

## THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: HOSPITALY CONTEX

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### Abstract:

**Background:** Human resource management (HRM) practices are essential tools employed by hotel management to achieve organizational objectives.

**Purpose:** The aim of this study was to investigate how HRM practices impact job satisfaction and employee retention in the hotel industry in Indonesia.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This study used a completely random sample of 361 hotel employees from Indonesia. This study employed regression modeling on online survey collected data.

**Findings/Results:** Research has demonstrated that human resource management (HRM) practices, including job security, empowerment, training, and quality of work life, have a substantial influence on employee retention rates. Furthermore, job satisfaction emerges as another critical determinant of the duration employees choose to stay with their present employer.

**Conclusions:** Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis indicate that there is a direct link between HRM practices and employee retention. However, this connection is significantly stronger when job satisfaction levels are initially increased. As a result, effective HRM practices have been shown to enhance employee satisfaction, leading to greater loyalty and commitment to the company.

**Originality/value (state of the art):** This study aims to enhance our understanding of the relationships between human resource management (HRM) practices, employee satisfaction, and employee retention. While previous research on the connection between HRM practices and employee satisfaction is limited, this study is noteworthy for exploring the effects of four dimensions of HRM practices on employee satisfaction, and how this in turn impacts employee retention.

**Keywords:** employee satisfaction, hospitality organizations, HRM practices, regression analysis, retention

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## INTRODUCTION

The issue of low “employee retention” in the hospitality industry has been widely discussed for a long time. Bibi, Ahmad, and Majid (2018) have also recognized this problem, and Islam, Furuoka, and Idris (2020) have even suggested that the employee retention rate in this industry is lower compared to other sectors. Employee retention refers to an organization’s efforts to prevent employees from leaving. It primarily focuses on retaining qualified employees who are crucial to the organization. High employee retention rates can significantly impact both employee and organizational performance (Islam et al. 2022), while Goings, Walker, and Wade (2020), and Mia (2023) stated that low retention rates can have negative consequences for organizations, such as the loss of valuable and unproductive human resources. Hospitality managers constantly face challenges in addressing this issue. However, several studies have revealed that the majority of hotel managers struggle to retain their employees, with only a few achieving successes.

Considerable research has been conducted on the subject of employee retention within general organizational contexts. However, there has been a dearth of studies specifically examining this topic within the context of hospitality organizations. Some scholars propose that augmenting resources within the hotel and tourism industry may effectively mitigate the issue of subpar employee retention rates (Spain and Jacob, 2019) (Dodanwala et al. 2023). According to Kumar (2021), inadequate human resource management (HRM) practices can contribute to these low rates of retention (Kumar, 2021). To enhance employee retention, it is imperative to cultivate HRM practices that augment employee satisfaction, foster workplace commitment, and curtail employee turnover (Aktar and Pangil, 2018).

The problem-solving approach begins with recognizing the widespread issue of low employee retention in the hospitality industry, a challenge observed globally. Existing research predominantly focuses on turnover, often overlooking the distinct concept of retention (Park and Min, 2020). Understanding that retention is not simply the inverse of turnover is crucial (Dodanwala et al. 2023). Central to addressing this challenge is the acknowledgment that HRM practices significantly impact retention (Kumar, 2021). These practices function as policies or systems shaping employee attitudes and behaviors (Aktar and Pangil,

2018). Effective HRM practices enhance satisfaction and retention, while poor ones will make one job dissatisfied and subsequently lead to turnover. Hence, the proactive approach involves improving HRM practices toward increasing employee satisfaction and commitment, which in turn reduces turnover (Aktar and Pangil, 2018). This approach recognizes the interconnectedness of various factors influencing retention and emphasizes the pivotal role of HRM in fostering a conducive work environment.

The current study has tried to assess the effect of HRM practices on job satisfaction and, in turn, on employee retention in the Indonesian hotel industry. In this regard, we have considered four HRM practices: QWL, job security, employee empowerment, and training. Besides, we have also tested the moderating role of job satisfaction in the relationships among these variables with employee retention. This research adds value to the literature available on organizational aspects in the hospitality sector in the light of employee retention challenges. The study is also practically relevant because most hospitality management companies suffer from issues related to low employee retention rates.

## METHODS

The research was conducted between June and August 2023, among workers in five 3- and 4-star hotels located in Banten Province, Indonesia. These hotels were used as primary sites of data collection; to give an idea of the region’s hospitality industry. The choice of this timeframe allowed for a comprehensive understanding of employee experiences and organizational dynamics during the peak tourist season. By focusing on this specific location and time period, the study aimed to capture relevant nuances and trends pertinent to the local hospitality sector.

The primary data sources for this study were the employees working within the five 3- and 4-star hotels situated in Banten Province. These individuals provided invaluable insights into various facets of the hospitality industry, including but not limited to, customer service, operational procedures, and employee satisfaction. Their firsthand experiences and perspectives formed the foundation of the research, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities present within the hotel sector.

This multiple regression analysis was done by taking into consideration the various measurements adopted within the research framework to establish the relationship between various variables (Hair et al. 2019). It allows the testing of several independent variables and analysis of non-experimental data to have a better understanding of “the interactions between the factors” (Noor, 2013). First, before carrying out the analysis, the Pearson correlation coefficient was checked to determine the direction, magnitude, as well as the statistical significance of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables as documented by Sender et al. (2017).

Data were collected from employees in five 3- and 4-star hotels in Banten Province through a simple random sampling technique. A total of 405 employees were administered the questionnaire using Google Docs, and 380 employees responded, yielding a response rate of 93%. According to Carnevale and Hatak (2020), anonymity was maintained during the data collection process to ensure the confidentiality of participants. After screening the returned questionnaires, 361 responses were deemed suitable for inclusion in the final analysis. It had two parts: the first part obtained information about the demographic data of the respondents, and the second one was the questionnaire related to research variables. Opinions of the respondents were gauged using “a 5-point Likert scale where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 5 strongly agreed.” Questionnaires were distributed to hospitality establishments with star ratings in four cities within the province of Banten, Indonesia. The final sample consisted of 361, who were selected in the form of a simple random sampling technique.

QWL refers to “the extent to which an employee is able to meet various important personal needs through their performance in the workplace while achieving organizational goals” (George, 2015). According Rai and Verma (2023), the impact of quality of work life (QWL) on employee satisfaction and turnover intention has been extensively studied. George (2015) has shown that “the extent to which an employee's personal needs, including health, safety, financial stability, family life, social life, recognition, personal growth, knowledge, and aesthetics,” are met in the workplace plays a significant role in this impact. Consequently, organizations that prioritize meeting these needs are more likely to experience higher levels of employee

satisfaction and lower turnover rates. Therefore, it is imperative for organizations to enhance employees' perceptions of QWL in order to attract and retain them, ultimately leading to increased satisfaction and lower voluntary turnover. Based on these findings, we propose the following hypothesis: H1: Quality of work life is a positive effect on employee satisfaction.

Abolade (2018) defined job security as “the employee's perception that they can have a job as long as they want, and that there are no subjective or objective factors that make them vulnerable to losing their jobs”. According to Aboramadan et al. (2020), “job insecurity is a perception of the potential for accidental job loss.” The level of job security within organizations has a significant impact on employee job satisfaction and their intention to leave (Sender et al. 2017; Sender et al. 2017). Ngo et al. (2023) argue that both quantitative and qualitative job insecurity can have a negative impact on employee satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance. According to De Cuyper et al. (2019), government employees with permanent positions generally enjoy greater job security compared to contract employees in the private sector. Therefore, organizations that “provide a sense of job security are likely to witness higher levels of job satisfaction and lower turnover rates among their employees.” (Artz and Kaya, 2014). Thus, the hypothesis developed for this is: H2: Job security is a positive related to employee satisfaction.

Kakar (2017) stated that “employees are said to be empowered if they are given the opportunity to participate in decision making, goal setting, and necessary steps.” According to Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2001), employee empowerment has a significant impact on employee satisfaction and retention in organizations. By involving employees in decision-making processes, goal setting, and career development, employee empowerment fosters a sense of ownership and dedication towards their organization (Salman and Saleem, 2022). Research shows that empowered employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and demonstrate higher levels of commitment and performance (Madera et al. 2017). Empirical evidence supports the correlation between employee empowerment and job satisfaction, suggesting that organizations that promote empowerment are likely to see increased employee satisfaction and retention rates (Kim et al. 2019; Kakar, 2017). Therefore, the

hypothesis proposed for this study is: H3: Employee empowerment is a positive effect on employee satisfaction.

Training significantly influences employee satisfaction and retention in organizations. While training is a strong predictor of employee satisfaction, its effects on retention (Ashton, 2018). On the one hand, training can encourage higher retention (Ellen et al. 2022; Sutisna & Noor, 2022). With training, employees can improve competence and self-development. When organizations provide sufficient training, employees become more satisfied, and therefore their commitment to the organization becomes stronger (Lin & Huang, 2021; Noor, 2013). However, on the other hand, training can actually encourage turnover (Rawashdeh and Tamimi, 2020). With training, employee competency increases, and this makes them more attractive to other organizations. Thus, employee training and retention do not have a direct relationship, but through satisfaction. When training is able to increase satisfaction, then with that they will be committed to their organization. A number of studies have also proven that training has a very strong correlation with employee satisfaction and retention (Paposas & Kumar, 2019; Memon et al. 2016). The impact of training on employee satisfaction and retention in organizations has been widely studied. Research indicates that training plays a significant role in predicting employee satisfaction (Ashton, 2018). On one hand, providing adequate training can lead to higher retention rates (Bolt et al. 2022; Sutisna and Noor, 2022). Employees who receive training are able to enhance their skills and personal growth. Organizations that prioritize training are more likely to have satisfied employees, which strengthens their commitment to the organization (Lin and Huang, 2021; Noor, 2013). However, on the other hand, training can also increase employee turnover (Rawashdeh and Tamimi, 2020). As employees become more competent through training, they become more attractive to other organizations. Therefore, the relationship between training and retention is not direct but rather mediated by employee satisfaction. Numerous studies have shown a strong correlation between training, employee satisfaction, and retention (Paposas and Kumar, 2019; Memon et al. 2016). Based on these findings, we

propose the following hypothesis for this problem: H4: Training is a positive effect on employee satisfaction. Lai et al. (2018) explained that “employee satisfaction significantly influences employee retention and service quality.” According to Karatepe et al. (2006), “low job satisfaction levels resulted in a high intention to leave the workplace.” Furthermore, employee satisfaction is an important factor in predicting service quality. This is because guests often assess a company's overall performance based on the quality of its services (Mirzaei et al. 2019). According to Chow et al. (2007), “HRM practices influence retention via employee job satisfaction, morale, and attitude.” However, according to Malik et al. (2017), “employee dissatisfaction can lead to an unpleasant attitude towards the job, deterioration of employee morale, and eventually staff turnover.” Han (2022) stated that “almost 90% of employees would leave their job when dissatisfied with the workplace.” Therefore, “it is important for managers to closely monitor employee satisfaction levels and address any signs of stress or dissatisfaction promptly, as stress at work can lead to employee absenteeism, intention to leave, interpersonal difficulties, and poor performance” (Acquah et al. 2021). To ensure that potential candidates or employees do not refuse to work in the hospitality industry, it is important to consider several factors in HRM practices. These factors encompass “workplace image, social status, nature of work, working hours, acceptance of physical workload, and career development opportunities” (Teng, 2008). Therefore, the hypothesis formulated for this issue is: H5: Employee satisfaction is a negative related to employee retention

The diagram depicted in Figure 1 illustrates the interconnection among four key dimensions of HRM practices, namely quality of work life, job security, employee empowerment, and training, and their impact on employee satisfaction and retention. As per this conceptual interconnection, these HRM practices exert a direct influence on employee satisfaction, which in turn has implications for their inclination to remain within the organization. The objective of this research is to examine the effects of these HRM practices on employee satisfaction and retention.

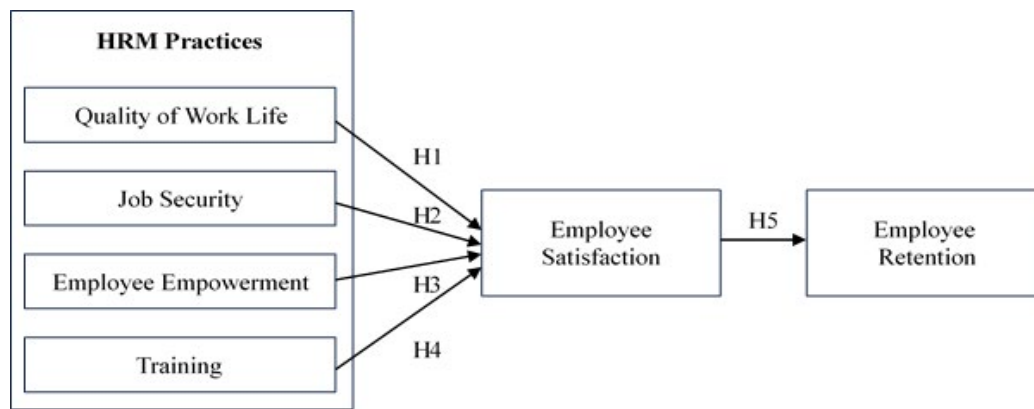


Figure 1. Conceptual Interconnection

## RESULTS

Table 1 presents an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample under examination. The women respondents constituted the majority, accounting for 52.91% of the participants, while the remaining 47.09% were men. Regarding age distribution, 59.56% fell within the 20-30 year bracket, 27.70% were aged between 31-50 years, and 12.74% were above 50 years. In terms of educational attainment, 60.94% held a diploma, 29.09% possessed a bachelor's degree, 6.65% completed high school, and 3.32% held a master's degree. The distribution of job tenure among hotel employees displayed a remarkable similarity, with the largest proportion (approximately 48.75%) having worked for a period between 2-5 years. Notably, significant proportions were also observed for those with less than 2 years of experience (24.93%) and those with a tenure ranging from 6-9 years (26.32%).

The findings indicate that the retention rate of employees in the hospitality sector is significantly low ("with an average retention value of less than 3"). The majority of these employees lack a strong emotional connection with their respective organizations, and a considerable number express intentions to seek employment elsewhere, even in different industries. Furthermore, the level of job satisfaction among hospitality employees also proves to be notably low ("with an average satisfaction value of less than 3") (refer to Table 2). This dissatisfaction primarily stems from inadequate organizational support and the nature of the work itself. Similarly, the perceived effectiveness of human resource management (HRM) practices is found to be lacking, particularly in the areas of quality of work life, job security, and employee empowerment. However, the training programs provided by these

organizations are considered fairly satisfactory, though not entirely effective yet. Specifically, low job involvement contributes to a substandard quality of work life, while the dynamic nature of the hospitality industry fuels employee anxieties about potential job loss at any given moment. Moreover, the absence of employee participation in decision-making processes further contributes to weakened empowerment. On the other hand, the provided training programs are sufficient in the aspect of upgrading knowledge, skills, and even employee performance. Unfortunately, the opportunity for employees to attend such training programs is rather limited.

A significant relationship exists between employee retention and job satisfaction, as well as with human resource management practices. HRM practices are also positively and significantly related to employee satisfaction. In other words, employee retention is affected by two major factors: the effectiveness of HRM practices and satisfaction. In addition, employee satisfaction is highly dependent upon the effectiveness of HRM practices. More specifically, the factors that have high correlation with regard to employee retention are quality of work life, job security, empowerment, and training. These findings indicate that improving HRM practices can help increase employee retention. Likewise, employee satisfaction is positively and significantly associated with HRM practices. The positive correlation between factors like quality of work life, job security, empowerment, and training with employee satisfaction highlights the role of HRM practices in fostering satisfaction. Conversely, ineffective HRM practices can lead to job dissatisfaction. Interestingly, demographic factors like gender, age, and education do not show a significant correlation with employee retention, satisfaction, or HRM practices.

This suggests that individuals from different genders, age groups, and educational backgrounds have similar levels of retention and satisfaction and perceive HRM practices in a similar way.

Table 3 presents the main findings of our study. Our analysis reveals that the predictors of HRM practices that have a direct impact on employee retention include quality of work life (QWL), job security, and training. Additionally, we found that empowerment is also a

significant predictor, although its contribution is slightly lower. The results of our analysis demonstrate that QWL (H1:  $\beta = .335$ ; t-value = 3.484), job security (H2:  $\beta = .348$ ; t-value = 4.915), employee empowerment (H3:  $\beta = .232$ ; t-value = 4.915), and training (H4:  $\beta = .436$ ; t-value = 4.744) all have a significant positive effect on employee satisfaction. Moreover, the results indicate that training (H5:  $\beta = -.543$ ; t-value = -7.926) has a significant negative effect on employee satisfaction.

Tabel 1. Demographic characteristics

Variable	n	Valid %	Variable	n	Valid %
<b>Gender</b>			Age		
Men	170	47.09%	20 -30	215	59.56%
Women	191	52.91%	31 - 50	100	27.70%
<b>Education</b>			Over 50	46	12.74%
High School	24	6.65%	<b>Job Tenure</b>		
Diploma	220	60.94%	Less than 2 years	90	24.93%
Bachelor degree	105	29.09%	2 – 5 years	176	48.75%
Graduate degree	12	3.32%	6 – 9 years	95	26.32%

Note. “Valid %: Based only on cases who actually answered a question”

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation results

	Mean	SD	Employee Retention	Employee Satisfaction	QWL	Job security	Employee Empowerment	Training
Employee Retention	2.49	.95	1					
Employee Satisfaction	2.32	.76	.76***	1				
QWL	2.42	.96	.61***	.56***	1			
Job security	2.63	.93	.77***	.60***	.75***	1		
Employee Empowerment	2.72	.92	.68***	.53***	.62***	.78***	1	
Training	3.44	.87	.59***	.59***	.87***	.94***	.69***	1

Note: “\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

Tabel 3. Results of multiple regression

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	$\beta$ (std.coef)	t-value	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F value
Employee Satisfaction	QWL	.335**	3.484	.62	20.926**
	Job Security	.348***	4.915		
	Employee Empowerment	.232***	4.574		
	Training	.436***	4.744		
Employee Retention	Employee Satisfaction	-.543***	-7.926	.43	14.231**

Note: “\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001.”

The regression analysis results depicted in Figure 2 demonstrate a significant relationship between HRM practices and employee satisfaction, as well as a significant relationship between employee satisfaction and retention. This suggests that effective HRM practices can directly enhance employee satisfaction. Moreover, when employee satisfaction is established, it has a negative impact on retention. This aligns with the principles of social exchange theory, which emphasize that HRM practices are designed to cultivate employee satisfaction, leading to heightened commitment and retention. Therefore, these findings substantiate all of our proposed hypotheses.

### Managerial Implications

As previously explained, HRM practices in the hospitality industry are often ineffective, resulting in low satisfaction and consequently low retention. Therefore, the problem of low retention in this industry is directly linked to the ineffectiveness of HRM practices. Hospitality managers can address this issue by improving the effectiveness of their HRM practices. Specifically, these practices should focus on creating emotional attachment among employees towards their organizations, which will promote long-term commitment. Besides, HRM practices have to ensure organizational support and work flexibility in order to

enhance the level of satisfaction among employees. All these can be achieved by employee involvement and participation, particularly in the decision-making process. High engagement of employees results in improved quality of work life and job security apart from increased empowerment. Another important factor that enables employee satisfaction and retention is training effectiveness. Fairness and equal opportunity to participate should be ensured for every employee, which is not only underlined by the fact that knowledge and skills are important to be acquired. No matter how good the training might be, if it's not accessible to all employees, dissatisfaction finds its way out through high turnover rates.

This research finding is consistent with the findings of Armstrong and Taylor (2014), who assert that employees derive satisfaction from their hospitality work when they perceive opportunities for enhancing their competence. Effective management involves fostering positive relationships among colleagues, promoting harmonious teamwork, and providing personal support. Karatepe and Talebzadeh (2016) also emphasize the importance of maintaining good relationships with colleagues to reduce conflicts and staff dissatisfaction, which reinforces the findings of Umasuthan and Park (2018) regarding the impact of work-life quality on job satisfaction.

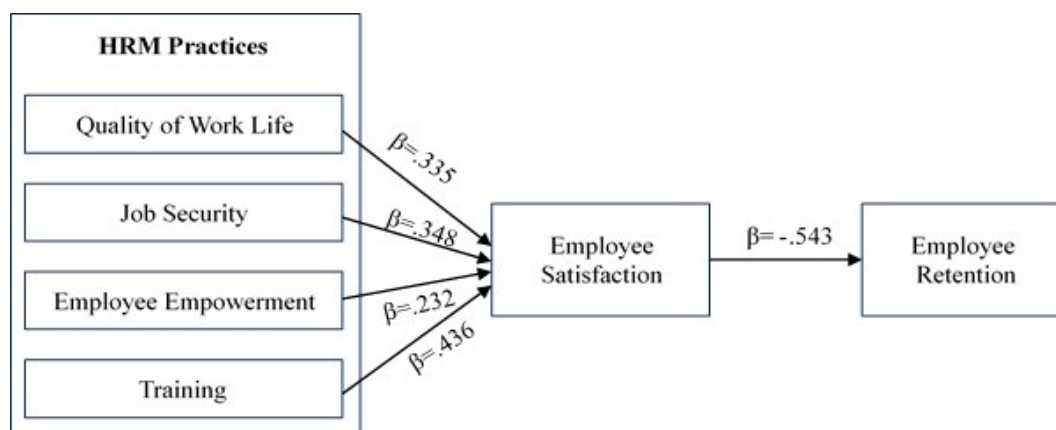


Figure 2. Model was developed based on findings from a field survey conducted in 2023

Moreover, these findings align with the research conducted by Aruldoss, Kowalski, and Parayitam (2021), which highlights the significance of job security and satisfaction. The study by Choi et al. (2016) specifically focuses on empowerment and satisfaction. Lalioti (2019) found a positive association between training and job satisfaction, which is further supported by the research of Gandolfi and Stone (2017). Lastly, these findings support Singh (2019) studies, which not only analyze the relationship between satisfaction and retention but also provide additional insights.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

According to the study, HRM practices can address personnel and skill deficits while boosting employee job satisfaction. This establishes a link between HRM and a high-quality workplace where factors such as quality of work life (QWL), ongoing training, and job security are crucial. In the hospitality industry, it is vital to monitor employee empowerment, as they must meet specific standards when serving guests. The findings suggest that employee satisfaction in the Indonesian hotel sector is significantly influenced by the HRM model. This sector would benefit from a new conceptual HRM model that can serve as a guide for future academic research. Through this research, human relations can be effectively managed and improved in these workplaces, providing an appropriate approach to addressing employee and skill shortages. The conceptual model focuses on four variables of HRM practices: quality of life, job security, employee empowerment, and training. These variables have an impact on job satisfaction and employee retention. QWL reflects the hospitality environment, while job security and employee empowerment play crucial roles in offering benefits and maintaining a positive reputation and brand image. A firm engaged in international hospitality business will likely have both expatriate and local staff. In such cases, relevant staff training programs, including cross-cultural training, are necessary for the firm to achieve its objectives through consistent and targeted development efforts.

### Recommendations

A Recent study holds significant implications for key stakeholders in the hospitality industry and urges their

intervention. These findings can guide the establishment of a new standard that emphasizes the creation of more appealing work environments, thereby ensuring employee commitment to providing exceptional service to guests. Note that capability building in employees does not depend on wage increase alone; rather, a good and friendly work environment and regular training with a strong reputation are equally necessary. High QWL fosters a more harmonious and contented setting, one that experiences fewer employee conflicts with one another. To enhance job security, hospitality management has to focus on some of the grievances that these workers go through, such as working for long hours, especially during peak seasons. In the recruitment of workers again, love for workplace diversity and delivering quality service ought to be a key factor since it plays a big role in retaining workers.

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