

# The Level of Human Resource Management Practices in Malaysia: A Study on Sports Graduates' Perceptions

Nur Syazwani Zulaikha Safwan<sup>1</sup>, Mohamad Firdaus Ahmad<sup>1</sup>,  
Nur Hani Syazwani Bakri<sup>1</sup>, Azman Ahmad Tajri<sup>1</sup>, Mai Dhaniah  
Meor Ab. Rahim<sup>1</sup>, Al Hafiz Abu Bakar<sup>2</sup>, Shahlan Surat<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Seremban, <sup>2</sup>Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Perlis, Kampus Arau, <sup>3</sup>Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: firdaus466@uitm.edu.my

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## Abstract

Employees are the most valuable resources that contribute to the organization's success. Employed university graduates are expected to be employees with good work skills to meet the needs of employers. Nevertheless, the problem of employee turnover always being challenging for management to solve. This study aims to determine the level of human resource management practices practiced in Malaysia. A total of 370 sports graduates who worked in the public and private sectors were selected for this study. Data were acquired through a questionnaire form consisting of 26 items to evaluate human resource management practices, including recruitment and selection, training and development, rewards, performance appraisal, and participation and communication. Data were also analyzed using descriptive analysis. The results show that each practice's human resource management practices were at a moderate level. Therefore, the excellent execution of human resource management practices among sports graduates may assist employers in accomplishing organizational goals.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management Practices, Sports Graduates, Level of HRM

## Introduction

The practice of Human Resource Management (HRM) shows the aspect of recruitment and selection as the utmost consideration from both public and private sectors to produce quality employees. In this situation, most organizations faced challenges, especially in selecting and hiring individuals. According to Tien et al (2021), HRM practices still need help even though organizations have chosen and hired qualified employees. As a result, employers took the initiative to specify the requirements to ensure the employed employees possess good skills and knowledge. This shows that reasonable procedures in conducting HRM are necessary to

attract and retain outstanding employees in achieving goals and vision (Hoang, 2022). Rodríguez-Sánchez et al (2020) also stated that organizations' most excellent HRM strategies are crucial to their growth because they enable them to cultivate and retain active personnel. Therefore, implementing pertinent HRM practices can assist the organization in achieving its success.

Employee turnover intention has become a significant problem for public and private organizations. This issue emerges due to HRM procedures that must provide employees with the desired level of happiness. According to Alias et al (2018), the problem of employee turnover has forced businesses to take on the cost and uncertainty of training new employees. This situation leads the employees to feel demotivated, reduces their intention to work, and can directly contribute to increasing the turnover rate of the organizations. In this situation, Suguna and Mohammed (2017) stated that organizations must spend large amounts of money on replacing new employees. This indicates the high cost required to be faced when they lose employees that possess good skills in enhancing the reputation and image of organizations.

In previous research conducted by Munir and Tobi (2020), staff turnover has become a significant concern in emerging countries, especially Malaysia. According to Sunil (2021), Malaysia reported 8.7% of voluntary employee turnover in the organization. Researchers also stated that Malaysia was the third leading country in turnover, followed by Singapore and Vietnam. This issue happened because of the discouragement of the employee's skills to engage with the work fully. At the same time, inadequate information about the requirements to fill a position can result in hiring an overqualified person (Yapo, 2019). This shows that the trend of an employee leaving the company will influence negative repercussions for the organization. Besides, the inadequate construction of a reward system could result in dissatisfaction and a lack of enthusiasm among employees in the organization (Shafiq & Naseem, 2012; Chung & Al-Khaled, 2022). This is supported by Ismail and Ahmed (2015) expressed that unprofessional management in providing incentive always become a significant source of employee dissatisfaction. Employees often look for high rewards offered by the organization to fulfill their daily responsibilities. From this, it implies that a high amount of money invested by the public and private sectors will lead to a high degree of employee satisfaction, ultimately reducing their intention to leave.

On top of the above explanation, it shows that HRM practices play a crucial role in influencing the turnover intention of employees in organizations. The proper treatment by employers is needed in providing opportunities for employees to be retained in the organization. At the same time, employees must also be well-developed with relevant skills according to the organization's demands (Ahmad et al., 2022). This shows the need for further study of HRM perceived by the employee. It will provide significant benefits for employees to recognize and update the implementation of HRM in their organization. Therefore, this study examines the level of HRM practices perceived by Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) sports graduates.

### **Literature Review**

In an organization, employees have always been a significant focus for the organization to produce and sustain their achievement. This is because the employees can provide the organization with the key to achieving goals. Nonetheless, problems among employees,

especially turnover, must be controlled by the organization (An, 2019). This has caused the organization to face high costs when hiring and training new employees. The relevant practices of HRM need to be implemented by the organization to reduce the issue regarding employees. Human resource management strategies have always received a lot of attention and awareness from organizations because of their substantial benefits in reaching their objectives. Chillakuri and Vanka (2021) stated that HRM aims to enhance employees' skills and enthusiasm to acquire long-term benefits. In this study, five practices of HRM from Beijer (2014), namely recruitment and selection, training and development, reward, performance appraisal, and participation and communication, were used.

Recruitment and selection are initial practices to discover candidates who may execute job tasks to accomplish organizational goals (Jashari & Kutllovci, 2020). Based on the previous finding by Božović et al (2019) demonstrated a moderate level of recruitment in the banking sectors in Serbia. Researchers indicate that adequate recruitment should produce good employees with the required requirements. Whereas, Kaur and Kaur (2020) show the opposite result, as the mean recruitment score was low. Senaweera et al (2020) stated that the proper selection of candidates is not the significant contribution as they perceived training and development practice is essential to ensure that employees are appropriately trained and retained to execute their jobs. This shows that the organization's achievement depends on its employees' ideas and input. Besides, training and development practice has been viewed as a way to develop and enhance employees' new understanding, knowledge and skills required to perform administrative jobs (Hassan, 2016). Although the expense of training employees is significant, ignoring this need increases the cost of the resulting activity. This may cause the organization not to produce a good employee training level. Previous scholars revealed that the mean score of training and development conducted in Kashmir was moderate (Baba, 2020). Mehrez and Bakri (2019) stated that training activities make employees feel the little potential to develop their workplace skills, causing them to be dismissed from the organization. Despite that, Zeb et al (2018) found a contradicting finding as the training and development was at a high level. Training designed and delivered by the organization gives employees greater opportunities to learn new responsibilities and knowledge (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Consequently, investing in employees' growth is necessary for any organization that cares about its productivity and success.

Moreover, reward practice refers to the incentives offered to employees through monetary or non-monetary rewards as a part of their willingness to undertake various professions in providing good performance for organizations (Hee et al., 2019). According to Vizano et al (2020), the sufficient remuneration allocated to employees might influence their effectiveness in performing their job. Past studies show that the rewarding practice conducted in Pakistan had an average mean score. A similar payment scheme delivered by the organization has been the primary determinant for employees to receive fair reward (Shehata et al., 2020). However, the result was rejected by past researchers as they found a high reward level among employees in the manufacturing industry in Bahrain (Alzyoud, 2018). The researcher stated that the recognition given by employers had stipulated their engagement to work in the organization. This illustrates that substantial compensation for employees may encourage them to do better in their tasks.

Performance appraisal refers to a system or tools that can determine employees' competencies through some set of standards designed by an organization to influence them

toward a job (Naeem & Jamal, 2017). According to Kaur et al (2018), performance appraisal is a constant assessment of employees that allows their employer to appreciate their contribution to the organizational achievements. The transparent evaluation of the organization enables employees to feel secure and perceive the appraisal extensively. Based on a study by AlShaikhly (2017) in Jordan, the appraisal system perceived by employees was at a moderate level. The researcher indicates that empowering feedback has encouraged employees to satisfy with the evaluation system conducted by the organization. Nevertheless, the study by Terng and Ahmad (2021) revealed a high-performance appraisal among banking sector employees. Ameen et al (2019) expressed that the regular feedback provided by employers has produced favorable employee outcomes.

The last practice of HRM used in this study is participation and communication. Participation and communication practice refers to the involvement of employees in demonstrating their ideas and knowledge in influencing management decisions that can improve organizational outcomes (Otoo, 2018). The chance given to involving in the organization can contribute to the excellence of employees. A previous finding from Akkermans et al (2019) revealed a moderate level of employee participation and communication practice. Liu et al (2020) asserted that the attitudes of management that do not take great concern might lead employees to lack involvement in the organization. This result rejects the previous study's finding as the researcher found a high level of employee participation (Al Adresi & Darun, 2017). Employees' involvement in decision-making creates a strong relationship with others, especially in providing ideas and solutions (Hassan, 2016). After all, the high level of encouragement by the organization might affect the employee to stay active in maintaining existing performance.

### **Methodology**

The quantitative design in this study uses survey methods to gather data from respondents. This study measured the descriptive statistics to identify the level of human resource management practices perceived by UiTM sports graduates. The information was obtained from UiTM Transformation Division and used simple random sampling to select the respondents. The total sample employed for this study was 370 sports graduates working in the public and private sectors. In answering the purpose of this study, the instrument was adapted from Beijer (2014), which consists of 26 items to measure human resource management practices.

The validity and reliability of an instrument are essential to ensure that the study obtained is reliable and unquestioned (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Evaluating the reliability and validity of the questionnaires may help the researcher analyze and improve the format, items, and rating scale. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha from Konting et al (2009) has been adopted to ensure the instrument is reliable. Researchers stated that a value above 0.61 is acceptable to use. The interpretation of the Cronbach Alpha values is set out in table 1.

Table 1

*The interpretation of Cronbach Alpha Value*

Cronbach Alpha Value	Interpretation
0.91-1.00	Excellent
0.81-0.90	Good
0.71-0.80	Good and acceptable
0.61-0.70	Acceptable
0.01-0.60	Non-acceptable

A pilot study was conducted on the instruments used before distributing it to the actual sample, which involved 30 respondents of UiTM sports graduates. This is supported by Chua (2006), who suggested that the minimum of respondents pilot study is 30. The table below shows the Cronbach alpha for all practices of HRM (recruitment and selection, training and development, reward, performance appraisal and participation and communication) was rated respectively. The value of Cronbach Alpha shown in this study was above 0.71, considered good and acceptable. Therefore, the instruments used were deemed reliable for this study. Table 2 shows the Cronbach Alpha values of HRM practices.

Table 2

*Cronbach Alpha Values for HRM Practices*

Construct	Sub-construct	Items	Cronbach Alpha
HRM Practices	Recruitment and selection	4	0.881
	Training and development	5	0.735
	Reward	6	0.758
	Performance appraisal	4	0.802
	Participation and communication	5	0.796

The items were based on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to demonstrate their level of agreement with each statement. The data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to examine the level of HRM practices perceived by UiTM sports graduates.

**Findings**

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the level of human resource management practices using five practices: recruitment and selection, training and development, reward, performance appraisal and participation and communication. Researchers have gathered data through the questionnaire of the variable studied. The level of HRM practices perceived by UiTM sports graduates has been interpreted through the mean score from (Best, 1977). Table 3 shows the interpretation of the mean score for the level of HRM practices.

Table 3

*Interpretation of Mean Score*

Level	Mean score
Low	1.00-2.33
Moderate	2.34-3.66
High	3.67-5.00

Table 4 demonstrated that all practices of HRM perceived by UiTM sports graduates were at a moderate level as the values range from 2.34 to 3.66. Recruitment and selection practice (Mean = 3.62, SD = 0.744), training and development practice (Mean = 3.49, SD = 0.618), reward practice (Mean = 3.44, SD = 0.824), performance appraisal practice (Mean = 3.63, SD = 0.764) and participation and communication practice (Mean = 3.62, SD = 0.838).

Table 4  
*Levels of HRM Practices*

HRM Practices	Mean	Std. Deviation (SD)	Level of Interpretation
Recruitment and selection	3.62	0.744	Moderate
Training and development	3.49	0.618	Moderate
Reward	3.44	0.824	Moderate
Performance appraisal	3.63	0.764	Moderate
Participation and communication	3.62	0.838	Moderate

### Discussions

Human resource management practices practiced by human resource practitioners are responsible for managing and directing employees to accomplish organizational goals (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). The results of this study show that the level of human resource management perceived by UiTM sports graduates was at a moderate level for all practices. Firstly, the moderate level of the recruitment and selection practice indicates that the thorough efforts and consideration by the organization to recruit employees are not a priority in the organization where UiTM sports graduates work. This study's findings align with a study by Alabarah (2019), which showed that the recruitment and selection of employees were at a moderate level. The proper recruitment and selection of employees will reduce employee turnover and help the organization achieve the set objectives (Kamal, 2021). Besides that, the training and development practice was also moderate. This shows the graduates are less agreed with the training and development offered because they expect the organization to provide regular training that can give them a greater chance. This study's findings align with Shin et al (2020), which showed that the level of training and development of employees in Asia is moderate. Most employees believe that increased employee training and development will improve their employees' skills and abilities (Areros & Pangemanan, 2018).

Moreover, reward practice perceived by UiTM sports graduates shows the average mean score at a moderate level. It shows that the sports graduates emphasized that the organization where they work does not give commensurate rewards to employees. This study's results align with a study conducted by Akkermans et al (2019), who showed moderate levels of reward practice. This situation suggests that the organization should practice an appropriate reward system as employees will feel more committed to their jobs and reduce employee turnover (Mendis, 2017). This study also shows that the average mean score of performance appraisal practice perceived by UiTM sports graduates was moderate. This indicates that graduates feel that the performance appraisal practice is less effective because the organization needs to provide more feedback on their current performance in carrying out the assigned tasks. This study's results align with the study done by Kaur and Kaur (2020), which shows that the average mean score for performance appraisal practice among employees was also at a moderate level. Rehman et al (2021) demonstrate that the effective transformation of the appraisal system from traditional to modern assessment enables organizations to improve employees' performance in a better direction.

The results of the previous descriptive study showed that the participation and communication practice perceived by UiTM sports graduates was moderate. This means graduates are less receptive to the hierarchical structure of open communication between employees and organizations due to a lack of gratitude for their involvement in achieving organizational goals. In line with the findings of Alzyoud (2018), which also indicate a moderate level of involvement and communication. This explains that the organization's management needs to highly regard the employees' participation in giving suggestions for improvement of something and participating in making a decision. After all, it can be concluded that employers need to emphasize all HRM practices to increase employee productivity at the workplace, which can boost organizational performance.

### **Implications of Study**

This study examines the level of HRM practices perceived by UiTM sports graduates. This study's findings can benefit employers in the public and private sectors. Employers can evaluate the implementation of HRM practices provided to employees to produce a better future workforce. For instance, employers may determine the level of training and development perceived by employees, whether at a good or bad level. This action's consequences could impact the employees' spirit to perform well in the organization. Besides, this finding also benefits employees as they can provide ideas and suggestions to employers. The contribution of ideas can help the organization to get a clear picture regarding the improvement of the organization. The finding of this study also may contribute to readers in related fields. This study allows the readers to broaden their information and messages regarding the current situation related to human resource management, especially in the sports industry. The evaluation of the case enables readers to be more motivated in evaluating the human resource management conducted by the employer. As a result, it could make the reader enhance their ability to perform human resource management better and develop better comprehension in determining the level of human resource management in a real-world setting.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Researchers**

The result shows that the level of HRM practices perceived by UiTM sports graduates was moderate. This result concludes that the employers' role is crucial in conducting HRM practices in the public and private sectors. An exemplary implementation of HRM handled by management can influence employee performance. Therefore, it is imperative for the management to continually enhance all HRM practices until reaching a high level. Additionally, this study suggests that future researchers generalize the population to other institutions in Malaysia as this study only focuses on UiTM. Future researchers may also conduct this study by evaluating the relationship of HRM with different variables, such as employee performance and job satisfaction, to gain highly significant findings among the sample. Lastly, future researchers also recommended adding other reasonable HRM practices to be conducted on a sample, such as working conditions and career development. In light of the above discussion, the researcher believed these findings would be helpful to the public and private sectors to employ a better technique of HRM in the workplace.

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