

# Exploring the Influence of Human Resource Management Strategies on Employee Retention: A Detailed Empirical Analysis in Private Higher Education Institutions

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## Abstract

*This study explores the influence of human resource management strategies on employee retention at private higher education institutions in Malaysia. This quantitative research aims to examine how human resource management practices affect employee retention, and this research will be conducted on individual employees at private higher education institutions in Malaysia, where questionnaires were distributed electronically and in hard copies to respondents. In this study, the primary sources of data collection were observed, and there was minimal interference in the process. This study was a cross-sectional time horizon since survey data are only gathered once at a certain period from respondents from various backgrounds. The target population was 1,000 people from private higher education. 98 responses were received, and all were coded and analyzed with IBM Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 and Smart PLS. The study proves that rewards and recognition positively influence employee retention at private higher education institutions in Malaysia. The study suggested that employees given opportunities for training and development are more likely to stay with their organization. On the other hand, the study suggests that performance appraisal does not necessarily positively influence employee retention at Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.*

**Keywords:** *Employee Retention, Rewards and Recognition, Training and Development, Performance Appraisal System, Productivity, Decent Job.*

## Introduction

HR management is gradually moving away from its formerly assigned traditional tasks, such as administration, transactional, and personnel roles, in the age of globalization. However, as a result of the numerous challenging obstacles that contemporary firms must overcome, their HR departments also need to adapt. Globalization and competitive trends in human resource management are the direct causes of this change. Businesses today expect HR Management to improve the strategic use of employee initiatives. The decision-making process in firms has gotten more complex due to the increased level of global competitiveness. They demand cutting-edge HR systems that can decipher data to give corporate insights, foresee future needs, and develop plans to meet urgent requirements (Multiplier, 2022). The stark disparity between the global talent supply and long-term demand makes the difficulty even more difficult. If a result, as the skill gap widens over time, the next generation of firms will probably experience a shortage of highly skilled people. Companies will need to invest in human capital above financial capital because of the effects

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of globalization on HR practices. After all, a company's ability to become a global leader depends heavily on good HR management (Multiplier, 2022).

Western countries' educational infrastructures have undergone significant changes, which have greatly improved the management of higher education institutions (Akhtar et al., 2022). The methodical implementation of these changes has impacted the world. Given that education is a global phenomenon, developing nations are pressured to uphold worldwide educational standards and reform their educational institutions to meet higher education criteria established by international agencies. According to research studies, most public sector educational institutions struggle with poor human resource management. According to these findings, poor strategic planning and improper application of sound HRM procedures cause disasters in firms (Akhtar et al., 2022). According to Gander (2019), the infrastructure of educational institutions has changed structurally from being public to a corporate company, necessitating an effective human management system. Employees nowadays must deal with both financial pressures and demands for increased productivity.

According to Randstad's employer brand research for that year, 30 percent of Malaysian employees are expected to change jobs by June 2022. In Malaysia, 3 out of 10 respondents stated they intended to change occupations before June of this year, a 7 percent increase from 2021. One in five people not concerned about losing their jobs, up 5% from the previous year, say they will change careers (Randstad, 2022). The Head of Operations at Randstad Malaysia, Fahad Naeem (2022) said, "As the labour market recovers from the pandemic and companies hire more headcount to manage increasing business demands, many employees are both tempted and motivated to seek new and better work opportunities. Many employees have had the chance to hone their skills over the last two years amid a volatile business climate, and they feel like they are ready for more challenging jobs with employers who not only care about their professional development but their well-being." (Randstad, 2022)

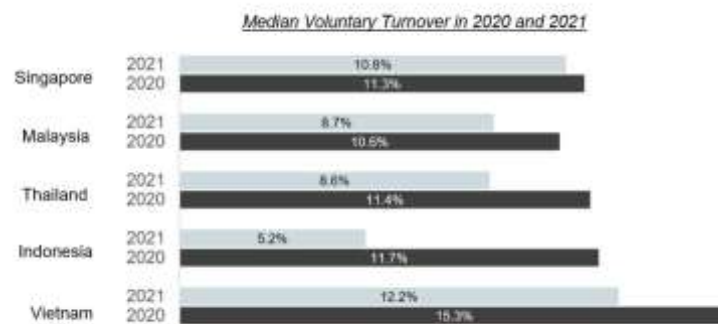
Many job searchers in 2022 are looking for businesses that offer competitive wage packages and comprehensive employee well-being programs, such as flexible work schedules. Because of this, corporate executives who proactively carry out programs to enhance work-life balance for their staff are more likely to draw in and keep talent. In the six months from July to December 2021, according to the report (Randstad, 2022), 14% of respondents changed employers. Strong management (62 percent), work-life balance (62 percent), and appealing salaries and benefits (66 percent) are the top three factors encouraging Malaysian employees to look for a new job (Randstad, 2022). Overworked employees are more inclined to look for a new position with a more manageable task or a compassionate employer so they may reclaim control of their time and look after their physical and emotional well-being. Bosses and supervisors who value their employees' well-being and reward good work will attract more talent seeking employment (Randstad, 2022).

According to H2 2021 statistics from Randstad's Work Monitor survey, 44% of Malaysians think their skills have become more valuable during the pandemic. This is the highest rate in the area; Singapore and Hong Kong lag at 21% and 17%, respectively. Nearly half of those surveyed said that their talents were still somewhat useful (48%), and just over one in ten said that their skills were less relevant (8%) at the same time (Tan, 2022). Drawing a relationship between relevancy in skills and career progressions, a good mix of respondents reported that they have: i. Promoted and received a pay raise during the pandemic (21%); ii. I have been promoted and will receive a pay raise later (17%). I have been promoted and will not receive a pay raise (14%). Nearly one in four (23%) have experienced an improvement in their ability to make an income in terms of the relevance of their skills and income. However, more than half (56%) claimed that it remained the same, and almost one in five (17%) claimed that their capacity to generate income had decreased (Tan, 2022).

Even though job prospects in Malaysia are still generally favorable, nearly nine out of ten (89%) respondents said that changes in the job market have "made them realize" that they need more training and development to stay relevant. Nearly 90 percent of respondents also said that they want their employers or the government to "provide skills assessment tests" so that they will know what skills to pick up to remain employable (Tan, 2022). Analysts stated that as a result, employers "need to design an executable long-term

workforce upskilling strategy that attempts to let employees know the precise skills they need to acquire to advance their careers, as well as give resources to assist them reach their professional goals." The research stressed that if businesses do not take these steps, workers might re-enter the workforce (also known as The Great Resignation) (Tan, 2022).

Talent retention and employee turnover are significant concerns for higher education institutions because they are losing highly qualified and quality staff to the private sector. Employee retention is, therefore, a major concern for the institution to examine. In developing countries like Malaysia, employee turnover intention has become a serious problem. According to Munir and Tobi (2020), the likelihood of an employee quitting their job was estimated to be 36 percent within the next two years in Malaysia. In addition, based on Malaysian media reports, retention is indicated by a high turnover ratio, with up to 150,000 employees losing their jobs during the pandemic due to the financial crisis and lockdown (Munir and Tobi, 2020).



**Figure 1. Median Voluntary Turnover in 2020 and 2021 (Sunil, 2021)**

In the Malaysian context, the general industry's employee turnover rate was 10.6% in 2020 and 8.7% in 2021, as shown in Figure 1. The statistic shows that attracting and keeping talent for the company is a significant challenge for Malaysian human resource managers. Numerous causes and effects have a big impact on how many employees leave an organization (Sunil, 2021).

According to the 2022 Randstad Employer Brand Research, the survey involved 163,000 respondents from 31 markets, and 2,524 people were based in Malaysia. The study shows that after the labor market recovers from the pandemic, companies increase their headcount to meet growing business demands, and many employees are motivated to seek better job opportunities. Many employees in 2022 are looking for new employers who can offer competitive salary packages and comprehensive employee well-being programs like flexible work schedules (Randstad, 2022). The study's data from the previous year, conducted from July to December 2021, shows that 14% of respondents had changed employers. The top three factors encouraging Malaysian workers to look for a new job are as follows (Randstad, 2022):

Attractive salary and benefits (66%)

Work-life balance (62%)

Strong management (62%)

The consequences of a high employee turnover rate include high direct and indirect costs, decreased productivity, and adverse effects on the company's reputation and performance. As a result, a company should evaluate what needs to be improved in order to attract and retain talent.

Implementing HR strategies such as incentives and recognition, performance evaluations, training, and development has been associated with fulfilling various managerial responsibilities and optimizing the

performance of an organization's workforce. Nevertheless, adopting these HR practices within private higher education institutions is relatively limited. Considering that employees play a significant role in the growth and success of an organization, private higher education should emphasize these practices to enhance employee retention. Given the dynamic and ever-changing global landscape, private higher education institutions must recognize the importance of staff retention. They should ensure that their intellectual capital remains productive and responsive to the needs of their stakeholders. Prior research has demonstrated that effective implementation of essential HR practices, although not explicitly studied within private higher education, can contribute to employee and organizational performance, facilitating their growth and success. While human resource management encompasses a wide range of tasks in the business world, its application to the educational sector, notably higher education institutions, requires specific adaptations. Motivating college staff and coordinating their activities are crucial aspects that must be addressed to maximize their contributions and achieve educational objectives (Chaudhari, 2019).

This research aims to investigate and assess the impact that Human Resource Management (HRM) techniques have on the retention of employees at private institutions of higher education. The objective of this study is to conduct an empirical analysis of the effects that different human resource management (HRM) practices, which have been modified to accommodate the evolving global environment and unique difficulties encountered by private higher education, have on the retention of academic and administrative personnel. The research aims to provide private higher education institutions with practical insights that might boost their organizational performance and sustainability in a globally competitive education market by identifying HRM methods that specifically lead to increased employee retention.

## Literature Review

Due to the small employee population, the localized nature of human requirements, and the early stage of organizational culture, the human resource management department's responsibility was relatively small. New facets of the company with strategy building arose as industrialization expanded and the number of producers increased, making it challenging to maintain market dominance and profitability. Over time, as rivalry rose, little activity in strategy development developed into Strategic Management, a comprehensive and essential business component. As a result, human resource management has transformed from an easy task into a strategic procedure (Vaidya and Shirahatti, 2019).

According to Vaidya and Shirahatti (2019), due to the economies' increasing integration and the need to promote goals of maximizing economic circumstances, businesses have come to understand the significance of implementing global strategies in their subsidiaries. In order to comply with their new and innovative management policies and practices, MNCs must study and implement local laws. This has prompted HRM to research local laws and regulations and establish appropriate guidelines for the host country where the subsidiaries will operate. As a result of expanding their businesses outside their home countries, companies now go by the moniker "Multinational company" or MNC (Vaidya and Shirahatti, 2019). Any corporation that wants to create successful business operations must employ a sizable local workforce. Thus, it is critical to research, comprehend, and appreciate the area's demographic, cultural, and religious landscape. This will eliminate the "foreigner" label and alienation and foster a sense of trust and belonging (GreatDay, 2022).

### *Human Resource Practices in Global Perspective*

The responsibility of the human resource management department was initially limited due to the small employee population, localized human requirements, and the nascent stage of organizational culture. However, as industrialization progressed and the number of competitors increased, the need for strategic management and maintaining market dominance and profitability became apparent. Consequently, human resource management transformed from a simple task to a strategic process (Vaidya & Shirahatti, 2019).

The success of an organization relies on quality production, sustained output, and strategic performance. Human resources are crucial in creating, implementing, and timely revising plans. Regardless of their position, human resources can make or break an organization. In today's environment, the importance of

human resource management has intensified (Vaidya & Shirahatti, 2019). As economies integrate and businesses aim to maximize economic conditions, implementing global subsidiary strategies has become increasingly important. Multinational companies (MNCs) recognize the need to align with local laws and regulations while implementing innovative management practices. Consequently, HRM researches local laws, establishes relevant guidelines, and adapts to host countries where subsidiaries operate. MNCs expand their operations beyond their home countries, and it is crucial to understand the demographic, cultural, and religious landscape of the area to foster trust, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging (Vaidya & Shirahatti, 2019; GreatDay, 2022).

Human resource management is crucial in developing HR policies by researching human behavior, family structure, and societal culture (Vaidya & Shirahatti, 2019). These policies are implemented uniformly throughout the organization as standards, facilitating the successful localization of global culture. For example, policies regarding holiday weekends, leave options and shift work schedules. Furthermore, communication challenges may arise due to the linguistic diversity in the countries where a company's headquarters and subsidiaries are located. The HR department provides language acquisition courses and promotes cross-cultural awareness in such cases. The HR department also educates employees about other cultures to enhance their training and experiences. Additionally, the perception of the local community significantly influences an organization's success. Therefore, businesses can foster community by organizing social events, supporting governmental and non-governmental organizations, and contributing to charitable trusts (Vaidya & Shirahatti, 2019).

#### *Overview of Human Resource Management in Malaysia*

Arguing that a company's human resources keep an organization running smoothly is not a stretch. Since employees directly impact an organization's success, talent management has been more popular over the past few decades. So, when Malaysian businesses pursue organizational stability and harmony while aiming for improved organizational performance and productivity, human resource management has been seen as a critical capital (GreatDay, 2022). As employees from a variety of backgrounds make up the bulk of Malaysian enterprises, businesses must practice effective human resource management in Malaysia.

Although a company's aims for human resource management are often the same as those of other businesses in the market, the decision of which sort of practice to use depends heavily on the makeup of the business. The quantity of resources the business might allocate to human resource management is also crucial. As a result, many Malaysian businesses modified their human resource management practices to meet their evolving needs. For instance, businesses whose primary source of income is product sales would need to create a human resource management plan that considers employee commission and other incentives to boost sales performance. However, training will improve work-related abilities, including marketing and communication skills (Tan, 2022).

#### *Employee Retention*

Retaining employees requires an organization to implement a wide variety of policies and procedures (Francis, 2014). Human Resource practices and policies help employees have positive work experiences, strengthen employment relationships, and contribute to an organization's overall success (Hvizdová and Máchal, 2019). The practices of strategic human resource management influence the levels of employee commitment as well as the rates of voluntary turnover among employees (Allui and Sahni, 2016).

Studies on HRM have demonstrated the functional significance of HRM practices in helping businesses manage their people effectively and efficiently to achieve organizational goals. It was also noted that HRM practices substantially correlate with job embeddedness (a measure of how attached employees are to their jobs), significantly impacting employees' productivity and job performance (Wei et al., 2016). The ability of an organization to keep the high performers while letting the low performers leave will, therefore, be positively impacted by this (Renaud et al., 2015). Otherwise, retention will be dysfunctional and a waste of resources for the organization if the high performers depart while the low performers remain (Hausknecht et al., 2009).

Success in the modern business environment depends on retention, which is the capacity to preserve an employee's relationship with a company (Kadiresan et al., 2019; Baharin and Hanafi, 2018). Employee retention is essential since it gives businesses a competitive edge and indicates goals achieved (Bakar et al., 2018; Zainal et al., 2022). Retention is also valued highly because it affects the business's effectiveness in terms of monetary and non-monetary values (Kadiresan et al., 2019). The term "employee retention process" refers to the procedures and methods used by organizations to prevent key employees from quitting, such as encouraging them to remain with the business for as long as is practical (Baharin and Hanafi, 2018). Nowadays, many businesses are looking at ways to keep their workers around for as long as possible through interacting with them and using employee retention strategies (Mahadi et al., 2020). The number of people who leave or join the company indicates that this relationship is related to its efforts to assist its personnel (Tian et al., 2020). By predicting the gap between future labor demand and supply based on the organization's goals, retention aids human resource planning (Kamalaveni et al., 2019). Employee retention is higher when they have some say and control over workplace decisions (Khalid and Nawab, 2018). Compensation, supervisor support, and work-life policies are the main factors that influence employees' principal concerns and their intention to leave their current position (Kamalaveni et al., 2019). Contextual factors like the environment and the type of job also support human behavior (Subramaniam et al., 2019).

### *Rewards and Recognition*

The reward is "Something that increases the frequency of an employee action" (Zigon, 1994). The rewards and recognition practice determines the monetary and non-monetary rewards employees receive from the organization based on their performance (Halid et al., 2020). A meticulously designed reward system can enhance an organization's human resource effectiveness and productivity. Recently, complex reward systems have been required to meet the needs of a more diverse workforce, and organizations have discovered that they must increasingly focus on the total compensation package for employees (Akafo and Boateng, 2015).

According to the research result from Tirta and Erika, reward and recognition (implicit and explicit) I played a significant role in employee retention. It is recommended that the benefits and Douglas package for employees be clarified. Organizations are also advised to have intrinsic reward policies and standards, and it is also recommended that employee benefits be realistic and reliable (Tirta and Erika, 2020).

Tessema et al. (2013) found that in their research conducted in Vietnam, the United States, and Malaysia, recognizing members/employees generates greater motivation than monetary rewards (salary, money, or other benefits). In conclusion, recognition plays a crucial role in a company's ability to retain its talent by correlating the aforementioned variables (reward and recognition) with the characteristics of the current workforce generation, which is dominated by Millennials who will be the top management. Martin et al. (2016) found that Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials view reward and recognition as one of the most important factors in employee retention.

### *Training and Development*

Training programs are designed and delivered internally by company experts or managed and organized externally (Benslimane and Moustaghfir, 2020). Other forms of human resource management include training and development, in which companies invest in their workers by enhancing their knowledge, abilities, and other necessary skills to increase productivity (Gamage, 2014). According to Alrehail and Osman (2019), training and development result in knowledge accumulation and human capital growth. This ultimately influences job retention because employees can efficiently complete assigned tasks and are satisfied with their work (Memon et al., 2022). Based on the research from Nguyen and Duong (2020), past research has demonstrated that training and development have a substantial impact and strong relationship with employee retention. In their study of manufacturing firms, (Nurul Absaret al, 2010) discovered that training and development had the most significant and positive effect on employee job satisfaction and thus reduced employee turnover. Therefore, previous research has demonstrated that training and development as one of the primary HRM practices can affect employee job retention.

Training and development are believed to be crucial tools for meeting organizational needs. Many businesses stress training and development to encourage employee growth and create highly competent staff (Syah Mokhtar, 2019; Towler et al., 2014). In reality, it is generally acknowledged that a critical element in guaranteeing an organization's long-term success is the caliber of its workforce and the ongoing development of its skills and productivity through training (Syah Mokhtar, 2019). Therefore, employees must have access to training based on the requirements. The ability of the organization to create training plans based on employee needs determines the effectiveness of a training program (Syah Mokhtar, 2019).

Today, many businesses are more willing to spend money on training initiatives (Syah Mokhtar, 2019; Thijssen, 2014). This demonstrates how employee engagement in training programs can raise the degree of expertise and experience in economic development (Hahn et al., 2015). Meeting the requirements plays a significant role in determining an organization's success. Participation in training programs is crucial in developing skills (Mcdowall and Saunders, 2010). Participation in training programs has positive outcomes for both parties (Yang et al., 2012). However, the choice of the program, a person's participation in the program, and the organization's capacity to offer training to the workforce based on needs all affect how effective this training program is (Schuchter et al., 2015).

### *Performance Appraisal*

Employee performance appraisal is a systematic process in which management evaluates and provides feedback on employees' job performance and suggestions for enhancement and growth (Elrehail et al., 2019). Performance appraisal is also defined as the systematic process of measuring and developing the job performance of an organization's employees in relation to a predetermined set of standards over a specific period in order to achieve various goals (Halid et al, 2020). Performance Appraisals allow managers to discuss employees' work, give feedback, propose further training, and define appropriate incentives (Hauret et al., 2020). Employees who are happy with their performance reviews are often practical and efficient, reducing employee turnover (Alrehail et al., 2019).

Several studies show that performance appraisal fairness affects job satisfaction and retention (Pagan and Malo, 2021). It is important to know how performance appraisal affects job retention, especially among academics in Malaysia's higher education sector. Nowadays, performance appraisal plays a significant role in a more comprehensive approach that includes company strategies and human resource management techniques (Ram Sing and Guan Eng, 2021). It can be viewed as a general term comprising a variety of initiatives businesses take to evaluate employees, develop their abilities, increase production, and give out rewards. Employee output determines an organization's success, and it is human nature to evaluate the world around us. When there are no established standards of judgment, people may start making decisions based on informal norms, which can lead to disinterest, reduce employee productivity, and ultimately harm the organization (Hauret et al., 2020). Setting the appropriate standards for evaluating staff productivity is crucial. The primary goal of the literature review is to provide a sound framework and perspective for the current work.

There are not many studies on the use of performance reviews in Malaysia, and most of those that have been done show that staff members are not involved in the decision-making and evaluation processes (Ram Sing and Guan Eng, 2021). Poon (2004) claimed that in Malaysia, a manager's or supervisor's personal preferences take precedence when rating employees, and Kumar and Chaturvedi (2016) claimed that managers or supervisors lacked rating abilities. According to research by Phin (2015) and Sing and Guan Eng (2021), in Malaysia's education sector, "distributive justice" was positively correlated with employee satisfaction when it came to their reactions to receiving feedback and suggestions for wage increases or promotions. However, a number of research conducted in the past to determine the relationship between PA characteristics, work satisfaction, and its practicality have revealed a significant positive relationship between the mediating elements (Wahjono et al, 2016; Subekti and Setyadi, 2016; Arif and Urooj, 2016; Kumar and Chaturvedi, 2016).

### *The Relation between the Variables of the Study*

The significance of Rewards and Recognition, Training and Development, and Performance Appraisal in improving employee retention is emphasized in an abundance of scholarly works within human resource management. According to Zigon (1994), a well-managed incentive program may enhance employee performance, increasing motivation and retention. The effectiveness of monetary and non-monetary incentives in enhancing employee retention is supported by Tirta and Enrika (2020) and Tessema et al. (2013). This perspective extends beyond generational differences in the labor market, as noted by Martin et al. (2016).

Increasing the significance of employee-centric practices, Training, and development becomes fundamental in cultivating loyalty and contentment inside a firm. This view is supported by Nurul Absar et al. and Alrehail and Osman (2019), Nguyen and Duong (2020), and Nguyen and Duong (2020), who establish the direct association between investment in staff development and a substantial reduction in turnover rates (2010). This investment enhances employees' skill sets and fosters a culture that values growth and opportunity, as Syah Mokhtar (2019) emphasizes, therefore emphasizing the inherent worth that workers attribute to prospects for advancement.

An aspect of equal importance in the discussion around employee retention is the methodical implementation of performance appraisal. The authors Elrehail et al. (2019) and Halid et al. (2020) describe its crucial function in facilitating the exchange of constructive feedback and cultivating an atmosphere characterized by equity and openness—qualities that are considered essential for employee retention and job satisfaction by Pagan and Malo (2021). This has significant relevance in situations that need rigorous assessment procedures, such as the higher education system in Malaysia (Phin, 2015; Ram Sing and Guan Eng) (2021).

Upon synthesizing these several lines of inquiry, it becomes apparent that the convergence of training and development, performance appraisal, and rewards and recognition substantially propels employee retention. By strategically incorporating these practices into an organization's human resource management (HRM) strategy, it is possible to foster decent job that is positive for employee engagement and satisfaction and crucial for talent retention. This, in turn, strengthens the organization's competitive advantage and guarantees its continued prosperity in the ever-changing market.

### *Theoretical Justification*

There are some of the most common Employee Retention Models, such as the Zinger Model, ERC's Retention Model, Integrated System for Retaining Employees, etc. However, the framework of this study is derived from Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene model.

Frederick Herzberg proposed the Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene model in 1959, as shown in Figure 2. This concept proposes two factors that motivate employees: job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Although these may appear to be opposites, they function together in a cycle (Iyer, 2022).

The two-factor theory developed by Herzberg provides an insightful look into the primary factors that encourage employees that can be used to understand the motivations of individual employees that can, in turn, be utilized to craft a holistic employee motivation plan (Iyer, 2022).

Therefore, strategies for employee retention would involve taking care of both sets of factors to guarantee that talented employees receive the recognition and rewards they rightfully deserve for the effort they have put into the job. This will help to prevent employees from leaving the organization.



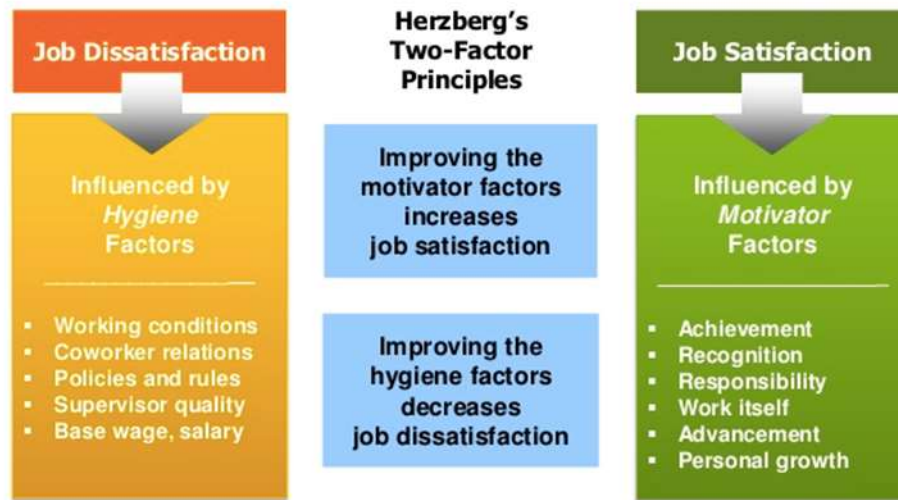


Figure 2. Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Model (Iyer, 2022).

The research framework was developed based on the Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene model associated with the research study to examine the relationship between three independent variables with employee retention for Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.

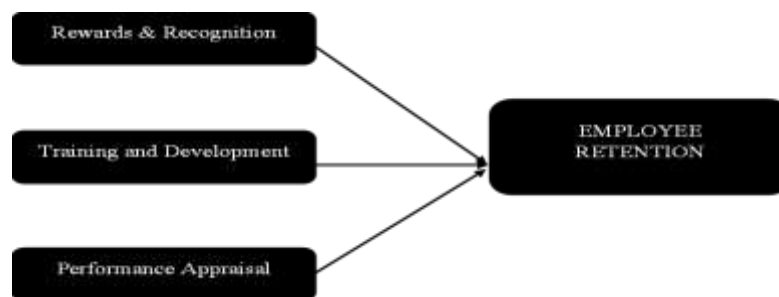


Figure 3. Research Framework

## Methodology

Quantitative research was utilized for this study, where questionnaires were distributed both electronically and through hardcopies to respondents (Thanaraju et al., 2019). In this particular study, the primary sources of data collection were observed, and there was minimal interference in the process (Chong and Dastane, 2017). A structured survey questionnaire was utilized to collect data and test hypotheses to analyze the relationship between the variables (Hoe et al., 2018). This study had a cross-sectional time horizon since survey data were only gathered once at a certain period from respondents from various backgrounds (Chung et al., 2018). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2020), the statistical formula to calculate as stated below and determine the sample size required is shown in Figure 3:

$$n = p\% \times q\% \times \left[ \frac{z}{e\%} \right]^2$$

Source: Saunders et al. (2020)

The target population was 1,000 from private higher education institutions, and the sample size was 278, according to Taherdoost (2017). A total of 22 items were adopted from Halid et al. (2020) and Hauret et

al. (2020) to measure retention towards Human Resource Management Practices, and it was divided into three practices: (i) reward and recognition, (ii) training and development, (iii) performance appraisal. Each question was answered by a five-point Likert-type scale, namely Most Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). A total of 6 items were adopted from TalentLyft to measure employee retention among the respondents. A 5-point Likert scale, namely Most Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5), was used to obtain the level of employee retention among the respondents. A pilot test was conducted to ensure that the validity was attained. The relationships between independent and dependent variables were tested using multiple regression analysis using SmartPls 4.0.9.8. Evaluation of measurement and structural model were assessed.

## Results and Discussion

### *Pilot Test*

**Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test (Pilot Test)**

Constructs	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.
Rewards and recognition	.799
Training and Development	.661
Performance Appraisal	.676
Employee retention	.730

Based on Table 1, the KMO and Bartlett Test for Pilot Testing revealed KMO values of 0.661 and 0.799 for dependent and independent variables, respectively, suggesting good data quality. This reflects an acceptable degree of information overlap and partial correlation among variables, enabling factor analysis. Additionally, the Bartlett Test result being less than 0.05 indicates a significant relationship between variables, further supporting the feasibility of factor analysis with the collected data.

### *Reliability Test (Pilot Test)*

**Table 2. Reliability Test (Pilot Test)**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Employee retention	0.808	6
Rewards and recognition	0.909	9
Training and Development	0.877	7
Performance Appraisal	0.882	6

Considering the reliability test results reported in Table 2, the dependent and independent variables' Cronbach's Alpha values vary from 0.808 to 0.909, indicating a good internal consistency level. The responses are trustworthy, and additional analysis can be done utilizing the information gathered.

### *Data Analysis*

#### *Demographic Profile*

**Table 3. Demographic Profile**

		Frequency	percent
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>48</b>	46.2
	<b>Female</b>	<b>50</b>	48.1
<b>Age</b>	18-20 years old	26	25.0

	21-30 years old	40	38.5
	31-40 years old	24	23.1
	41-50 years old	8	7.7
<b>Education</b>	SPM/STPM	3	2.9
	Certificate	6	5.8
	Diploma	48	46.2
	Advanced Diploma	21	20.2
	Bachelor's Degree	19	18.3
	Master's Degree	1	1.0
<b>Current Position</b>	<b>Academic</b>	21	20.2
	<b>Non Academic</b>	77	74.0
<b>Experience</b>	1 - 5 Years	30	28.8
	6 - 10 Years	24	23.1
	11 - 15 Years	15	14.4
	16- 20 Years	11	10.6
	20 - 25 Years	12	11.5
	25 - 30 Years	4	3.8
	> 30 Years	2	1.9

This research involved 98 respondents from private higher education institutions in Malaysia, comprising academic and non-academic staff. Demographics were categorized into gender, age, education, position, and work experience. Gender-wise, 46.2% were male (48 respondents) and 48.1% female (50 respondents). Age groups were segmented into four categories, with the majority being 21-30 years (40 respondents, 38.5%), followed by 18-20 years (26 respondents, 25%), 31-40 years (24 respondents, 23.1%), and 41-50 years (8 respondents, 7.7%). Education levels were divided into six categories, with diplomas being the most common (46.2%, 48 respondents). Academic staff constituted 20.2% (21 respondents), while non-academic staff comprised 74% (77 respondents). Work experience varied, with 1-5 years being the most common (28.8%, 30 respondents), followed by other ranges up to over 30 years.

#### *Measurement Model Assessment*

**Table 4. Construct Reliability and Validity**

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ER	0.865	0.888	0.899	0.603
PA	0.925	0.927	0.941	0.727
RR	0.925	0.934	0.938	0.628
TD	0.902	0.907	0.923	0.633

Source: Authors' research results

All four constructs (ER, PA, RR, TD) demonstrate strong internal consistency and reliability, as evidenced by their high Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability scores. Additionally, each construct's AVE is above 0.5, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. This suggests that the items within each construct are well-suited for measuring the intended concepts and that the constructs capture a significant proportion of the variance in their respective items.

*Discriminant Validity***Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (Htmt) - Matrix**

	ER	PA	RR	TD
ER				
PA	<b>0.735</b>			
RR	0.825	<b>0.774</b>		
TD	0.843	0.679	<b>0.717</b>	

Source: Authors' research results

Based on the HTMT values provided, the constructs generally have good discriminant validity. The constructs are distinct, with ER and TD being the closest pair (0.843), but still below the 0.85 threshold. It is important to consider these results in conjunction with other validity and reliability analyses to assess the measurement model fully.

**Table 6. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) – List**

	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
PA <-> ER	0.735
RR <-> ER	0.825
RR <-> PA	0.774
TD <-> ER	0.843
TD <-> PA	0.679
TD <-> RR	0.717

Based on Table 6, all the HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.85, which suggests that each construct is distinct and measures a different concept. However, TD <-> ER and RR <-> ER ratios are close to the threshold, indicating that these pairs of constructs share more similarities than others, which should be considered in any further analysis.

*Total Effects***Table 7. Sample Mean, Standard Deviation, t-Value and p-Value for Structural Model**

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
PA -> ER	0.139	0.137	0.086	1.619	0.106
RR -> ER	0.379	0.386	0.111	3.421	0.001
TD -> ER	0.416	0.415	0.108	3.871	0.000

Source: Authors' research results

In the present analysis, the effects of performance appraisal (PA), rewards and recognition (RR), and training and development (TD) on employee retention (ER) were assessed through structural equation modeling to understand the predictive power of these constructs.

The path from PA to ER yielded an original sample estimate (O) of 0.139, which suggests a positive yet modest relationship between PA and ER. The consistency of this effect was evidenced by a sample mean

(M) of 0.137, closely aligning with the original estimate. However, the standard deviation (STDEV) of 0.086 indicated a degree of variability in the effect size across samples. A T statistic of 1.619, calculated as the ratio of the original estimate to the standard deviation, was observed to be below the benchmark of 2, commonly used for establishing statistical significance. Furthermore, the P value stood at 0.106, surpassing the conventional alpha level of 0.05, leading to the conclusion that the effect of PA on ER is not statistically significant.

In contrast, the RR to ER path demonstrated a more pronounced effect with an original sample estimate of 0.379, substantiated by a sample mean of 0.386, which corroborates the consistency and strength of the relationship. While indicating variability, the standard deviation of 0.111 was less pronounced than that of the PA to ER path. Notably, the T statistic reached 3.421, suggesting the effect size is significantly beyond 2 standard deviations away from zero, denoting statistical significance. This assertion is further supported by a P value of 0.001, which is substantially below the accepted significance threshold, thereby confirming the robust and significant predictive power of RR on ER.

Finally, the TD to ER path exhibited the most substantial effect among the three analyzed, with an original sample estimate of 0.416. The sample means corroborated this strong effect, standing at 0.415 and indicating a robust relationship. The standard deviation was recorded at 0.108, showcasing a level of variability similar to that observed in the RR to ER path. A T statistic of 3.871, the highest among the examined paths, indicated a highly significant effect size. The P value was reported to be effectively 0, underscoring the strong statistical significance of the TD effect on ER.

Collectively, these findings suggest that while PA may have a positive influence on ER, its impact is not statistically significant. Thus, caution should be exercised when interpreting its practical implications. Conversely, RR and TD are statistically significant predictors of ER, with TD showing the most substantial effect. These results emphasize the importance of RR and TD in influencing emotional responses, with potential implications for strategies to enhance ER in various contexts.

#### *R-square*

**Table 8. R<sup>2</sup> Criterion**

	R-square	R-square adjusted
ER	0.698	0.689

Source: Authors' research results

The R-squared (R<sup>2</sup>) and Adjusted R-squared values pertain to the construct of employee retention (ER) within the context of a regression or structural equation model. R-squared is a statistical measure representing the proportion of variance for the dependent variable explained by the model's independent variables. In this case, an R-squared value of 0.698 indicates that approximately 69.8% of the variation in ER can be explained by the predictors included in the model, which could be constructed like performance appraisal (PA), rewards and recognition (RR), and training and development (TD), as discussed earlier. The R-squared and Adjusted R-squared values suggest that the model is robust and that the included predictors substantially explain the variance observed in the Emotional Response construct. However, it is also crucial to consider other model evaluation metrics and thoroughly assess the model's assumptions to ensure the reliability and validity of the model's conclusions.

*Results of all the Hypotheses Testing*

	Path	Result
H1 Rewards and recognition have a significant influence on employee retention at Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.	RR -> ER	Accepted
H2 Training and development has a significant influence on employee retention at Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.	TD -> ER	Accepted
H3 Performance appraisal has a significant influence on employee retention at Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.	PA -> ER	Rejected

**Discussion**

H1: Rewards and recognition positively influence employee retention at Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.

A substantial body of literature supports the hypothesis that rewards and recognition positively influence employee retention in various industries, including Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Malaysia.

Firstly, according to a study conducted by Ki, Heng and Lau (2022) on the impact of rewards on employee retention in the Malaysian private higher education sector, the provision of monetary rewards, bonuses, and benefits positively correlates with employee retention. The study suggests that employees receiving better compensation and benefits are more likely to stay with their organization. Furthermore, a study by Sinniah S. et al. (2019) on the factors that influence employee retention in private higher education institutions in Malaysia found that recognition and rewards are among the top three factors that affect employee retention. The study showed that employees receiving recognition and rewards for their work were likelier to stay with their organization. Similarly, a study by Halid et al. (2020) found that non-monetary rewards, such as recognition, feedback, and career development opportunities, positively impact employee retention in Malaysian private higher education institutions. These studies prove that rewards and recognition positively influence employee retention at private higher education institutions in Malaysia. Therefore, PHEIs in Malaysia can benefit from implementing effective reward and recognition programs to increase employee retention and ensure a stable workforce.

H2 Training and development positively influence on employee retention at Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.

There is substantial evidence in the literature to support the hypothesis that training and development positively influence employee retention in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Malaysia. Firstly, a study conducted by Ismail and Warrak (2020) on the relationship between training and development and employee retention in Malaysian higher education institutions found a positive correlation between the two. The study suggested that employees given opportunities for training and development are more likely to stay with their organization. Similarly, a study by Chow et al. (2017) on factors influencing employee retention in PHEIs in Malaysia found that training and development are among the top three factors influencing employee retention. The study showed that employees receiving training and development opportunities were more likely to stay with their organization. Furthermore, a study by Shafiq and Qureshi (2014) on the relationship between training and development and employee retention in Pakistani universities found that training and development opportunities significantly influence employee retention. The study showed that employees receiving training and development opportunities were more likely to stay with their organization. Moreover, a study by Ismail and Warrak (2020) on the impact of training and development on employee retention in Kuwaiti higher education institutions found that training and development opportunities positively impact employee retention. The study suggested that

training and development opportunities increase job satisfaction, increasing employee retention. These studies provide strong evidence that training and development positively influence employee retention in PHEIs in Malaysia. Therefore, PHEIs in Malaysia can benefit from implementing practical training and development programs to increase employee retention and ensure a stable workforce.

H3 Performance appraisal negatively influences employee retention at Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia.

A study by Phin (2015) on the relationship between performance appraisal and employee retention in the Malaysian higher education sector found that a well-designed and properly executed performance appraisal system can improve employee retention by enhancing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The study suggested that performance appraisal can help employees feel valued and recognized for their contributions, increasing retention. Similarly, a study by Harun et al. (2014) on the impact of performance appraisal on employee retention in Pakistani universities found that performance appraisal positively influences employee retention when perceived as fair and transparent. The study suggested that employees who feel that the performance appraisal process is fair and transparent are likelier to stay with their organization. Moreover, a study by Tian et al. (2014) on the relationship between performance appraisal and employee retention in Ghanaian universities found that performance appraisal positively impacts employee retention when linked to training and development opportunities. The study showed that employees who receive training and development opportunities due to their performance appraisal are more likely to stay with their organization. These studies suggest that performance appraisal does not necessarily negatively influence employee retention at PHEIs in Malaysia. Instead, a well-designed and properly executed performance appraisal system can positively impact employee retention by enhancing motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Therefore, PHEIs in Malaysia should focus on implementing effective performance appraisal systems that are fair, transparent, and linked to training and development opportunities to improve employee retention.

## Recommendations

The research problem and questions should be clearly defined and specific to the context of private higher education. Refine the research questions to ensure they align with the research problem and enable you to answer your research questions. A more targeted and specific sample will provide more accurate and reliable results. Ensure that the sample size is appropriate to achieve statistical significance, and use a sampling technique that is appropriate for the study's objectives. A clear conceptual framework will provide a framework for your study and guide your data collection and analysis. It will also enable you to demonstrate how your study fits within the existing literature on human resource management practices and employee retention. A mixed-methods approach will enable you to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of human resource management practices on employee retention. It will also enable you to triangulate your data and enhance the reliability and validity of your findings. Consider the influence of other variables on employee retention, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. Including these variables in your study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence employee retention in private higher education.

## Contribution

"Empirical Evidence from Private Higher Education" has the potential to make several contributions, including:

**Practical contributions:** The study's findings could provide practical implications for private higher education institutions to develop and implement effective human resource management practices that promote employee retention. This could help institutions to retain high-quality employees, reduce turnover costs, and improve overall organizational performance.

**Theoretical contributions:** The study could make theoretical contributions to the existing literature on human resource management practices and employee retention in private higher education. The findings could help to confirm, refute or expand upon existing theories, and provide insights into how the theories can be applied in a practical setting.

**Empirical contributions:** The study's empirical evidence could provide insights into the impact of human resource management practices on employee retention in the context of private higher education. This could help to fill the existing research gap in this area and provide a foundation for future research.

**Methodological contributions:** The study's methodology, such as the sample size, sampling technique, and data collection method, could contribute to the methodological advancements in the field of human resource management and employee retention research. It could also serve as a basis for future research to build upon and improve the methodology.

Overall, the research title "The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Retention: Empirical Evidence from Private Higher Education" has the potential to contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge, which can benefit private higher education institutions, researchers, and the broader academic community.

### **Future Directions of Research or Future Research Focus**

"The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Retention: Empirical Evidence from Private Higher Education" is an important research topic exploring the relationship between human resource management practices and employee retention in private higher education institutions. Based on the current research, several potential future directions could be taken to advance this field further:

**Examining the role of different HRM practices:** The study could be extended by investigating the effects of specific HRM practices, such as training and development, performance management, and employee engagement, on employee retention. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of which practices have the greatest impact on retention and help institutions to focus their efforts on the most effective practices.

**Cross-cultural comparisons:** The research could also include cross-cultural comparisons of the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. This would allow for a better understanding of the cultural factors that influence employee retention in different regions of the world.

**Longitudinal studies:** Future research could use longitudinal designs to investigate the long-term effects of HRM practices on employee retention. This would provide insights into how the impact of HRM practices on retention changes over time and would allow institutions to develop strategies that are effective in the long term.

**Exploring the moderating factors:** The study could investigate the moderating effects of factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job characteristics on the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. This would allow a better understanding of the complex interactions between different factors influencing retention.

**The role of technology:** As technology in HRM practices becomes more prevalent, future research could investigate how technology impacts employee retention in private higher education institutions. This would allow institutions to develop more effective strategies that take advantage of technology to improve employee retention.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research has provided empirical evidence of the significant impact of human resource management practices on employee retention in private higher education institutions. The findings suggest



that effective HRM practices, such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, training and development, and performance management, positively impact employee retention. Private higher education institutions must recognize the importance of HRM practices in retaining their employees and develop effective strategies to address retention issues. The findings of this study suggest that institutions should focus on implementing HRM practices that improve employee job satisfaction, engagement, and development opportunities to enhance employee retention. The study also highlights the need for further research in this area. Future research should investigate the moderating effects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job characteristics on the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. Additionally, cross-cultural comparisons and longitudinal studies could be conducted to understand better the complex interactions between different factors that influence retention.

In summary, the findings of this research provide valuable insights for private higher education institutions on how to improve employee retention through effective HRM practices. Institutions adopting these practices will likely experience positive outcomes such as higher employee retention rates, increased productivity, and improved organizational performance.

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