

Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Retention: A Study of Public Healthcare Sector of Pakistan

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Abstract

Background:In today's world, most organizations face challenges in managing and retaining their potential employees, as most organizations have grown rapidly and the competition between these organizations is high in order to sustain their businesses. In addition, retention of employees is also an area of constant focus for the healthcare sector, as this sector can realize the importance of the health care cost, quality and continuity of care, stress and burnout of the remaining health care professional. This research aims to explore the relationships between human resource management (HRM) practices (compensation, recruitment and selection, training and development) and employee's retention in the public healthcare sector of Pakistan.

Materials and Methods:This research was cross-sectional in nature and used quantitative research techniques. A structured questionnaire consisting of 273 medical doctors working in different public sector hospitals in Punjab, Pakistan, was used for data collection. The smart PLS was used to test the hypothesized relationships of the study. Cluster sampling technique was used for data collection.

Results:The results of the study showed that the use of HRM practices (compensation, recruitment and selection and training and development) have a statistically significant effect on employee retention. The findings of this research advance current literature to non-Western countries, such as Pakistan by providing literature on doctors' retention.

Conclusion:The empirical findings of this research suggest that HRM practices (compensation, recruitment and selection and training and development) can enhance doctor's retention in the healthcare sector of Pakistan. The theoretical and practical contributions of this research and the limitations and recommendations for future research are also discussed on the basis of the findings.

Keywords: Employee retention, Compensation, Recruitment and selection, Training and development, Healthcare sector, Pakistan.

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I. Introduction

In today's world, services sector is rapidly growing and largest sector of the world's economy and is the only main contributor towards the GDP of both developing and developed countries [1, 2]. Globalization, public sector growth, increasing demands for customer services and rapid urbanization are the main reasons behind services sector growth [3]. Moreover, services are generally utilized by the individuals in many facets of their life like education, health, finance, food etc. Consequently, just because of its direct and indirect relationship with different economic activities, the competency of service sector plays a significant role in the overall GDP growth as well as efficiency of the country [2]. Within the context of Pakistan, healthcare system has turned out to be one of the leading services sectors. According to the statistics provided by the World Bank, the position of Pakistan is 178th out of 182 countries in terms of its spending on healthcare sector as a percentage of GDP [4]. According to the Ishaq [5] and Javed and Liu [6] the spending of government budget is embarrassingly 0.5 to 0.9 percent of GDP in the healthcare sector for the last ten years, whereas, WHO standard on health spending is at least 6 percent of the GDP [7] making it among world's worst countries in healthcare spending [8, 9].

The healthcare sector of Pakistan has been divided into two types which are public and private healthcare sectors. Public healthcare sector is controlled and owned by the government, whereas, private healthcare sector is controlled and owned by the local authorities [10]. In Pakistan, the picture of public healthcare sector is quite gloomy and need enormous efforts and consideration when compared to the private healthcare sector [8]. More than 60 percent of the total demand in healthcare sector is being provided by the private healthcare sector, whereas less than 40 percent of the total demand is provided by the public healthcare sector [11]. Delivery of good quality healthcare services is mainly the responsibility of the government according to the Constitution of Pakistan [6, 8]. Likewise, Pakistan has been struggling to fulfill national targets

as well as international commitments with its complicated healthcare system in pursuit of the achievement of quality health care services like other countries in the developing world [12].

The optimal quality healthcare services for enhancing people's wellbeing is the sole responsibility of healthcare system for which healthcare professionals are known as the building blocks. Within the healthcare providers, doctors play an important role to effective management and supervision of healthcare services [13]. Moreover, Universal Health Coverage dream can be transformed into reality with the help of well-functioning healthcare systems well-equipped with more skilled healthcare doctors, as today, consumers of healthcare systems are more conscious about their rights and have more expectations from healthcare doctors and claim improving standards of healthcare [14]. Failing the target to achieve 'Health for All' caused primarily due to applicable policies, lack of decisive actions, lack of political will, and the lack of resources [12]. Workplace dissatisfaction, perceptions of better employment, better salaries, training and development opportunities in other organizations [15]. All these factors, along with doctor's migration from public healthcare sector and rural geographies to the private healthcare sector or abroad have made doctor's retention issues more critical in Pakistan. This paper deals with the issue of doctors' retention within the healthcare sector which helps to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills and provide quality of care to the patients. Whereas, doctors less intention to stay may have harmful effects on the delivery of healthcare services.

Employee Retention

Employee retention is defined as employees wish to stay with their current organization based on the factors that have been offered by the organization [16]. According to Cascio [17] employee retention is perceived as the initiatives taken by the management to keep employees safe from leaving, providing them incentives for their efforts in order to perform their jobs effectively, ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and supervisors, providing them training and development opportunities for their professional growth. Different researchers have defined retention in different ways. According to Pittino, Visintin [18] employees stay with the organization when there is an environment of motivation and encouragement and the rewards they receive have a great importance to satisfy their aspirations and needs (Johari, Yean, Adnan, Yahya & Ahmad, 2012a). Furthermore, most of employees feel that they have more worth than what they are actually being paid. There is a natural difference between what employee think they should be paid and what the organizations spend in compensation. When the disparity becomes greater and another opportunity occurs, it will lead to less intention to stay [19].

Employee retention is the dependent variable and a primary source of this research. During the past few years, employees are facing the problems of brain drain due to less opportunities provided by the organization which has become a perplexing and serious issue around the globe. According to Luscombe, Lewis [20] if employees stay longer they can solve the problem of employee's shortage as well as contribute to the success of an organization. In summary, employee's retention will be increased only in that case when employees will perceive that they are being equally treated by the organization, have training and development opportunities and have good working environment which make them happy to stay longer. To conclude, following Kyndt, Dochy [21] and within the context of this research, this study conceptualized doctor's retention as doctors' desires and efforts to work and stay within the same hospital in order to achieve personal and hospital objectives.

II. Hypothesis Development

Compensation

Compensation is referred to as total rewards gained by the employees in exchange for their services performed to their respective organization. Compensation is of two types, one is direct pay such as wages and salary and the other one is indirect pay such as benefit programs [22]. According to Perkins and Scutella [23] international evidence indicates that a well-designed financial incentives and benefits perceived by employees can play an important role in supporting employee retention. Furthermore, Johari, Yean [24] stated that compensation helps to attract, motivate and retain employees if they perceive it to be equal to their knowledge and skills. A study conducted on 150 faculty members in South Africa universities found that compensation system effects positively faculty's decision to remain with their university [25]. Scholars have traditionally focused on non-monetary rewards, whereas recently both practitioners and scholars have highlighted and recommended the added value of focusing on economic factors, such as the role of compensation (monetary rewards) in influencing employee's retention in the context of Pakistan. Thus, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

H1: Compensation has a positive and significant influence on employee retention.

Recruitment and Selection

The process of recruitment and selection plays a pivotal role in the development of workforce planning because it is a difficult task to perform due to its impact on employees performance [26]. Employees will be motivated when they perceive that this organization recruits best candidates with proper skill match, give timely promotions and compensate them accordingly. Moreover, research conducted by Bernardin and Russell [27] stated that when employees perceive that recruitment and selection practices are fairly implemented by the organization employee retention will be increased. Mbugua, Waiganjo [28] have also mentioned that the employee's perceptions regarding fair recruitment and selection process has influenced employee retention in Kenya. Somewhat surprisingly, little attention has been devoted to the healthcare sector of Pakistan regarding recruitment and selection and employee retention. Employees perceptions of the recruitment and selection process aligned with employee's goals significantly influences their retention level. Thus, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

H2: Recruitment and selection have a positive and significant influence on employee retention.

Training and Development

Noe, Hollenbeck [29] defined training and development as "an organization's planned efforts to help employees acquire job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors, with the goal of applying these on the job". Training and development has a positive relationship with retention, which is consistent with the outcomes of existing literature[30]. However, Asiedu, Kontor [31] conducted a research on the factors of retention in Ghana's 23 public organizations. The research emphasized that most of the participants believed that training and development are important factors in employee's retention and their intention to leave the organization is less [32-35]. Somewhat surprisingly, little attention has been devoted in the healthcare sector of Pakistan to understand the relationship between training and development and employee retention. Thus, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

H3: Training and development have a positive and significant influence on employee retention.

III. Research Methodology

The suggested hypotheses were tested using a quantitative approach. This method helps the theoretical model and its variables to be statistically verified. A survey method that is commonly used and most widely accepted in social science studies was followed [36]. A cross-sectional research method was used to find out respondent's perceptions. The unit of analysis for this research were doctors working in the public health sector of Punjab, Pakistan. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 23.0 for descriptive statistics and smart PLS 3.0 was used for the hypothesized relationships. A total of 288 questionnaires were received out of 450 questionnaires with a response rate of 64 percent. A total of 273 questionnaires were used for the final analysis after detection of outliers and incomplete questionnaires. The respondent's data shows that there were 53.5 percent male and remaining were females. 72.9 percent of the respondents were married, and 27.1 percent were unmarried. As the study was related to doctors from the health care sector of Pakistan so the highest number of doctors nearly 48 percent were qualified at MBBS level. They were working as a house officer in the hospitals with a percentage of 19.4. Employees are working at different medical specialty like, Gynecology, Medicine, Pathology, Surgery and Allied, Dermatology, Ophthalmology, Radiology, Orthopedic, Psychiatry, Cardiology, Pulmonology, Dentistry and many more. So according to these specializations the highest number of doctors are related to gynecology filed with 17.1 percent. Moreover, lot of doctors have less than 1 year of work experience, which represents 22.2 percent.

Measurement Scales

In this study, employee retention was measured by eleven (11) items scale adapted from Kynndt, Dochy [21]. Similarly, recruitment and selection scale was adapted from Demo, Neiva [37] which contain six (6) items. Compensation scale was adapted from Delery and Doty [38] which contain six (6) items. Johari, Yean [39]. Training and development scale was adapted from Delery and Doty [38] which contain four (4) items. These items of the variables were measured using a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

IV. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling Approach

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) has attracted much attention for different scholars in different fields of business research[40]. In PLS-SEM path model, the measurement model or outer model described the relationship between latent constructs and their respective items. A measurement model assessment involves examining individual item reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity and VIF[41]. Moreover, the structural model generally involves the steps of coefficient of

determination (R^2), effect Size of coefficient of determination (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) of the model. All these steps of the measurement model and structural model were followed and interrupted below.

Individual Items Reliability

Indicator reliability or individual item reliability is assessed by investigating the outer loadings of every item of the constructs [42]. In this study, the reliability score value of each latent construct items reached the satisfactory level, which is 0.70 and above [41].

Internal Consistency Reliability

According to Sun, Chou [43], internal consistency denotes to the level to which, all the items in particular scale/subscales are measuring the same concept. According to Nunnally and Bernstein [44] the composite reliability score of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable. Table 1 has shown that the composite reliability value of each latent construct reaches satisfactory level.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity refers to the individual items which are correlated with each other to measure the same construct [45]. Our study has measured the convergent validity of the latent constructs through Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Chin [46] has recommended that the AVE value should be 0.50 or above to ensure sufficient convergent validity.

Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Keeping the recommendations of Sarstedt, Hair [47], the current study has reported VIF reaching the satisfactory level of > 3 and < 5 [40, 48].

Table no 1: Results of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	CR	AVE	VIF
Recruitment and Selection	R&S1	0.748	0.865	0.518	1.618
	R&S2	0.728			1.564
	R&S3	0.621			1.304
	R&S4	0.753			1.762
	R&S5	0.681			1.533
	R&S6	0.777			1.717
Compensation	Comp1	0.803	0.880	0.551	1.915
	Comp2	0.770			1.724
	Comp3	0.765			1.659
	Comp4	0.746			1.610
	Comp5	0.588			1.313
	Comp6	0.763			1.728
Training and Development	T&D1	0.876	0.896	0.683	2.446
	T&D2	0.798			1.751
	T&D3	0.740			1.550
	T&D4	0.884			2.438
Employee Retention	ER1	0.754	0.891	0.510	1.834
	ER2	0.805			2.148
	ER3	0.746			1.795
	ER4	0.754			1.867
	ER5	0.528			1.235
	ER6	0.553			1.363
	ER9	0.755			1.908
	ER10	0.765			1.943

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is defined as, “the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards” [45].

Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) criterion was used in the current study to assess the discriminant validity, proposed by Henseler, Ringle [49]. The HTMT suggested threshold value is 0.90 [50]. The study results of the HTMT values were presented in Table 2.

Table no 2: Results of the Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Constructs	Comp	ER	R&S	T&D
Comp				
ER	0.552			
R&S	0.653	0.508		
T&D	0.642	0.595	0.498	

Assessing the Significance of Structural (Inner) Path Model

After evaluating the measurement model, the current study evaluated the significance of structural (inner) path model. In order to get path coefficient, standard error and t-values, the current study used standard bootstrapping procedure with 5000 bootstrapping subsamples as per the guiding principles of Hair, Hult [45].

The current study revealed three relationships with the dependent variable. The relationships have depicted the coefficients of three hypotheses and their respective t-values for making decision whether the hypothesized relationships are statistically significant or not.

Table no 3: Structural Model Results

Path Coefficient	beta value	SD	t values	p values	Decision
Compensation -> Employee Retention	0.191	0.067	2.831	0.002	Accepted
Recruitment Selection -> Employee Retention	0.193	0.055	3.500	0.000	Accepted
Training and Development -> Employee Retention	0.329	0.064	5.160	0.000	Accepted

With respect to Hypothesis H1, H2 and H3, the findings reported that there was a significant relationship between compensation and employee retention ($\beta=0.191$, $t=2.831$, $p<0.005$). The relationship between recruitment and selection and employee retention was also statistically significant ($\beta=0.193$, $t=3.500$, $p<0.005$). Likewise, the findings indicated that the relationship between training and development and employee retention was also significant ($\beta=0.329$, $t=5.160$, $p<0.005$). Therefore, hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 have been supported.

V. Assessment of Variance Explained in the Endogenous Latent Variable

The R^2 value represents the percentage of total variance explained by the exogenous variables towards the endogenous variable [51]. Chin [46] provided the values for R^2 , if 0.67 as substantial, 0.33 as moderate, and 0.19 as weak respectively while using PLS-SEM path modeling approach. Cross-validated redundancy measure can be utilized to evaluate the predictive quality of the model, signified as Q^2 [45]. The value of cross validated redundancy approach should be more than zero, the study revealed that the cross-validation redundancy (Q^2) of employee retention, thus, signifying the model's predictive relevance in accordance with Henseler, Ringle [52]. In our study all the values are at satisfactory level. [48].

Table no 4: R square (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Dependent Variable	R^2	Q^2
Employee Retention	0.343	0.159

VI. Discussion

Pertaining to the test of compensation and its relationship with employee retention, the PLS structural path modeling results have suggested a positive and significant ($\beta=0.191$, $t=2.831$, $p<0.005$), thus accepting hypothesis 1 of this study. The finding suggests that employees value the compensation provided by their respective hospitals. Accordingly, they also viewed positively the focus of their hospitals on employee's compensation packages. The finding of this study is also consistent with the previous studies Johari, Yean [24], which show that the relationship between compensation and employee's retention was statistically significant. In the same way, the compensation positively predicted intention to stay. Employees perform work on the job with the understanding that the employer will reciprocate by providing compensation and other positive considerations consistent with the work of social exchange theory by Whitener [53].

The result of the current study showed statistically significant relationship between recruitment and selection and employee retention ($\beta=0.193$, $t=3.500$, $p<0.005$), thus supporting hypothesis 2. The finding of this study are also consistent with the previous study [54], that the relationship between recruitment and selection and employee's retention was statistically significant. The results have shown that with in the healthcare sector of Pakistan, employees' value fair recruitment and selection process, which thus increases their retention level. According to social exchange theory, satisfactory exchanges take place between employee and the employer when both parties believe that they are getting enough compared to their sacrifices. According to Homans [55] exchanges between the parties are subject to a cost-benefit analysis. Pertaining to the test of training and development and its relationship with employee retention, PLS structural path modeling results have suggested a significant relationship ($\beta=0.329$, $t=5.160$, $p<0.005$). Thus, hypothesis 3 was therefore supported. The result shows that in public sector hospitals, doctors have the opportunities to learn advanced training and development opportunities and are likely to develop skills due to the availability of advanced technologies among healthcare professionals. The results of this study are consistent with previous study [56], who found direct relationship between training and development and employee retention. Training and development reinforce social exchange relationships between employers and employees [57].

Implications of the Study

At first, the present study responded to calls for a review of individual HRM practices rather than combined HRM practices to increase the level of employee behavior in the Pakistan health care sector. With

strong theoretical justifications and evidence, the study incorporated three HRM practices (compensation, recruitment and selection, training and development) and found satisfactory results between the relationships. The current study has added value to existing literature by addressing the role of HRM practices on employee retention in the public health sector in Pakistan. Likewise, the study findings also questioned the assertions of the social exchange theory, which emphasizes on the exchange relationship between employee and employer for shaping attitudinal and behavioral outcomes amongst individuals. Henceforth, by covering major lapses, particularly in the domain of HR, the inclusion of individual HRM practices has made the framework more theoretically robust and empirically scalable. Taken together, this study not only contributes to the pertinent literature on these variables and its relationships, but also gives the idea for future researchers to consider and address the issue of employee retention in a highly responsive manner.

On a practical view, the study results may have several practical implications, especially for the service sector with a particular focus on the public health sector in Pakistan. This study may contribute to a better understanding of health sector doctor's retention with practical aspects. The intention of the doctor to remain in the healthcare sector would help to mitigate the shortage of doctors, facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills and provide quality care to patients. The findings of this study have practical implications and contributions for the health sector. Policy makers and practitioners may consider the results of this study while formulating or implementing the appropriate HRM practices in the healthcare sector in order to improve employee retention. The study results also showed significant results between compensation, recruitment and selection, training and development and employee retention. Given the evidence from this study, human resource practitioners and policymakers in the healthcare sector need to pay attention to these resources in order to maximize their intention in the organization. Indeed, human resource practitioners are expected to play important role in the development of fair recruitment and selection policies to attract skilled, competent and eligible employees without any political interference. Moreover, training and development paths for each position may be developed and designed in conjunction with detailed employee progress plans to visualize their development.

VII. Conclusions, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In conclusion, the study has provided empirical understanding pertaining to the direct influence of proposed exogenous and endogenous relationships in public health sector in Pakistan. The empirical evidence provided by this study supported the theoretical propositions of the study. First, the study findings depend solely on the public health sector. Consequently, it may be very difficult to generalize the findings of the current study to other service sector organizations. Future researchers would therefore conduct similar studies in other service sector organizations operating in Pakistan, such as insurance, hotels, banks and education, with a view to verifying the findings of the current study. Second, the current study was a cross-sectional study and data were collected at one point in time, with the result that only a short population was studied. Future researchers would therefore conduct a comparable but longitudinal study to analyze the constructs over a longer period for the receptive confirmation of the hypothesized relationship of the present study. Third, this study collected data using self-reported questionnaires which might create the common method bias problem in the study. Future studies may therefore consider other strategies, such as qualitative and mixed method research, where both qualitative and quantitative analyses should be carried out so that the level of retention of healthcare employees in Pakistan can be described from different perspectives. Lastly, this study considered only public health sector doctors working in Punjab, Pakistan. Further research may involve doctors from all four provinces of Pakistan in order to make the results more generalizable. It would also be better to study the health sector employee's retention and compare findings with private and not for profit organizations (NGOs) operating in Pakistan for a comprehensive understanding and the prospects for doctor's retention. On the other hand, since this study was conducted in a developing context like Pakistan, the findings of this study are expected to be implemented in other developing countries as a means of improving employee retention

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