

Human Resource Management Practices and Job Satisfaction of Academics in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions

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Purpose – 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.

Design/methodology/approach – 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.

Findings – 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.

Research limitations/implications – This study focused on academics in a selected Malaysian Public Higher Education Institution. Thus, it is not possible to generalize the findings to academics in other public or private higher education institutions. This study also found difficulty to find the similar significant literature on human resource management practices and its relationship with job satisfaction within the Malaysian Higher Education sector. The other limitation in this study is the number of human resource management practices selected to be investigated and limited measurements to be considered in this study.

Originality/value – 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

Paper type - Research paper

1. Introduction

Malaysia's system of higher education has experienced various trends and restructuring episodes that enabled the provision of high quality (Zain *et al.*, 2017). The development of higher education institutions in Malaysia has been rapid commencing with the establishment of the University of Malaya in 1962 (Hassan, 2001). According to Noor *et al.* (2013), Malaysia has experienced increasing numbers of public and private universities, intense growth of student enrolments, the expansion of courses in various fields especially science and technology, and an increase in the internet and web-based teaching.

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.

2. Literature Review

2.1 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.

2.1.1 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.

2.1.2 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.

2.1.3 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.

2.1.4 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 Deeprose (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.

2.1.5 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.

2.2 Job Satisfaction

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.

2.3 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?

2.4 Research Hypotheses

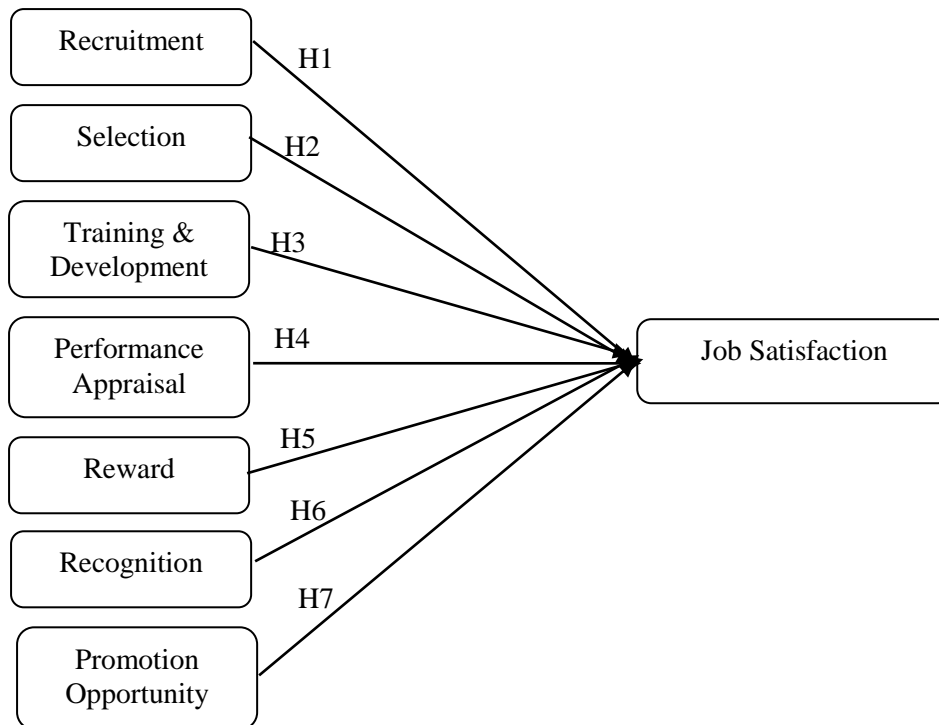
In this study, HRM practices (recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, reward, recognition, promotion opportunities) and job satisfaction are hypothesized into seven dimensions following the work of past studies (e.g., Noor, 2013; Gamage, 2014; Boon *et al.*, 2011; Hauret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

2.5 Proposed Model

The study set seven hypotheses appropriate to the purpose of this study based on prior research. The researchers will verify the effects of human resource practices on job satisfaction by testing H1 to H7. The proposed model (Figure 1) of the study has been constructed on the basis of a literature review on the effects of HRM practices and job satisfaction of academics in higher education.

Figure 1: Proposed model of the study and hypotheses



3. Methodology

3.1 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.

3.2 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. Table 1 shows the brief background of all the panel of experts who had evaluated the questionnaire.

Table 1: Background of panel of experts for evaluation

Panel	Initial	Designation & Institution
Panel 1	PNHNM	Professor (Human Resource Management), Technology University of Malaysia, Malaysia
Panel 2	DSAW	Associate Professor (Human Resource Management), Technology University of Malaysia, Malaysia
Panel 3	DRD	Associate Professor (English Language) Islamic Science University of Malaysia, Malaysia
Panel 4	DSMS	Associate Professor (Organizational Behavior), International Islamic University of Malaysia, Malaysia

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.

4. Findings

4.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

Table 2 shows the basic profiles of the study sample. 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.

Table 2: Basic profiles of the study sample

Characteristics	Basic variable	Sample size	(%)
Gender	Male	87	60.4
	Female	57	39.6
Age (years old)	Less than 25	1	0.7
	25 to 34	54	37.5
	35 to 44	54	37.5
	45 to 54	29	20.1
	More than 54	6	4.2
Highest academic qualification	Master degree	29	20.1
	Doctorate degree	115	79.9
Academia's category	Teacher	10	6.9
	Lecturer	11	7.6
	Senior Lecturer	78	54.2
	Associate Professor	32	22.2
	Professor	13	9.0
Lecturing experience (year)	Less than 5	11	7.6
	5 to 10	62	43.1
	11 to 15	31	21.5
	More than 15	40	27.8

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 3 show the overall mean and standard deviation for each of the dimension of HRM practices and job satisfaction. As presented in Table 3, 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 3: 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

4.2 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 (Fuji *et al.*, 2019).

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 4.

Table 4: Reliability analysis results of the dimensions in the questionnaire

Variable	Dimension	Number of Items	Item for Deletion	Cronbach's alpha value	Result
Human resource management practices	Recruitment	5	None	0.85	High reliability
	Selection	4	None	0.80	High reliability
	Training and Development	6	None	0.84	High reliability
	Performance appraisal	6	None	0.82	High reliability
	Reward	6	None	0.84	High reliability
	Recognition	3	None	0.75	High reliability
	Promotion	5	None	0.83	High reliability
Job satisfaction	Job Satisfaction	3	None	0.78	High reliability

4.3 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 5 describes the degree of Pearson's product-moment correlation between HRM practices and job satisfaction. Through the matrix for Pearson's correlation in Table 5, 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 5: Matrix for Pearson's Correlation between HRM Practices and 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).

4.4 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 6.

	Job Satisfaction				
	β	<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 6, 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; β =0.429; *t*-value=5.622; *p*-value= 0.000). Value of R² 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; β =0.240; *t*-value=2.941; *p*-value= 0.004). Value of R² 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; β =0.606; *t*-value=9.073; *p*-value= 0.000). Value of R² 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; β =0.661; *t*-value=10.497; *p*-value= 0.000). Value of R² 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; β =0.545; *t*-value=8.752; *p*-value= 0.000). Value of R² 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; β =0.428; *t*-value=5.648; *p*-value= 0.000). Value of R² 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; β =0.640; *t*-value=9.934; *p*-value= 0.000). Value of R² 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.*

5. 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.

6. 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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Appendix

a. ITEMS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Recruitment

- I was provided adequate relevant information about this University at the time of recruitment
- I was given adequate relevant information about this job at the time of recruitment in this University
- I obtained the job in this University after information was officially disclosed to me on the criteria to follow for me to get the job
- I joined this University after information about the availability of job was widely disseminated
- My recruitment to this University was strictly based on merit

Selection

- To get the job in this University I went through a rigorous selection process
- I went through a competitive selection process to obtain the job in this University

- When I was being selected to work in this University, my skills relevant to the job were evaluated
- When I was being selected to work in this University, my attitudes relevant to the job were evaluated

Training and Development

- The training programmes available for me in this University are relevant to the changing needs of my job
- In this University I receive regular training in the different aspects of my job
- My training needs in this University are identified through a formal performance appraisal mechanism
- My University provides me extensive training to enhance my job performance
- In this University I have been encouraged to participate in seminars and workshops
- The mentoring I have received in this University has been vital to my job performance
- In this University I have been assigned challenging jobs to evoke my skills

Performance Appraisal

- The appraisal system of this University has a strong influence on my performance
- The appraisal system of this University advances my career
- The performance appraisal system of this University is fair
- In this University my performance is measured on the basis of objective results
- In this University after every appraisal I receive feedback about my performance
- In this University I am appraised at regular intervals

Reward

- The rewards/ remuneration I receive from this University are comparable to the market
- I am satisfied with the rewards/ remuneration I receive from this university
- Rewards/ remuneration are fairly distributed in this university
- I am paid adequately for the work I do in this university
- My job performance is an important factor in determining the rewards/ remuneration I receive in this university
- My rewards/ remuneration in this university are/ is paid timely

Recognition

- I am praised regularly for my work
- I get credit for what I do
- When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive

Promotion

- Promotion in this University is based on merit
- I have a clear understanding of the promotion requirements of my job in this University
- Management of this University has communicated the promotion policy to me very clearly
- The promotional opportunities available to me in this university are satisfying
- There is an opportunity for me to get promoted in this university soon

b. ITEMS FOR JOB SATISFACTION

- All in all, I am satisfied with my job
- In general, I don't like my job
- In general, I like working here