

The Work Environment as a Moderator of the HRM Practice Impacts on Employee Retention in the Apparel Industry

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Abstract: The HRM practices and improving employee retention are major concerns of all organisations, as human workforces are the significant assets of both manufacturing and services industries. The current study aims to examine the relationship between human resource management (HRM) practices and employee retention in the Jordanian apparel industry. The study also explored the moderating influence of the work environment on the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. The proposed hypotheses were tested on the Smart PLS software based on the data collected from 260 employees in the apparel industry via a questionnaire. Resultantly, a significant correlation was discovered between the recruitment and selection process, training and development, and compensation with employee retention in the apparel industry. The work environment significantly influenced the relationships between HRM practices, including recruitment and selection processes, learning and development, compensation, and employee retention. Improving employee retention requires all HRM practices and the necessary skills for the relevant industries.

Keywords: HRM practices, employee retention, apparel industry.

INTRODUCTION

Employee retention is significantly influenced by HR practices and procedures implemented by an organisation (Olayisade & Awolusi, 2021). Effective human resource management (HRM) would ensure an organisation manages HR effectively with satisfactory employee retention. Retention is a crucial factor in determining the turnover intention of employees. Accordingly, multiple Jordanian apparel organisations encounter high employee turnover rates, which necessitates appropriate and effective HR policies and practices to maximise employee productivity (Eneizan et al., 2021). As proper HR practices and policies are lacking in most Jordanian garment businesses, employees become dissatisfied with work obligations and environments (Elbanna & Kamel, 2015). Consequently, a large number of resignations and job transfers are observed (Awolusi & Jayakody, 2021).

The current study sought to determine the underlying factors as the Jordanian apparel industry encounters high employee turnover rates. Certain workers resign from the current employment positions due to poor management, intense rivalry, low wages, and an unsuitable work environment. High employee turnover is also engendered by a lack of proper employment plans and long working hours. Hence, maintaining a low employee attrition rate requires performing the appropriate HR decisions by thoroughly understanding the fundamentals of a proper HR policy (Hijazi et al., 2021) and

identifying effective methods to promote employee retention. Accordingly, the current issues experienced by the apparel industry, including inconducive work environments, poor leadership, and inadequate performance evaluations, would be resolved to prevent further employee turnover. Furthermore, employees without sufficient knowledge and skills relevant to the current jobs would negatively impact the retention rate (Aktaş & Yeasmin, 2015).

Research on effective HRM practices and the overall influence on employee retention is essential to prevent employee turnover rates (Abdelqader Alsakarneh et al., 2018). This study focused on recruitment and selection, compensation, training, and development to improve employee retention to contribute to the existing literature investigating appropriate approaches to retaining employees. A theoretical framework was also developed to elucidate the impacts of HRM practices on employee retention moderated by the work environment. A moderator would be integral to clarifying the relationships between various HRM practices to resolve the contradictory results by prior scholars. Thus, the present study aimed to determine the influences of HRM practices on employee retention among Jordanian apparel businesses.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

HRM Practices and Employee Retention

A significant positive correlation between employee retention and HRM practices was revealed in past studies (Alsakarneh & Hong, 2015; Imna & Hassan, 2015; Sepahvand &

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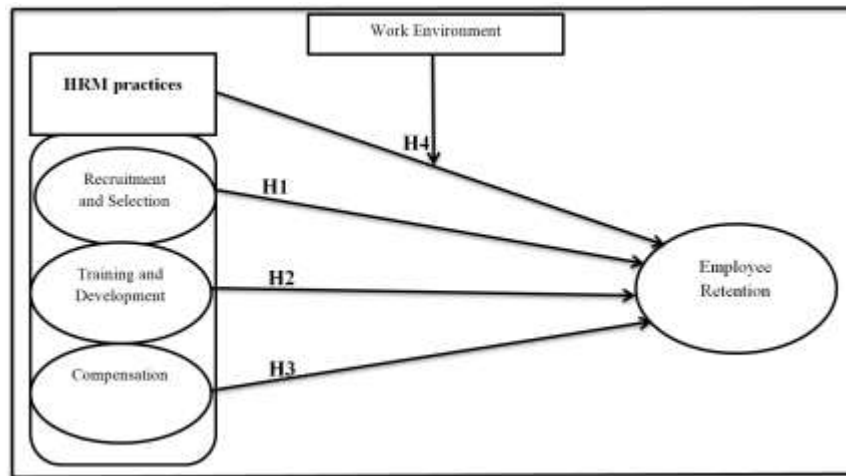


Fig. (1). The Research Framework.

Khodashahri, 2021; Hassan, 2022; Islam et al.,2022; Alajlani & Yesufu,2022). Nevertheless, the development of employee skills and benefits may be hampered by lower entry barriers, individual differences, and temporary work scopes (Kampkötter, 2017). Onyije (2015) argued that HRM practices, which determine the relationship between employers and employees, reflect the effectiveness of a firm in managing respective Hrs. Organisational success is also impacted by existing HRM practices (Yang & Alves, 2022). Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between each component of HRM practices with employee retention moderated by the work environment. The research framework was developed upon reviewing existing literature and identifying the key variables significantly impacting employee retention.

Recruitment and Selection and Employee Retention

Enterprises consider employees as the most vital asset, with corresponding HRM practices encompassing relevant systems and policies to positively influence employee attitudes, behaviours, and performance (Alajlani & Yesufu, 2022). According to Reina and Scarozza (2021), HRM practices refer to employee management, development, retention, and motivation to succeed through strategic planning (Boselie et al., 2021; Makhamreh et al., 2022). Effective HRM could elevate employee performance apart from improving company efficiency (Beijer et al., 2021). Specifically, the recruitment and selection process involves selecting qualified candidates to fill current or future employment vacancies. The process is highly important, especially for small companies with under 20 employees, which experience a high turnover rate due to ineffective hiring procedures (Mohammad, 2015; Sepahvand & Khodashahri, 2021). Moreover, the recruitment and selection process is pivotal to employee retention (Miheo et al., 2019). The improvement of work performance through HR policies would lead to high job satisfaction (Fitz-Lewis, 2018), wherein committed and engaged employees would enhance corporate performance through lower turnover and absenteeism rates.

Employees with a high trust level in senior management exhibit a higher engagement degree among employees and lower turnover intentions (Kundu & Lata, 2017). A highly engaged employee would receive more promotion opportuni-

ties in the organisation, which would contribute to a positive employer image while reducing the turnover rate (Erwin et al., 2019). During the employment process, employee retention strategies are determined by the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection procedures (Mbugua et al., 2015). Therefore, effective recruitment and selection strategies in seeking job candidates would positively impact employee retention. A relevant hypothesis was proposed as follows:

H1: Recruitment and selection practices are positively correlated to employee retention.

Training and Development and Employee Retention

Development and training are the most effective HRM strategies for retaining employees. Employee retention was significantly impacted by training and development in most previous studies (Aleem & Bowra, 2020; Akther & Tariq, 2020; Okafor, 2022). Particularly, appropriate training programmes could reduce turnover intention when the programmes are perceived as effective by employees (Aburuman et al., 2020; Mohite et al.,2022) with higher job satisfaction (Hassan,2022). Although past researchers did not demonstrate a significant correlation between training and development and employee retention (Santhanam et al., 2017;Murtiningsih, 2020; Lwin,2022),training and development investments allow companies to effectively retain employees (Nguyen, 2020) and enhance employee creativity. Simultaneously, training and development would create a sense of belonging, which promote employee retention and improves employees' marketability (Glen, 2007).

In developed countries, corporations consider comprehensive technical and professional skills as the most effective method of attracting and retaining workers. Training would elevate employee retention rates and growth, especially for long-term employees. Essentially, training and development would prevent the cost of employing new employees with sufficient employee retention (Wentland, 2003).Numerous studies also demonstrated that the increased employee retention rate was contributed by adequate training and development (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2020). Nonetheless, major knowledge and methodology gaps exist in empirical studies investigating the positive impacts of training and

development on employee retention. As such, the current study postulated as follows:

H2: Training and development practices are positively correlated to employee retention.

Compensation and Employee Retention

Employee retention was positively impacted by HRM procedures, such as compensation, which was regarded as one of the most crucial HRM strategies in the past 10 years (Imna & Hassan, 2015). In addition to tangible monetary rewards, employees could receive direct and indirect payments as compensation for respective employment services (Hasibuan, 2019; Dessler, 2020). Direct compensation refers to salary, whereas indirect compensation includes holiday allowances and other benefits (Bibi et al., 2017). An employee’s compensation could be a motivational and inspirational source at work and an incentive for higher job performance when appropriately implemented and managed (Suta & Ardana, 2019; Ginting & Meilani, 2022). Specifically, compensation based on the contribution level to organisational goals could support the strategic planning of a company (Hafanti & Lubis, 2015) by encouraging employees to perform specific work behaviours (Dessler, 2020). According to Suta and Ardana (2019), employees who receive fair compensation tend to remain longer in an organisation. A relevant hypothesis was postulated:

H3: Compensation practices are positively correlated to employee retention.

Work Environment

A work environment encompasses all factors other than financial elements (Bibi et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2020), which affect employee turnover intentions and decisions (Markey et al., 2012; Qureshi et al., 2013; Zeytinoglu & Denton, 2006). Ollukaran and Gunaseelan (2012) explicated that the work environment would positively or negatively influence certain job outcomes, such as engagement, commitment, and employee retention (Bibi et al., 2016, 2017). Particularly, employee dedication and retention are positively impacted by a tidy, appealing, inspiring, and conducive work environment (AlBattat & Som, 2013; Mangi et al., 2011). Blau (1964) delineated that responsibilities for reciprocation are created when employees and firms enter into exchange relationships, in which effective HRM practices would increase employee retention (Raihan, 2012). Nevertheless, empirical findings on compensation, growth, and success as significant contributors to employee retention remain inconsistent (Abeysekera, 2007).

The present study incorporated the work environment as a moderator of HRM practices and employee retention to resolve the inconsistent past findings. Baron and Kenny (1986) recommended a moderating variable when the association between a criterion and a predictor is ambiguous. As such, this study included the work environment to determine the moderating effect on the relationships between HRM practices and employee retention. Nonetheless, no studies were conducted on the moderating impact of the work environment on the correlations between HRM practices and employee retention in the apparel industry. Thus, this study

appraised the work environment as the moderator to bridge the existing literature gap. A relevant hypothesis was posited as follows:

H4: A work environment significantly moderates the relationships between HRM practices and employee retention

Methodology

The study participants were apparel industry employees in Amman, which is the capital city of Jordan. A total of 320 questionnaires were distributed via email and other electronic and social media platforms with the cooperation of respective employers. The sample size was determined by the components of the research instrument, whereas the respondents were selected through a random probability sampling method, with 260 responses collected. A total of 20 responses were removed from the collected responses due to incompleteness. The 16 items utilised in this study were adapted from previous studies. The four items measuring the variable of recruitment and selection were adapted from Tang (2018), the four items examining the variable of training and development were adapted from Delery and Doty (1996), and another four items assessing the variable of compensation were adapted from Tessema and Soeters (2006). Meanwhile, the four items appraising employee retention were modified from Kyndt et al. (2009).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The Smart PLS version 4 software was employed to examine the measurement and structural model (Ringle et al., 2005). The first step was determining the measurement model validity and reliability. Convergent validity was assessed via the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). Sufficient convergent validity was demonstrated when the factor loading was at least 0.7, with the AVE value at least 0.5 and the CR value at least 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Table 1 and Fig. (2) depict the factor loadings, whereas Table 2 portrays Cronbach’s alpha, AVE, and CR values. Subsequently, the HTMT ratio determined discriminant validity (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019), with a threshold value under 0.90. Table 3 illustrates that all the HTMT values were under 0.90, which established adequate discriminant validity between two reflective constructs.

Table 1. Factor Loadings.

	CO	ER	RS	TD	WE
CO1	0.885				
CO2	0.853				
CO3	0.914				
CO4	0.923				
ER1		0.918			
ER2		0.887			
ER3		0.931			
ER4		0.906			

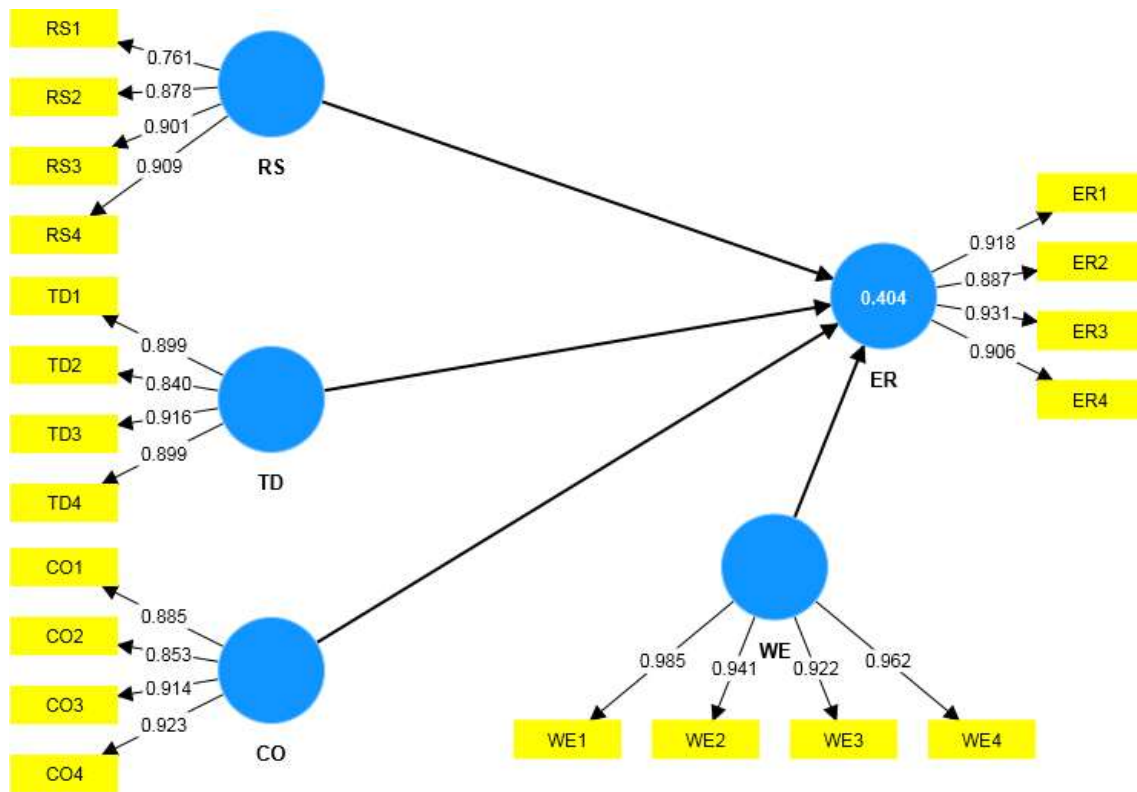


Fig. (2). Factor Loadings.

RS1			0.761		
RS2			0.878		
RS3			0.901		
RS4			0.909		
TD1				0.899	
TD2				0.840	
TD3				0.916	
TD4				0.899	
WE1					0.985
WE2					0.941
WE3					0.922
WE4					0.962

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha, AVE, and CR Values.

	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
CO	0.916	0.924	0.941	0.799
ER	0.931	0.935	0.951	0.829
RS	0.893	0.980	0.921	0.747

TD	0.911	0.912	0.938	0.791
WE	0.966	0.994	0.975	0.907

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (HTMT).

	CO	ER	RS	TD	WE
CO					
ER	0.404				
RS	0.255	0.320			
TD	0.344	0.628	0.318		
WE	0.034	0.068	0.127	0.040	

Structural Model

The structural model was applied to test the direct and indirect hypotheses. Bootstrapping was conducted to investigate the proposed hypotheses by analysing the t-values and p-values. The t-values of the direct and moderation hypotheses are depicted in Table 4 and Figure 3. Particularly, compensation significantly and positively impacted employee retention ($t=3.243, p < 0.01$). Recruitment and selection also significantly and positively impacted employee retention ($t=3.963, p < 0.001$). Concurrently, training and development significantly and positively impacted employee retention ($t=7.594, p < 0.001$). The findings also discovered that the work

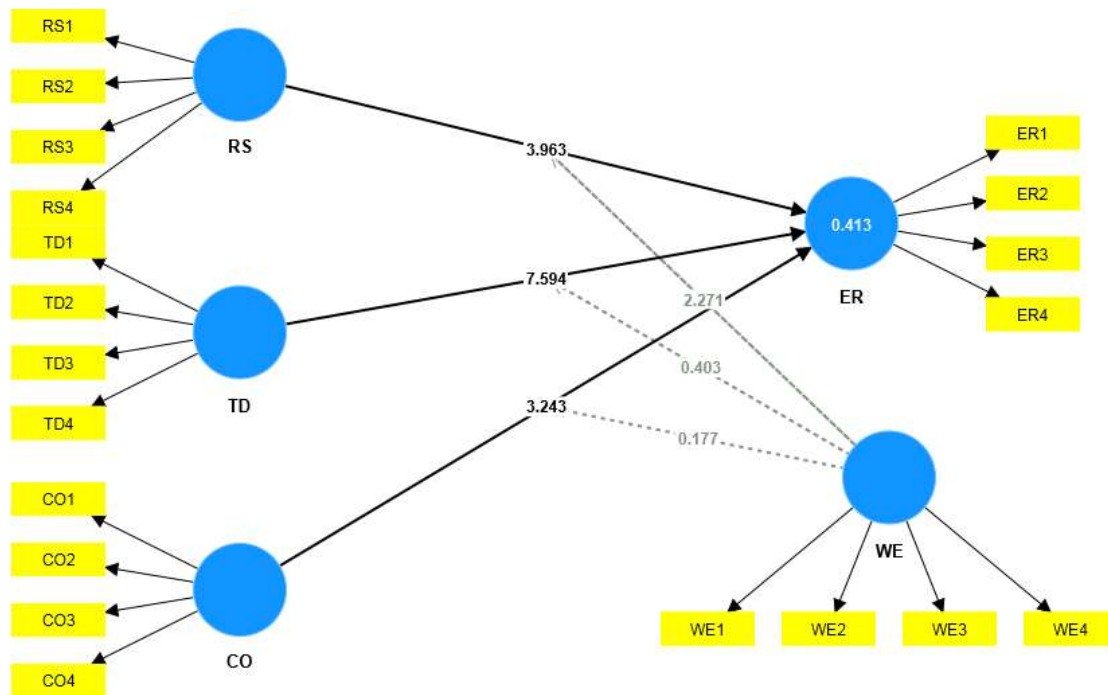


Fig. (3). The Structural Model.

environment significantly moderated the relationship between recruitment and selection and employee retention ($t = 2.271, p < 0.05$).

Table 4. Direct and Moderation Hypothesis Testing.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-statistic (O/STDEV)	p-value
CO → ER	0.190	0.190	0.059	3.243	0.001
RS → ER	0.165	0.169	0.042	3.963	0.000
TD → ER	0.481	0.472	0.063	7.594	0.000
WE × CO → ER	0.011	0.013	0.064	0.177	0.859
WE × TD → ER	-0.023	-0.019	0.058	0.403	0.687
WE × RS → ER	0.100	0.095	0.044	2.271	0.023

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. The results revealed a significant correlation between recruitment and selection and employee retention following Mbugua et al. (2015). Furthermore, training and development were significantly associated with employee retention (Yang & Alves, 2022; Ginting & Meilani, 2022; Islam et al., 2022; Abdullah, 2022), which suggested that training could reduce employee turnover rates. Ahmad et al. (2020) also discovered that employee

turnover intention was significantly impacted by training. Thus, the study outcomes corroborated previous findings and enriched the existing literature regarding the effectiveness of training in elevating employee retention in the apparel industry. In addition, the study results demonstrated a positive relationship between compensation and employee retention based on previous findings (Bibi, 2017; Ginting & Meilani, 2022). Hence, employee retention is increased when organisations provide appropriate compensation and care for employees.

The work environment significantly moderated the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. The finding produced significant implications for HR managers in the Jordanian apparel industry, who are the main personnel in allocating resources and developing employees. The findings would also be instrumental to managers of garment-related industries in other countries, especially in Asian countries. In this context, the recommendations are designing optimal compensation plans for employees' continuing services. Different HR departments in the garment industry should also provide adequate and appropriate training for employees while ensuring appropriate ergonomics that influence employee retention. Therefore, HR managers in the apparel industry should ensure a conducive work environment, which plays a pivotal psychological role in reducing employee turnover.

CONCLUSION

The primary study objective was to determine the impact of HRM practices on employee retention rates in the Jordanian apparel industry. Resultantly, HR practices were significantly and positively correlated to employee retention, which postulated the importance of employee recruitment and selection in improving employee retention in the Jordanian

apparel industry. Moreover, the study established a significant correlation between employee training and development and retention. Compensation, which is a HRM practice, also significantly and positively impacted employee retention in the apparel industry, especially when employees responded proactively to career development and advancement opportunities. Compensation is an organisational approach to fulfilling commitments to improving employee competencies by offering ample career opportunities, which motivates employees to remain longer with the company by providing ongoing learning opportunities. In addition, the study indicated that training is integral to improving employee retention by supporting staff training, which provides clear knowledge about the respective job responsibilities required for assigned tasks. Training would also boost employee confidence, loyalty, and productivity.

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