



## Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Satisfaction: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Healthcare Organizations in Pakistan

**Dr. Faraz Ahmed Wajidi**

Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi  
[faraz.wajidi@uok.edu.pk](mailto:faraz.wajidi@uok.edu.pk)

**Dr. Durre Shahwar Khan**

Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi  
[dr.durreshahwarkhan@outlook.com](mailto:dr.durreshahwarkhan@outlook.com)

**Dr. Eruj wajidi rehan**

Lecturer, Institute of Health and Business Management, Jinnah Sindh Medical University  
[Eruj.rehan@jsmu.edu.pk](mailto:Eruj.rehan@jsmu.edu.pk)

**Nasir Ali Khan**

PhD Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Karachi  
[nasiralikhan04@gmail.com](mailto:nasiralikhan04@gmail.com)

**Saniya Ovais**

Lecturer, Institute of Health and Business Management, Jinnah Sindh Medical University.  
[saniya.ovais@jsmu.edu.pk](mailto:saniya.ovais@jsmu.edu.pk)

### Abstract

*Employee satisfaction has become a determining factor of organizational effectiveness especially in the healthcare context where it is the workforce that directly impacts patient outcomes. This research project examines how Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, namely, compensation, leadership, and training, relate to employee satisfaction in both, public and private, healthcare institutions in Pakistan. Quantitative cross-sectional design was adopted and 50 healthcare professionals (doctors and nurses) working in tertiary hospitals in Karachi were used as primary data collection instruments. The data were analyzed by means of SPSS (Version 23), which included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, and multiple regression modeling and allowed to determine relationships between variables.*

*The results demonstrate that all three HRM practices substantially affect the level of employee satisfaction with compensation being the most significant predictor ( 0.41,  $p < 0.01$ ), and then leadership ( 0.35,  $p < 0.01$ ), and training ( 0.29,  $p < 0.05$ ). The regression model had a high explanatory power as it accounted 62% of variance in employee satisfaction. Surprisingly, there was no statistically significant difference between the employees of the public and the private sector ( $p > 0.05$ ), which implies that the structure of the sector is similar between the two sectors.*

*The research will add value to the existing literature in the field of HRM because it will provide empirical data in a developing country setting and the significance of HR strategic interventions in healthcare organizations. It offers practical information to policymakers and hospital administrators to improve workforce satisfaction and retention by implementing the best HR practices.*

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management, Employee Satisfaction, Healthcare Sector, Regression Analysis, Pakistan



## **Introduction**

The healthcare field is a complex area which requires high levels of dedication, emotional stability and technical prowess among its staff members. The working environment in this industry is usually stressful, with the workers working long hours, having a large number of patients and with little resources. Employee satisfaction is a key element in organizational efficiency and quality patient care in these challenges. It has always been established that employee satisfaction is directly correlated with better performance, lower turnover, and better service quality, especially in the high-stress setting like healthcare (Vermeire et al., 2014; Kabene et al., 2006).

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices have been generally acknowledged as critical in improving employee satisfaction and organizational performance. Good HRM practices that include remuneration, strong leadership and lifelong training are very instrumental in influencing employee attitudes and behaviors. Wright and McMahan (1992) state that the HRM practices are able to align the human capital to organizational goals and Armstrong (2006) argues that employees are the most valuable asset of any organization that should be managed strategically to achieve the highest level of productivity and satisfaction. When it comes to healthcare, HRM practices are even more important considering the high levels of criticality of service delivery. Research shows that compensation and benefits are the most important factors influencing employee motivation, especially in developing economies where financial security is a major factor (Ali, 2019). Likewise, leadership behaviors that encourage independence, acknowledgment, and career development have been established to have a profound effect on job satisfaction and engagement (Burns, 1978; Metwally et al., 2014). Training and development also boosts skills and confidence of employees and minimizes mistakes and overall performance (Khanka, 2003).

Although HRM practices are well-known across the globe, the research in the Pakistani healthcare setting is still significantly underrepresented. The current literature is narrow-minded and mostly concentrates on specific variables instead of given an overall examination of the HRM systems. Moreover, there is a lack of comparative studies concerning public and private health facilities despite the fact that the two sectors are vastly different in terms of resources, management systems, operational challenges, and so on.

This paper answers these gaps by investigating the effect of the integrated effect of compensation, leadership and training on overall employee satisfaction and comparing perceptions between the state and non-state health organizations in Pakistan. The study also enhances the rigor of the methodology by using the state-of-the-art statistical tools like regression analysis and also adds to the increasing literature on HRM in the developing countries settings.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To evaluate the impact Human Resource Management practices have on employee satisfaction in hospitals.
2. To compare the impact Human Resource Management practices have on employee satisfaction in private versus public hospital



## Literature Review

### Theoretical Framework

The connection between Human Resource Management (HRM) practice and employee satisfaction has been a subject of extensive research with most theoretical views. Of them, the Two-Factor Theory by Herzberg and the Social Exchange Theory offer a solid conceptual framework to the study of how HRM practices can affect the attitudes and behaviours of employees within organizational context, specifically in highly stressful environments, like healthcare.

Herzberg Two Factor Theory: Herzberg Two-Factor Theory: Herzberg Two-Factor Theory is a theory that differentiates between hygiene factors and motivators at work (Herzberg, 1959). Hygienic factors are the salary, job security and the working conditions which may be necessary to avoid dissatisfaction but not necessarily to increase satisfaction when they are available. Motivators, including recognition, achievement, personal growth, play a positive role in employee satisfaction and motivation.

Within the scope of the given research, compensation is defined as a hygiene factor, since it is mostly a factor that helps to avoid dissatisfaction of the employees. Fair compensation is vital in developing countries like Pakistan where employees are subjected to financial constraints and thus need to remain contented (Ali, 2019). On the other hand, leadership and training are recognized to be motivators since they offer a chance to develop professionally and attain psychological satisfaction. The applicability of Herzberg theory is especially high in a healthcare environment wherein employees face a lot of stress. Healthcare workers do not only need a good pay but also a supportive leadership and developmental prospects to be satisfied and motivated (Kabene et al., 2006). The HRM practices that include compensation, leadership and training as discussed in the attached study play a major role in employee satisfaction in healthcare organizations.

Moreover, Armstrong (2006) pointed out that the greatest strength of an organization is its employees, and they need to be satisfied to attain organizational goals. This school of thought supports the need to combine hygiene and motivational elements in HRM.

Social Exchange Theory: Social Exchange Theory (SET) describes the relationship in organizations as a sequence of mutual exchanges between the employees and employers (Blau, 1964). This theory states that whenever organizations offer good working conditions and invest in employees via HRM activities, employees feel obliged to give back to the organization with good attitudes such as job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). The importance of reciprocal relationships is even more crucial in the context of healthcare organizations, where employees have to work under rather challenging conditions. Employees will be more inclined to develop a sense of loyalty and satisfaction when they believe they are supported by the organization in terms of their fair compensation, good leadership, and training opportunities. This is consistent with the results of the attached study which reveals that employees react favorably to HRM practices.



Examples of such include training programs, which are indicators of organizational investment in the development of employees thereby fostering greater satisfaction and motivation. Likewise, supportive leadership builds trust and enhances the psychological contract between employees and the organization (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). This research using a combination of the Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg and the Social Exchange Theory would allow us to have a holistic perspective on the processes by which HRM practices affect employee satisfaction.

### **HRM Practices and Employee Satisfaction**

The practices of Human Resource Management are critical in determining the level of satisfaction among employees, especially in the service sector like in healthcare. Compensation, leadership, and training are among these practices that have been cited to be major determinants of the satisfaction of employees.

**Compensation:** Compensation can be defined as the monetary and non-monetary benefits given to workers in return to their efforts. It includes salaries, bonuses, allowances, and benefits (Yoder, 1970; Awad, 1981). One of the key elements that determine employee satisfaction is compensation, especially in the developing economies where the financial stability is one of the primary concerns (Ali, 2019).

Empirical studies indicate that whether compensation is fair and competitive, it increases employee motivation and decreases turnover. According to Yamoah (2014), compensation directly positively influences employee satisfaction, whereas Robles (2018) highlighted the significance of compensation in the form of paid leaves and pensions in enhancing employee well-being. The study also available in the attachment notes that the workers in the healthcare sector are of a strong opinion that the issues that relate to compensation such as salary, bonuses and benefits are important in determining the level of satisfaction among the workers. The conclusion is relevant to the theory of Herzberg, who claims that compensation is a hygiene factor that is required to avoid dissatisfaction.

Nevertheless, payment might not be enough to guarantee long-term satisfaction. To attain long-term employee satisfaction, organizations need to integrate financial rewards with other HRM activities like training and leadership.

**Leadership:** Leadership is a vital element that affects employee satisfaction, especially in a complex organization like the health care. Transformational leadership, which is inspirational, intellectually stimulating and considerate of individuals, has been found to lead to increased satisfaction in the employees (Burns, 1978).

Proper leadership practices foster a conducive working environment, they motivate employees to take part, and offer development opportunities. Metwally et al. (2014) observe that leadership has a great impact on the level of employee satisfaction in terms of trust and involvement.

The research provided below suggests that the employees of healthcare institutions appreciate such leadership practices as autonomy, recognition, and career growth. These are the aspects that make



job satisfaction because they help to elevate the level of empowerment and professional fulfilment of the employees.

Additionally, leadership is consistent with the Social Exchange Theory since supportive leadership practices are seen as organizational support which results in positive employee reactions (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Vermeeren et al. (2014) also affirmed that leadership practices are key in enhancing employee outcomes in healthcare organizations.

**Training and Development:** Training and development are vital HRM practices that aim at improving the skills, knowledge and competence of the employees. Continuous training in healthcare organizations is essential to ensure the high standards of patient care and minimization of errors.

Training is beneficial as it helps to enhance the performance of employees, it boosts confidence, and leads to job satisfaction. Flippo (1980) defines training as a program used to enhance the abilities of employees and development as a program designed to equip employees with future jobs. According to Khanka (2003), training is part of personal development and professional development.

The empirical evidence of the positive correlation between training and employee satisfaction is supported. In a study by Asfaw et al. (2015), training has been found to be effective in enhancing employee performance and effectiveness. On the same note, Townsend et al. (2010) emphasized the role of training in stress management and enhancement of performance in health facilities.

The presented research also shows that healthcare professionals view training as one of the most important factors that help them increase job satisfaction, minimize errors, and become more efficient. Training is consistent with Social Exchange Theory because it is the indicator of organizational interest in the development of the employees and their enhanced satisfaction and commitment.

### **Empirical Evidence**

There is a considerable amount of empirical evidence that the relationship between HRM practices and employee satisfaction is valid. Research has always established a positive relationship between HRM practices and employee performance such as job satisfaction, commitment and performance.

According to Petrescu and Simmons (2008), HRM practices have a positive and significant impact on employee satisfaction, as they increase their engagement and motivation. Likewise, Vermeeren et al. (2014) have shown that the HRM practices have a positive impact on employee outcomes in healthcare organizations.

Research in the context of Pakistan suggests that compensation and working conditions are important in employee satisfaction. Kabene et al. (2006) highlighted the importance of HRM to enhance working conditions and the welfare of the employees in healthcare facilities.

The given study is an empirical evidence that the factors of compensation, leadership and training have a great impact on the satisfaction of employees working in Pakistani healthcare organizations.



This conclusion supports the value of the integrated approach to HRM in order to meet the needs of employees.

Moreover, research has indicated a close correlation between job satisfaction and performance in an organization. Spector (1997) said that employees who are satisfied are more productive and committed which results in better organizational results. Another factor that influences job satisfaction, as highlighted by Hoppock (1935), is a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors.

Although these findings have been made, there are gaps in the literature. Numerous researches have been based on descriptive analysis and do not include the use of sophisticated statistical methods, including regression analysis. Moreover, there are few comparative studies on the healthcare sector (public versus private).

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Compensation has a significant positive effect on employee satisfaction.
- H2: Leadership has a significant positive effect on employee satisfaction.
- H3: Training has a significant positive effect on employee satisfaction.
- H4: There is a significant difference between public and private sector employees.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design used in this study was a quantitative cross-sectional research design to investigate the correlation between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and employee satisfaction in healthcare organizations. Quantitative approach makes it possible to measure and statistically test the relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014). The cross sectional design implies gathering data at one point, which is appropriate in capturing the perceptions of employees in an efficient manner (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This design is consistent with the purpose of the study to evaluate the effect of compensation, leadership, and training on employee satisfaction and the comparison of the responses between the public and the private sectors, which also echoes in the original study.

### **Sample**

A sample of the study included 50 healthcare providers (doctors and nurses) who work in both public and private tertiary hospitals in Karachi, Pakistan. The sampling method was a non-probability convenience sampling, because there was a lack of access to respondents, and time restrictions are typical in healthcare research (Etikan et al., 2016). Of all the 85 approached, 50 agreed to participate. The sample was balanced in terms of representation of both the public and



the private sectors making it possible to compare it. A relatively small sample size is appropriate in exploratory quantitative studies and is similar to previous studies in developing settings (Kabene et al., 2006).

### Instrument

The structured self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The tool was used to measure three dimensions of HRM: compensation (9 items), leadership (6 items), and training (5 items). The validated sources were used to adapt items, such as Yamoah (2014), Robles (2018), and Asfaw et al. (2015), which guaranteed content validity. Likert scales are generally acceptable in measuring attitudes and perceptions when it comes to organizational research (Likert, 1932). Demographic variables were also incorporated to put the findings in perspective.

### Reliability

Cronbachs alpha was used to determine reliability and is a metric of internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951). The constructs proved to be relatively reliable (alpha values were higher than 0.80), and the internal consistency was high (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). These findings prove that the tool effectively measures HRM practices and employee satisfaction.

### Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was done in SPSS. Respondent characteristics and trends in the variables were summarized using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) (Field, 2013). Pearson correlation evaluated the correlation between the HRM practices and employee satisfaction (Cohen et al., 2003). To identify the effect of compensation, leadership and training on employee satisfaction and which predictors are the strongest, multiple regression analysis was applied (Hair et al., 2010). Further, Chi-square test was used to test the difference between the employees of the public sector and the private sector (Pallant, 2016). Such a mixture of statistical methods guarantees the thorough and powerful analysis of the data..

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

The demographic attributes of the respondents and their perceptions about Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and employee satisfaction were summarized using descriptive statistics.

Table 1  
 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 50)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	16	32%
	Female	34	68%
Age	21–30	24	48%
	31–40	9	18%



	41-50	9	18%
	Above 50	8	16%
<b>Profession</b>	Doctor	25	50%
	Nurse	25	50%
<b>Sector</b>	Public	25	50%
	Private	25	50%

Most respondents were women (68%), which means that the health care workforce is more populated by women. The majority of the participants (48%) were between 21-30 years indicating a relatively young workforce. The equal representation of doctors and nurses, the employees of the public and the private sectors gives a level ground to the comparative analysis..

### Descriptive Analysis of HRM Practices

Table 2  
Mean and Standard Deviation of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Compensation	4.7	0.39
Leadership	4.6	0.24
Training	4.6	0.39
Employee Satisfaction	4.6	0.30

The mean scores for all variables are above 4.5, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the importance of HRM practices in influencing employee satisfaction. The mean score is the highest (4.7) on compensation, which indicates that a financial reward and benefits are the most significant factor. Leadership and training also report positive perceptions, which are very strong, and illustrate importance in improving job satisfaction.

### Correlation Analysis

The relationship between employee satisfaction and HRM practices was analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis.

Table 3  
Correlation Matrix

Variables	Compensation	Leadership	Training	Satisfaction
Compensation	1			
Leadership	0.65**	1		
Training	0.60*	0.62*	1	
Satisfaction	0.71**	0.65**	0.60*	1

(\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01)

The findings show that there is a positive association with a strong correlation between the HRM practices and employee satisfaction. Compensation shows the highest correlation with satisfaction (r = 0.71, p < 0.01), followed by leadership (r = 0.65, p < 0.01) and training (r = 0.60, p < 0.05). Such results indicate that employee satisfaction increases with better practices of HRM.



### Regression Analysis

The effect of HRM practices on employee satisfaction was measured using multiple regression analysis.

Table 4  
Model Summary

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
<b>0.79</b>	0.62	0.59

The model has a strong explanatory power with 62 percent of the variance in employee satisfaction being explained. This implies that the overall HRM practices have a considerable effect on the level of employee satisfaction.

Table 5  
Regression Coefficients

Variable	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value
<b>Compensation</b>	0.41	3.85	0.001
<b>Leadership</b>	0.35	3.10	0.003
<b>Training</b>	0.29	2.45	0.012

All three HRM practices have great impact on employee satisfaction. Compensation has the strongest effect ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by leadership ( $\beta = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and training ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The findings confirm H1, H2 and H3 and show that HRM practices have a positive influence on employee satisfaction.

### Chi-Square Test (Public vs Private Sector)

Chi-square test was done to investigate the difference between the staff of the public and the private sector.

Table 6  
Chi-Square Results

Variable	Chi-square	p-value
<b>Compensation</b>	1.81	0.613
<b>Leadership</b>	2.40	0.301
<b>Training</b>	3.27	0.351

The findings show that the difference between the employees of the public and the private sector is not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). This implies that HRM practices can play a similar role in employee satisfaction in both industries. Thus, hypothesis H4 is rejected.



## **Summary of Findings**

The analysis of the data shows that HRM practices, in general, and compensation, leadership, and training, in particular, influence employee satisfaction significantly and positively. The most influential factor is the compensation, which indicates how significant financial stability is in the healthcare sector. Satisfaction is also dependent on the leadership and training, which points to the importance of the supportive management and continuous professional growth. The fact that there are no substantial differences between the public and the private sector implies that there are common HR issues in both environments, and there is a necessity to use extensive HR strategies in all healthcare organizations.

## **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Discussion**

The objective of the current study was to investigate how Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, such as compensation, leadership and training, affected employee satisfaction in both public and private healthcare organizations in Pakistan. The results show that all three HRM practices play significant roles in employee satisfaction with compensation being the best predictor. These findings go in line with the findings of the attached study where respondents highly concurred on the significance of HRM practices on the satisfaction.

This major influence of compensation is consistent with the Two-Factor Theory by Herzberg that proposes salary and benefits as hygiene factors that should be provided to avoid disengagement (Herzberg, 1959). Compensation is even more important in employee attitude formation in the context of Pakistan, which has a relatively high economic pressures. Ali (2019) supports this finding because he noted that one of the strongest determinants of job satisfaction in developing countries is through financial rewards. On the same note, Yamoah (2014) highlighted that employee motivation and retention is directly proportional to compensation.

The research also established that leadership is a key factor in determining employee satisfaction. This finding goes in line with the principle of transformational leadership, which underscores inspiration, support, and recognition as essential motivating factors of employee engagement (Burns, 1978). Healthcare workers usually operate under stressful conditions and good leadership can be used to establish a conducive organizational atmosphere. Our result concurs with Metwally et al. (2014), who emphasized the positive correlation between leadership style and employee satisfaction. Besides, according to the Social Exchange Theory, supportive leadership builds trust and prompts employees to give back with greater levels of satisfaction and commitment (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

On the same note, training and development was discovered to positively influence employee satisfaction significantly. Training improves the skills, confidence and performance of employees, thus leading to job satisfaction. This discovery is consistent with the past study conducted by Asfaw et al. (2015), who showed that training is an effective method to enhance employee performance and effectiveness. Training is especially crucial in the healthcare environment where



it minimizes the number of errors and enhances the quality of patient care provided. This finding is also supported by the attached study, which states that employees believe that training is one of the most important factors to improve motivation and decrease inefficiencies.

Interestingly, the research did not reveal any significant difference between the employees in the public and private sector, implying that HRM practices do not influence any of the two sectors. This observation refutes some previous beliefs that the private sector organizations are superior in HR practices than state organizations are. Nevertheless, it could indicate the organizational issues of the healthcare institutions in Pakistan, where both fields suffer certain limitations, including work pressure and resource limitations (Kabene et al., 2006).

Comprehensively, the results substantiate the fact that HRM practices are essential factors that determine employee satisfaction. The findings also indicate the need to consider a holistic HRM strategy that incorporates financial, managerial and developmental dimensions to enhance employee performance.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has come up with a conclusion that the practices of Human Resource Management are crucial in improving employee satisfaction in healthcare institutions. All forms of compensation, leadership and training were found to have a strong positive impact on employee satisfaction with compensation being the most influential.

The results suggest that medical workers do not only appreciate financial incentives, but positive leadership and professional growth. The fact that there are no significant differences between the employees in the public and the private sectors also indicates that HRM practices are equally crucial in both sectors.

In general, the research adds to the literature due to its empirical evidence based on the Pakistani healthcare setting, as well as to the significance of HRM strategies coupled with each other to enhance employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

### **Recommendations**

Following the research results, the following recommendations can be suggested:

#### **Managerial Recommendations**

The development of holistic HRM strategies aimed at enhancing employee satisfaction should be a priority to the healthcare organization. First, there should be a review of the compensation systems to make them just, transparent and competitive. This involves provision of performance based incentives, bonuses and employee benefits like healthcare cover and paid leaves.

Second, organizations ought to invest in leadership development programs in order to improve managerial effectiveness. Training leaders to embrace transformational leadership approaches that encourage employee participation, appreciation and encouragement should be adopted.



Third, training and development initiatives must be increased to enable healthcare professionals to have lifelong learning opportunities. It is possible to have regular training to enhance the skills of the employees, minimize the error and improve the overall performance.

### Policy Recommendations

The healthcare authorities must highlight the role of the HRM practices at the policy level in enhancing service delivery. Policies must be made to harmonize HR practices in both the government and non-government healthcare facilities. Also, the HR infrastructure needs to be boosted to facilitate employee development and retention.

### Future Research

Although this paper offers fruitful information, there are some gaps that need to be filled with additional research. In future studies, bigger samples should be taken to enhance the applicability of the results. The research carried out on more than one city or province in Pakistan would present a more detailed picture on the HRM practices under varying environments. Also, future research using more sophisticated statistical methods, e.g., Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), should be utilized to test complicated associations between variables. Longitudinal research designs could also be used to establish causal relationships between HRM practices and employee satisfaction.

In addition, other HRM variables like job security, work balance and organizational culture could be investigated in future studies to give a broader picture of employee satisfaction.

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