

An Analytical Study on HR Practices in the Public Sector Universities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir



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Abstract: The primary focus of this paper was to analyze the impact of performance evaluation, compensation and promotion on perceived employee performance. Primary data collection was collected from 214 employees serving in various universities of AJK. Data were analyzed through correlation and regression by running SPSS software. Results revealed that all selected HR practices were positively related to employee perceived performance and employee commitment. Employee commitment has also been tested as the mediator between HR practices and employee perceived performance. As per reference (Barren and Kenney, 1986), partial mediation of employee commitment was found between the HR practices and employee perceived performance. The study indicates that if an organization wishes its workforce to be committed to it and wants to enhance its performance, it needs to address its HR practices. Investment in HR practices is undoubtedly the right investment to enhance the commitment and to boost the performance of the employees.

Key Words: HR Practices, Employee Commitment, Employee Perceived Performance, AMO Theory, Social Exchange Theory

Introduction

Human Resource Management is defined as a philosophical concept by Noe et al. (2010), being a system of policy and practices which has the power to affect the attitudes, behavior and performance of the people working in the organization. During the early stage of management development, the management of the organization did not pay proper attention to the HR practices as the key and the major driving force behind the success of the organization. The recent development in management has induced the potential part of HRM in improving and enhancing performance. Customers' productivity, innovation and good reputation development among the community the firm is operating in (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Noe et al., 2010).

The realization of the fact that it is the human beings, not the buildings and infrastructures, which make organizations successful gave momentum to the professional and corporate communities' towards the recognition and significant interest of Human Resource Management practices. Considering HRM, a newly emerged phenomenon, cannot be justified as a matter of fact is that it has been in practice for very

long. HRM is considered to be an evolved and advanced form of management. In the present competitive world, the need for HR practices is felt significantly to assure that the business entities are able to achieve the objectives of the organization through the available human resources. A sound HRM system is aimed at by corporate professionals in order to achieve organizational success. However, only a limited number of organizations can establish independent, autonomous and separate HRM departments because of the reasons of unaffordability and lack of understanding of the worth that the HRM practices can have towards the organization success.

Human Resource Management focuses on a variety connected with activities regarding the acquisition and development of labor to meet ones instantaneous and immediate requirements of an organization. The aim of HRM is to make all the staff members perform collectively into a unified strategy. Furthermore, it deals with personnel record keeping of employees and different other activities related to the job, and at the same time, it also studies the whole organization as the basic point of investigation. Legge

(1995) described managing staffing needs on the basis of the hard and soft distinguishing aspects which differentiate between material and human resources. Like other different economic factors, the hard perspective mostly focused on the strategies used in business as quantitative and calculative aspects of HR. Storey (1992) considered the human resource in the organization as a factor that is involved in the production, and the treatment of these human resources is considered as the variable cost of managing the business. According to [Guest \(1987\)](#), the soft aspect is focused on the approach of competitive advantage in selecting and recruiting the expert, keen and flexible human resources.

Technological advancements, globalization and competition, have forced the world and different fields to change accordingly. These changes have also affected the way of functioning of an organization. These challenges can be met by using active HR practices, and these practices can have a prominent contribution to the success of the organization through the involvement and consideration of the people. Managing today's diverse workforce at the workplace is not an easy task and requires some effort. This diverse workforce has diverse preferences which are needed to be addressed by HR practices. No doubt, it seems difficult, but it is very imperative for the success of the organization. [Meyer and Allen \(1997\)](#) believe that researches need to be carefully designed related to the field of different dimensions of human resource management. They stressed that additional research would be required to recognize the precursors connected through the multiple spheres of employee commitment. It is therefore important that the policies of the management are focused on retaining the talent as it makes them feel committed towards the firm. This will, in turn, help to attract other talented and qualified employees to the organization. Therefore, this subject should be a very prime one, focusing researchers throughout the fields involving employment, organizations, along with other interconnected fields (Scarpello, Ledvinka, & Bergman, 1995).

Review of Literature

HR Practices and Performance

Based on the literature, human resource practices are those activities that are discrete but also interconnected, and these activities are very helpful in attracting and maintaining the firm's human resources

[\(Lado and Wilson \(1994\)\)](#). These practices play an important role in the achievement of a firm's objectives and, in this way, adding value for its customers and its resources. [Barney \(1991\)](#) explored that HR practices management is a very crucial organization's strategy in attaining and maintaining competitive advantage. HR management practices are helpful in guiding and monitoring employee performance [\(Snell and Dean, 1992\)](#). Organizations use these practices to involve employees in decision making and award the best rewards for their good performance. [MacDuffie \(1995\)](#) describe that HR management policies impact the 'psychological contract' between employees and firm. If employees perceive them positive, then they enhance the satisfaction and confidence of employees. HR management policies are means which provide internal development and career opportunities to employees and also have an impact on their attitudes [\(Delery and Doty, 1996\)](#).

The majority of researchers have stated HR practices has an influence on employee performance as compare to working individually [\(Arthur, 1994; MacDuffie, 1994; Husield, 1995; Baron and Kreps, 1999\)](#). [Ichniowski \(1995\)](#), in his study on the performance of steelworkers, found that employee performance can be increased if proper pay plans, job design, training, screening and communication system are used. Employees need incentives and rewards for achieving organizational goals [\(Mohinder et al., 2010; Guest, 1997\)](#). Incentives provide a high level of satisfaction to employees, so in this way, an organization can get the required level of performance [\(Dessler, 2010; Milkovich and Boudreau, 1997\)](#). [Barney \(1991\)](#) explored that HR practices management is a very crucial organization's strategy in attaining and maintaining competitive advantage. HR management practices are helpful in guiding and monitoring employee performance [Snell and Dean \(1992\)](#). Organizations use these practices to involve employees in decision making and award the best rewards for their good performance. [MacDuffie \(1995\)](#) describe that HR management policies impact the 'psychological contract' between employees and firm. If employees perceive them positive, then they enhance the satisfaction and confidence of employees. HR management policies are means which provide internal development and career opportunities to employees and also have an impact on their attitudes [\(Delery and Doty, 1996\)](#).

There are some basic functions of an organization that provide a competitive edge. These functions assist job satisfaction, and employee performance Kya et al. (2010) highlighted the positive relationship between evaluation and performance of employees. [Huselid \(1995\)](#) stated that if the investment is made in HR practices, then the rate of turnover of employees can be easily reduced, and performance can be increased. Gyensare and Asare (2012) have also identified the relationship between various HR practices in the organization. They concluded that all three HR practices had a substantial and constructive association with the perception of the performance of psychiatry nurses of Ghana. In an attempt to find the association between HR practices, which were promotion compensation and performance appraisal practices in public sector employees of Pakistan, [Bashir and Khattak \(2008\)](#) found that all the practices used in the study had a significant impact on the perceived performance of employees. So on the basis of these studies, it is proposed that;

Compensation Practices and Performance

[Singh \(2004\)](#) argues that there are multiple ways by which an organization can encourage its workforce and accomplish its objectives and goals. Compensation based on performance is one of them. There are some empirically based evidence that proves performance and compensation have a close relationship (Gardner et al., 2004., [Gneezy and Rustichini, 2000](#));. [Ichniowski et al. \(1997\)](#) argued that incentives and payment plans, along with some other practices, crucial role in employee performance. [Wright et al. \(2003\)](#) examined that if we establish a proper system of compensation according to the performance of employees, then these employees will make a lot of efforts to complete their tasks on time. Caruth and Handlogten (2001) stated that employee performance and motivation could be enhanced if rewards are directly provided to them. Leonard (1990) stated that companies that plan long term incentives get more equity return compare to those companies which do not introduce such plans. [Baloch et al. \(2010\)](#) conduct a study on the performance of employees in banking sectors and compensation systems and found a positive relationship. Therefore they argued that the management of public and private sector banks need to establish a proper compensation system so that performance of employees could be increased.

A number of researchers have stated that dilapidation of income, tough working settings, involvement of politicians, and poor supervision from years created corps of public employees in most emerging nations and countries have caused demotivation and desperation ([Jaeger et al., 1995](#)). [Cohen et al. \(1997\)](#) found the evils of HR practices in evolving countries which are small salary, less consideration of performance, non-ability of firing people, non-provision of incentives to excellent performance etc. Budhwar and Debrah (2001) said one of the most prominent and common problems faced by developing countries is a weak HR system, especially the compensation plans. Different compensation may be paid to different levels as per their education, training and experience (Pedro & Vicente, 2007). Mostly Compensation plans which are equity-based are used for staff. Upon these plans, employees are permitted to get the benefit (Fyre, 2004). FW Taylor (1911) said that to get workmen to work for a long period of time is impossible unless they are guaranteed to get a large and stable increase in pay. Skinner (1974) argued that employees could be made to behave in a specific way if they are awarded for behaving in required ways. A bonus system plays a key role to achieve the goals and objectives of a company ([Pfeffer, 1994](#)). A large number of researchers concluded that a high rate of wages could easily reduce the rate of deliberate turnover ([Shaw et al., 1998](#)).

The researches have proved that pay and performance both are strongly correlated. Moreover the behavior of employees can be shaped well if intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are given to them. Compensation is a very effective tool that improves the performance of the employee in a company (March & Simon, 1958; [Weinert, 1999](#)). Lawler (2005) concluded that the performance of the organization, its design, its effectiveness and change in its management system all are results of an outstanding HRM system. Further, he explained that to improve the system of HRM, there is a need for empirical evidence that approach shifts the traditional HRM system towards a strategic HRM system. So reward and performance have a positive relationship with organizational effectiveness. There are various studies that investigated the compensation scheme and explained that on the basis of it, the reward structure is divided into two classes. Intrinsic rewards are related to job or job content like variety and independence. Extrinsic rewards are related to the framework of the job like

pay, promotion and physical condition of work. So it is proposed that;

Performance Evaluation Practices and Performance

PA known as Performance appraisal denotes the process of measuring, evaluating and influencing the employees' behaviors and job-related outcomes. It is the process of assessing the productivity of the employee and assessing the ways by which this productivity could be improved. Performance Appraisal apprises the employees that what are requirements of their job. In this way, it helps the employees to achieve the goals of the company easily. This process is also known as Employee Assessment. Evaluation of the performance of the staff is a very important duty of HRM supervisors of related units. This procedure is helpful to check the output of employees, and it should be according to the culture and rules of business (Ebrahim et al., 2005). Performance can be evaluated by using diverse methods because every organization has its own culture, and in accordance with that, it set different standards to evaluate the performance.

Sometime Performance Appraisal is not managed properly, and the organization gets poor results of performance. This is due to the poor management system and lack of provision of feedback to employees (Ebrahim et al., 2005). This process has great importance and provides an opportunity for employees and managers to discuss work-related issues very efficiently. [Brown and Heywood \(2005\)](#) mentioned in their study that this process could be used as a tool that monitors the employees and increase the productivity of workers. Training, rewards and evaluation etc., have a great impact on productivity ([Brown and Heywood, 2005](#)). [Brown & Benson \(2003\)](#) concluded that employee's responsibilities, commitment and performance can be enhanced by using performance evaluation. Through this process, management monitors the employees' activities and controls them, and in this way, performance can be increased.

Teseema and Soeters (2006) and [Huselid \(1995\)](#) used different HR practices to evaluate the performance of the employees where performance evaluation was found one of the major determinants of the performance. Both performance evaluation and employees performance have a positive relationship.

[Marwat \(2009\)](#) also have the same view about that relationship. According to [Coens and Jenkins \(2000\)](#), under the process of Performance Appraisal, the traits and behaviour of employees are rated and judged individually within a specific period of time and outcomes are held by the organization itself. Performance Appraisal and rewards systems in a company play a key role to increase efficient performance ([Abeysekera, 2007](#)).

Materials & Methods

This research is a quantity one which is assessing the various aspects of the human resource where the researchers targeted the employee performance in the different universities. For a collection of primary data, descriptive and quantitative approaches were used. The main intention of this article is intended to investigate the possible relationship between two or among more than two variables, and it involved the collection of data in testing the hypothesis so, such approaches were deemed appropriate. The questionnaire for this study was adopted. It contained the same standardized questions for every respondent, and this thing makes measurement easy and reliable. The questions were aimed to measure the different variables of the research model and were simple and easy to understand. This questionnaire was developed and used by Teseema and Soeters (2006) for the study of the same practices which are used in this research.

The respondents were required to rate the HR practices of an organization. This questionnaire consists overall 30 items on a different dimension of the understudy variable. This MHRPQ has a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 signifies a high degree of disagreement while 5 show a high degree of agreement. The data collected for this research is analyzed by using SPSS version 19. The analyses done are; Cronbach's Alpha, Reliability, Frequency, Correlations and Multiple regressions.

Results and Discussion

The Cronbach α for employee perceived performance is .769. The Cronbach α for compensation practice is .816, performance appraisal is .807, promotion practice is .794, and human resource practice is .844. The value of Cronbach α for the commitment of employees is .698, and the general consistency of the instrument is .848. The reliability results show that the instrument used was quite reliable.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α	Reference
EPP	4	.769	Tseema & Soeters (2006)
CP	6	.816	
PA	6	.807	
PRP	3	.794	
HRP	15	.844	Tseema & Soeters (2006)
EC	9	.698	Cook & Wall (1980)
Overall	28	.848	

Source: Calculated by Author

*EPP stands for Employee Perceived Performance.

*PA stands for Performance Appraisal.

*HRP stands for Human Resource Practices.

*CP stands for Compensation Practice

*PRP stands for Promotion Practice

*EC stands for Employee Commitment

Table 2. University Wise Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
UMSIT	50	23.4	23.4
MUST	47	22.0	45.3
UAJK	45	21.0	66.4
BWU	40	18.7	85.0
UPR	32	15.0	100.0
Total	214	100.0	

Source: Calculated by Author

The prior table specifies the distribution of the employees as per university. The figures specify that 50 respondents were from UMSIT, 23.4 percent, 47

were from MUST 47, contributing 22.0 percent, 45 were from UAJK, forming 21.0 percent of the

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents (Gender)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	133	62.1	62.1
Female	81	37.9	100.0
Total	214	100.0	

Source: Calculated by Author

This table shows the distribution of the respondents as per gender. It can be seen that 133 male and 81 female

respondents answered, contributing 62.1 and 37.9 percent, respectively.

Table 4. Distribution of the Respondents (Marital Status)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Unmarried	59	27.6	27.6
Married	147	68.7	96.3
Divorced	8	3.7	100.0
Total	214	100.0	

Source: Calculated by Author

The table shows that 59 respondents were unmarried, 147 respondents were married, and 8 respondents

were divorced with a percentage of 27.6, 68.7 and 3.7, respectively.

Table 5. Distribution of the Respondents (Education)

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Masters	42	19.6	19.6
MS/M,Phil	128	59.8	79.4
Ph.D	29	13.6	93.0
Post Doc.	15	7.0	100.0
Total	214	100.0	

This table shows respondents distribution as per education. The table shows that 42 employees have masters’ degrees, 128 have MS/M.Phil degree, 29

respondents have Ph. D degree and 15 respondents were post-doctorate.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5. Descriptive Statistic

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Perceived Performance	214	3.7278	.63062	.398
Compensation Practice	214	3.3964	.70084	.491
Performance Appraisal	214	3.2103	.68741	.473
Promotion Practice	214	3.3785	.94642	.896
HR Practices	214	3.3284	.57809	.334
Employee Commitment	214	3.4237	.33015	.109

Source: Calculated by Author

This table highlights the number of respondents (N=214), mean, variance and standard deviation of the variables. Mean range from 3.2103 to 3.7278,

standard deviation range from .33015 to .94642, and variance varies from .109 to .896.

Correlation

To discover the relationship among different variables of the present study Pearson Product Momentum

(PPM) was used. Following is the table that depicts the main results:

Table 6. Correlation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. EPP	1					
2. CP	.194**	1				
3. PA	.203**	.418**	1			
4. PRP	.403**	.184**	.385**	1		
5. HRP	.390*	.630**	.776**	.773**	1	
6. EC	.141*	.208**	.288**	.371**	.401**	1

Source: Calculated by Author

EPP=Employee Perceived Performance, CP=Compensation Practice, PA=Performance Appraisal, PRP=Promotion Practices, HRP=Human Resource Practices, EC=Employee Commitment

understudy variables with employee perceived performance at value is (.390). This depicts that if HR practices are prevalent in an organization, then the performance of the employees are also increasing. The correlation between the employee perceived performance and other independent variables of the present study, which are compensation practice,

As in earlier studies, this study also supported that there is a relationship which is positive between

performance appraisal, and promotion practice, is .194, .203 and .403, respectively, and all are significant. The relationship between the values indicates that compensation practice, performance appraisal, and promotion practice have a significant and positive effect on the perceived performance of the employees. This is also evident from table 1.8, with a correlation value of .401. The correlation value

of compensation practice, performance appraisal and promotion practice with employee commitment is also positive and significant. The correlation values are .208, .288 and .371 respectively. This also shows that employee commitment has a positive and substantial association with employee perceived performance with a correlation value of .141.

Regression Analysis

Table 7. Regression of CP & EPP

Forecaster	Dependent Variable: EPP				
	R ²	ΔR ²	F	Sig.	B
	.038	.038	8.326	.004	.194**

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Source: Calculated by Author

The table shows that compensation practices contribute to a 3 percent variation in the perceived performance of the employees.

The value of F (8.326) shows the strength of the model, and it depicts that it has substantial overall strength and is correct. The Beta coefficients demonstrate an increase of one unit in compensation

will lead to .194 units increase in the perceived performance of the employee.

The value is substantial and is significant. Hence the positive relationship between compensation practices & the performance of the employees proved to accept this hypothesis of relationship.

Table 8. Regression of PA & EPP

Predictor	Dependent Variable: EPP				
	R ²	ΔR ²	F	Sig.	B
PA	.053	.053	11.855	.001	.230***

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Source: Calculated by Author

The table shows that performance appraisal practices contribute to 5 percent variation in the perceived performance of the employees.

The value of F (11.855) shows the strength of the model, and it depicts that it has substantial overall strength and is correct. The Beta coefficients demonstrate an increase of one unit in performance

appraisal will lead to .230 units increase in the perceived performance of the employee.

The value is substantial and is significant. Hence the positive relationship between performance appraisal practices and the perceived performance of the employees has been proved. So, H_{2a} is accepted

Table 9. Regression of PRP & EPP

Predictor	Dependent Variable: EPP				
	R ²	ΔR ²	F	Sig.	B
PRP	.162	.162	41.074	.000	.403***

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Source: Calculated by Author

The table shows that promotion practices contribute to a 16 percent variation in the perceived performance of the employees. The value of F (41.074) shows the strength of the model, and it depicts that it has substantial overall strength and is correct.

The Beta coefficients demonstrate an increase of one unit in the promotion will lead to a .403 units increase in the perceived performance of the employee. The value is substantial and is significant. Hence the positive relationship between compensation practices and the perceived performance of the employees has been proved. So, H_{3a} is accepted

Discussion

The prime objective of the present study was to examine the effects of few practices related to the human resource on their performance. The survey results reveal that there is a role of mediation by the employee commitment independent variables of this study and the employee perception about their performance. It hypothesizes and tests a model that can understand the connection between human resource practices and employee perceived performance. The research results strongly support the hypothetical relationships established in the research. This study found a general positive correlation between human resource practices and employees' perceived performance; this has also been reported in earlier studies as well ([Baloch et al., 2010](#); Micheal and Joan, 2012).

The results show that the academic employees who perceive HR practices to be appropriate contribute more towards their own performance and hence towards the overall performance of the organization. As the three HR practices used in this particular study have a direct effect on the financial earning of the people, they have dominated effect on their performance also. This fact has been stated by Ghebregiorgis and Karsten (2006) as they say that HR practices and their results are affected by factors like economic condition, political stability and uncertainty in the environment.

The findings of this study have reached the same conclusion that these findings are consistent with earlier research results ([Shahzad et al., 2008](#); Teseema and Soeters, 2006; Fyre, 2004). It is found that performance appraisal practice has a significant relationship with employees' perceived performance. The results do support the findings identified in previous studies ([Baloch et al., 2010](#)). Also,

promotion practices have been found positively related to employee performance. The findings of this study are also supporting the earlier studies findings of (Micheal and Joan, 2012; [Baloch et al., 2010](#); [Shahzad Shabbir, 2014](#), Teseema and Soeters, 2006).

This study has identifies that a correlation between employee commitment and employee performance. The reasons are [Watson and Wyatt \(1999\)](#), [Huselid \(1995\)](#), [Konovsky and Cropanzano \(1991\)](#), and Mayer. (1998) found similar results in their research. Multiple regression analysis proves that human resource practice enhances employees' commitment and ultimately improves their performance. This study has gained higher significance based on the existing evidence is still consistent with the results of this study. [Payne and Huffman \(2005\)](#) found that employee commitment plays an intermediary role in the association between employee turnover and coaching. [Masoud Hasanzadeh and Roya Davari \(2014\)](#) pointed out that certain practices are being mediated by the org commitment. [Irvan Trang et al. \(2013\)](#) believes that organizational commitment will interfere with the impact of motivation productivity of the employees.

The findings can easily be justified by the logic that humans naturally reciprocate to what they receive or whatever is given to them. Newton's law "every action has a reaction" also depicts the same reality. People try to pay back. If they are given good, they are motivated, obliged and in response to that, they return well. If HR practices are employee-centric, they give a message of consideration to the employees, and they reciprocate by showing commitment towards the organization, which ultimately enhances their performance. AJ&K is striving for prominent advancement in the education sector, especially for quality education at a higher level. The other fact is that AJ&K is a developing area where per capita income is very low. Moreover, there is a need to retain the talented academic staff which is seeing its future bright abroad. All the stated issues can be addressed by investing in these HR practices, which will result in employee commitment and enhanced employee performance.

Further Research Direction

A longitudinal study to establish a causative relationship among the variables to increase validity. In further researches conducted in this area, a larger sample can increase the generalizability of its findings.

The same study can be done in other sectors to investigate the relationship and to generalize the results that HR practices positively impact the employee perceived performance, and employee commitment mediates the relationship between them.

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