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# The Effect of Human Resource Management Practices and Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance: A Proposed Research Framework at Palestinian Municipalities

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ABSTRACT: Effective employee performance gives businesses a competitive edge, with Human Resources Management (HRM) central to optimizing this. HR practices, tied to employee satisfaction and commitment, affect job attitudes and performance. Thus, strategic HR practices that foster satisfaction are crucial. This study examines how key HR practices (recruitment, training, compensation, performance appraisal) affect performance and job satisfaction in Palestinian central municipalities, guided by Maslow's and Adams' theories, and supported by Social Exchange and Signaling theories. The focus is on administrative employees with supervisory duties in 10 central West Bank municipalities. Stratified random sampling is employed, with Yamane's formula determining sample size due to the small population. Data is collected via a five-point Likert scale survey, and descriptive statistics used for analysis. Reliability and validity assessments are also included.

**KEYWORDS:** Human Resource Management Practices, Employee Performance, and Job Satisfaction

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance, key to a firm's competitiveness, can be amplified through strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) (H. Khan & Wisner, 2019; Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020). Valuing employees and enhancing their skills drive organizational success, especially when HR practices are adapted to competitive environments (Zarim et al., 2017). These practices, vital for employee satisfaction and performance, are less examined in developing countries like Palestine (T. M. Ahmed et al., 2016; Shaukat et al., 2015; M. M. H. Al-Jabari, 2011). Although traditional HRM is often applied in public sectors, it's challenging for developing nations (Suhail & Steen, 2018). Given the enormous economic challenges faced by the Palestinian economy (World Bank, 2020), its unique circumstances, and reliance on newly established organizations (Olof Palme International Center, 2019; World Bank, 2020), its HRM practices have unique characteristics. Despite this, performance levels of Palestinian National Authority (PNA) institutions are considered weak (World Bank, 2020). Therefore, improving these practices is critical for sustainable human resources and high functionality in PNA institutions (World Bank, 2015; Porterfield & Clark, 2011).

This research focuses on HRM practices in Palestinian central municipalities, especially in light of constraints and conditions the PNA institutions face. It aims to enhance employee performance, supporting the survival of municipalities under difficult circumstances (World Bank, 2015).

### II. LITERATURE ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE PALESTINE CONTEXT.

#### 2.1 Employee Performance in the Palestine context.

Despite efforts to enhance employee performance, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has consistently recorded low performance levels (World Bank, 2015,2018,2020). Even with the launch of a "Reform and Development" program in 2008, focusing on efficiency and service quality, performance did not significantly improve.

The PNA initiated reforms including comprehensive analysis and plans for human resource development, yet reports reveal that the improvements were not as anticipated (World Bank, 2020). Despite investing significantly in performance enhancement, criticisms on staff performance persist (World Bank, 2020; PCDCR, 2019; UNISPAL,



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2021). Consequently, public services delivered by PNA employees are still considered ineffective due to these performance issues.

However, a study by Jouda et al. (2016) on the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) indicated that HRM practices, such as "recruitment, training, compensation, and performance appraisal," positively impacted employee performance, suggesting potential solutions for the PNA's performance issues.

#### 2.2 Issues in Core HRM Practices in the Palestine context.

The human resource management (HRM) landscape in the Middle East, specifically Palestine, is relatively uncharted in scholarly literature, despite belief in the applicability of HRM theories developed in advanced nations (Al-Jabari, 2013). The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has developed HRM policies and practices which reflect those implemented in similar developing countries, focusing on crucial HRM components of recruitment, selection, training, and development, compensation, and performance appraisal (World Bank, 2018; Al-herbawi, 2015; Al-Sharabati, 2015; Al Shobaki et al., 2017; Alsabbah et al., 2017).

However, Palestine presents a unique context due to the challenges it has faced under Israeli occupation, which has adversely affected the stability and strength of its institutions (EU, 2017). Factors like lack of control over land, water, physical borders, and revenues, administrative fragmentation, and systematic human rights violations have hampered the potential of Palestinian society and economy.

The PNA and its institutions have struggled to adapt to rapid cultural and attitudinal changes (Al Shobaki et al., 2017), with confusion heightened by the impacts of the Israeli occupation. The PNA was also confronted with the complexity of merging different rules and regulations inherited from Jordanian and Egyptian administrative laws, resulting in confusing work standards that may affect HRM practices (Alsabbah et al., 2017).

Moreover, a gap exists between the required intellectual skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and technology manipulation skills and the quality of local university outcomes (Al-herbawi, 2015; Al-Sharabati, 2015). Additionally, the scarcity of job opportunities and political discord between Palestinian parties further exacerbates the employment situation (Al-Sharabati, 2015; Alsabbah et al., 2017). The frequent bans and closures also complicate HRM planning (Al Shobaki et al., 2017; Alsabbah et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the recruitment process in Palestine is disorganized and resource-deficient, with university graduates not providing a reliable workforce for local authorities (Al-Sharabati, 2015). This situation underlines the importance of effective HRM in Palestine, especially considering the unique challenges it faces under Israeli occupation.

Thus, examining HRM practices within the Palestinian context, specifically in municipalities as they serve as a bridge between citizens and central government, is vital for achieving better employee performance. Specifically, the HRM practices of the PNA – including recruitment, selection, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal – and job satisfaction as a mediating factor will be examined.

#### 2.2.1 Recruitment Practice in the Palestine context.

Amin et al. (2014) define recruitment as "a procedure that organizations use to attract and hire individuals to fill vacancies". It can also be identified as "the definition and attractiveness of potential candidates by the organization". Wilton (2022) defines recruitment as all activities undertaken by an organization to recruit talent. Based on the foregoing; The concept of recruitment is defined as "one of the human resources management strategies, which aims to fill vacancies in the organization's structure, through which it searches for qualified people and explores them to fill current or planned jobs in the future by modern scientific methods, Analyzing and classifying jobs in the organization to determine the needs and conditions that must be met by the incumbent".

New employees need to be aware of the organization's policies, procedures, and performance expectations. Recruitment and selection is a human resource best practice that helps organization managers in selecting and attracting potential candidates which in turn leads to increased job satisfaction and improved job and organizational performance (Amin et al., 2014).

The PA implements many human resource strategies, particularly in the area of implementing polarization strategies. If a vacancy is found in one of the ministries, coordination is made with the Personnel Affairs Office, where the vacancy is announced through the Personnel Office's website as well as through the relevant Ministry's website. As well as by advertising on websites, and after this step, the citizens expected to be employed and who meet the conditions of the job in terms of qualifications, experience, and academic degree apply for employment, and the human resources departments in the ministries determine how to fill the vacancy, whether through the ministry's employees such as transferring employees or work to promote them or take a job from outside the ministry.

It was found that officials in the human resources departments in the Palestinian ministries consider the recruitment strategy as one of the most important strategies applied by the Palestinian ministries, due to its importance in attracting



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qualified and trained human resources that possess the skills and capabilities necessary to carry out the tasks assigned to them to the fullest (Tlaib, 2014).

However, the institutions of the Palestinian Authority are constantly exposed to waves of emigration, especially professionals and university graduates, which is known as a "brain drain" from the Palestinian territories. This is partly caused by the confidence in their competence and professionalism to find better opportunities to secure employment and a safer lifestyle outside Palestine (World Bank, 2018). Therefore, the process of recruitment and selection of staff and professional competencies constitutes a major challenge within the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority.

#### 2.2.2 Selection Practice in the Palestine context.

Amin et al. (2014) Selection can be defined as the procedure that narrows down a list of applicants, choosing the most suitable candidate based on their qualifications and predefined criteria. In the context of PNA organizations, several recruitment and selection methods are employed, including setting job application prerequisites, administering written tests, and conducting interviews. (*Civil Service Law*, 2005). The consistency of GPC's work with the National Strategic Plan for the Civil Service "Development Department" in developing an integrated system for civil service employment through the application of a unified recruitment announcement, receiving electronic employment applications only through the civil service website, electronic competitive exams where the results of the job applicant exam appear Before leaving the hall, an electronic question bank related to the recruitment process in the civil service sector (GPC, 2018). Moreover, most recruitment and selection practices begin with job analysis, setting the required conditions for employment, electronic advertisement, written examination, interviews, medical examination, and probationary recruitment for one year (GPC, 2018).

#### 2.2.3 Training and Development Practice in the Palestine context.

Training and development are intended to equip employees with the knowledge and skills for their present roles, while also promoting long-term learning and professional growth (Ratna & Singh, 2013). Defined formally, it is an effort to enhance an employee's present or future job performance by fostering learning, usually altering the employee's attitude or increasing their skills and knowledge (Imna & Hassan, 2015). These activities, critical for improved workforce utilization and job satisfaction, are gaining importance in Palestinian, Arab, and developing nations' contexts (Hosie et al., 2013). The Palestinian Development Plan has implemented numerous training programs since 2008, positively impacting employee performance (GPC, 2020). It also established the Palestinian National School of Administration in 2016 to further develop public sector workers' capabilities (PNSA, 2022).

#### 2.2.4 Compensation and Reward Practice in the Palestine context.

Compensation is the reward an organization offers its employees for their services and performance, which can be financial (e.g., salaries, bonuses) or non-financial (e.g., additional vacations, entertainment plans) (Rana & Malik, 2017). When rewarded, employees are typically more motivated to work, leading to increased productivity (Mira et al., 2019; Hailemariam et al., 2019). Certain elements like salary, rewards, and indirect compensation have a substantial impact on performance and should be prioritized (Hameed et al., 2014). In the context of PNA organizations, compensation practices more familiar in developing and public sector organizations are employed (Khatibi et al., 2012; Soomro et al., 2011). A study by Abu-sultan and Habil (2011) showed that PNA employees highly value pensions as they provide long-term job security, while insurance is seen as adequate, and monthly salary is considered the least efficient compensation form. Per Palestinian Civil Law, PNA employees in the public sector are entitled to financial support and incentives.

#### 2.2.5 Performance Appraisal Practice in the Palestine context.

Performance appraisal, defined as a formal system for reviewing and assessing individual performance, provides employees with feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement (Ratna & Singh, 2013). This feedback often results in increased satisfaction and productivity. The main aim of performance appraisal is to enhance individual performance based on set criteria, such as improving current performance and motivation, determining training and development needs, and it is positively associated with job performance (Abutayeh & Al-Qatawneh, 2012). In contrast, ineffective performance appraisals can harm employee morale and satisfaction (Amin et al., 2014).

Organizations typically use appraisals for managerial or developmental purposes. Managerial purposes include decisions on promotions, termination, and rewards, while developmental purposes aim to improve employee performance and skills (Iqbal et al., 2013). Performance appraisal can boost motivation and satisfaction, contributing to organizational goals. However, the lack of appraisal can lead to low motivation and performance (Ramous et al., 2016).



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PNA organizations utilize appraisal practices common in public sector organizations (Shim et al., 2011; Soomro et al., 2011). Employee performance in PNA institutions is evaluated annually using forms prepared by the General Personnel Council covering aspects like achievements, supervisor's notes, work hours, and training (GPC, 2020).

Performance appraisal is a cornerstone of administrative work in Palestine's civil service sector, serving as an indicator for evaluating programs and policies. Since 2016, it has been used to clarify the general policies of the job performance appraisal system, ensuring integrity and transparency in the process. New evaluation models have been prepared for various job categories, based on key aspects of the job description and self-evaluation (GPC, 2018).

#### 2.3 Job Satisfaction.

Job satisfaction has been defined in various ways by numerous authors (Noor et al., 2022). An early definition by Hobock, cited in Aziri (2011), posits job satisfaction as a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental conditions leading a person to state contentment with their job. Others see it as a sense of fulfillment derived from performing specific tasks (Kasemsap, 2017), or a positive response due to the alignment of actual job outcomes with the employee's expectations (Castaneda & Scanlan, 2014). Job satisfaction can also be viewed as a positive sentiment about a job stemming from the evaluation of its intrinsic qualities (Robbins & Judge, 2013) or as the attitudes and feelings people hold about their work (Armstrong et al., 2014).

Job satisfaction is often characterized as a positive emotional state stemming from one's job and work experiences appraisal. It's seen as a reflection of employees' attitudes towards their work, either aligning with positive sentiments or clashing with job aspects (Aziri, 2011).

Numerous factors impact job satisfaction, including individual, social, cultural, organizational, and environmental variables (Kavita et al., 2012). Flexibility at work (FWA) is another influencer, defined as flexibility in terms of work timing, location, and volume (Chen, 2015). Armstrong et al. (2014) mention three primary factors influencing job satisfaction: the intrinsic motivators related to job content, the quality of supervision, and personal success or failure at tasks

Job satisfaction is important due to its impact on an individual's performance within the organization (Uddin et al., 2017). HR practices aim to boost employee confidence and motivation, thus leading to job satisfaction and improved performance (ASTUTI et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2019). Job satisfaction also influences employee attitudes and behaviors within the organization and forms part of the broader framework affecting an employee's work experience or quality of work life (Byremo, 2015). Positive job satisfaction can promote advantageous attitudes towards the organization, reducing turnover intent and fostering voluntary efforts, thereby enhancing company performance (Noor et al. 2022; Noor, 2020).

#### 2.4 Research Objectives and Proposed Conceptual Framework

The study was set to achieve the following objectives:

- 1. To determine the impact of recruitment adopted by Palestinian municipalities on employee performance.
- 2. To determine the impact of selection adopted by Palestinian municipalities on employee performance.
- 3. To assess the extent to which training and development influenced employee performance in Palestinian municipalities.
- 4. To investigate whether compensation practices affect employee performance in Palestinian municipalities.
- 5. To analyze the impact of performance appraisal on the performance of employees in Palestinian municipalities.
- 6. To determine the influence of recruitment on job satisfaction in Palestinian municipalities.
- 7. To determine the influence of selection on job satisfaction in Palestinian municipalities.
- 8. To examine the influence of training and development on job satisfaction in Palestinian municipalities.
- 9. To elaborate association of compensation practice with job satisfaction in Palestinian municipalities.
- 10. To examine the effect of performance appraisal on job satisfaction in Palestinian municipalities.
- 11. To examine the influence of job satisfaction on employee performance in Palestinian municipalities.
- 12. To examine the influence of job satisfaction as the mediator between HRM practices and employee performance in Palestinian municipalities.

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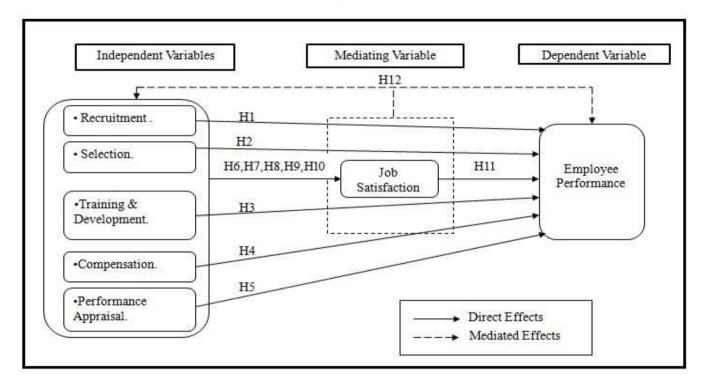


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Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



#### III. METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on selected HRM practices (recruitment, selection, training, development, compensation, and performance appraisal) that influence employee performance in Palestinian municipalities, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating factor. As per Zikmund & Babin (2013) and Kotler & Armstrong (2012), the "population" in a research context refers to the group of entities under study and encompasses individuals, groups, or items that the researcher is interested in.

In this study, the population comprises all administrative employees in central West Bank municipalities who perform supervisory tasks. Administrative personnel in supervisory roles, such as managers, department heads, and division heads, from 10 central municipalities were chosen as respondents. They were selected due to their contributions to human resource policy-making within their organizations, their knowledge of HRM methods, job satisfaction, and employee performance, as well as their crucial roles in enhancing employee performance. Consequently, the study population comprises 603 employees, as displayed in the following table.

Total Head of No. Municipality Managers Division head Department Hebron 1 23 60 75 158 2 TulKari 19 49 23 91 3 Ramalla 1 26 46 81 4 Jericho 16 21 37 74 5 Nablus 5 26 34 65 6 Qalqilya 7 16 13 36 Jenin 12 15 8 35

Table (1) study community



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8	Bethleh	9	18	3	30
9	Salfit	7	2	12	21
10	Tubas	3	7	2	12
Total	10	104	240	253	603

Source: General Administration of Formations, Palestinian Ministry of Local Government, 2022

Bhattacherjee (2012) defines sampling as "the statistical process of selecting a subset (known as a 'sample') of a population of interest for the purpose of making statistical observations and inferences about that group." In this study, stratified relative random sampling was used, where samples were drawn from each stratum using simple random sampling, and the representation of each stratum was proportional to its size in the overall population (see Table 1). With a sample size of 240, the stratified sampling method ensures data is collected from 10 central municipalities in the West Bank. As the population of the sample is small and requires only a minor reduction, the sample size was computed using Yamane's simple sample size formula (Yamane, 1967). The research methodology will be conducted through questionnaires to gather the necessary data.

Table (2) Distribution of the study sample to the Palestinian municipalities

No.	Municipality	The number of administrative staff	Their ratio to the total number	Sample volume
1	Hebron	158	26.20%	63
2	Tul Karim	91	15.09%	36
3	Ramallah	81	13.43%	32
4	Jericho	74	12.27%	30
5	Nablus	65	10.77%	26
6	Qalqilya	36	5.97%	14
7	Jenin	35	5.80%	14
8	Bethlehem	30	4.97%	12
9	Salfit	21	3.48%	8
10	Tubas	12	1.99%	5
Total	10	603	100%	240

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In its entirety, this proposed study aims to provide organizations with insights into the influence of various HRM practices on employee performance, thereby empowering them to undertake the necessary measures to enhance employee performance. The study will further the evolving comprehension of extending stakeholder knowledge and investigating human resource management practices that impact the performance of municipal employees in Palestine. Specifically, the study will equip the Ministry of Local Government with the understanding needed to formulate and execute human resources management policies in sync with improving the performance of municipal workers in Palestine. It will assist the municipalities under study to be proactive in managing human resource practices that affect employee performance.

This research paves the way for future investigations in this area by identifying potential areas of study. The study will also contribute to the expanding theoretical knowledge in the field of human resource management, specifically by incorporating employee performance into human resource practices. As such, this forms the foundation for other comparable replication studies with extensions in developing countries.

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