

The impact of human resource development (HRD) practices on job satisfaction and intent to leave: Moderating role of perception of organizational politics (POP)



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ABSTRACT

This study uses a framework of social exchange theory and attempts to better understand the impact of human resource development (HRD) practices on job satisfaction and intent to leave. Furthermore, the perception of organizational politics (POP) is explored as a moderator between the relationships of HRD practices with employees' job satisfaction and intent to leave. In earlier studies, the impact of HRD practices has been observed on employees' job satisfaction and intent to leave, but this study extends the body of knowledge by empirically investigating the moderating role of POP on the relationship between HRD practices, job satisfaction, and intent to leave. Primary data from 40 respondents working in public sector departments are collected through a survey questionnaire. Results show that HRD practices have a significant impact on job satisfaction and intent to leave with the moderating effect of perception of organizational politics. This study can have a sizeable role in the current knowledge domain and may be helpful for organizations in formulating human resource management functions in the departments of the government of Punjab. As a future direction, this study may be moved further throughout Pakistan in the private sector with a larger sample size.

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1. Introduction

The Human Resource Development (HRD) concept is focused on the humanistic view (Collins, 2019) and highlights the concerns for national, societal, organizational, and individual development (Collins et al., 2017). HRD practices are envisioned to support employees as well as organizations to achieve their work goals, whereas HRD professionals are intended to provide learning opportunities to the organizational members so that they may nurture their expertise (Jeong and Park, 2020). Lee and Bruvold's (2003) noted that HRD practices include a systematic program that regularly assesses employees' skills and interests, and accordingly trains employees on skills that prepare them for future jobs and career development. According to

Thoman and Lloyd (2018), organizations have understood the importance of equipping employees with new knowledge for better organizational outcomes.

In the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in the recognition of human resource management functions to acquire the long-term and sustainable competitive advantage of the organizations (Hutchins and Rainbolt, 2017). The changes in the international market scenarios of human resources management have influenced the Pakistani industries to look internally for the development of human resources (Mujtaba et al., 2018; Rathore et al., 2020). HRD is a practical notion that helps organizations in achieving goals of getting a competitive edge (Martin, 1979; Islam, 2012). Thus if Pakistani organizations want to have a competitive advantage, they should increase the potential values of employees through HRD practices. HRD practices help organizations to increase organizational performance through a satisfied employee.

Job satisfaction is the affective reaction of employees towards their jobs or working roles (Schmidt, 2007). It is the fundamental feeling of an employee and also the pleasurable and positive

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emotional state, which keeps him away from job stress, exhaustion, and burnout (Nagar, 2012; Kampkötter, 2017). Bin (2015) opined that a satisfied employee positively contributes to organizational performance, and when organizations review their performances, they use job satisfaction as one of the measures. In the public sector, greater job satisfaction and lesser intent to leave have been observed among employees because they tend to enjoy greater job security than in the private sector (Lane et al., 2010; Burke and Singh, 2016). But, a phenomenon named perception of organizational politics (POP) produces damaging and undesirable outcomes for the organization as well as for individuals (Huang et al., 2003; Aybar and Marsap, 2018). POP has been observed as a form of danger for organizations which may effects the personnel's believes, objectives, and performance (Miller et al., 2008), and may detriment all the efforts made for developing human resources. The current study emphasizes the inquiry of how variations in POP affect the association within the organization: especially in public sector organizations.

A very few research studies have been conducted in the context of Pakistan that see the impact of HRD practices on job satisfaction and intention to leave (Alam, 2009; Bashir et al., 2011; Saleem et al., 2013), and none of the studies has ever explored the relationship of said variables in the presence of POP. The current study has attempted to fill the gap in the context of government departments of Lahore, Pakistan. This study can have a sizeable role in the current knowledge domain and may be helpful for organizations in formulating human resource management functions in the departments of the government of Punjab. Keeping in view the research gap, this study addresses the following research question: What is the relationship of HRD practices with job satisfaction and intent to leave of an employee in the presence of POP? Accordingly, the objective of the current study is to investigate the relationship of HRD practices with job satisfaction and intent to leave of an employee in the presence of POP.

2. Literature review

The relationship among HRD practices, job satisfaction, and intent to leave can be comprehended through the lens of social exchange theory (SET). Lee and Bruvold's (2003) worked on perceived investment of employee development (PIED) has been taken as a proxy for HRD practices; Landau and Hammer's (1986) framework for employee's intent to leave; and Schriesheim and Tsui's (1980) framework of job satisfaction.

The underpinning social exchange theory contends that when two parties are communally interlinked with each other than the obligations are generated, and over time this relationship between them will be considered as more credulous and trustworthy. For the durability and long run of this relationship, there must be some rules of exchange

between them (Cook et al., 2013). When these rules of exchange are explained in employment terms, then they become very clear and understandable, where an employee exerts his efforts to benefit the organization, and in return, the organization gives him satisfaction and provides means of growth. Saks (2006) added in the context of social exchange theory that this theory delineates the two-way relationship between employee and employer by stressing upon the concept of employee engagement.

2.1. HRD practices and intent to leave

Human resource development does not comprise all the activities of employee's well-being and development, but it attempts to include maximum (Guest, 1987). Employee development means integrated and purposely designed plans over the different periods of time to assure that all the employees have enough knowledge necessary to meet their personal as well as organizational targets and goals. Employee development includes training, learning programs, self-study materials, seminars, career counseling, career development programs, conferences, etc. (Jacobs and Washington, 2003).

It is believed that HRD professionals may contribute widely in enhancing employee's level of satisfaction towards different job roles in the organization and can control turnover rate through developing the simple and complex level skills of the employees (Egan et al., 2004).

Turnover consequences a high cost to the organizations, and this cost becomes nonrecoverable and dangerous when organizations lose the valued manpower who are difficult to replace. Therefore, it is the prime responsibility of organizations to retain the employee (Hellman, 1997). If organizations make efforts to develop human resources, then work attitudes and PIED might supportive of organizations in retaining their employees. Intent to leave is an abrupt cognitive decision that causes an immediate turnover. When intentions to leave increase, then turnover in an organization also increases, and it has harmful effects on organizational progress (Paillé et al., 2010). Although PIED is not only a single reason to reduce intent to leave in employees, it plays a significant role in reducing these kinds of intentions. Researchers suggest that employees who perceive they are getting internal training, career counseling, and involvement in developmental activities are usually extra loyal to organizations, extra gratified toward their job, and have less intent to leave (Paillé et al., 2010). From these arguments, the following is hypothesized:

H1: HRD practices have an inverse relationship with the intent to leave of employees in an organization.

2.2. HRD practices and job satisfaction

When organizations capitalize on the employees' development, it is more likely that employees sense this investment as a sign of keeping a better and

longer-term relationship with the organization (Noe, 1996). Human resource development activities are a message for the employees that the organization takes much care of them and have positive intentions for their well-being. Many researchers argue that investing in human resource development is a process that increases the commitment of employees to the organization, which gives the sense to the organizations that employees are loyal to them. These eminences are clear cues to the employers that they have satisfied employees, and they have no intentions to leave the organization (Agarwal et al., 2003). Thus the organization must make every effort to conceive and design HRD culture where employee development program is strongly supported.

Job satisfaction of employees has always been an important factor in organizations. Organizations spend more and more on HRD practices to increase the satisfaction level of employees (Klassen and Chiu, 2010). Organizations facilitate their employees by conducting different training programs, career counseling activities, career development procedures, and skill enhancement exercises. Job satisfaction offers numerous potential benefits that may associate with PIED. PIED can help in increasing job satisfaction for reasons like; employees may consider the development programs as an organizational contribution for their career growth, they may develop a greater feel of managing their professional life due to the opportunities provided by their organizations (Shuck et al., 2014). Therefore, employees take these opportunities to develop new competencies for the current development and for future growth as well. Employee development programs play an important role in improving employees' discernments about the organization, and by the successful implementation of these initiatives, organizations may increase employee job satisfaction of an employee. Investing in employees' development activities is a way to help them in becoming more skilled and dexterous at their workplace, which increases their employability and job satisfaction (Harris et al., 2009). From these arguments, the following is hypothesized:

H2: HRD practices have a positive relationship with job satisfaction of employees in an organization.

2.3. The moderating role of POP

Three dimensions of POP are described by Kacmar and Ferris (1991), firstly "general political behavior" that explains self-serving behaviors to advance preferred outcomes by organizational member's, Secondly "go along to get ahead" in this, members show silence and behave in a passive manner to benefit themselves. Thirdly, "pay and promotion policies," in this dimension of POP, the policy implementers in an organization react politically to influence the process of decision making. More than three decades ago, Ferris and Kacmar (1989) theorized a highly influential concept

about POP that is till today functional and effectual in an organizational context.

Kiewitz et al. (2009) viewed that organizations are hesitant to acknowledge the negative effects of POP on the progressive process and performance indicators of organizations. Therefore, organizations should study the presence of POP in their organizations and must take measures to exterminate them. HRD practices negatively influence the intent to leave employees and positively influence job satisfaction of employees, but POP is a significant factor to consider that could damage the organizational outcomes (Drory and Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). Therefore, POP may moderate the relationship between HRD practices and intent to leave, and HRD practices and job satisfaction. From these arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: POP moderates the relationship between HRD practices and intent to leave.

H4: POP moderates the relationship between HRD practices and job satisfaction.

Fig. 1 shows the hypothesized research framework.

3. Method

3.1. Sampling

The data for this study has been collected from permanent government employees of basic pay scale 14 and above through a self-explanatory research questionnaire containing 30 questions. Due to restricted access and the prevailing Covid-19 situation in the country, a purposive sampling technique is used to collect data, and responses of forty regular employees of two Government departments have been acquired for data analysis. Five-point Likert scales ranging from 1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) were used to acquire responses from the respondents.

3.2. Measures

Items used to operationalize the constructs of the study were mainly adapted from previous studies and modified as per the Pakistani context. Four constructs have been measured in this study by using multiple items: HRD Practices, Job Satisfaction, Intent to leave, and Perception of Organizational Politics.

HRD Practices: A perceived support for participation in HRD practices is measured using the Perceived Investment in Employee Development (PIED) scale created by Lee and Bruvold (2003). As HRD practices differ by location and organization, therefore PIED nine items scale is used as a proxy to assess perceived support for participation in HRD practices in this study.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is measured with six items scale made by Schriesheim and Tsui

(1980). This measurement scale provides an assessment of the job satisfaction of employees in an

organization.

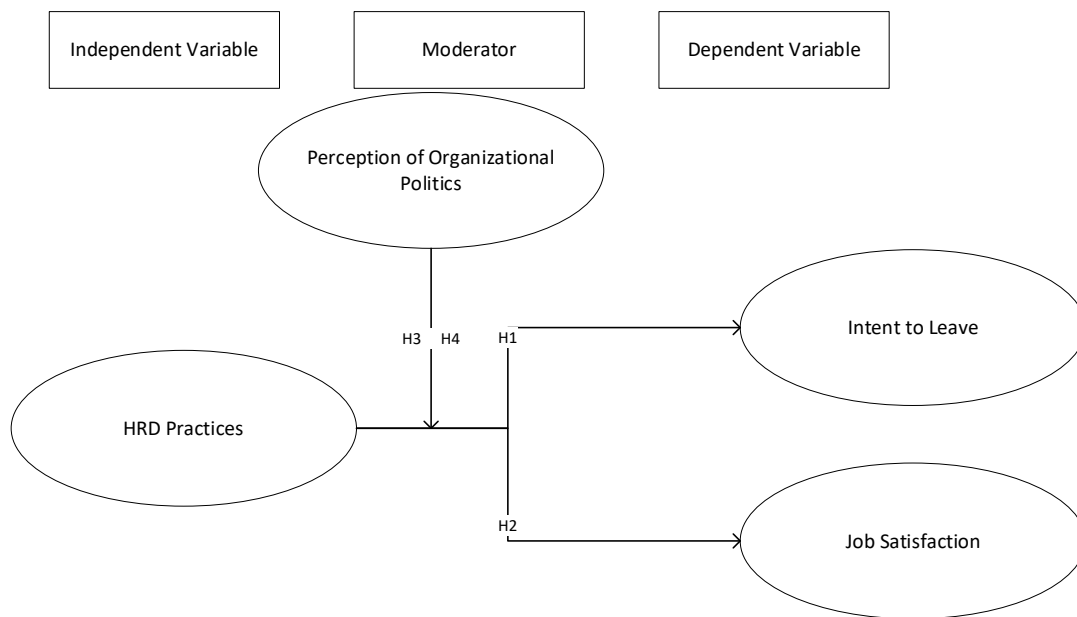


Fig. 1: Hypothesized research framework

Intent to Leave: Intent to leave was measured with three items scale made by Landau and Hammer (1986). This measurement scale provides an assessment of employees’ intent to leave the organization. POP is quantified using a scale of 12 items, developed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991).

3.3. Reliability analysis of the coefficients

Table 1 presents the reliability coefficient of Cronbach’s alpha values of each measure that is used to evaluate the internal consistency of all constructs used in a framework. Table 1 shows 0.83 as Cronbach’s alpha value of HRD practices that presents 83% reliability of the scale. Likewise, 0.76, 0.71, and 0.84 are the values of Cronbach’s alpha of job satisfaction, intent to leave, and POP, respectively.

Table 1: Cronbach’s reliability coefficient

Variable	Cronbach’s alpha value	No of items	Source
HRD Practices	0.83	3	Lee and Bruvold (2003)
Job Satisfaction	0.76	6	Schriesheim and Tsui (1980)
Intent to Leave	0.71	3	Landau and Hammer (1986)
POP	0.84	12	Kacmar and Ferris (1991)

4. Results

Statistical analysis software SPSS 24 has been used in the study to analyze the direct influence of independent variables on dependent variables and through the moderator. The hierarchical regression analysis has been applied to test the hypotheses.

4.1. Means, standard deviations (S.D) and correlations

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics and correlations. The mean values 2.40 (S.D=0.67), 3.08 (S.D=0.47), 3.15 (S.D=0.62), 2.30 (S.D=0.79) are of POP, HRD practices, job satisfaction and intent to leave respectively. Table 2 also shows the Pearson correlation among variables. Correlations results significantly supported almost all hypotheses. It is found that HRD practices are positively correlated to job satisfaction with the value 0.569** and negatively correlated with POP and intent to leave with the values -0.338* and -0.335*, respectively. POP is negatively correlated with job satisfaction with the value -0.577**, whereas positively correlated with intent to leave with the value 0.685**. As job satisfaction and intent to leave are opposite to each other, and their correlation value is also reflecting it with a negative value of -0.511**.

4.2. Regression analysis

As regression analysis predicts impact, therefore, regression analysis is used to check the influence of HRD practices as an independent variable and POP as a moderator on job satisfaction. The results are shown in the following Table 3.

The value of R square in Table 3 indicates that 30.6% variation in employees’ job satisfaction is observable through HRD practices, and a coefficient value of 0.569 explains that one unit change in HRD Practices will pass on the change of 0.569 units in job satisfaction of employees. In line with the literature, the direct impact of HRD Practices is found positively significant over Job Satisfaction of employees. Thus, hypothesis 2 is fully supported in the study.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4
1. Perception of organizational politics (POP)	2.40	0.67	1			
2. HRD Practices	3.08	0.47	-0.338*	1		
3. Job Satisfaction	3.15	0.62	-0.577**	0.569**	1	
4. Intent to Leave	2.30	0.79	0.685**	-0.335*	-0.511**	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3: Regression analysis to predict the impact of HRD practices and POP on job satisfaction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Adjusted R Square
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	HRD Practices	0.746	0.175	0.569	4.266	0.000	0.306
2	HRD Practices	0.969	0.169	0.739	5.734	0.000	0.453
	INTERACTION 1	-0.138	0.041	-0.431	-3.348	0.002	

Dependent variable: Job satisfaction

The results of hypothesis 4 indicate the significant negative impact of POP on job satisfaction as a moderator, and hypothesis 4 is supported. Hence, it proves that POP affects the job satisfaction of employees in an organization as a moderator.

Results reveal that regression analysis can forecast the direct influence of HRD practices on job satisfaction as well as the indirect influence through POP as a moderator. The results are shown in Table 3.

According to the results, the value of R square represents an 11.2% variation in intent to leave of employees through HRD practices, and the value of the coefficient is -0.335, which indicates that one unit change in HRD practices can cause -0.335 units to change in intent to leave of employees. The direct

impact of HRD practices is found significantly negative on intent to leave employees in the organization. Moreover, the indirect effect of HRD practices through POP on intent to leave is also found significant. Thus, hypothesis 1 is fully supported in the study.

The results of hypothesis 3 indicate the significant positive impact of POP on intent to leave as moderator, and hypothesis 3 is supported. Hence, it proves that POP affects the intent to leave of employees in an organization as a moderator.

Results reveal that regression analysis can forecast the direct influence of HRD practices on intent to leave as well as the indirect influence through POP as a moderator. The results are shown in Table 4. Table 5 shows path estimates.

Table 4: Direct and indirect influence of HRD practices on intent to leave

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Adjusted R Square
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	HRD Practices	-0.558	0.255	-0.335	-2.191	0.035	0.112
2	HRD Practices	-0.954	0.227	-0.572	-4.198	0.000	0.307
	INTERACTION 2	0.245	0.055	0.603	4.424	0.000	

Dependent variable: Intent to leave

Table 5: Path estimates

Hypothesis	Estimate	Status
H1. HRD Practices → Intent to leave	0.112**	Accepted
H2. HRD Practices → Job Satisfaction	0.306**	Accepted
H3. Moderating effect of POP → HRD Practices and Intent to leave	0.307**	Accepted
H4. Moderating effect of POP → HRD Practices and Job Satisfaction	0.453**	Accepted

**Significant at the 0.01 level; *significant at the 0.05 level

5. Discussion

The current study answers the research question stated above and shows the impact of HRD practices on employees and organizations as well (Fig. 2).

If an employee perceives that investment made on him in the form of training or through other functions of human resource development will be helpful for him from futuristic perspectives, then it increases his/her satisfaction towards a job, which confirms the study of Klassen and Chiu (2010). In line with the study of Agarwal et al. (2003), the results of this study endorse that when an employee learns new skills and considers that ongoing efforts made on me will be fruitful for my future progression, then he tries to remain with the

organization and his intent to leave decreases which ultimately lessens the employee turnover rate in an organization. This study showed a parallel result to confirm Bin (2015) that organizations should enhance their HRD activities so that employees could understand that they have full support for their career management, and organizations should conduct a training needs assessment of employees on a regular basis to support the growth and development aim of employees. HRD practices have a positive impact on job satisfaction and play a vital role in changing the intent of employees to leave and convert this intent into job satisfaction (Hutchins and Rainbolt, 2017). This study also proved that HRD practices have a negative impact on the intent to leave employees (Paillé et al., 2010). As POP moderates positively between HRD practices and job satisfaction, and negatively between HRD practices and intent to leave, therefore, managers in the organizations must keep close observance and monitor the presence of organizational politics and in case found then some useful and tactical actions have to be taken to decimate it.

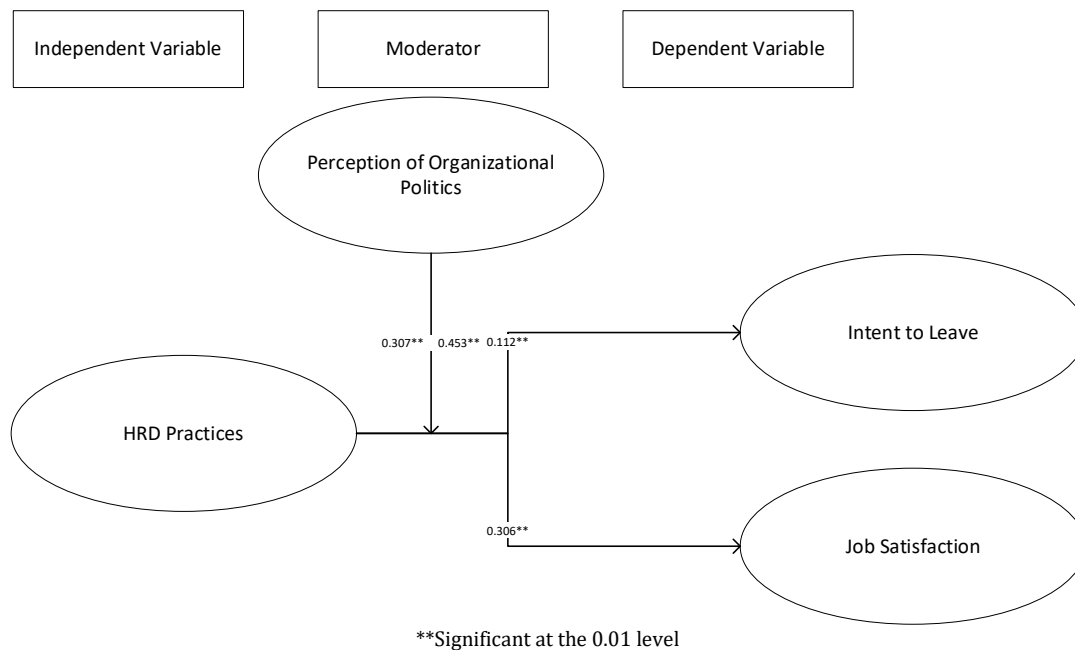


Fig. 2: The current study framework

All the proposed hypotheses were proved true in this study, and the results of empirical testing were found significant. Thus, from the above discussion, we can establish a fact that HRD practices play a significant role in organizational performance by increasing job satisfaction and decreasing intent to leave among employees. Organizations should study the actuality of POP in their organizations to take pragmatic measures for eradicating POP. The findings of this study should act as a substantial contribution to the current knowledge domain and may turn out to be beneficial for organizations in formulating human resource management functions by focusing on human resource development practices.

5.1. Implications: Theoretical and practical

This study has made a practical contribution to the knowledge domain of the social exchange theory framework through the empirical extension of past studies that observed the impact of HRD practices on job satisfaction and intent to leave. Rather than focusing on the direct relationship, the study has incorporated the perception of organizational politics as a moderating variable to comprehend the cause of why HRD practices are not fully benefiting organizations.

This study would play a substantial role in the current knowledge domain and may be helpful for organizations in formulating human resource management functions especially focused on human resource development practices in the departments of the government of Punjab.

5.2. Limitations and future directions

The findings of the current study can also extend help to government departments of Pakistan in

devising better policies for human resource development. In the future, such a study can be re-taken in other private and public organizations of Pakistan with a larger sample size. An important factor that has been recognized for future research during the study is that heads of public departments should work hard to eradicate the POP because it may destroy the morale of employees and cause a higher turnover rate. The proposed model can also be evaluated by using modern data analysis tools and techniques with the inclusion of some important variables like organizational performance.

This study was conducted for two departments of the government of Punjab, which limits the scope of the study. Another limitation of the study is the smaller sample size, which must be larger in future studies. The restricted data analysis techniques are used in the study, which could have been further enhanced in the future.

6. Conclusion

This study intended to investigate the impact of HRD practices on job satisfaction and intent to leave of employees through moderation of POP in the context of public departments of Govt. of Punjab, Pakistan. The results of this study indicate that employees will have more job satisfaction and lesser intention to leave the organization if the organization is making an investment in employees in the form of human resource development activities, but POP severely affects these relationships and creates hindrances in the development of employees and organizations as well. Thus, there is a need to develop and maintain human resource development practices in the organization to excel and outlive. If organizations aspire to have a greater outcome with minimum resources and wish to be competitive, then they

must focus on establishing and assuring a strong and workable human resource development system.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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