

# EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON JOB SATISFACTION IN MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES: A STUDY ON ACADEMICS

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to investigate the influence of human resource management practices on job satisfaction among academics in a Malaysian higher education institution. A pilot study was carried out on a sample of 144 academics in a higher education institution. The respondents included a wide range of university faculties, departments and academic units in the participating university. A 30-item scale developed by Halid et al. (2020) and Hauret et al. (2020) were designed to measure human resource management practices and a 3-item scale developed by Noor (2013) was used to measure job satisfaction. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 were used to analyze the data and provided descriptive, correlation and regression analyses. Human resource management practices of recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition and promotion opportunities were significantly and positively related to job satisfaction. The results and statistical analysis of the current study could be a reference to indicate the effects of human resource management practices on job satisfaction among academics in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions. This study made a significant contribution of human resource management practices and the current state of job satisfaction in Malaysian higher education particularly in the public sector. In light of the findings, it is worth considering that at the organizational level, there are a number of actions that can be adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and the university management to increase and maintain the job satisfaction among academic staff in regards to its antecedents of human resource management practices. The study is also expected to provide useful reference for future researchers in this research area.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource Management Practices, Job Satisfaction, Academics, Higher Education.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian higher education system has experienced significant development and growth over the years. The government has made substantial investments in the sector, aiming to establish Malaysia as an education hub in the region. Some key aspects of the Malaysian higher education system and its development includes the development of Public and Private Institutions, whereby Malaysia has a mix of public and private higher education institutions. Public universities are funded and regulated by the government, while private universities operate independently but are subject to quality assurance measures. Malaysian universities offer a wide range of programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These include arts and humanities, engineering, science, medicine, business, and many more. There is a particular emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields to support the country's economic development.

In the realm of internationalization, the country has actively pursued internationalization in higher education. Many universities have collaborations with foreign institutions, offering twinning programs, joint degrees, and student exchange opportunities. This approach has attracted international students and contributed to cultural diversity on campuses. In terms of research and innovation, the government has placed a strong emphasis on research and innovation to drive socioeconomic development. Research universities, such as Universiti Malaya, are established with a focus on producing cutting-edge research in various disciplines. The Malaysian government has also introduced funding schemes and initiatives to encourage research and development activities.

**Technological Advancements:** Malaysian higher education institutions have embraced technology to enhance teaching and learning. E-learning platforms, online resources, and digital libraries are widely used. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of online and blended learning approaches. When comes to education for sustainable development, Malaysia is committed to promoting sustainability in higher education. Sustainable development programs and initiatives are integrated into the curriculum, research projects, and campus operations. Universities also engage in community outreach activities to raise awareness and contribute to sustainable development goals.

It is important to note that university rankings can vary depending on the ranking methodology used by different organizations. Some popular ranking systems include QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education World University Rankings, and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). In this sense, Malaysian Higher Educational Institutions like Universiti Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia, and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia have achieved recognition for their academic reputation, research output, and international collaboration. Malaysian universities have been actively working on enhancing their quality through various initiatives, including research funding, faculty recruitment, international collaborations, and infrastructure development. Rankings should be

seen as a part of this improvement process, rather than the sole determinant of a university's quality.

Overall, the Malaysian higher education system has seen remarkable development, with a focus on quality, internationalization, research, and technology. These efforts have positioned Malaysia as an attractive destination for both local and international students seeking quality education and diverse academic opportunities. Malaysia's system of higher education has experienced various trends and restructuring episodes that enabled the provision of high quality (Zain et al., 2017).

Past studies found that Malaysian higher education sector has been reformed in tandem with socioeconomic development and the nation's aspirations. Malaysia's economy, from 1960 to 1980, had been based on agricultural activities, however from 1980 to 2000, economic activities shifted towards industrial development in pursuit of contemporary financial trends (Zain et al., 2017). This progress is prior to the emergence of a knowledge-based economy (k-economy) that demanded a highly skilled and better informed workforce in 2000 and beyond (Noor, 2013; Zain et al., 2017).

Also, significant development has been experienced by university academics such as the implementation of a stern assessment system and key performance indicators, increasing number of student's enrolments locally and from international, vast funds for research and development, effort to place universities in the global ranks, and so forth (Noor et al., 2019). These changes have arisen from a variety of drivers such as pressures of demand, a cultural shift in the way in which higher education is viewed, financial pressures, structural and managerial diversity, and an assortment of changes in university mission or emphasis (Noor, 2020).

All of these changes portray the concentration of academic work in an increasingly demanding environment (Houston et al., 2006). Hagen (2002) asserts that universities are the largest 'knowledge-based' institution in the region; hence they are urged by the industry and policy makers to transform their traditional roles of teaching and research by adding an additional pivotal role in economic regional development. This means that university academics are expected to aid economic regeneration by disseminating their knowledge and expertise through industry linked partnerships (Noor et al., 2019).

Based on the rapid developments in higher education sector, scholars and practitioners have recognized the importance of human resource management (HRM) practices and their effectiveness for positive organizational outcomes (Najam et al., 2020) among university academics. According to past studies, effectiveness of HRM practices should be evaluated from the employee's point of view in the form of behavioral and psychological effects (Lam et al., 2009; Oluwatayo, 2015; Lim & Ling, 2012) which include academics in higher education institutions. Literature of HRM necessitates developing a theoretical and empirical model that explains the link between HRM practices and its positive and negative effects on employees and organizational outcomes (Najam et al., 2020). A review of the literature divulges an

increasing interest in the impact of HRM practices on employee attitudes including job satisfaction.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between HRM practices and job satisfaction among academics in Malaysian higher education institutions. Specifically, the study will assist the universities and policy makers with key information to increase the effectiveness of HRM practices and maintain the job satisfaction of the employees particularly the academics.

The paper is organized in four sections. Section 1 highlights the aim of the paper. Section 2 discusses the literature on HRM practices and job satisfaction. Section 3 confers the methodology used to investigate the HRM practices and the current state of job satisfaction among academics in Malaysian higher education institutions. Section 4 manifests the conclusion and the expected contributions of the current study to the body of knowledge and to the policy makers in Malaysian higher education sector pertaining to HRM practices and job satisfaction of academics.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

Human resource management refers to the practices, systems, and policies that influence the behavior, performance, and attitudes of employees (Saifalislam, 2014). Human resource management practices are a broad term that include related but different activities, functions, and processes directed at an enterprise's holistic view of human resources (Tangthong & Agahi, 2018). According to Dessler and Tan (2009), human resource management practices include analyzing human resource needs, screening, recruiting, training, rewarding, appraising as well as attending to labor relations, safety and health, and fairness concerns. In Malaysia, research on academics in higher education institutions is perceived to be lacking, and there seems to be an absence of studies particularly discussing HRM practices in these institutions along with the people-related repercussions (Rosdi & Harris, 2011).

In this study, HRM practices are the main predictors which impact job satisfaction among academics in Malaysian higher education sector. Halid et al. (2020) stated that perceived HRM practices can be interpreted as an individuals' perceptions of this system that are most relevant to individual-level attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Therefore, this study will contribute on an understanding of how higher education institutions academics' perceived HRM practices specifically, recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition and promotion opportunities, are associated with job satisfaction.

### ***Recruitment and Selection***

Recruitment is the searching for and obtaining potential job candidates in sufficient numbers and quality so that the organization can select the most appropriate people to fill its job needs (Georgia, George & Labros, 2013). Robbins and Coulter (2018) defined recruitment as locating, identifying, and attracting capable applicants. Meanwhile, the selection is screening job applicants to ensure that the most

appropriate candidates are hired (Robbins & Coulter, 2018). Armstrong (2010) asserts that selection is the process of assessing the suitability of candidates by predicting the extent to which they will be able to carry out a role successfully.

Also, the selection is the process of choosing the most appropriate person from the pool of applicants recruited to fill the relevant job vacancy (Gamage, 2014). According to Moustaghfir et al. (2020), the guiding principle of recruitment and selection processes remains transparency, as the assessment of applications follows different procedures that build on job-related criteria, including various types of interviews and considers giving feedback to both accepted and rejected applicants when such processes are completed.

Previous research found that recruitment and selection have statistically significant on employees' behavior including job satisfaction (e.g. Georgia et al., 2013; Akafo & Boateng, 2015; Mugizi & Bakkabulindi, 2018; Halid et al., 2020). Moreover, a study by Hauret et al. (2020) also supports previous studies that recruitment and selection have a significant impact on job satisfaction.

### ***Training and Development***

According to Moustaghfir et al. (2020) training programs are either designed and delivered internally by the company's own experts or managed and organized by external entities and specialized agencies. Training and development are other dimensions of human resource management practices where firms invest in the development of their employees' knowledge, skills, ability and other required skills to improve the productivity of employees (Gamage, 2014). Besides specific coaching and mentorship programs that are directly focused on internal mobility and job rotation, training programs are mainly developed to respond to clear job-related knowledge needs (Lam et al. 2009). According to Elrehail et al. (2019), training and development leads to the accumulation of knowledge and the development of human capital, which eventually influences job satisfaction, because employees can carry out assigned tasks easily and without difficulties.

In the past studies, it has been found that training and development have a strong relationship with employee's job satisfaction. Nguyen et al. (2010) argued that it was found in the past studies that training and development has a significant impact on employee satisfaction. Absar et al. (2010) in their study among manufacturing firms found training and development to have the most significant and positive influence on employees' job satisfaction. Hence, based on the previous studies, it was proved that training and development as one of the main HRM practices can influence employees' job satisfaction.

### ***Performance Appraisal***

Employee performance appraisal is a process – often combining both written and oral elements – whereby management evaluates and provides feedback on employee job performance, including steps to improve or redirect activities as needed (Elrehail et al., 2019). According to Mugizi and Bakkabulindi (2018), performance appraisal refers to the systematic evaluation of the employee with regard to his or her performance on the job and his potential for development. Halid et al. (2020) defined performance appraisal as the systematic process measuring and developing job performance of the employees in the organization concerning the set of standards for a particular period to achieve various purposes.

Appraisals allow managers to take time to discuss with each employee individual work, give feedback, propose further training if needed and also be used to define appropriate rewards included in the incentive domain (Hauret et al., 2020). Elrehail et al. (2019) postulated that employees who are satisfied with their workplace performance appraisal are often effective and efficient in their task.

According to Pagan et al. (2021), several studies support the notion that fairness of performance appraisal is saliently related to employees' job satisfaction. For instance, it is evidenced from the findings of a study by Elrehail et al. (2019), where performance appraisal had a significant impact on the job satisfaction and competitive advantage among employees in the hotel industry in Northern Cyprus. Wahjono et al. (2016), in their study found medium and positive correlation between performance appraisal and job satisfaction among employees in a private company in Malaysia. Therefore, it is essential to know the current state of the effect of performance appraisal on job satisfaction particularly among academics in Malaysia higher educational sector.

### ***Reward and Recognition***

The rewards and recognitions practice determine the type of appreciation received by employees, monetary and non-monetary rewards, from the organization based on their performance (Halid et al., 2020). Human resources effectiveness and productivity can be enhanced through a meticulous reward system designed in an organization. Recently, complex reward systems are needed to meet the demands of a more diverse workforce and gradually more, organizations found that they must focus on the total compensation package for employees (Akafo & Boateng, 2015). Employee recognition is being increasingly acknowledged as a management practice having a wide-ranging impact on people and organizations (Brun & Dugas, 2008). Furthermore, as argued by Deeprouse (1994), motivation of employees and their productivity can be enhanced through providing them effective recognition which ultimately results in improved performance of organizations.

A study by Hussain et al. (2019) among employees in the call centers in Pakistan found that employee rewards and recognition have a significant and positive effect on employee performance. In the same vein, Ali and Ahmed (2009) in their study found statistically significant, direct and positive relationship between

rewards and recognition with work satisfaction and motivation. According to these findings, employees will show good level of job satisfaction when they found that rewards and recognition provided by the organization are sufficient.

### ***Promotion***

Malik et al. (2010) stated that the movement of an employee upward in the hierarchy of the organization, typically that leads to enhancement of responsibility and rank and an improved compensation package is a promotion. Past studies believe that promotion opportunity is one of the important indicators of an individual employee's satisfaction (Noor, 2013). The proposed research intends to investigate the promotion opportunities as a factor which determine academics job satisfaction.

A study by Ch'ng et al. (2010) found that promotion opportunities are positively significant in determining the job satisfaction of lecturers in Penang state, Malaysia. Noor (2013) conducted a study on job satisfaction of academics in public universities in Malaysia found that promotion had a positive but low correlation with job satisfaction. These findings reflect that the reliance of the positive correlation between promotion and job satisfaction is on perceived justice by workers. Therefore, based on evidence in the previous literature, it is shown that strategic and neat practice of promotion opportunities will increase employees' job satisfaction and other positive behavioral outcomes within the organization.

## **JOB SATISFACTION**

Job satisfaction refers to the level of contentment, fulfillment, and positive feelings an individual experiences in their job or work environment. It reflects an individual's overall perception of their job and the degree to which their expectations and needs are met. Research findings suggest that job satisfaction is not a static state but is subject to influence and modification from forces within and outside an individual; that is his or her own personal characteristics and the immediate working environment (Noor, 2013). Among the most cited definitions of job satisfaction is that of Spector (1997) who defined it as the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. According to Paşaoğlu and Tonus (2014), the job satisfaction is also defined as a person's general attitude to his own job.

Job satisfaction is an expression, emotional or mental, regarding the nature of work (Tangthong & Agahi, 2018). These positive results of job satisfaction can create advantageous attitudes toward the organization (e.g., reduced turnover intent, increased self-efficacy, voluntary efforts, and the development of relationships between organization members) and can increase the performance of the company (Yu et al., 2020). Consequently, in regards to the direction of current study, the job satisfaction of academics in higher education institutions is vital for ultimately reaching the financial and non-financial goals of a university.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND JOB SATISFACTION**

While many studies view the effect of human resource management practices only in terms of organizational-level outcomes (e.g., Moustaghfir et al., 2020; Rogg et al., 2001; Park et al., 2003; Lam et al., 2013; Halid et al. 2020; and Cherif, 2020) suggested that it is vital to consider the effects of human resource management practices on the individual employees themselves, in terms of employee outcome variables. Lim and Ling (2012) found that many of the human resource practices are significantly correlated with job satisfaction.

Andreassi et al. (2014) in their study across Asia, Europe, North America and Latin America, found that there were significant relationships between human resource management practices and satisfaction across all regions of the world. Some studies conclude there is a negative link between human resource management practices and employees' job satisfaction (Haurett et al., 2020). These studies argue that human resource management practices (e.g., performance relative pay, job rotation, team work) lead to work intensification which increases job strain, accidents at work or absenteeism (Halid et al., 2020).

Recent researches have explored that HRM practices are positively related to job satisfaction (Najam et al., 2020). The main research findings in the work of Elrehail et al. (2019) revealed that HRM practices had a significant effect on job satisfaction and competitive advantage. According to Halid et al. (2020), in examining the possible effects of human resource management practices on employee behavior, it is pertinent to discover precisely how employees perceive those practices. Therefore, the researchers attempt to propose a study that looks into the question of what are the effects of human resource management practices particularly recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities on job satisfaction of academics in Malaysian higher educational institutions?

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

In this study, HRM practices (recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities) and job satisfaction are hypothesized into seven dimensions following the work of past studies (e.g., Noor, 2013; Gamage, 2014; Boon et al., 2011; Hauret et al., 2020; Lam et al., 2009; Najam et al., 2020):

- H1: Recruitment is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction;
- H2: Selection is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction;
- H3: Training and development are positively and significantly related to job satisfaction;
- H4: Performance appraisal is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction;
- H5: Reward is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction;
- H6: Recognition is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction; and
- H7: Promotion opportunities are positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Data Collection*

It is essential to assure that population selection can determine the direction of a study. Higher education is seen as a sector which concerned with the quality of the academic services. The population for the pilot study comprised of academics from a public higher education institution located in Negeri Sembilan State, Malaysia. The respondents were the academics from a wide range of university faculties, departments and academic units in the University. Deans and head of each department, faculty and school in the university were contacted through phone calls or emails to obtain their assistance on disseminating the cover letter of invitation to participate in the study, participation information sheet, and hyperlink for the online survey designed for the study to their academic staff members.

### *Measurement And Questionnaire Development*

First, the study comprised of questions in regard to the personal characteristics of the respondents. The measures of gender, age, highest academic qualification, academia's category and tenure in the current university were included. Second, a total of 36 items were adopted from Halid et al. (2020) and Hauret et al. (2020) to measure satisfaction towards Human Resource Management Practices and it was divided into seven practices: (i) recruitment, (ii) selection, (iii) training and development, (iv) performance appraisal, (v) reward, (vi) recognition, and (vii) promotion opportunity. Each question was answered by the five-point Likert-type scale, namely 1 (disagree very much); 2 (disagree); 3 (neither agree nor disagree); 4 (agree); and 5 (agree very much). The higher the total score in the scale was, the higher the satisfaction towards each human resource management practices was. The lower the total score in the scale was, the lower the satisfaction towards each human resource management practices was.

To measure job satisfaction among the academics, 3 items were designed and revised from Noor (2013). A 5-point Likert scale namely 1 (disagree very much); 2 (disagree); 3 (neither agree nor disagree); 4 (agree); and 5 (agree very much) was used to obtain the level of job satisfaction among the respondents. The higher the total score in the scale was, the higher the job satisfaction among academics was. The lower the total score in the scale was, the lower the job satisfaction among the academics was.

Following the work of Fuzi et al. (2019) an expert validation was conducted to assess the validity of the contents of the questionnaire. This was done by inviting four experts who are familiar with the constructs included in the study, the methodology used, and both the forward and backward translations of the items in the questionnaire. In accordance to the suggestions by Tsang et al. (2017), the four appointed expert panels had reviewed the questionnaire and provided feedbacks for improvement and to produce the pre-final version of the questionnaire.

Fuzi et al. (2019) argue that a pilot study is an initial step in the research, and it is used for all research studies. A pilot study is often a smaller-sized research advocating in planning and modification of the real study to be conducted. According to Hazzi and Maldaon (2015), the importance of the pilot study is to enhance the quality and the efficiency of the main research. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) argued that a reasonable sample size larger than 30 is preferable for a pilot study. However, Kieser and Wassmer (1996) pointed out that a sample size that range from 30 to 40 is good enough in providing data for pilot study. Hence, the sample size is important for conducting the pilot study and to check the instruments used (Fuzi et al., 2019). A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed via an online survey and 167 were returned. After the returned questionnaires were sorted and categorized, 23 incomplete and invalid questionnaires were excluded and only 144 valid questionnaires were used for the pilot study.

Based on the quantitative data obtained from the 144 returned valid questionnaires, all responses were coded and analyzed with IBM Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. According to the research questions and nature of this study, the present study mainly adopted statistical methods, including descriptive statistical analysis, reliability analysis, Pearson's correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***Descriptive Statistical Analysis***

According to the basic sample data of the respondents which includes gender, age, highest academic qualification, academia's category and lecturing experience, sample distribution was analyzed to get frequencies and percentage related to each study variables. First the measure of demographic information is gender. 87 respondents (60.40 per cent) were male and 57 respondents (39.60 per cent).

Then, the age of respondents was divided into five categories. Those in the age between 25 to 34 and 45 to 54 years old were the dominant group of age which constituted 54 respondents (37.5 per cent) for each category. Then, 29 respondents (20.1 per cent) were between 45 to 54 years old, six respondents (4.2 per cent) were more than 54 years old, and one respondent (0.7 per cent) aged below than 25 years old. In terms of highest academic qualification, 115 respondents (79.9 per cent) had a doctorate degree, and 29 respondents (20.1 per cent) obtained master degree.

In terms of academia's category, majority of the respondents work as a senior lecturer (17 respondents, 54.2 per cent), follows by 32 respondents (22.2 per cent) among Associate Professor, 13 respondents (9.0 per cent) as a Professor, 11 respondents (7.6 per cent) who work as a lecturer, and 10 respondents (6.9 per cent) were teachers. It was found that in regards to lecturing experience, 62 respondents (43.1 per cent) have between 5 to 10 years of lecturing experience. Next 40 respondents (27.8 per cent) have lecturing for more than 15 years, lecturing

experience between 11 to 15 years (31 respondents, 21.5 per cent), and 11 respondents (7.6 per cent) were those with less than 5 years of lecturing experience.

Next, the results in Table 2 show the overall mean and standard deviation for each of the dimension of HRM practices and job satisfaction. As presented in Table 2, the mean values for human resource management practices' dimensions ranged from 2.92 to 3.65. On the other hand, mean value for job satisfaction was 3.95.

Table 2: Overall mean and standard deviation for HRM practices and job satisfaction

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation
Recruitment	3.22	0.92
Selection	2.92	0.87
Training & development	2.96	0.76
Performance appraisal	3.65	0.67
Reward	2.96	0.76
Recognition	3.57	0.66
Promotion	3.53	0.77
Job Satisfaction	3.95	0.63

### *Reliability Analysis*

Scores from an instrument are reliable and accurate if an individual's scores are internally consistent across the items on the instrument. The consistency of responses can be examined in several ways including coefficient alpha. If the items are scored as continuous variables (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree), the alpha provides a coefficient to estimate consistency of scores on an instrument (Creswell, 2012). Cronbach's alpha provides a measure of the internal consistency of the scale used between 0 and 1 to test the reliability of the analysis (Fuzi et al., 2019).

Table 3: Reliability analysis results of the dimensions in the questionnaire

Variable	Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha value	Result
Human resource management practices	Recruitment	5	0.85	High reliability
	Selection	4	0.80	High reliability
	Training and Development	6	0.84	High reliability
	Performance appraisal	6	0.82	High reliability
	Reward	6	0.84	High reliability
	Recognition	3	0.75	High reliability
	Promotion	5	0.83	High reliability
	Job satisfaction	Job Satisfaction	3	0.78

According to Lin (2021), a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7 indicates high reliability, a Cronbach's alpha value in the range of 0.5 to 0.7 indicates acceptable reliability and a Cronbach's alpha value smaller than 0.5 indicates low reliability. Reliability analysis results depict that HRM practices and job satisfaction are all high in reliability value which ranged from 0.75 for recognition to 0.85. Hence, the reliability of the questionnaire used in this study inclines to be consistent and stable. The detailed data is provided in Table 3.

***Pearson's Correlation Analysis***

Correlation analysis is used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between HRM practices (recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities) and job satisfaction. According to Pallant (2010), Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) can take on values from -1 to +1. The sign out of the front indicates whether there is a positive correlation (as one value increases, so too does the other) or a negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other decreases). Table 4 describes the degree of Pearson's product-moment correlation between HRM practices and job satisfaction. Through the matrix for Pearson's correlation in Table 4, all HRM practices variables (recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities) were found to be significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction.

**Table 4: Matrix for Pearson's Correlation between HRM Practices & Job Satisfaction**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Recruitment	1							
2. Selection	.225**	1						
	0.007							
3. Training & Development	.654**	.341**	1					
	0.000	0.000						
4. Performance Appraisal	.549**	.187*	.689**	1				
	0.000	0.025	0.000					
5. Reward	.654**	.341**	1.000**	.689**	1			
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000				
6. Recognition	.390**	.170*	.458**	.508**	.458**	1		
	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000			
7. Promotion	.554**	.181*	.693**	.991**	.693**	.496**	1	
	0.000	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		

8.Job Satisfaction	.429**	.240**	.606**	.661**	.606**	.428**	.640**	1
	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Notes. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

### Regression analysis

In this study, the multiple linear regression analysis was used to verify whether the hypotheses herein were true and determine whether the correlations between HRM practices (recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities) and job satisfaction were affected. The researchers used mean values of the variables for the analysis. Mean values provide consolidated measurement of the variable and all the dimensions of the variable into a single standardized value (Manzoor et al., 2019). By using regression analysis, this study explores the influence of HRM practices (recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities) on job satisfaction as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

	Job Satisfaction				
	$\beta$	<i>t</i> -Statistic	<i>p</i> -Value	F-Statistics	R-Square
Recruitment	0.429	5.662	0.000	32.058	0.184
Selection	0.240	2.941	0.004	8.651	0.057
Training and Development	0.606	9.073	0.000	82.323	0.367
Performance Appraisal	0.661	10.497	0.000	110.185	0.437
Reward	0.545	8.752	0.000	78.212	0.362
Recognition	0.428	5.648	0.000	31.904	0.178
Promotion Opportunities	0.640	9.934	0.000	98.676	0.406

Dependent variable: job satisfaction. Independent variables: recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities;  $p < 0.05$  is significant.

In Table 5, the main findings of the multiple regression analysis show the relationship between HRM practices of recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition and promotion opportunities with job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The findings of the regression analysis indicate that recruitment and job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship (R-Square=0.184; F=32.058;  $\beta$ =0.429; *t*-value=5.622; *p*-value=0.000). Value of R<sup>2</sup> shows 18.4 percent variation occurred in job satisfaction due to recruitment. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that recruitment and job satisfaction have a positive relationship. The *t*-value is greater than 2 and *p*-value is less than 0.05, which means variables have a positive and significant relationship. So,

the results support Hypothesis 1: *recruitment is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.*

Then, the findings of the regression analysis indicate that selection and job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship (R-Square=0.057; F=8.651;  $\beta=0.240$ ;  $t$ -value=2.941;  $p$ -value= 0.004). Value of R<sup>2</sup> shows 5.7 percent variation occurred in job satisfaction due to selection. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that selection and job satisfaction have a positive relationship. The  $t$ -value is greater than 2 and  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, which means variables have a positive and significant relationship. So, the results support Hypothesis 2: *selection is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.*

Next, the findings of the regression analysis indicate that training and development and job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship (R-Square=0.367; F=82.323;  $\beta=0.606$ ;  $t$ -value=9.073;  $p$ -value= 0.000). Value of R<sup>2</sup> shows 36.7 percent variation occurred in job satisfaction due to training and development. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that training and development and job satisfaction have a positive relationship. The  $t$ -value is greater than 2 and  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, which means variables have a positive and significant relationship. So, the results support Hypothesis 3: *Training and development is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.*

Also, the findings of the regression analysis indicate that performance appraisal and job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship (R-Square=0.437; F=110.185;  $\beta=0.661$ ;  $t$ -value=10.497;  $p$ -value= 0.000). Value of R<sup>2</sup> shows 43.7 percent variation occurred in job satisfaction due to performance appraisal. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that performance appraisal and job satisfaction have a positive relationship. The  $t$ -value is greater than 2 and  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, which means variables have a positive and significant relationship. So, the results support Hypothesis 4: *Performance appraisal is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.*

Correspondingly, the findings of the regression analysis indicate that reward and job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship (R-Square=0.362; F=78.212;  $\beta=0.545$ ;  $t$ -value=8.752;  $p$ -value= 0.000). Value of R<sup>2</sup> shows 36.2 percent variation occurred in job satisfaction due to reward. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that reward and job satisfaction have a positive relationship. The  $t$ -value is greater than 2 and  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, which means variables have a positive and significant relationship. So, the results support Hypothesis 5: *Reward is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.*

Subsequently, the findings of the regression analysis indicate that recognition and job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship (R-Square=0.178; F=31.904;  $\beta=0.428$ ;  $t$ -value=5.648;  $p$ -value= 0.000). Value of R<sup>2</sup> shows 17.8 percent variation occurred in job satisfaction due to recognition. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that recognition and job satisfaction have a positive relationship. The  $t$ -value is greater than 2 and  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, which means variables

have a positive and significant relationship. So, the results support Hypothesis 6: *Recognition is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.*

Then, the findings of the regression analysis indicate that promotion opportunities and job satisfaction have a significant and positive relationship (R-Square=0.406; F=98.676;  $\beta$ =0.640;  $t$ -value=9.934;  $p$ -value= 0.000). Value of R<sup>2</sup> shows 40.6 percent variation occurred in job satisfaction due to promotion opportunities. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that promotion opportunities and job satisfaction have a positive relationship. The  $t$ -value is greater than 2 and  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, which means variables have a positive and significant relationship. So, the results support Hypothesis 7: *Promotion opportunities is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction.*

## DISCUSSION

In the present pilot study, the researchers analyzed the effect that HRM practices of recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition and promotion opportunities have on job satisfaction of academics in a higher education institution of Malaysia. The current study explored a significant and positive relationship among HRM practices and job satisfaction. Recruitment was found to be positively and significantly related to job satisfaction and this support the past studies of Georgia et al. (2013) and Hauret et al. (2020). Then, selection was also found to be positively and significantly related to job satisfaction which reiterated the findings by Mugizi & Bakkabulindi (2018).

The current study also found that training and development affected the job satisfaction of academics in higher education positively and significantly. This supports the work of Nguyen et al. (2010) who argued that training and development has a significant impact on employee's job satisfaction. Another dimension of HRM practices which was performance appraisal, also found to be positively and significantly related to job satisfaction. This finding restated the findings in the study by Elrehail et al. (2019) that performance appraisal had a significant impact on the job satisfaction among employees in Northern Cyprus and the work of Wahjono et al. (2016) among employees in Malaysia.

The finding from the regression analysis also indicated that reward is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction. This is consistent with the work of Hussain et al. (2019) that reward has a significant and positive effect on employee satisfaction and performance. The HRM practice dimension of recognition was also investigated to be positively and significantly affected job satisfaction. This specifically support the finding by Ali and Ahmed (2009) who found statistically significant, direct and positive relationship between recognition and work satisfaction and motivation. Subsequently, the current study also found that promotion opportunities is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ch'ng et al. (2010), revealed that promotion opportunities are positively significant in determining the job satisfaction of lecturers.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study focused on the effects of HRM practices on job satisfaction among academics in Malaysian higher education setting. Based on the expert validation process and reliability analysis, it was found that all HRM practices variables and job satisfaction were valid, reliable and accepted for this study. Furthermore, through the correlation and multiple linear regression analyses, all the HRM practices namely recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, and promotion were found to be significantly and positively related to job satisfaction.

For practical implications, the development of the instruments in the study will be helpful as tools to evaluate HRM practices and job satisfaction in Malaysian higher educational sector. Furthermore, the empirical findings of correlation and regression analyses from this study make a significant contribution to HRM practices and the current state of job satisfaction among academics in Malaysian higher education sector. In light of the findings, it is worth considering that at the organizational level, there are potential yet significant actions that can be adopted by the university management and the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia to increase and maintain the 'happiness' or job satisfaction among academic staff and to sustain a good and balanced ecosystem of HRM practices in the university. The study is also expected to provide useful reference for future researchers in this research area.

In the meantime, the limitation of the study was the difficulty to find the specific literature on HRM practices and its relationship with job satisfaction in Malaysian higher education sector. Another limitation is that this pilot study was conducted with academics in one higher education institution only which also restraining the generalizability of the findings to the other higher education institutions. Plan for future research, the researchers are going expand the study among a wider group of respondents among academics from all public universities in Malaysia, looking at the relationship between HRM practices and job satisfaction.

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