing data. More specifically, the commitment of expatriates constitutes three types: effective, continuance, and normative commitment. For each of these types of commitment, the three influencing factors are studied. The research findings show that increasing job security has a positive impact on effective and continuance commitment, with the least impact on normative commitment. Similarly, unequal compensation of expatriate workers compared to local employees harms normative commitment, with the least impact on effective and continuance commitment. Finally, the increasing trend of Qatarization exhibits a negative impact on effective and continuance commitment, with the least impact on normative commitment.

**Keywords:** *Effective, Normative, Continuance, Qatarization, Job Security, Compensation, Expatriate*

## Introduction

Highly committed employees perform better, are more productive, and are more willing to invest their time and effort toward the progress of the organization. Employees with a lower level of commitment, on the other hand, perform much below their potential and do not abide by the rules and regulations of the company (Osa and Amos 2014). Companies that hire foreign workers especially focus on employee commitment and try to create a favorable environment for them by offering better compensation, perks, and other benefits such as career development opportunities (Khan, Rajasekar, and Al-Asfour 2015).

In this study, the commitment level of expatriate employees working in Qatar will be explored. Qatar has been specifically chosen because it is a country in the world with the largest expatriate workforce, around 90 percent (Jones 2016). As reported by Jones (2016), out of the total workforce of 1.34 million, only 88,600 are Qataris, while the remaining 1.33 million are expatriate employees. Jones (2016) also reported that 99.2 percent of expatriate employees were working in the private sector.

Expatriates are people who live in a foreign land mostly to earn a living (Gatti 2009). Being away from home, they require special motivation to perform better and remain committed to the organization (Gatti 2009), whereas commitment refers to the feeling of involvement and identification an employee develops toward the organization (Dixit and Bhati 2012). Unfamiliarity with the local language, high cost of living, greater working hours compared to other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and low work-life balance are cited as common reasons that have made Qatar an unfriendly company for expatriate employees (Khatri 2014). An important reason that Qatar placed at the bottom of the favorable country list was that of job security (Labor Laws in Qatar 2019). Based on job security, Qatar ranks thirteenth among twenty-eight nations in the mid-way range (Khatri 2014). Naithani and Jha (2010) also observed a bias in salaries against expatriate employees, especially those who belonged to Asian countries.

The oil-rich Kingdom of Qatar possesses the world's third-largest deposits of oil and gas. Qatar is a high-income, developed country and is the richest country in the world based on GDP per capita (Maps of the World 2020). Expatriates have played a strong role in the development of the country, and an estimated 90 percent of the workforce in Qatar comprised expats (Naithani and Jha 2010). A country that is largely dependent on expatriates for its growth and development should create and maintain an expat-friendly environment to motivate employees and produce job satisfaction (Araci 2015). It has been observed that in countries where expat employees adapt easily, employee loyalty and commitment are high (Moulik and Mazumdar 2012). Employee satisfaction significantly influences the quality of work and the growth of the organization (Al Muftah and Lafi 2011). According to these authors' physical factors, psychological and social factors play an important role in the establishment of a quality work life, which, in turn, affects employee commitment.

The sponsorship system is still followed in Qatar, which restricts the ability of the employee to switch jobs without the approval of the current sponsor (Zahra 2014). Because of this law, expats are forced to continue with their jobs even if they are not treated well or are uncompensated. Qatarization is a new phenomenon and is part of Qatar National Vision 2030; the government of Qatar is trying to employ the majority of nationals. The strategy of the government to employ Qatari nationals in organizations to provide more jobs to locals is known as Qatarization (Oxford Strategic Consulting 2015). Job security is also an important factor in Qatar, as expatriates are on contracts, and feelings of job insecurity exist in Qatar. This issue raises important questions about employee commitment, and this study

determines the impact of job security, compensation, and Qatarization on expatriates' effective, continuance, and normative commitment in Qatar.

As far as this study is concerned, expatriate employee commitment in Qatar has not been studied before. This is a sensitive topic that deserves special attention both in the academic world and in actual life. Therefore, to highlight the research gaps in expatriate employee commitment in Qatar, this study creates an in-depth understanding of expatriate employee commitment in Qatar from the perspective of the employees working in Qatar.

The research questions are as follows:

- Is there any relationship that exists between job security and effective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment?
- Is there any relationship that exists between compensation and effective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative Commitment?
- Is there any relationship that exists between Qatarization and effective commitment, continuance commitment, and Normative commitment?

This study will provide an overview of some specific components of Qatari labor law and human resources practices dealing with expatriates and their commitment. This study is focused on expatriates' job security, compensation, and the concept of Qatarization. Much literature is available on expatriates and employee commitment, but this study specifically addresses the scenario of Qatar and will analyze the impact of job security, compensation, and Qatarization on the three types of employee commitment defined by Meyer and Allen (1991). The three types of commitment described by Meyer and Allen are effective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

## Literature

Meyer and Allen (1991) developed three-dimensional models in which three types of employee commitment were described.

- Effective commitment
- Continuous commitment
- Normative commitment

This research uses the three-dimensional model of employee commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). Based on the model, it will be determined how different components of Qatari labor law affect employee commitment and its specific type as well.

Continuance commitment refers to the extent to which employees feel they should remain with the organization (Balogh, n.d.). Benefits and finance play an instrumental role in establishing continuance commitment, and for this reason, it has been described as the

cost associated with leaving the organization (Lau 2011). Continuance commitment is largely dependent on external factors such as alternate job opportunities present in the market and the remuneration package offered by the organization (Balogh, n.d.). Lau (2011) observed that although the employee may not be satisfied with the organization or perhaps disengaged, employees do not show an inclination to leave the organization because of the monetary gains and associated benefits. The lack of alternatives also establishes continuance commitment because currently there are fewer jobs and employment opportunities, which has made the job market extremely competitive (Wandera 2011).

Normative commitment generates an employee out of obligation. An employee may feel obligated to stay with the organization because the organization may have invested considerably in the employee in the form of training or courses (Balogh, n.d.). Employees who are normatively committed believe that they should remain with the organization and feel guilty about leaving it (Meyer et al. 2002). This commitment arises from their long tenure, alignment of their values with those of the organization, and their perception of themselves as valuable contributors to the organization. The positive side of normative commitment is that the employee may not consider leaving the organization even if it is not performing well (Meyer et al. 2002).

Various scholars have conducted studies to determine the factors that affect employee commitment (Azizzadeh et al. 2013). For instance, Njenga, Kamau, and Njenga (2015) explored the education sector to determine the factors that affect employee commitment and found that employees were highly committed to a supportive working environment. Igella (2014) studied employee commitment in the civil aviation industry and found that factors such as organizational climate, the reliability of the organization, communication within the organization, teamwork, strong management, and a strong work ethic were instrumental in shaping employee commitment in favor of the organization. Nguyen, Mai, and Nguyen (2014) conducted a study on employee commitment in the banking sector and found that supportive work conditions, career development, interaction with management, and teamwork spirit led to job satisfaction, which, in turn, resulted in employee commitment.

The expatriates can be divided into three categories (Collings, Wood, and Caligiuri 2014). The first category describes the expatriate as a person who is sent by their employers for international assignment (Sarkiunaite and Rocke 2015). As per the second category, an expatriate is a person who has found employment in a foreign country (Reiche and Harzing 2009). The third category of expatriates is that of international students who are pursuing education abroad (Renn et al. 2015). The wider exposure and better education equip these students for a better professional life. In Qatar, expatriates comprise the first two categories, and rarely do students come here to study. The expatriate employees in Qatar constitute a professionally and technically qualified workforce (Naithani and Jha 2010).

Different factors affect employee commitment, depending on the industry. Hence, in this research, three important factors related to expatriates will be considered.

- Compensation
- Job security
- Qatarization

Job security is an individual's expectations about their job continuity situation; it is an individual's perception of the potential threat to his/her job and helplessness to maintain the desired continuity (Bosman, Buitendach, and Laba 2005). Other authors rank job security as the most important factor for commitment (Soltani, Malmir, and Azizzadeh 2013; Soltani et al. 2014). Job security plays a vital role not only in reducing employee turnover but also in maintaining stable employment relationships in organizations (Bosman, Buitendach, and Laba 2005). Employees who experience job security are more efficient and productive and perform their duties and responsibilities diligently (Alvi, Abbasi, and Haider 2014). Organizations that offer job security can form stronger bonds with their employees and attract and retain talent easily (Alvi, Abbasi, and Haider 2014). Employees who feel insecure in their jobs are engaged in work withdrawal behavior and report reduced organizational commitment (Dost et al. 2011).

Organizations are developing different compensation systems and are offering market-competitive salary packages not only to attract but also to retain existing talent. Organizations are continuously reviewing their compensation schemes to ensure that their compensation policies are competitive. In Qatar, there is no legislation for minimum wage, annual increments, bonuses, pensions, and so on. The compensation system not only attracts competent candidates but also retains existing talent. Research shows that the number of paid employees strongly correlates with effective behavior relating to commitment and performance (Bloom and Michel 2002).

The level of pay also affects individual perceptions of their value to an organization and individual feelings of self-worth and plays an important role in the formation of behavioral intentions (Pierce and Gardner 2004). It is important to identify the relationship between compensation and employee commitment because employee commitment is a multi-dimensional construct (Pierce and Gardner 2004), and compensation is an important issue for both employers and employees. Compensation is a broad phenomenon, and organizations have to develop different policies regardless of size (Milkovich, Newman, and Gerhart 2014).

As discussed above, numerous studies are carried out on employee commitment, expatriates and human resource practices, and Qatar labor law. However, in the available literature, there is limited material available on expatriate commitment. Qatarization is a new phenomenon and is also part of Qatar's national vision; normal people link it only to the

Qataris, but it has a huge impact on expatriates as well. From the available literature, it has been determined that compensation and job security are also important components for expatriates and may impact their commitment. In this study, the impact of the above-mentioned three factors, that is, job security, compensation, and qatarization on expatriates' effective commitment, continuance, and normative commitment will be analyzed.

## Methodology

In this research, the quantitative approach has been adopted for many reasons, including the fact that employee commitment is a frequently researched topic and data from previous research is available for comparison. Second, there is no ambiguity about the topic being measured. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model indicating the relationship between job security, compensation, and Qatarization with the three types of commitment. These factors have been discussed in detail in the previous section.

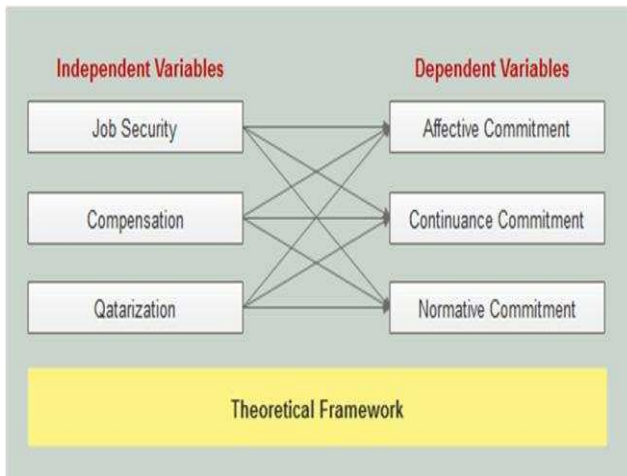


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Source: Irfan 2024

## Job Security Hypotheses

Job security refers to the continuation of a job; it also refers to the confidence and assurance of an employee that they will be able to retain the job (Bosman, Buitendach, and Laba 2005). Okoli and Monanu (2016), in their study on effective commitment and job security, found that organizations that create conditions where the needs and expectations of the employees are matched with their expectations can generate higher effective commitment among their employees. Riketta (2002) noted that employees who form an attachment to the organization and identify themselves with the organization tend to work harder; hence, organizations must make efforts to foster organizational commitment. However, if the employees

constantly live under the fear that they will be dismissed from their jobs, their commitment to the organization is affected. Hence, a meaningful relationship between job security and employee commitment exists. The better an employee performs, the more likely they will be able to retain his job.

- H1) Job security positively affects expatriate effective commitment, which is the positive feeling generated by the supportive attitude of the management. If the management offers job security, then effective commitment will be strong.
- H2) Job security positively affects expatriate continuance commitment. Continuance commitment is generated by fear of loss as employees stand to lose benefits when they lose a job. Hence, job security can affect continuance commitment.
- H3) Job security positively affects expatriate normative commitment. Normative commitment arises from obligations and values; job security impacts normative commitment if the employee feels an obligation toward the organization.

### **Compensation Hypotheses**

Employees must be adequately compensated by the organization if it wants to motivate and retain them (Pierce and Gardner 2004). Salary and other benefits affect the attitude of the employees toward work and the organization. If the employees believe that they are compensated for the effort they put in, then they work more diligently and try to improve their performance (Ahmed and Hassan 2019; Pierce and Gardner 2004). According to Okoli and Monanu (2016), the compensation offered by the organization, which is usually in the form of a good pay package and rewards, is vital for boosting the morale of the employees and keeping them motivated. As stated by Zaitouni, Sawalha, and Sharif (2011), employees weigh the efforts they put into the organization with the compensation and benefits they receive. If they think that the pay package is fair, they believe that justice has been provided, experience satisfaction, and are willing to form a long-term relationship with the organization. But if the employee believes that the pay package is not up to his/her expectations because it does not cover the hard work and efforts, then the employee becomes disheartened and performs below their potential (Pierce and Gardner 2004). The attitude of the employee toward work and the organization is also adversely affected as no positive link exists between the employee and the organization. The employee may seek other employment possibilities as well. Hence, a relationship exists between compensation and employee commitment.

- H4) Compensation positively affects expatriate effective commitment. Effective commitment is generated when the employee believes they are fairly and adequately compensated in terms of salary and benefits.



- H5) Compensation positively affects expatriate continuance commitment. An employee experiences continuance commitment when they fear that leaving their job will result in the loss of their salary and benefits. If compensation is greater, continuance commitment among employees will be higher.
- H6) Compensation positively affects expatriate normative commitment. Employees may experience commitment out of obligation if the compensation package is generous.

## **Qatarization Hypotheses**

The growing unemployment among local Qataris has become a cause for concern for the Qatari government; in an effort to provide employment to the locals and reduce the dependency of the country on expatriates, the government has introduced the process of Qatarization. According to this process, the expatriates will gradually be replaced with the local Qatari workforce. Although public organizations have adopted Qatarization, it is relatively slow in private organizations. Many expatriate employees find Qatarization a threat and perceive it in different ways; the threat is more real, which makes them pessimistic about the job; in this case, employee commitment is weak. In Qatar, the workforce is young and inexperienced; hence, expatriates who have wide knowledge, experience, and expertise, which the organization requires, will not be easily replaced and are not threatened by the process of Qatarization. Those in junior positions, however, feel more threatened by Qatarization as they believe that they can be easily replaced, which adversely affects their commitment. Hence, the process of Qatarization is linked with expatriate employee commitment.

- H7) Qatarization negatively affects expatriate effective commitment. Qatarization can affect the effective commitment of the employee as they fear being replaced by a local.
- H8) Qatarization negatively affects expatriate continuance commitment. Effects of Qatarization can be seen on expatriate continuance commitment as expatriate employees have much to lose if they are replaced by a Qatari.
- H9) Qatarization negatively affects expatriate normative commitment. The normative commitment may also be negatively affected by Qatarization.

For this research, a questionnaire has been specifically chosen. The respondents taking part in the study have been assured of confidentiality during and after the research. This assurance prompts an honest response. The sample population comprises expatriates working in the construction industry in Qatar. This industry was particularly chosen because it has the highest number of expatriate employees and because of the diversity of expatriate employees. Expatriates are employed in different capacities from laborers to supervisors, storekeepers,

managers, and various personnel involved in technical and non-technical operations within the industry; however, in this research, laborers were excluded because they had limited education and thus did not have proper knowledge of Qatarization, Qatari laws, and workforce issues.

A random sampling technique has been used to choose participants. The random sampling technique offers an equal chance of selection for each unit present within the sample frame (Soltani, Malmir, and Azizzadeh 2013). Both male and female expatriate employees were approached for the study; however, as the number of male employees is far greater, the sample size is not equal, as out of the selected 300 respondents, only 110 were women.

The questionnaire was distributed among 300 expatriates working in different capacities in the construction industry in Qatar. The target sample was 250 respondents who, in the opinion of the researcher, were sufficient to achieve theoretical saturation for the thesis. Out of 300 questionnaires, 273 were properly filled out and usable; the data collected from them revealed that relevant theoretical concepts had been covered, and the possibility of the emergence of new data was very small. Most of the expatriates have been working for more than five years, while a few were new; the sample comprised both male and female participants.

The questionnaire used in this research has three parts.

- Section A comprises personal information.
- Section B comprises questions based on job security, Qatarization, and compensation.
- Section C comprises questions based on employee commitment.

Section A: The respondents are asked to provide their personal information to create a profile of the sample group concerning age, gender, years of service, educational qualifications, and monthly income.

Section B: In this section, respondents are asked about different components, which include Job security, Qatarization, compensation, and the impact of these components on their commitment. This section is further divided into four parts, and a total of nine questions were asked.

Section C: The Employee Commitment Questionnaire. The questions in this section are based on the three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1). The three dimensions are as follows:

1. "Effective commitment involves the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization."
2. "Continuance commitment involves commitment based on the costs that the employee associated with leaving the organization"; and
3. "Normative commitment involves the employees' feelings of obligation to stay with the organization."

The reliability of the research refers to the stability and consistency of the results produced by the assessment tools (Yu, n.d.). In this study, the Cronbach Alpha test has been used to determine the reliability of the research. Developed in 1951, the test is widely used in research to measure the internal consistency of a scale or a test and is expressed in the form of a number between 0 and 1 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011). In this study, the Cronbach’s alpha test was .686, which indicates satisfactory reliability. In the case of quantitative studies, the validity of the research means that the outcomes of the research are free from bias. To ensure both reliability and validity of the identity of the respondents, is kept confidential.

**Results**

Of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 286 were returned, out of which 273 were properly filled out and were, hence, considered for analysis. Data collected from Section A of the questionnaire were used to create a demographic profile.

Table 1: Participants Demographics

Participants' Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Age</i>	Between 20 and 25 years	20	7.32%
	Between 25 and 35 years	125	45.78%
	Between 36 and 45 years	100	36.63%
	46 and above	28	10.25%
<i>Marital Status</i>	Married	210	77%
	Single	60	23%
<i>Gender</i>	Male	174	63.73%
	Female	99	36.26%
<i>The duration of Job</i>	<5 years	77	28.20%
	6–10 years	113	41.39%
	11–15 years	68	24.90%
	>16 years	15	5.49%
<i>Educational Qualification</i>	High school	4	1.46%
	Undergraduate	25	9.15%
	Graduate	210	76.92%
	Masters and above	34	12.45%
<i>Salary</i>	<2,500	12	4.39%
	2,501–5,000	54	19.78%
	5,001–10,000	122	44.68%
	10,001–15,000	45	16.48%
	15,001–20,000	22	8.05%
	> 20,000	18	6.59%

The above demographic profile (Table 1) shows that all male members are employed at Qatar Construction Company, with the majority of them being young employees between the age of 25 and 35 years. More than half of the employees were married. The majority of the employees had been associated with the organization for up to ten years. 76.92 percent of the employees hold a bachelor's degree, while 12.45 percent hold a master's degree, 36.62 percent of the expatriate respondents in this study were women.

The correlation between job security, compensation, and Qatarization, and employee commitment is tested via Pearson correlations.

Table 2: Correlation

		<i>Emp. Commitment</i>	<i>Job Security</i>	<i>Compensation</i>	<i>Qatarization</i>
<i>Emp. Commitment</i>	Pearson Correlation	1	.737**	.729**	-.703**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	273	273	273	273
<i>Job Security</i>	Pearson Correlation	.737**	1	.928**	-.881**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	273	273	273	273
<i>Compensation</i>	Pearson Correlation	.729**	.928**	1	-.891**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	273	273	273	273
<i>Qatarization</i>	Pearson Correlation	-.703**	-.881**	-.891**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	273	273	273	273

Note: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed),  $n = 273$ .

The results in Table 2 indicate that job security correlates positively with employee commitment and is statistically significant at a 1 percent level of significance. Similarly, compensation correlates positively with employee commitment, and its  $p$ -value is zero and less than a 1 percent level of significance. Moreover, Qatarization harms employee commitment as the  $p$ -value is less than a 1 percent level of significance.

Three hypotheses associated with effective commitment are analyzed:

- Job security positively affects expatriate effective commitment.
- Compensation positively affects expatriate effective commitment.
- Qatarization negatively affects expatriate effective commitment.

Below are the regression results for an effective commitment (Table 3) that aim to justify the proposed hypothesis. Overall, the  $R$  square indicates that 49 percent of the variations in the dependent variable, that is, effective commitment, are explained by the independent variables.

Table 3: Regression Analysis—Effective Commitment

	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>T-Stat</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	1.878	.570	3.293	.001
<i>Job security</i>	.261***	.098	2.665	.008***
<i>Compensation</i>	.124	.100	1.243	.215
<i>Qatarization</i>	-.229**	.099	-2.306	.022**
<i>R square</i>	.488			

Note: The dependent variable is effective commitment.

$R^2 = .488$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , \*\* $p \leq .05$ .

The regression results in Table 3 indicated that 1.878 is the intercept, which represents the average effective commitment. Job security and Qatarization have a statistically significant relationship with effective commitment. The  $p$ -value of job security is less than 1 percent of its significance so expatriates’ effective commitment is affected by job security. Similarly, Qatarization decreases effective commitment by 0.229 and has a statistically significant relationship as the  $p$ -value is less than a 5 percent level of significance. However, the regression results indicate that compensation does not have a significant association with effective commitment as its  $p$ -value is above a 10 percent significance level; thus, organizational compensation does not affect effective commitment.

Three hypotheses associated with the continuance commitment are analyzed:

- Job security positively affects expatriate continuance commitment.
- Compensation positively affects expatriate continuance commitment.
- Qatarization negatively affects expatriate continuance commitment.

Below are the regression results for continuance commitment, which aim to justify the proposed hypothesis. Overall,  $R$  square indicates that 66 percent of the variations in the dependent variable, that is, continuance commitment, is explained by the independent variables.

Table 4: Regression Analysis—Continuance Commitment

	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>T-Stat</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	1.227	.507	2.422	.016
<i>Job Security</i>	.485***	.087	5.575	.000***
<i>Compensation</i>	.106	.088	1.199	.231
<i>Qatarization</i>	-.149*	.089	-1.683	.094*
<i>R square</i>	.656			

Note: Dependent variable is Continuance Commitment.

$R^2 = .656$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ , \* $p \leq .1$ .

The regression results in Table 4 indicated that 1.227 is the intercept, which represents the average continuance commitment. Job security and Qatarization have a statistically significant relationship with the continuance commitment. The *p*-value of job security is less than 1 percent at the level of significance so expatriates' continuance commitment is affected by job security. Similarly, Qatarization decreases the continuance commitment by 0.149 and has a statistically significant relationship as the *p*-value is less than a 10 percent level of significance. However, the regression results indicate that compensation doesn't have a significant association with continuance commitment as its *p*-value is above the 10 percent significance level, thus organizational compensation does not affect continuance commitment.

Three hypotheses associated with normative commitment are analyzed:

- Job security positively affects expatriate normative commitment.
- Compensation positively affects expatriate normative commitment.
- Qatarization negatively affects expatriate normative commitment.

Below are the regression results for normative commitment aimed at justifying the proposed hypothesis. Overall, *R* square indicates that 17 percent of the variations in the dependent variable, that is, normative commitment, are explained by the independent variables.

Table 5: Regression Analysis—Normative Commitment

	<i>B</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>T-Stat</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	1.131	.646	1.752	.081
<i>Job Security</i>	.21	.111	.186	.852
<i>Compensation</i>	.243**	.113	2.148	.033**
<i>Qatarization</i>	-.036	.113	-.320	.750
<i>R square</i>	.173			

Note: The dependent variable is normative commitment.

$R^2 = .173$ , \*\* $p \leq .05$ .

The regression results in Table 5 indicated that 1.131 is the intercept, which represents the average normative commitment. Job security and Qatarization have a statistically insignificant relationship with normative commitment. A *p*-value of job security and Qatarization is greater than a 10 percent level of significance, so does not affect employee normative commitment to the organization. However, the regression results indicate that compensation has a significant association with normative commitment at a 5 percent significance level, indicating that organizational compensation packages enhance the expatriates' normative commitment.

## Discussion

In this study, normative continuance was found to be the lowest because expatriate employees do not experience job security. Furaker and Berglund (2014) observed that employees who were physically, emotionally, and cognitively involved with the organization felt obliged to remain with the organization. Job security is another factor that evokes positive normative commitment (Lee and Chen 2013), as all expatriate employees are on contract and are aware that their employment is not lifelong; therefore, they do not feel an obligation toward the organization. There exists a lack of positive employee attitude among expatriate employees toward their jobs; this finding proves the research conducted by Fauraker and Berglund (2014), in which the authors observed that the greater the positive job attitude among the employees, the higher the normative commitment. This research shows that the relationship between job security and normative commitment is not significant. Hence, this hypothesis that job security has a positive impact on expatriates' normative commitment is not accepted.

Previous studies show that a better pay package is more likely to produce greater effective commitment among employees. The findings of this study are not aligned with previous research, for instance, that of A'yuninnisa and Saptoto (2015), in which the authors argue that pay satisfaction produces higher effective commitment among employees and reduces turnover. The study reveals that compensation has an insignificant but positive impact on continuance commitment. The response from the questionnaire shows that expatriate employees in Qatar also consider compensation important. Although the compensation offered to expatriate employees in Qatar is not as per their qualifications, experience, and contribution to the organization still, they exhibit continuance commitment. This is because there is a lack of job opportunities back home and because, as per Qatar Labor Laws, an expatriate cannot switch jobs until they gain the approval of the current employer they are working for.

As stated by Nawab and Bhatti (2011), normative commitment is strongly affected when finances are involved; hence, fair compensation is likely to generate greater normative compliance among employees. This study shows that compensation has a positive and significant relationship with normative commitment. Hence, the hypothesis that job security has a positive impact on expatriates' continuance commitment is accepted.

A significant negative association exists between Qatarization and effective commitment. The management plays a strong role in building rapport with the employees and thus creating loyalty among them. In organizations where management is supportive of the employees and creates facilities for them, effective commitment among employees is high. Qatarization has adversely affected the emotional association of expatriate employees as they believe that they are no longer valued by the management. Hence, the effective commitment among expatriate employees has gone down as they constantly live in fear of being replaced as indicated by the response to the questionnaire. The findings of the study show a negative

and significant relationship between Qatarization and effective commitment; hence, the hypothesis that Qatarization has a negative relationship with expatriates' effective commitment is accepted.

A negative association exists between Qatarization and continuance commitment. As continuance commitment involves perceived costs associated with leaving the organization, Qatarization is likely to affect continuance commitment among expatriate employees. This is because expatriate employees not only consider the cost of leaving the organization but are also aware that they cannot switch jobs in Qatar. Qatar Labor Laws also do not provide them with adequate support, and there are limited job alternatives in their home country. Hence, continuance commitment is affected because of Qatarization as employees fear that they will be replaced. The results of the study show a negative relationship with a significance value of 0.094 between Qatarization and continuance commitment. Hence, the hypothesis that Qatarization has a negative relationship with expatriates' continuance commitment is accepted.

As evident from the responses from the questionnaire and the above discussion, normative commitment is the weakest among expatriate employees as compared to other dimensions of employee commitment. The findings of the study show that there is no significant relationship between Qatarization and normative commitment. Hence, the hypothesis that Qatarization harms expatriates' normative commitment is not accepted.

From the above discussion, lack of job security, inadequate compensation, and Qatarization have to some extent adversely affected effective commitment among expatriate employees. Continuance commitment among expatriate employees has also been influenced by a lack of job security, inadequate compensation, and Qatarization. Normative commitment, which stems from loyalty toward the organization, is the weakest, commitment dimension found among expatriate employees.

## **Conclusion**

The main aim of the study is to determine the impact of job security, Qatarization, and compensation on the three types of employee commitment of expatriate employees. The analysis of the response showed that there was a direct relationship between job security, compensation, and Qatarization; job security and compensation positively affected commitment whereas Qatarization negatively affected commitment.

Based on this study, although Qatarization will lead to the replacement of expatriate employees, not all employees will be replaced as employers will need experienced people to carry out the functioning of the organizations. The employers must also make the working conditions more favorable for the expatriates. To make Qatarization smooth, employers must ask the expatriate employees to train the local employees and then gradually replace them. The expatriate employees must be given a specific period so that they can find another job, and they should be compensated as well, depending upon the position they hold in the company.



## Organizational and Practical Implications

This study aimed to determine the factors that affect the commitment level of expatriate employees in Qatar. The country was chosen because Qatar has a large workforce of expatriate workers, and negligible research has been done on the situations faced by expatriates, especially in the wake of the process of Qatarization. Through this study, the researchers aim to bring to light how expatriates perceive Qatarization and how job security and compensation influence employee commitment. The key research question revolves around the influence of two important factors, namely job security and compensation, on the three dimensions of commitment, namely effective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. In this section, the influence of job security, compensation, and Qatarization on effective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment are discussed separately. The results of this study show that the impact of job security, Qatarization and compensation was stronger on continuance commitment than on effective commitment and normative commitment, which indicates that the main driving force behind expatriates in Qatar is fear of losing jobs and benefits; the association with the organization is average, whereas loyalty toward the organization is low.

There are mutual obligations between employers and employees, where job security is the obligation of the employer and loyalty is the obligation of the employee. Employers in Qatar do not offer permanent jobs, and expatriate employees feel no obligation or loyalty toward their employers. Also, compensation, or pay package, is a major contributor to employee satisfaction and commitment. The better the pay package, the more motivation among employees to perform better. The current employers usually refuse to relieve the expatriate employee and cancel the job contract, forcing him to go back home. Because of this reason, in this study, continuance commitment among expatriate employees is present despite unfair compensation. It is also proven that, besides fair compensation, other factors, such as a lack of job alternatives, also affect the decision of the employees to stay with the organization. The management plays a strong role in building a rapport with the employees and thus creating loyalty among them. In organizations where management is supportive of the employees and creates facilities for them, effective commitment among employees is high. A supportive environment also includes assuring employees that they are valuable and will not be replaced.

## Limitations and Suggestions

Expatriates, especially those from Asian countries, make useful contributions to the economy of Qatar; hence, a better relationship between the expatriate employees and the Qatari employers is needed. This study focused only on three components: job security, compensation, and Qatarization. Other factors that affect employee commitment as well, such as job satisfaction, treatment of management, positive organizational culture, and

organizational climate, also affect employee commitment and should also be included in future research. It is suggested that the reasons behind the negative attitude of the Qataris, which leads to low commitment, should also be explored. The data in this study were based on the opinions of expatriate employees; only in future studies, views of Qatari employers must also be included. Future studies can overcome the limitations of this study by including other industries where expatriates are employed. It would be beneficial to explore and include more variables in future research. This research has been done with a quantitative approach. It is suggested that researchers conduct qualitative research with open questions. The regression technique can also consider the scale of measurement of the variables for future investigations. The biggest limitation of the study is that it is restricted to the construction sector only and does not include other industries, especially those where expatriates are better educated and employed in important positions. Their views are necessary, as the Qatari workforce is too young and inexperienced to replace them.

The study is specific to Qatar, and hence the findings may not apply necessarily to other countries. Previous studies exist that evaluate the expatriate's commitment to Qatar. Hence, the research findings pose great significance in helping policymakers enhance the commitment level of expatriate workers.

### **Informed Consent**

The author has obtained informed consent from all participants.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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