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Mohamad Firdaus Ahmad, Norlena Salamuddin, Shahlan Surat

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Comparing Public and Private Sectors in Malaysia: A Study of Human Resource Management Practices among Sports Graduates

Mohamad Firdaus Ahmad^{1,2}, Norlena Salamuddin¹, Shahlan Surat¹

¹Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, ²Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Seremban
Email: firdaus466@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

Good performance for an organization can be seen through the effectiveness of human resource management practices on employees. Employees are a vital asset in an organization that will strive to help the organization's goals. However, the problem of employee turnover always occurs because there are weaknesses in human resource management practices in an organization that poses a management challenge. Thus, this study examines the differences in human resource management practices perceived by sports graduates based on the working sectors. Through a quantitative survey of 370 sports graduates, this study confirmed that there were significant differences based on the working sectors for the domains of training and development and performance appraisal. These study findings show that sports graduates working in the government sector are more satisfied with the training and development and performance appraisal is given to them. Therefore, an understanding of human resource management practices among sports graduates can help employers improve human resource management practices in an organization. Future studies are proposed to involve employers and employees together as respondents in evaluating the organization's human resource management practices to see points of difference that can be improved for the common good.

Keywords: Human Resource Management Practices, Government Sector, Private Sector

Introduction

The practice of human resource management (HRM) shows the challenge in getting quality employees. This challenge is increasingly evident with the changes taking place in education (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006). Issues related to human resource management are also the cause of changes in recruitment and selection criteria. Human resource management practices are getting worse. Even though organizations have selected and hired quality employees, they will leave and create their businesses. As a result, employers set many aspects to ensure that graduates employed in the organization possess the expected quality. The matching of required skills enhances the marketability value of individuals through

human resource management practices in organizations (Nelissen, Forrier, & Verbruggen, 2017). One of the essential methods for a better understanding of individual marketability processes within organizations is through social exchange. When employees learn these human resource management practices can improve the marketability of their work while creating mutual success (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Literature Review

Employees are an essential asset and the backbone of the industry to ensure that the organization can operate smoothly. Organizations need employees who can provide the best work performance to enable the organization to achieve its objectives and goals. However, one of the challenges that organizations have to face is the ever-present problem of employee turnover. The situation of employees leaving the organization and being replaced by other employees is known as employee turnover (Abdul Latif & Saraih, 2016). This employee turnover problem puts the organization at risk of hiring new employees and makes other existing employees responsible for tasks left by previous employees. This condition causes employees to feel disinterested and lack self-motivation, contributing to subsequent organizational turnover (Alias et al., 2018). Employee turnover involves very high costs for an organization, especially when hiring new employees because recruitment and selection, training and expansion, and advertising have to be done (Otoo, Assuming & Agyel, 2018). Therefore, an organization will face fewer problems related to costs and the issue of losing skilled employees when they adopt the best human resource management practices towards employees.

Human resource management practices practiced in an organization can determine the state of the organization is at a reasonable level or vice versa. In general, human resource management practices have always been the main focus of employers to achieve organizational goals. Employers need to have an excellent strategy to ensure employees do not leave the organization. Based on Armstrong and Taylor (2020), human resource management is a guide that allows professionals to master human management principles and compile the best standards to ensure a professional approach to employee management. Meanwhile, Obeidat, Tawalbeh, and Akour (2019) study explain that human resource management practices all actions and practices that affect employees in an organization. Domains covering human resource management practices are recruitment and selection, training and development, reward, performance appraisal, and participation and communication.

Recruitment and selection of employees are one of the initial steps in human resource management practices used by employers to determine the appropriate employees to work in the organization. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), recruitment is an activity in which the employer screens applicants interested in the organization of vacancies. Selection refers to the decision made in the shortlist of successful applicants. Recruitment and selection also refer to the mechanism used to determine the best candidate to be selected through identifying, evaluating, and working in the proper position (Van den Brink, 2009). Next, training and development is a human resource management practice that can help organizations have competitive, knowledgeable, and skilled employees in work done (Nawaz Judge & Bhaskar, 2016). Training is an activity that involves high costs, but when not providing training to employees will make an action more expensive.

Meanwhile, performance appraisal is related to the systematic method commonly used by employers to evaluate the work and performance of each employee (Hee & Jing, 2018). Performance appraisal becomes increasingly broad as the implementation concept of performance management becomes part of a strategic approach to integrating human resource activities with an organization's policies (Gladisa & Susanty, 2018). Performance appraisal can provide significant benefits to employees and organizations because employees can refer to appraisal feedback to improve existing weaknesses and evaluate and help improve employee performance (Swanepoel, Botha & Mangonyane, 2014).

Human resource management practices related to rewards are essential elements to influence an individual's work in the organization. According to Dinesh and Senthil (2019), organizations will have effective employees when they receive adequate pay for the job done. The rewards given by employers to employees are like providing bonuses and benefits for their efforts and sacrifices in achieving organizational objectives (Danish & Usman, 2010). Rewards also refer to systems that can influence the skills and behaviors of employees as they perform tasks. Rewards given based on the knowledge and expertise of employees add value that can help the organization compete with other organizations. The element of participation and communication in human resource management practices is also vital in an organization because it can affect employee productivity and contribute to the excellence of an organization itself. According to Oikonomou (2018), this participation and communication refer to the situation that connects employees to each change with a decision, planning, solution, and outcome in the organization. The participation of employees in the organization's activities allows them to make significant contributions. Employee participation is also based on the objectives (Kaur & Kaur, 2020). However, employee participation is dependent on the experience of the group or the individual itself.

Problem Statement

In Malaysia, the issue of employee turnover has existed since early 1991 and increased gradually due to high labor demand and better job supply in the market (Keni et al., 2013). Employee turnover has been a significant problem every organization faces in most Asian countries such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia (Khatri, Budhwar & Chong, 2010). The Hewitt Associates Total Compensation Management survey showed that Malaysia had an increase in employee turnover rate of 9.3 percent to 10.1 from 2009 and 2010. The General Total Rewards survey in 2013 reported that the turnover rate of general industry workers in Malaysia increased from 2012. with a rate of 12.3 percent to 13.2 percent in 2013 (Watson, 2013), while a study by Ilmi et al. (2019) showed that the turnover percentage in Malaysia was at a high level with the third-highest average voluntary turnover at 9.5% in South East Asia. The private sector has a higher rate than the public sector for employee turnover issues (Alias et al., 2018). This problem arises because human resource management practices do not satisfy employees. At the same time, employee ineffectiveness also causes employers to dismiss them from the organization (Ilmi et al., 2019).

Organizations need employees who can provide the best work performance for the objectives and goals of the organization to be achieved. However, the ever-present employee turnover problem creates challenges organizations need to face. Yeong (2017) stated that human resource management practices in organizations in Malaysia need to change, and employers need to accept that the average turnover for each individual in employment is two and a half

years. Employees are the organization's assets, have a crucial role in carrying out planned activities. Still, it can not run smoothly when not getting support from competent human resource management practices in an organization (Sellvy & Noor Siti, 2010). These human resource management practices involving training and career development components, job performance appraisal, employee selection and appointment, rewards and rewards, and organizational participation and communication are essential in influencing organizational commitment, which reduces employee turnover (Henkin & Marchiori, 2003). Past studies have shown that private organizations in Malaysia must retain their employees because it fulfills their primary goal to maximize profits. Malaysian Employers Federation (2005) reported that annual employee turnover in 2003 and 2004 was around 17 percent and 16 percent, respectively. An organization needs to implement human resource management practices to smooth the work movement in the organization (Juhary & Ishak, 2004). Therefore, this study would like to examine the differences of human resource management practices practiced by employers on sports graduates of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Through the results of this study can show the evaluation of sports graduates employed in the public or private sector to employers related to human resource management practices.

Methodology

This study is a research that uses a quantitative survey design to identify the differences in human resource management practices perceived by UiTM sports graduates based on the working sector. The researcher obtained sample information from the University Transformation Division, UiTM, and the selected sample was stratified randomly. Stratified random selection avoided bias and improved the study findings' representation of the population. The respondents of this study consisted of UiTM sports graduates who have worked. 370 sports graduates comprising 261 sports graduates working in the private sector and 109 sports graduates working in the public sector were involved as study respondents. To measure human resource management practices variables, this study adopted a questionnaire from a survey conducted by Beijer (2014).

A research instrument is reliable if repeated measurements under fixed conditions still give the same results. Several methods can be used to look at the reliability value of an instrument. Among them is by referring to the consistency and consistency of the instruments used in research (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the researcher conducted an internal consistency test by looking at the Cronbach Alpha value. Determining the reliability value is essential in determining the internal consistency of the items constructed in the study instrument. For that purpose, the researcher adopted the Cronbach Alpha value based on the coefficient used by the researcher, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Interpretation of Cronbach Alpha Values

Indicator	Cronbach Alpha Value
Very High	0.90 – 1.00
High	0.70 – 0.89
Moderate	0.30 – 0.69
Low	0.00 – 0.30

The respondents of this pilot study are sufficiently based on the recommendation of Chua (2006), that is, by using a minimum of 30 respondents. The value of the Cronbach Alpha

coefficient obtained from the item analysis in the pilot study shows that the instrument used in this study has high reliability and is very high and can be applied to the actual research. Table 2 shows the Cronbach Alpha values for the study variables for the pilot study data.

Table 2 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Values of Pilot Study

Construct	Sub construct	Number of Items	Alpha Value
HRM Practices	Recruitment and selection	4	0.835
	Training and development	5	0.817
	Reward	6	0.913
	Performance appraisal	4	0.915
	Participation and communication	5	0.927

Respondents were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale to each statement. Data were analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistical data was used to see the mean of human resource management practices, while differences in human resource management practices based on the working sector among UiTM sports graduates were analyzed using an independent t-test

Findings

Descriptive statistics are used to see the mean scores of human resource management practices practiced by organizational management among UiTM sports graduates. There are five domains studied for these variables, namely the domains of recruitment and selection, training and development, reward, performance appraisal, and participation and communication. Researchers have collected data through questionnaires to measure the variables studied. Table 3 shows all mean human resource management practice scores among UiTM sports graduates. Recruitment and selection domain (Mean = 3.62, SD = 0.743), training and development domain (Mean = 3.56, SD = 0.730), reward domain (Mean = 3.44, SD = 0.824), performance appraisal domain (Mean = 3.63, SD = 0.763) and the domains of participation and communication (Mean = 3.62, SD = 0.837).

Table 3 Mean score of Human Resource Management Practices

No	The domain of HRM Practices	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Recruitment and selection	3.62	0.743
2	Training and development	3.56	0.730
3	Reward	3.44	0.824
4	Performance appraisal	3.63	0.763
5	Participation and communication	3.62	0.837

Independent sample t-test analysis was used to identify significant differences in human resource management practices and each domain in human resource management practices among UiTM sports graduates based on the working sector. The results of this analysis are shown in the table below:

Table 4 Results of Independent Sample t-test Analysis

The domain of HRM Practices	Working Sector	N	Mean	S.D	t	P-Value
Recruitment and selection	Public	109	3.66	0.795	-0.497	0.620
	Private	261	3.61	0.723		
Training and development	Public	109	3.68	0.674	-1.968	0.007
	Private	261	3.52	0.748		
Reward	Public	109	3.54	0.679	-1.595	0.112
	Private	261	3.40	0.876		
Performance appraisal	Public	109	3.80	0.701	-2.727	0.007
	Private	261	3.56	0.780		
Participation and communication	Public	109	3.66	0.820	-0.580	0.562
	Private	261	3.61	0.846		

Table 4 shows the results of an independent sample t-test for human resource management practices for the domains of human resource management practices. There are significant differences for the two domains of human resource management practices among UiTM sports graduates based on the working sector, namely training and development and performance appraisal. The analysis results showed that the p-value for the independent sample t-test was 0.007, which was smaller with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p \leq 0.05$). This means that there is a significant difference in human resource management practices for training and development domain among UiTM sports graduates based on the working sector ($t(368) = -1.968$; $p \leq 0.05$) even though the p-value or significant value is equal to the significant level value. Descriptive analysis showed that the mean for graduates working in the public sector (Mean = 3.68 and SD = 0.674) for the recruitment and selection domain was higher compared to graduates working in the private sector (Mean = 3.52 and SD = 0.748).

The table above also shows the analysis results for human resource management practices for performance appraisal among UiTM sports graduates based on the working sector. The analysis results showed that the p-value for the independent sample t-test was 0.007, which was smaller than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$). This means that there are significant differences in human resource management practices for the domain of performance appraisal among UiTM sports graduates based on the working sector ($t(368) = -2.727$; $p < 0.05$). Descriptive analysis showed that the mean for graduates working in the public sector (Mean = 3.80 and SD = 0.701) for the performance appraisal domain was higher compared to graduates working in the private sector (Mean = 3.56 and SD = 0.780).

Discussions

Human resource practitioners practice human resource management practices in organizations that supervise and manage employees effectively to achieve individual and organizational goals (Othman, Ahmad & Hamzah, 2010). There are differences in studies related to human resource management practices depending on the type and purpose of the study. Overall, the independent sample t-test analysis results on differences in resource management practices based on the working sector showed significant differences for two domains in human resource management practices, namely training and development and performance appraisal. The results show that these two domains for the public sector have a

higher mean score level than the private sector. This means that graduates working in the public sector agree with the human resource management practices practiced in organizations related to training and development and performance appraisal compared to graduates working in the private sector itself. However, there were no significant differences for the three domains in human resource management practices, namely recruitment and selection, reward and participation and communication.

This study shows a significant difference in the training and development domain based on the working sector. The mean score for the training and development domain for the public sector is higher than the private sector is because the public sector in Malaysia always provides and conducts training and development courses for employees. Public sector because this sector has financial allocation by the government for that purpose. The public sector in Malaysia is very focused on improving the experience and knowledge of its employees through the training provided. Usually, the training will be held at the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN). According to Lamsah et al. (2021), training activities at all levels in the public sector are coordinated through the established policy of INTAN, which acts as a training center for government employees in Malaysia. In line with INTAN's vision to be an excellent public sector learning institution and INTAN's mission to develop competent public sector human capital through quality learning will increase knowledge according to relevant fields of work among government employees. Albrecht et al (2017) suggested that human resource management departments should provide training and development to employees to reduce uncertainty in doing work and increase their efficiency and participation in the organization.

The results of this study related to training and development in human resource management practices are in line with a survey conducted by Budhwar (2000) in India. Al Kahtani, Nawab and Allam (2016) also reported that training activities provided by the public sector to employees are more effective than the private sector. In addition, there are also differences in training and development practices in Telecom Companies in Saudi Arabia involving public and private companies. Iype (2019) revealed that the growth and career development practices of bank employees in the public and private sectors are different in line with the findings of this study. Career growth and development requires consciously planned efforts for individual careers and should not be neglected the opportunities available to employees. A balanced consideration between the needs of the organization and the needs of the individual needs to be given. Gardener et al (2011) stated that the career development process is very beneficial, and recognizing the expertise and skills of employees can improve the quality of their work. Therefore the government has spent a lot of financial resources specifically for the training and development of employees because it is significant for sustaining economic growth—country through quality work products produced by employees (Collier et al., 2011). Javed et al (2019) also reported no significant differences for training and development domains between public and private university employees in India.

Even so, a Berber and Slavic (2016) study revealed the public sector in Serbia had spent little money on employee training and development. There are past studies that are not in line with the findings of this study, such as Chinnadurai (2014), who conducted a survey of human resource management practices in private banks in the Cuddalore district and showed employees are satisfied with the training and development practices provided by the

organization. Qazi and Jeet (2017) also revealed no significant differences in training and development practices between India's public and private Higher Education Institute sectors. There are differences and similarities with previous studies on the findings of this study, and every employer needs to understand the need for the implementation of training and development in the organization to employees. It will help employees improve their knowledge and skills related to their respective career fields. It can produce quality work that is highly beneficial to the organization. The matters discussed clearly show that the public sector in Malaysia has an advantage in terms of training and development to employees due to the policy practices adopted by the government to government employees.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that there are significant differences for the domain of performance appraisal based on the working sector. The mean score for the performance appraisal domain for the public sector is higher than that of the private sector. Graduates working in the public sector are more likely to agree that the organizations use a fair annual appraisal system to assess employees' yearly performance. This may be because evaluating employers' performance on employees according to their respective departments or divisions involves a very detailed and comprehensive process. Individuals who assess employees in the public sector need to have a fair and transparent attitude and even qualify as evaluators due to their competencies and experience. This view is in line with the Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (2002) in the guidelines for the implementation of the Malaysian public service officer performance appraisal system, which explains that the appraisal officer and human resource development panel are responsible for determining performance appraisal in an orderly, objective and transparent manner based on guidelines and matters set. The government is constantly improving the performance appraisal system for employees from time to time. Performance appraisal in the public sector will involve more than one appraiser to avoid bias. This view is supported by Abdullah et al (2021); Nyaoga et al (2010), who explained the need for more than one appraisal officer to avoid bias or injustice during the performance appraisal process.

Al Kahtani (2016) also revealed the findings of a study that showed differences in performance appraisal of employees of Telecom companies in Saudi Arabia involving public and private companies. The performance appraisals conducted differed due to the unfair appraisals in the companies studied. Unfair performance appraisal of employees will affect them in providing quality work results (Francis & Ahmad, 2021). On the other hand, in contrast to the findings of this study, Lin and Kellough (2019) in their study explained that the valuation system adopted by the public sector is inefficient and outdated in contrast to the private sector. Next, there are previous studies that show the findings of studies that are different from this study, such as the study of Javed et al (2019); Qazi and Jeet (2017), who revealed that there is no difference in the domain of performance appraisal used in public and private institutions of higher learning because the appraisal system is more or less the same. Chinnadurai (2014) also reported in his study that the performance appraisal of banking sector employees is similarly contrary to the findings of this study. Thus, overall the discussion on the domain of performance appraisal shows that the performance appraisal performed is different according to the occupational industry studied. The best measures by employers as evaluators to employees on their job performance should be evaluated objectively rather than subjectively. According to Zulbasri and Bakar (2017), subjective-based performance

appraisal will cause tension and conflict so that activities in the organization become unpleasant and ineffective.

The following study results showed no significant differences in recruitment and selection, reward, participation and communication based on the working sector among UiTM sports graduates. The researcher believes that the process used by public and private organizations for recruitment and selection of employees is almost the same. Therefore, there is no difference in perceptions and views among UiTM sports graduates on this aspect. The researcher's perspective is supported by the study of (Ismail, 2017). He explained that recruitment often begins with the determination of the work needs of the organization by analyzing job information and employee selection. Then proceed with an initial interview session to find out the quality candidate or not. Poor quality employee candidates will be rejected while the best will be selected (Mondy & Noe, 1999). For the domain of rewards, the researcher believes that organizations in the public or private sectors have provided reasonable rewards and job benefits to employees. Those who work in public organizations are paid according to eligibility and receive pension rewards when the time comes. In contrast, those who work in private organizations are given high annual salaries and bonuses. This view is supported by Nadzri et al (2015) study, who stated that the private sector offers high salaries to employees. Adam and Rus (2018) explained that government employees would earn a pension after their service period. Finally, for the domains of participation and communication, researchers believe that both the public and private sectors need employees who have good communication skills, can build relationships with other individuals and have problem-solving skills. According to Otieno et al (2015), employee communication is crucial for organizational performance. Therefore, UiTM sports graduates in public and private sectors are always involved and participate in the organization to provide views and suggestions in making a decision. This view is reinforced by Ahmad et al (2021) study on UiTM sports graduates when the study's findings showed a high level of communication skills.

Contributions of the Research

The purpose of this study is to examine the differences in human resource management practices practiced by organizations towards UiTM sports graduates based on the working sector. The results of this study are very beneficial to public and private organizations, especially employers. Employers can identify the shortcomings and constraints they face on human resource management practices practiced in the organization. Employers in public and private sectors can improve the quality and work of employees to achieve organizational goals if they can implement human resource management practices properly. Employees evaluate everything the employer does to them. Job satisfaction of each employee is closely related to human resource management practices (Pradhan et al., 2019). For example, if the recruitment and selection of employees in an organization are not appropriately done, the situation will negatively affect the organization's productivity. Wrong employee selection can affect other employees, resulting in a loss of teamwork spirit, which interferes with achieving the organization's goals. Therefore, employers in public and private sectors should constantly evaluate the human resource management practices used in the organization to ensure immediate improvements can be made to the shortcomings of existing approaches.

Furthermore, the results of this study are beneficial to graduates who will enter the world of work. Graduates should always be prepared to face the challenges of the world of work

because when they are employed in the public or private sector, the situation is different. They should not assume that everything the employer gives to themselves causes them to be fully satisfied, especially human resource management practices. The preparation of graduates before entering the world of work is vital, especially from mental strength when getting an overview through a reading of studies related to human resource management practices used. For example, through the results of this study, performance appraisal in the public sector is better than in the public sector. So graduates are ready if they work in the private sector. There is a possibility that the same situation will occur: the lack of satisfaction of employees with performance appraisal given by the employer. Therefore, the implications of this study benefit employers in the public and private sectors that can help them understand the development of human resource management practices on employees. The result benefited graduates who get a clear picture of the situation. The next world of work makes them better prepared to go through the chosen world of work.

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