



Human resource management practices and employees' job satisfaction in public hospitals in Erbil City

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Abstract

Background and objectives: Employees' jobs satisfaction is the term most widely used and researched in field of management and organization behavior. This study aimed to explore the influence of human resource management practices on employees' job satisfaction in public hospitals in Erbil city.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out at public hospitals in Erbil city, Iraq, between January 2023 and September 2023. A sample of 405 employees was chosen using a convenience sampling method. A designed questionnaire was used to measure employees' job satisfaction and to assess the impact of human resource management practices, including rewards and incentives, training and development, and employee relations, on job satisfaction among these employees.

Results: Employees in the administrative and technical departments reported higher satisfaction compared to medical departments, $P < 0.001$ and 0.0483 , respectively. Moreover, the research found that an increase in rewards and incentives was connected to greater job satisfaction, as was the belief that the rewards system served as motivation for employees ($r = 0.17$, $P < 0.001$) and financial rewards are the most important ones to motivate employees ($r = 0.11$, $P = 0.0331$). Employees expressed greater satisfaction when training programs were consistently conducted ($r = 0.24$; $P < 0.001$), training programs were relevant to the needs of the hospital ($r = 0.23$, $P < 0.001$), and when they perceived their coworkers as cooperative ($r = 0.38$, $P < 0.001$).

Conclusion: The study revealed there is a significant impact of human resource management practices on employees' job satisfaction in public hospitals in Erbil City.

Key words: Employees' job satisfaction, Erbil City, Human resource management (HRM) practices, Public hospitals.

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Introduction

Over the past five decades, top-level management has recognized that individuals, rather than products, markets, capital, infrastructure, or machines, are the pivotal factors that set businesses apart. Every asset within an organization relies on human input to unlock its value. With this awareness in mind, senior management, business leaders, and researchers have been tirelessly exploring ways to elevate employee engagement and job-related activities, leading to enhanced overall organizational performance.¹ Human resource management (HRM) refers to the segment of an organization's operations focused on hiring, nurturing, and overseeing its workforce.² Contemporary HRM is gaining significant attention due to its potential to influence an organization's long-term viability and success. It is increasingly believed that to thrive and remain competitive in the current global economy, which heavily relies on talent, organizations must possess and effectively implement top-tier HRM skills and practices in talent acquisition, development, and management.³ In today's fiercely competitive and interconnected world, the significance of human resource management practices (HRMPs) is amplified, especially within public sector organizations. This is because the working conditions and context of the public sector differ from those of the private sector. In the contemporary landscape, the ongoing global technological advancements pose a particular challenge for public sector entities in developing nations like Kurdistan. Consequently, the public sector requires a proficient and capable workforce to ensure the efficient functioning of the organization. For years, research in developed countries has predominantly focused on examining how HRM practices influence employee satisfaction.⁴ Establishing effective HRM policies and practices is essential to cultivate

a satisfied, productive, and proficient workforce within any organization. Satisfied and proficient human resources are crucial elements that enable organizations to confront the dynamic challenges of today's ever-evolving landscape. Furthermore, the progress, evolution, and enlargement of the organization are closely tied to the performance of its workforce. Additionally, the performance of employees is interconnected with their job satisfaction.⁵ According to a study conducted by Dessler⁶, HRM encompasses the policies and practices associated with managing the human resource elements within a managerial role. This includes activities like human resource planning, job evaluation, hiring, candidate selection, onboarding, compensation, performance assessment, training and growth, and labor relations. The study by Murat et al.⁷ demonstrates a robust connection between HRM practices, employee dedication, and overall job satisfaction. Their findings indicate that offering rewards and incentives contributes to employee job satisfaction. Similarly, other favorable practices, such as employee relations, also influence the commitment and contentment levels of employees. Training and development initiatives within organizations have a beneficial impact on employees, enhancing their performance and personal growth. Evaluation, on the other hand, empowers individuals to perform at their best and strive for excellence.⁸ Therefore; in this study, we have taken the following human resource management practices (reward and incentives, training and development, and employee relations) to examine their impacts on employees' satisfaction in public hospitals in Erbil city.

Subjects and methods:

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in several public hospitals namely Rizgari hospital, Komari hospital, Raparin hospital, Maternity hospital, Nanakali





hospital, and psychiatric hospital in Erbil City, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, from January 2023 to September 2023. The study included 405 employees selected by convenience sampling method, from different departments such as medical, administrative, and technical ones. To be eligible, participants needed to be employees of public hospitals situated within the city center, employed by the government on a permanent basis, with work experience of more than one year at least, and currently active in their roles. A special questionnaire was created to measure job satisfaction among employees and to assess how human resource management practices affect the satisfaction of these participants. The survey was divided into two sections. The initial part contained sociodemographic characteristics of studied participants, such as gender, age, marital status, place of residence, education level, department, work experience, and monthly income. The second part comprised 20 questions categorized into four sections: rewards and incentives, training and development, employee relations, and employee job satisfaction. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale to indicate their level of agreement, ranging from strong negative to strong positive, for each question. The researcher provided information about the study to the participants in their native languages, emphasized that taking part in the study is optional, assured them that their information would be kept confidential, and written consent was obtained from them, data was then collected through conducting direct interviews with all the participants. The study was approved by the Research Scientific and Ethics Committee of the Kurdistan Higher Council of Medical Specialties. The data were analyzed using JMP Pro 14.3.0 software package, general characteristics of participants were presented in numbers and percentages, comparisons of overall employee satisfaction among groups with

different socio-demographic characteristics were examined using independent t-tests or one-way ANOVA tests. The correlations between overall job satisfaction and human resource management practices were assessed through bivariate regression analysis. The uncertainty of the correlation was determined using a 95% confidence interval (CI), significance levels for differences and correlations were set at a p-value less than 0.05.

Results

A total of 405 employees participated in the study. Table (1) shows that the majority of participants were as follows: 224 (55.31%) were females, 267 (65.93%) were aged between 30-49 years, 314 (77.53%) were married, 302 (74.57%) were college or institute graduates, 352 (86.91%) resided in urban areas, 285 (70.37%) worked in the medical department, 295 (72.84%) had more than 10 years of work experience, and 229 (56.54%) reported a monthly income of less than 1 million IQD. Various demographic characteristics variables did not exhibit a significant difference (p -value >0.05) in overall job satisfaction, except for the department where employees worked. Notably, employees in administrative departments reported higher satisfaction compared to those in medical departments, with a p -value of <0.001 . Similarly, employees in technical departments demonstrated greater satisfaction than their counterparts in medical departments, with a p -value of 0.0483.





Table (1): Frequency of general characteristics and overall job satisfaction among employees at public hospitals in Erbil City.

General Characteristics (n=405)	Frequency Distribution	Overall, Job Satisfaction	P (two-sided) Pairwise Comparisons
	No (%)	Mean (SD)	
Gender			
Male	181 (44.69%)	3.81 (1.18)	0.1519 ^a
Female	224 (55.31%)	3.64 (1.17)	
Age (years)			
20-29 years old	63 (15.56%)	3.55 (0.97)	0.4830 ^b
30-39 years old	134 (33.09%)	3.83 (1.09)	
40-49 years old	133 (32.84%)	3.76 (1.19)	
50 years old and more	75 (18.52%)	3.80 (1.19)	
Marital status			
Single	89 (21.98%)	3.60 (1.13)	0.2686 ^b
Married	314 (77.53%)	3.75 (1.19)	
Widow	1 (0.25%)		
Divorced	1 (0.25%)		
Residency			
Urban	352 (86.91%)	3.74 (1.17)	0.0801 ^b
Suburban	49 (12.10%)	3.59 (1.14)	
Rural	4 (0.99%)	2.50 (1.73)	
Educational level			
Illiterate	2 (0.49%)	3.5 (0.71)	0.2202 ^b
Read and write.	3 (0.74%)	4.33 (1.15)	
Primary school graduate	22 (5.43%)	4.17 (0.62)	
Secondary school graduate	50 (12.35%)	3.78 (1.27)	
College or institute graduate	302 (74.57%)	3.74 (1.14)	
Higher education (master or PhD)	26 (6.42%)	3.31 (1.35)	
Working department			
Medical department	285 (70.37%)	3.61 (1.21)	<0.0001 ^b Administrative dept. vs. medical dept. (P<0.0001) technical dept. vs. medical dept. (P=0.0483)
Administrative department	81 (20.00%)	4.22 (0.77)	
Technical department	39 (9.63%)	4.09 (0.68)	
Work experience			
Less than 5 years	58 (14.32%)	3.65 (0.93)	0.5439 ^b
5-10 years	52 (12.84%)	3.62 (0.95)	
11-15 years	91 (22.47%)	3.82 (1.13)	
16-20 years	99 (24.44%)	3.90 (1.16)	
More than 20 years	105 (25.93%)	3.75 (1.20)	
Monthly income			
Less than 1 million IQD	229 (56.54%)	3.70 (1.12)	0.6895 ^b
1-2 million IQD	147 (36.30%)	3.79 (1.27)	
More than 2 million IQD	29 (7.16%)	3.63 (0.79)	

^a Independent t-test and ^b ANOVA one-way were performed for statistical analyses.





The study showed that the level of satisfaction of the employees has been significantly increased by increasing level of rewards and incentives with a positive impact on employee performance ($r=0.15$, $P=0.0019$), reward system for facilitating implementation of plans by motivating employees ($r=0.17$, $P=0.0004$), financial rewards which are most important ones to

motivate employees ($r=0.11$, $P=0.0331$), utilizing reward system effectively and fairly ($r=0.20$, $P=0.0001$), except for rewards and incentives for increasing employee loyalty towards work showed statistically a non-significant direct positive correlation with employees' job satisfaction ($r=0.09$, $P=0.0646$), see Table (2).

Table (2): Correlation of reward & incentives with overall job satisfaction among employees of public hospitals in Erbil City.

Reward & Incentives (n=405)	Overall, Job Satisfaction r. value (95% CI)	P (two-sided)
Rewards have positive impact on employee performance	0.15 (0.06 to 0.25)	0.0019
They facilitate implementation of plans by motivating employee	0.17 (0.08 to 0.27)	0.0004
Financial rewards are most important ones for employees	0.11 (0.01 to 0.20)	0.0331
Rewards and incentives increase employee loyalty towards work	0.09 (-0.01 to 0.19)	0.0646
Reward system is utilized effectively and fairly	0.20 (0.10 to 0.29)	<0.0001
Bivariate regression was performed for statistical analyses.		

The study demonstrated that the level of staff satisfaction has been significantly increased by increasing level of continuous conduct of training and development programs ($r=0.24$; $P<0.001$), relevance of training programs to the needs of the hospital ($r=0.23$, $P<0.001$),

training programs with a good mix of theory and practice ($r=0.28$, $P<0.001$), training for improvement of knowledge and performance of employee ($r=0.19$, $P=0.001$), and attendance in training and development programs ($r=0.12$, $P=0.0147$), see Table (3).

Table (3): Correlations of training & development with overall job satisfaction among employees of public hospitals in Erbil City.

Training & Development (n=405)	Overall, Job Satisfaction r. value (95% CI)	P (two-sided)
Training and development programs conducted continuously	0.24 (0.15 to 0.33)	<0.0001
Training programs are relevant to the needs of hospital	0.23 (0.14 to 0.32)	<0.0001
Training programs have a good mix of theory and practice	0.28 (0.18 to 0.36)	<0.0001
Training improves knowledge and performance of employee	0.19 (0.10 to 0.28)	0.0001
I like to attend training and development programs	0.12 (0.02 to 0.22)	0.0147
Bivariate regression was performed for statistical analyses.		





The study revealed that the level of participants satisfaction has been significantly increased by increasing level of employees being co-operative to work with (r=0.38, P<0.001), having someone at work who encourages their development (r=0.42,

P<0.001), supervisors provide them feedback and guidance (r=0.48, P<0.001), receiving necessary information to perform their job (r=0.41, P<0.001), regularly receiving praise for doing good work (r=0.37, P<0.001). see Table (4).

Table (4): Correlations of employee relations with Overall job satisfaction among employees of public hospitals in Erbil City.

Employee Relations (n=405)	Overall, Job Satisfaction r.value (95% CI)	P (two-sided)
Employees here are pleasant and co-operative to work with	0.38 (0.29 to 0.46)	<0.0001
There is someone at work who encourages my development	0.42 (0.34 to 0.50)	<0.0001
My supervisor provides me feedback and guidance	0.48 (0.40 to 0.55)	<0.0001
I receive the information I need to do my job	0.41 (0.33 to 0.49)	<0.0001
I regularly receive praise for doing good work	0.37 (0.28 to 0.45)	<0.0001
Bivariate regression was performed for statistical analyses.		

Discussion

In general, Human resource management practices are instrumental in ensuring that organizations deliver high-quality services. These policies aim to enhance a company's human resources to achieve its business objectives.⁹ Employees' Job Satisfaction can be described as an employee's attitude regarding their feelings toward their job.¹⁰ Satisfied employees are those who feel motivated to express care for their colleagues and contribute more effectively to the company.¹¹ Our study aimed to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction among 405 employees within a healthcare setting. The demographic characteristics of the participants provided interesting insights. While these demographic factors are valuable in understanding the composition of the sample, they did not exhibit a significant difference (p-value >0.05) in overall job satisfaction, except when considering the department of employment. Individuals working in administrative and technical

departments expressed higher job satisfaction, with p-values of <0.0001 and <0.0483 respectively, compared to those in medical departments. In contrast, a study conducted by Robin ¹², showed that a significant difference exists in the case of gender, marital status, and work experience concerning job satisfaction. In this study, a significant number of participants 232 (57.28%) strongly believed that rewards and incentives positively influenced employee performance. However, a substantial portion 168 (41.48%) strongly disagreed with the fairness and effectiveness of the reward system's administration. This inconsistency highlights the importance not only of providing rewards and incentives but also of ensuring fairness and transparency in their distribution. Similarly, while most participants 357 (88.15%) expressed a preference for training and development programs, a notable proportion 123 (30.37%) strongly disagreed that these programs were consistently implemented. This suggests that





there is room for improvement in organizational training approaches. Additionally, the study revealed correlations between specific factors and employee job satisfaction. An increase in the level of rewards and incentives was associated with higher job satisfaction, as was the perception that the reward system motivated employees ($r=0.17$, $P=0.0004$). It's worth noting that financial rewards were identified as significant motivators ($r=0.11$, $P=0.0331$). These findings are consistent with the results of many studies.^{13,14,15} However, it's important to emphasize that rewards and incentives aimed at fostering employee loyalty toward their work did not exhibit a statistically significant direct positive relationship with job satisfaction ($r=0.09$, $P=0.0646$). This suggests that factors beyond tangible rewards may also play a role in influencing loyalty. The study also emphasized the importance of continuous and relevant training and development programs. Participants reported higher job satisfaction when these programs were consistently conducted ($r=0.24$; $P<0.0001$), customized to their needs ($r=0.23$, $P<0.0001$), and included a combination of theoretical and practical training ($r=0.28$, $P<0.0001$). Similarly, in their studies, Murad¹³ and Emmanuel¹⁴ found a positive effect of training and development on employees' job satisfaction, while Robin¹² found that training has a negative impact on job satisfaction. Furthermore, the research highlighted the significant impact of workplace interpersonal relationships and support on job satisfaction. Employees reported higher satisfaction when they perceived their colleagues as cooperative ($r=0.38$, $P<0.0001$), had mentors who encouraged their growth ($r=0.42$, $P<0.0001$), received feedback from supervisors ($r=0.48$, $P<0.0001$), had access to necessary job-related information ($r=0.41$, $P<0.0001$), and received recognition for their contributions

($r=0.37$, $P<0.0001$). Consistently, Mohammed¹⁶ reported a significant positive relationship between employee relations and job satisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of fostering a positive work environment and supportive relationships among colleagues and superiors. Lastly, this research illuminates the numerous factors that impact job satisfaction among healthcare employees. It underscores the importance of well-functioning reward systems, ongoing and pertinent training, and fostering positive workplace relationships. Organizations should take these findings into account when formulating strategies to enhance employee job satisfaction, with the potential for improved overall performance and increased employee retention.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is a significant impact of human resource management practices on employees' job satisfaction in public hospitals in Erbil city, these practices serve as a solid basis for an organization's path to success. When employees perceive proper care from their organization, they become more comfortable and demonstrate loyalty by dedicating extra effort to contribute to the organization's growth.

Conflicts of interest:

The author reports no conflicts of interest.

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