

**THE EFFECT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN LEBANON**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p><b>Received</b> 20 June 2023</p> <p><b>Accepted</b> 14 September 2023</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Human Resource Management Practices; Training and Development; Performance Appraisal; Compensation and Benefits; Employee Empowerment; Employee Retention; Educational Sector; Private Universities.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Employee retention is a real challenge and a crucial component that affects the organization's success and sustainability. The major purpose of this study is to examine the human resource management strategies that influence employee retention in private institutions in Lebanon.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The research employed a quantitative approach using a survey to collect data from a sample of 487 employees, and data was analyzed using the SPSS software.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> According to the research, employee empowerment, appraisals, wages and incentives, and training and development, all have a major influence on retaining employees at higher education institutions in Lebanon.</p> <p><b>Implications:</b> The significance of such practices in establishing a healthy work environment, enhancing job satisfaction, and lowering turnover rates is emphasized in the study. Furthermore, the strong correlation among the variables highlights the value of prioritizing human resources practices for higher employee retention in the competitive educational environment in Lebanon.</p> <p><b>Originality/Value:</b> Thus, private universities in Lebanon can enhance employee retention by conducting strengthened training and development, enhancing performance appraisals, offering competitive compensation and benefits, and empowering their employees.</p>

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## O EFEITO DAS PRÁTICAS DE GESTÃO DE RECURSOS HUMANOS NA RETENÇÃO DE FUNCIONÁRIOS EM UNIVERSIDADES PRIVADAS NO LÍBANO

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** A retenção de colaboradores é um verdadeiro desafio e uma componente crucial que afeta o sucesso e a sustentabilidade da organização. O principal objetivo deste estudo é examinar as estratégias de gestão de recursos humanos que influenciam a retenção de funcionários em instituições privadas no Líbano.

**Metodologia:** A pesquisa utilizou uma abordagem quantitativa por meio de uma pesquisa para coletar dados de uma amostra de 487 funcionários, e os dados foram analisados por meio do software SPSS.

**Resultados:** De acordo com a investigação, a capacitação dos funcionários, as avaliações, os salários e incentivos, e a formação e desenvolvimento, todos têm uma grande influência na retenção de funcionários nas instituições de ensino superior no Líbano.

**Implicações:** O estudo enfatiza a importância de tais práticas no estabelecimento de um ambiente de trabalho saudável, no aumento da satisfação no trabalho e na redução das taxas de rotatividade. Além disso, a forte correlação entre as variáveis destaca o valor de priorizar práticas de recursos humanos para uma maior retenção de funcionários no ambiente educacional competitivo no Líbano.

**Originalidade/Valor:** Assim, as universidades privadas no Líbano podem aumentar a retenção de funcionários através da realização de formação e desenvolvimento reforçados, melhorando as avaliações de desempenho, oferecendo remunerações e benefícios competitivos e capacitando os seus funcionários.

**Palavras-chave:** Práticas de Gestão de Recursos Humanos, Treinamento e Desenvolvimento, Avaliação de Desempenho, Compensação e Benefícios, Empoderamento dos Funcionários, Retenção de Funcionários, Setor Educacional, Universidades Privadas.

## EL EFECTO DE LAS PRÁCTICAS DE GESTIÓN DE RECURSOS HUMANOS EN LA RETENCIÓN DE EMPLEADOS EN UNIVERSIDADES PRIVADAS DEL LÍBANO

### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** La retención de empleados es un verdadero desafío y un componente crucial que afecta el éxito y la sostenibilidad de la organización. El objetivo principal de este estudio es examinar las estrategias de gestión de recursos humanos que influyen en la retención de empleados en instituciones privadas en el Líbano.

**Metodología:** La investigación empleó un enfoque cuantitativo mediante una encuesta para recopilar datos de una muestra de 487 empleados y los datos se analizaron utilizando el software SPSS.

**Hallazgos:** Según la investigación, el empoderamiento de los empleados, las evaluaciones, los salarios e incentivos, y la capacitación y el desarrollo tienen una influencia importante en la retención de los empleados en las instituciones de educación superior en el Líbano.

**Implicaciones:** En el estudio se enfatiza la importancia de tales prácticas para establecer un ambiente de trabajo saludable, mejorar la satisfacción laboral y reducir las tasas de rotación. Además, la fuerte correlación entre las variables resalta el valor de priorizar las prácticas de recursos humanos para una mayor retención de empleados en el entorno educativo competitivo del Líbano.

**Originalidad/Valor:** Por lo tanto, las universidades privadas del Líbano pueden mejorar la retención de empleados llevando a cabo una capacitación y un desarrollo reforzados, mejorando las evaluaciones de desempeño, ofreciendo compensaciones y beneficios competitivos y empoderando a sus empleados.

**Palabras clave:** Prácticas de Gestión de Recursos Humanos, Formación y Desarrollo, Evaluación de Desempeño, Compensación y Beneficios, Potenciación de los Empleados, La retención de Empleados, Sector Educativo, Universidades Privadas.

## INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive educational landscape, human capital, particularly within private universities, plays a critical role in achieving sustained success and maintaining a competitive advantage (Bouzakhem et al., 2023; Dobre, 2013). Employee retention is key to delivering quality education and fostering institutional growth (Alajlani & Yesufu, 2022).

The educational sector in Lebanon faced substantial growth driven by increasing demand for tertiary education, a growing emphasis on internationalization, and a proactive approach to innovation and research. Retaining qualified and motivated faculty and staff is of utmost importance as these universities strive for excellence and global recognition. High employee turnover rates can lead to challenges like the loss of institutional knowledge, disruption in academic programs, decreased faculty morale, and higher recruitment costs. Effective employee retention hinges on robust and strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) practices.

In Lebanon's fiercely competitive educational sector, employee retention is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge. While educational institutions strive to keep employees satisfied and motivated, the effectiveness of human resource practices toward overall retention remains a pressing question.

In 2019, Lebanon faced a severe economic crisis with hyperinflation, high unemployment rates, a devalued currency, and shortages of basic goods and services. This led to increasing emigration among talented employees and skilled workers due to a lack of job opportunities, unstable working conditions, and uncertainty about the country's future. This "brain drain" had a significant impact on the labor force and the country's potential for economic recovery, reducing its ability to innovate, compete, and develop critical sectors. In such circumstances, attracting and retaining talent required innovative, significant human resource management practices and strategic policies to encourage talented and skilled individuals to stay, contribute and support Lebanon's recovery efforts. To prevent a high turnover rate, crucial HRM practices including employee training, empowerment, performance appraisal, and competitive compensation and benefit are very important.

While research on employee retention and HRM practices has been widely explored in various sectors, there is a noticeable scarcity of comprehensive studies in the specific context of private universities in Lebanon. Consequently, this study aims to fill this research gap by examining the effect of HRM practices on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon and to provide a better comprehension of the relationship between HRM practices and

employee retention. Through the usage of the quantitative research method, this study seeks to identify the HRM practices that have the most significant impact on employee retention, explore the underlying factors contributing to turnover intentions, and propose evidence-based recommendations to enhance retention strategies for private universities.

This study helps human resource managers in private universities in Lebanon to better understand how to retain their employees. It provides a guide to many higher education institutions in Lebanon. This study offers a range of solutions for employee turnover in private universities in Lebanon by identifying the major factors that might be affecting employee retention. This matter is of great significance since employee retention is vital, especially in the current prevailing economic crisis.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of HRM practices on employee retention in Lebanese private universities. The sub-objectives of this study are as follows: (1) to reflect on how HRM practices affect employee retention in private universities in Lebanon, (2) to study the efficiency of HRM practices in retaining employees from the university employees' perception and find out the most significant practice, and (3) to gather opinions from employees working in private universities in Lebanon on their perception of a satisfactory job.

The main research question that will be investigated in this study is as follows: "What is the impact of human resource management practices on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon?" The sub-questions of the study are as follows: Q<sub>1</sub>: What is the impact of training and development on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon? Q<sub>2</sub>: What is the impact of performance appraisal on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon? Q<sub>3</sub>: What is the impact of employee compensation and benefits on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon? Q<sub>4</sub>: What is the impact of employee empowerment on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon?

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Theoretical Background**

#### Definition of employee retention

Employee retention includes organizational efforts, policies, and practices to retain and motivate employees while reducing turnover. This strategic approach emphasizes creating a supportive work environment through well-designed strategies, plans, and policies that enhance job satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty (Hong et al., 2012).

Several theoretical concepts contribute to understanding employee retention. The job embeddedness theory suggests that employee connections to jobs and organizations go beyond simple job satisfaction (Qaralleh et al., 2023). The social exchange theory explores reciprocal relationships between individuals and their organizations through the psychological contract, which represents unwritten expectations and obligations between employees and employers. The organizational support theory indicates that employees' perceptions of support and care from the organization influence their commitment and loyalty. The expectancy theory posits that employees' motivation to stay with an organization depends on their beliefs about achieving desired outcomes and rewards. These theories offer valuable insights for influencing employee retention.

Organizations can leverage these concepts to develop strategies that enhance job satisfaction, offer growth opportunities, and build strong relationships with employees (Ariani, 2023; Ahmed et al., 2022).

Employee retention presents a complex challenge for organizations and contributes to increased employee turnover. To gain a competitive advantage, employers must foster a work environment that encourages performance, productivity, and employee retention (Lwin, 2022). Implementing diverse strategies, such as adapting to changing workforce expectations, fostering employee engagement, investing in leadership and employee development, providing growth opportunities, and creating a positive work environment, can effectively decrease turnover and retain valuable talent (Hom et al., 2019; Al Jubouri, 2023).

#### Employee retention strategies

Organizations use employee retention strategies as proactive measures to enhance employee retention, increase job satisfaction, build employment relationships, and create a positive work environment. Furthermore, organizations can use several effective strategies to assess the organization's unique needs, culture, and employee preferences and to tailor retention strategies effectively, such as offering competitive salaries, and career advancement programs, and recognizing employee contributions through bonuses and incentives. Moreover, cultivating a positive organizational culture based on communication, shared values, and a good culture can contribute to employee retention and can create a sense of belonging, and enhance employee loyalty (Shamsudin & Velmurugan, 2023; James & Mathew 2012). Following that, engaging employees in decision-making processes and investing in leadership development can enhance employee commitment, make improvements, and involve employees in organizational

changes. Finally, conducting exit interviews with departing employees helps an organization identify areas for improvement. (James & Mathew 2012).

#### Factors influencing employee retention

Many factors can affect employee retention. Organizations that understand and address these factors effectively are more likely to create an environment that fosters employee retention, engagement, and loyalty, reduces turnover rates, maintains a skilled workforce, and achieves long-term success (Alkahtani, 2015).

Employee training is a vital component in the development and learning of individuals and organizational success. It can take various forms including workshops, seminars, shadowing, job rotation, mentoring, online courses, conferences, lectures, interactive activities, and E-learning (Brown & Sitzmann 2011). Organizations should always create and conduct a culture of incessant learning and offer employees opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, providing access to professional development to contribute to organizational growth and success (Brinkerhoff, 2005).

Performance appraisal is a way to provide feedback from managers to employees concerning their strengths, weaknesses, and improvement areas. These appraisals can be conducted periodically (Jacobs & Washington, 2003). Through performance appraisals, managers and employees can set performance goals, establish action plans, highlight skill gaps, and develop needs by identifying areas for improvement and providing training, coaching, and mentoring to enhance employees' skills and competencies (Lehnert & Sundheim, 1991). To ensure the success of performance appraisals, organizations should establish clear evaluation criteria and policies and update the appraisal process with the best practices (Hong et al., 2012).

Rewards and compensation are the cumulative financial and non-financial rewards, incentives, or benefits paid to employees by an organization in return and recognition for their services and their performance. The rewards and the compensation can motivate and engage employees, promote a positive work environment, attract and retain talent, enhance job satisfaction, and support employees, it can be a bonus based on individual or team performance, or a commission based on sales volume or profitability, or a profit sharing distribute as a percentage of company profits. Furthermore, rewards and compensation can include non-financial rewards such as insurance, vacation, flexible work, and recognition such as employee of the month awards, certificates, appreciation, trophies, etc. (Mondy & Noe 2005).



Employee empowerment is the process of granting employees the authority and the job autonomy to be the decision-makers and to be proactive to take actions independently within their roles and responsibilities, it's the process to transfer power from management to employees to giving the freedom to make decisions related to their tasks and providing training, to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions (Zakhem et al., 2022). Empowerment involves employees seeking their input and encourages teamwork and participation in problem-solving. Additionally, increase motivation, enhance creativity and innovation, and develop skills and competencies (Honold, 1997). Empowered employees are given the authority to make decisions within their areas of expertise that align with the organization's goals and have the freedom to work independently, they are encouraged to set goals, and determine how to accomplish them, and rewarded for their contributions. To effectively implement employee empowerment, organizations need to work on a culture of trust, provide clear guidelines, and guarantee that employees have the required resources and support to succeed.

### **Previous Research**

In Lwin's (2022) study, HRM practices' impact on employee retention in cement manufacturing factories in Myanmar was examined. Self-administered surveys were used to gather data from all employees working in selected industries with a minimum of 200 staff. SPSS was utilized for data analysis, revealing that HRM practices significantly influenced employee retention, supporting the vital role of these practices in enhancing profitability, reputation, and employee loyalty.

Imna & Hassan (2015) investigated HRM practices' impact on employee retention in 14 retail outlets in Male', Maldives, using a questionnaire. The study employed a descriptive and explanatory research design, utilizing cross-sectional survey methods. The findings revealed that reward and recognition, career development, and health and safety had positive effects on employee retention. Additionally, relationships between career development and training, performance evaluation, and reward and pay, were favorably impactful. Future research could expand the sample size and explore HR practices in diverse sectors.

Janjua & Gulzar (2014) explored the effect of HRM practices on employee retention and commitment in Pakistan's telecom sector. Data from 250 employees were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using correlation, regression, and Sobel tests. The results highlighted the significant impacts of various HRM practices on employee commitment and retention, with loyalty mediating the relationship between HRM and retention.

Hong et al. (2012) examined employee retention, emphasizing the importance of empowerment, compensation equity, job design, and expectation in effective performance management. Their quantitative study on 278 individuals indicated that training, development, appraisal systems, and compensation significantly contributed to retention, while empowerment had less relevance, possibly due to cultural factors valuing authority conformity in Asian cultures.

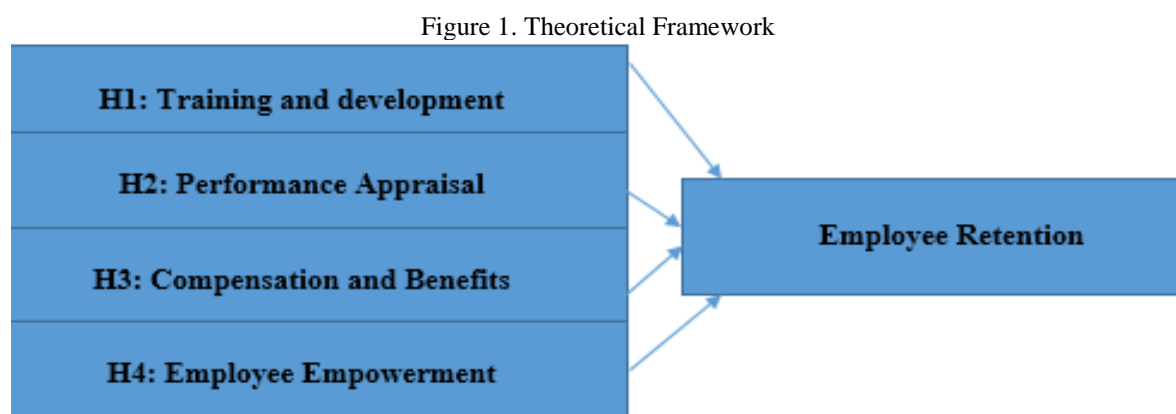
Johari et al. (2012) assessed the impact of HRM practices on employee intention to stay, focusing on career development, training and development, compensation and benefits, and performance appraisal. The questionnaire, involving 184 employees in Peninsular Malaysia, found that compensation and benefits had a positive impact on employee retention. The study underscores the significance of these practices in promoting employee retention.

### Conceptual Framework

Based on previous research, the following variables were taken as independent variables related to HRM practices:

- Training and development (Imna & Hassan, 2015; Janjua & Gulzar, 2014; Lwin, 2022; Hong, et al., 2012).
- Performance Appraisal (Imna & Hassan, 2015; Janjua & Gulzar 2014; Hong, et al., 2012).
- Compensation and benefits (Imna & Hassan, 2015; Janjua & Gulzar 2014; Lwin, 2022; Hong, et al., 2012).
- Employee empowerment (Hong, et al., 2012).

Below is the conceptual framework of the study indicating the independent variables related to HRM practices and the dependent variable “employee retention”.



Source: Prepared by authors



Thus, the main hypothesis is *H: Human resource management practices have a positive impact on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon*. The sub-hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Training and development have a positive impact on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon.

H<sub>2</sub>: Performance appraisal has a positive impact on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon.

H<sub>3</sub>: Employee compensation and benefits have a positive impact on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon.

H<sub>4</sub>: Employee empowerment has a positive impact on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, positivist philosophy was used, which involved using quantitative methods, surveys, and statistical analysis to identify the relationship between the variables. Deductive reasoning was used. The quantitative mono-method is adopted. It entails putting together numerical data in the form of statistics or quantifiable values utilizing just one data gathering. The major purpose and main goal of this approach, which relies on questionnaires or surveys to gather data from a large sample of workers working at private institutions in Lebanon, is to quantify the relationship between HR practices and employee retention. Moreover, this study used the cross-sectional time horizon. This approach is efficient because the data collection is conducted rapidly, so the results and the conclusion can obtain quickly and are valuable for research design.

A questionnaire was prepared and used to understand how specific HRM practices impact employees' decisions to stay or leave their positions within these educational institutions. The questionnaire consisted of 30 well-structured questions and was categorized into two sections. Section one included the socio-demographic questions and section two included the hypotheses testing questions. SPSS software was used for processing and analyzing the survey's data using frequencies, graphs, Pearson correlation, and Regression.

The population in this study consists of all employees who work in private universities in Lebanon, such as faculty members, administrative staff working in different departments like finance, admissions, registrar, human resources, head of departments, academic affairs, information technology, maintenance, etc.. and any personnel employed at private Lebanese

universities. Convenience sampling method was used and a sample of 487 employees was obtained.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sample Profile

This section includes the sample profile of the participants:

- **Gender:** 33.88% males, 66.12% females
- **Age:** 29.36% between 20-30, 48.46% between 31-40, 13.55% between 41-50, 8.62% above 51
- **Level of Education:** 36.96% Bachelor's, 44.15% Master's, 18.89% Ph.D.
- **Position:** 28.54% faculty/teachers, 48.87% administrative staff, 22.59% department heads
- **Experience in the educational section:** 7.39% <1 year, 46% 1-5 years, 29.57% 6-10 years, 17.04% >10 years
- **Experience in the current university:** 8.42% <1 year, 53.59% 1-5 years, 25.67% 6-10 years, 12.32% >10 years

### Hypotheses Testing Questions

Participants rated their agreement on four statements related to the independent variable:

**Training and Development:** Results show that for the provision of training and development programs at their university, 8.2% strongly disagreed, 14.2% disagreed, 40.5% were neutral, and 23.4% agreed, with 13.8% strongly agreeing. In terms of the effectiveness of these programs, 9.2% strongly disagreed, 12.9% disagreed, 34.3% were neutral, 38.0% agreed, and 5.5% strongly agreed. Concerning the impact on job performance and skills enhancement, 6.8% strongly disagreed, 25.7% disagreed, 21.1% were neutral, 36.6% agreed, and 9.9% strongly agreed. For satisfaction with the university's training and career development, 13.3% strongly disagreed, 26.5% disagreed, 13.8% were neutral, 40.9% agreed, and 5.5% strongly agreed.

**Performance Appraisal:** Results showed that 5.5% strongly disagreed and 26.9% disagreed about the university's effective performance appraisal process, while 20.1% remained neutral, and 40.5% agreed, with 7.0% strongly agreeing. Regarding appraisal frequency, 4.1% strongly disagreed, 33.7% disagreed, 13.8% were neutral, 40.5% agreed, and 8.0% strongly agreed. About employees' goals, 4.1% strongly disagreed, 21.4% disagreed, 29.8% were

neutral, 29.2% agreed, and 15.6% strongly agreed. Feedback's impact on employee development saw 6.2% strongly disagree, 19.5% disagree, 23.2% neutral, 37.8% agree, and 13.3% strongly agree.

**Compensation and Benefits:** Results showed that 3.9% strongly disagreed and 24.8% disagreed about recognition and rewards for commitment and dedicated service at their university, while 21.8% remained neutral, and 44.6% agreed, with 4.9% strongly agreeing. Regarding compensation transparency and fairness, 6.8% strongly disagreed, 18.3% disagreed, 45.6% were neutral, 24.2% agreed, and 5.1% strongly agreed. Employee satisfaction with benefits saw 9.4% strongly disagree, 31.4% disagree, 33.3% neutral, 20.9% agree, and 4.9% strongly agree. Perception of rewards compensating work quality had 12.1% strongly disagree, 31.6% disagree, 29.6% neutral, 21.6% agree, and 5.1% strongly agree.

**Employee Empowerment:** Results showed that 2.9% strongly disagreed and 14.6% disagreed about feeling empowered to make decisions and take action related to their work at the university, while 37.0% remained neutral, and 40.0% agreed, with 5.5% strongly agreeing. Regarding necessary information and resource availability for effective job performance at their university, only 0.4% strongly disagreed and 16.6% disagreed, whereas 36.8% were neutral, 39.8% agreed, and 6.4% strongly agreed. Professional growth opportunities saw 1.6% strongly disagree, 10.3% disagree, 39.8% neutral, 39.2% agree, and 9.0% strongly agree. Job description clarity with goals and objectives had 1.8% strongly disagree, 23.8% disagree, 24.6% neutral, 35.9% agree, and 13.8% strongly agree.

**Employee Retention:** Human resource management practices significantly influence retention, with 4.7% strongly disagreeing, 8.2% disagreeing, 27.9% neutral, 49.5% agreeing, and 9.7% strongly agreeing. Consideration of leaving the current job within the past year had 15.0% strongly disagreeing, 15.6% disagreeing, 19.9% neutral, 31.6% agreeing, and 17.9% strongly agreeing. Training and development impact intentions to stay, with 1.4% strongly disagreeing, 11.5% disagreeing, 26.3% neutral, 39.2% agreeing, and 21.6% strongly agreeing. Performance appraisal affects intentions to stay, with 2.5% strongly disagreeing, 10.3% disagreeing, 30.0% neutral, 42.7% agreeing, and 14.6% strongly agreeing. Compensation and benefits impact had 2.9% strongly disagreeing, 11.9% disagreeing, 24.6% neutral, 26.7% agreeing, and 33.9% strongly agreeing. Employee empowerment influenced intentions to stay, with 1.4% strongly disagreeing, 9.2% disagreeing, 24.4% neutral, 38.2% agreeing, and 26.7% strongly agreeing. When participants were asked to rank the variables that affect their decision to stay working at their current university from the most important to the least important,

compensation and benefits are ranked as the most significant HRM practice with 48%, followed by training and development at 21%, performance appraisal at 19%, and employee empowerment at 12%.

Lastly, participants answered an open-ended question about the key human resource practice that would encourage them to stay at their current university. This question aimed to identify any other HRM practices influencing employee retention. While most respondents emphasized the significance of the four variables considered in this study, a majority highlighted that competitive compensation and financial packages were the most crucial factors in their decision to remain, given the economic crisis in Lebanon. Some participants also mentioned other significant HRM practices, which are equal and fair treatment at work, communication and sharing opinions, fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, healthy work-life balance, availability of clear job descriptions, and recognition such as employee of the year, thank you letters ...

### Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha was employed as a reliability test; it is a measure of internal consistency reliability which helps researchers in determining if the items on a scale consistently measure what they are supposed to measure; Cronbach's Alpha goes from 0 to 1. A number greater than 0.7 indicates that the data is reliable. The results in Table 1 reveal that Cronbach's Alpha is 0.960, indicating that the data is reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Test

<b>Case Processing Summary</b>			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	487	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	487	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			
<b>Reliability Statistics</b>			
Cronbach's Alpha		N of Items	
.960		22	

Source: Prepared and analyzed by authors

### Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation was used in the study to analyze the relation between the variables. Each correlation coefficient indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. The values range from -1 to 1, with 1 representing perfect positive correlation, -1 representing perfect negative correlation, and 0 representing no correlation. The p-value should

be less than 1% to be considered significant. The results are shown in Table 2, which support the study's assumptions due to the positive and substantial correlations between the variables.

Table 2: Results of the Pearson Correlation between the Variables of the Study

		<b>Correlations</b>				
		Training and Development	Performance Appraisal	Compensation and Benefits	Employee Empowerment	Employee Retention
Training and Development	Pearson Correlation	1	.797**	.738**	.780**	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
Performance Appraisal	Pearson Correlation	.797**	1	.758**	.802**	.610**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
Compensation and Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.738**	.758**	1	.845**	.615**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
Employee Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.780**	.802**	.845**	1	.727**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	.575**	.610**	.615**	.727**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
N		487	487	487	487	487

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Prepared and analyzed by authors

The results in Table 3 illustrate the association between Employee Retention and HRM Practices, and the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) due to the high correlation between the four aspects of HRM practices. With a Pearson Correlation value of 0.682\*\*, the relationship between employee retention and HRM practices is significant and positive. This implies that there is a strong positive correlation between staff retention in Lebanon's private colleges and the efficacy of HRM methods.

Table 3: Results of the Pearson Correlation between Employee Retention and HRM Practices

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		Employee Retention	HRM Practices
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	1	.682**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	487	487
HRM Practices	Pearson Correlation	.682**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	487	487

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Prepared and analyzed by authors

### Regression Analysis

To further test the relationship between the dependent variable Employee Retention and the independent variable HRM Practices, regression analysis was conducted. Overall, the

results of the linear regression analysis show that HRM practices significantly increase employee retention. Approximately 46.5% of the variance in Employee Retention can be explained by HRM Practices (Training and Development, Performance Appraisal, Compensation and Benefits, and Employee Empowerment). HRM practices appear to be a significant predictor of employee retention, according to the standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.682. The following regression formula may be used to predict employee retention using HRM practices:

Table 4: Results of the Regression Analysis between Employee Retention and HRM Practices

<b>Employee Retention = 1.486 + 0.663 * HRM Practices</b>						
<b>Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method			
1	HRM_Practices <sup>b</sup>	.	Enter			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee_Retention						
b. All requested variables entered.						
<b>Model Summary</b>						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.682 <sup>a</sup>	.465	.464	.59008		
a. Predictors: (Constant), HRM_Practices						
<b>ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	146.822	1	146.822	421.670	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	168.873	485	.348		
	Total	315.696	486			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee_Retention						
b. Predictors: (Constant), HRM_Practices						
<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.486	.106		14.034	.000
	HRM_Practices	.663	.032	.682	20.535	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee\_Retention

Source: Prepared and analyzed by authors

## DISCUSSION

Employee retention is a very critical component for an organization, especially in the educational sector where our study focused on, enhancing employee satisfaction, productivity, and university success. The study's sample consisted of employees from various private universities in Lebanon, to ensure a diverse sample. A non-random sampling method using convenience sampling was employed. Employees from different job positions and departments, a mix of academic and administrative staff were included in the sample and who had been



employed for less than one year at their respective universities with varying levels of education, ages, and experiences. A sample of 487 employees was obtained.

#### Discussion of the hypotheses testing questions

After analyzing the data related to the responses measuring the independent variables, several discussion points can be noted:

- A substantial proportion of the participants say their university's training and development programs are either neutral or satisfactory. However, there is an opportunity for improvement in terms of program effectiveness and impact on job performance and skills enhancement, as a notable percentage of respondents hold neutral or negative views in these areas.
- While a portion of respondents are satisfied with the performance appraisal process and its frequency, there are some concerns about its effectiveness. However, there is an opportunity for improvement. Feedback from performance appraisals seems to have a positive impact on employee development, though there is still scope for further enhancement. Private universities may consider using this feedback to strengthen their performance appraisal processes and address the areas that need improvement.
- There is room for improvement in recognizing and rewarding employees for their commitment and dedicated service to the university. Additionally, a significant percentage of respondents feel that the compensation and benefits structure lacks transparency and fairness. Employee satisfaction with the benefits given also shows some room for enhancement. Moreover, there is a notable portion of respondents who do not perceive a strong correlation between the quantity and quality of labor performed and the incentives and advantages received. The universities may consider addressing these issues to improve employee satisfaction and overall workplace motivation.
- A significant percentage of respondents feel neutral or positive about their work environment at the university. Many employees feel empowered to make decisions and have access to the necessary information and resources for their job. Professional growth is perceived as an opportunity by a considerable portion of respondents. However, there are some concerns about the clarity of job descriptions and goals. The universities may consider further empowering employees, providing clearer job

descriptions, and emphasizing professional growth opportunities to enhance overall job satisfaction and productivity.

In summary, the findings indicate that human resource management practices conducted at Lebanese private universities have significant influences on employee retention. A majority of respondents considered staying at their current job within the past year, with many factors playing a role in their decision. Improving and prioritizing these HRM practices can contribute to better employee retention and job satisfaction at Lebanese private universities.

#### Discussion of the relationship between the study variables

The results of the Pearson correlation indicated a strong, positive, and significant correlation among the study variables. Based on this correlation, it can be noted that:

- Universities with better training and development programs tend to have higher performance appraisal scores, better compensation and benefits structures, increased employee empowerment, and improved employee retention.
- Universities that conduct effective performance appraisals tend to have well-implemented training and development programs, attractive compensation and benefits packages, higher levels of employee empowerment, and better employee retention.
- Universities with competitive compensation and benefits structures are more likely to have well-designed training and development initiatives, effective performance appraisal systems, higher levels of employee empowerment, and improved employee retention.

In brief, effective HRM practices, including training, performance appraisal, compensation, and employee empowerment, contribute to higher employee retention rates in universities. When well implemented, these practices foster job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, encouraging employees to stay longer. Robust HRM strategies are vital for attracting, developing, and retaining talent, leading to overall organizational success and stability.

#### Results of hypotheses testing and comparison with previous research

In conclusion, this study highlights the important role of HRM practices in employee retention within Lebanese private universities. Employee retention improves satisfaction, productivity, and overall success. The diverse sample of 487 employees, representing various job positions and departments, ensured comprehensive representation. Enhancing program

effectiveness, performance appraisals, recognition and rewards, compensation transparency, and employee empowerment can enhance employee satisfaction and motivation. Pearson correlation analysis further highlighted the strong and positive relationship between the variables. By implementing these practices, universities can create a positive work environment that fosters employee commitment, leading to sustained growth, productivity, and success in the competitive educational landscape.

Table 5 shows the results of testing the hypotheses of the study and a comparison with previous research findings.

Table 5: Hypotheses of the Study and Previous Research Findings

Hypotheses	Result	In line with the findings of	Opposing the findings of
H	Proved		
H <sub>1</sub>	Proved	Imna & Hassan (2015) Janjua & Gulzar (2014) Hong et al. (2012)	Johari et al.(2012)
H <sub>2</sub>	Proved		Imna & Hassan (2015) Johari et al.(2012)
H <sub>3</sub>	Proved	Imna & Hassan (2015) Johari et al.(2012)	
H <sub>4</sub>	Proved		Johari et al.(2012)

Source: Prepared by authors

## CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the challenges private universities in Lebanon face in retaining talented faculty members and staff. It aims to analyze the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention in these universities. A quantitative, deductive approach using a questionnaire was distributed, resulting in a sample of 487 employees. Pearson correlation and regression analysis revealed strong, positive, and significant relationships between training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits, employee empowerment, and employee retention. These practices significantly impact employee retention, explaining about 46.5% of the variance. Thus, based on the findings of the study, the hypotheses were confirmed and supported. Thus, effective human resource management practices are crucial in enhancing employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment in private universities, leading to higher retention rates. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of these practices in creating a positive work environment and improving employee retention in private universities in Lebanon.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Certain restrictions might limit how the results are interpreted and generalized. First, the cross-sectional methodology of the study, which gathers data at a particular moment in time, may make it more difficult to determine the relationship between HRM procedures and employee retention. Studies that follow changes over a long period may provide more thorough insights into the links between causes and effects. Second, the data collected through the questionnaire may be influenced by response and social desirability biases, potentially leading to inaccuracies or incomplete information. Third, unmeasured or unknown variables might influence employee retention in private universities in Lebanon. External economic, social, or political factors could also impact retention rates independently of HRM practices, especially during the pertaining economic crisis. The study's data collection might have occurred during a specific period, and the HRM practices' effectiveness could be influenced by external changes or evolving organizational dynamics that were not accounted for in the analysis. Fourth, the study's findings pertain specifically to private universities in Lebanon, and caution should be exercised when extrapolating the results to different countries, education sectors, or organizational types, as variations in cultural, regulatory, and institutional factors may affect the relationship between HRM practices and retention differently. Fifth, employee retention is a multi-faceted and subjective phenomenon, with individual preferences and motivations playing a crucial role in decision-making. The study may not capture all the complexities associated with employee decisions to stay or leave.

Despite these limitations, the study offers insightful information on the relationship between HRM procedures and staff retention at Lebanon's private colleges, offering a foundation for further research and informing HRM strategies in the education sector. Researchers and policymakers should consider these limitations when interpreting and applying the study's findings to real-world contexts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for private universities in Lebanon based on the study's findings and the established hypotheses:

1. **Strengthening training and development programs:** Private universities in Lebanon should invest in comprehensive training and development programs for faculty and staff. These

initiatives should be tailored to address both professional and personal growth, providing opportunities for skill enhancement, career advancement, and personal development. By investing in their employees' growth, private universities in Lebanon demonstrate a commitment to their well-being and professional aspirations, fostering a sense of loyalty and motivation to stay with the institution.

2. **Enhancing performance appraisal systems:** Implementing a robust and transparent performance appraisal system is crucial for fostering a culture of fairness and recognition. Regular feedback sessions should be conducted, allowing employees to understand their strengths, areas for improvement, and how their efforts contribute to the university's success. Recognizing and rewarding exceptional performance can boost employee morale and satisfaction, increasing the likelihood of their continued dedication to the university.

3. **Offering competitive employee compensation packages:** Private universities in Lebanon should strive to offer competitive and equitable compensation packages to attract and retain top talent despite the current economic crisis that is impeding salary raises.

4. **Foster employee empowerment and inclusivity:** Empowerment is a key driver of employee engagement and retention. Lebanese private universities should establish a culture that encourages employee involvement in decision-making processes, solicits their input, and values their opinions. Moreover, promoting diversity and inclusiveness also helps to create an inspiring work environment where everyone feels appreciated and valued for their contributions.

5. **Implement retention-focused HR policies:** Private universities in Lebanon should formulate HR policies that specifically target employee retention such as designing well-structured career progression pathways, succession planning, and internal promotion opportunities. This can motivate employees to stay and grow within the organization. Introducing tenure-based benefits or recognition programs can further incentivize long-term commitment.

6. **Conduct exit interviews and act on feedback:** Human resource managers in universities should conduct exit interviews when employees do leave the university, to understand their reasons for departure. Analyzing the feedback received during these interviews is significant and should be used to improve HRM practices and address any organizational issues that may be contributing to turnover.

7. **Nurture a positive work culture:** Creating a positive and supportive work culture is fundamental to retaining employees such as encouraging collaboration, open communication,

and recognition of accomplishments among staff and faculty. Moreover, emphasizing work-life balance initiatives and implementing employee well-being programs to ensure a healthy and motivated workforce.

In conclusion, by adopting these recommendations, private universities can foster a work environment that values and supports their employees, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately, increased retention rates.

### AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Some potential areas for future studies include:

1. **Longitudinal studies:** Conducting longitudinal studies can offer insights into the long-term impact of HRM practices on employee retention in private universities in Lebanon. By observing changes over time, researchers can better establish causal relationships and identify how specific HRM interventions influence retention rates.
2. **Employee segmentation:** Analyzing the impact of HRM practices on employee retention across different segments (e.g., faculty, administrative staff, support staff) can provide nuanced insights. Different employee groups may have distinct needs and motivations, and tailoring HRM practices accordingly could improve overall retention rates.
3. **Impact of organizational culture:** It is critical to examine the impact of company culture on employee retention. Understanding how a positive and supportive work culture influences retention, and how HRM practices can be aligned with such a culture, may be insightful for university administrators.
4. **Role of leadership and management:** It is critical to examine the impact of leadership and management strategies on employee retention. Effective leadership and management styles can significantly impact employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to the institution.
5. **Employee engagement and job satisfaction:** Examining the link between HRM practices, employee engagement, and job satisfaction reveals insights into retention mechanisms. High engagement and satisfaction correlate with better retention.
6. **The role of compensation and benefits:** Delving deeper into the specific components of employee compensation and benefits that are most influential in retaining staff can lead to targeted and effective retention strategies. Compensations and benefits are the most significant HRM practices as per the findings of this study so they need to be investigated more in future studies.



7. **Impact of external factors:** Consideration of the impact of external variables on employee retention, such as changes in the economic climate, societal trends, or government legislation, can give a larger perspective for understanding retention dynamics.

By addressing these areas in future studies, researchers can further advance the understanding of the link between HRM practices and employee retention in private universities in Lebanon, contributing to the development of effective retention strategies that promote a motivated and dedicated workforce.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications of the study are significant and can have far-reaching consequences for the higher education sector, university administrators, policymakers, and the overall well-being of employees.

### Practical Implications

The practical implications of the study are as follows:

1. **HRM Policy Formulation:** Practical implications emphasize the need for Lebanese private universities to adopt effective HRM policies, customized for employee preferences. Prioritizing training, performance appraisal, compensation, and empowerment can enhance job satisfaction, commitment, and retention.
2. **Talent Attraction and Recruitment:** Private universities in Lebanon can leverage the strong relationship between HRM practices and employee retention to attract and recruit top talent. Highlighting the institution's commitment to employee development, recognition, and empowerment during the recruitment process can serve as a competitive advantage and help in attracting individuals that have a higher chance of long-term loyalty to the university.
3. **Employee Engagement Initiatives:** Implementing employee engagement initiatives, such as mentorship programs, regular feedback sessions, and opportunities for staff involvement in decision-making, may develop a sense of ownership and commitment among employees and build a positive workplace culture.
4. **Performance Management:** Private universities in Lebanon should strengthen their performance management systems to provide timely and constructive feedback to employees.
5. **Training and Development Investments:** Investing in comprehensive training and development programs can have a direct impact on employee retention. Private universities in

Lebanon should allocate resources to offer relevant and continuous professional development opportunities, aligning them with employees' career goals and the university's strategic objectives.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The theoretical implications of the study are as follows:

1. **Human Capital Theory:** The study's positive correlation between HRM practices and employee retention provides empirical support for human capital theory. It reinforces the idea that investments in employees' skills, knowledge, and well-being lead to increased productivity and a higher likelihood of retaining talent.
2. **Social Exchange Theory:** The study's findings are consistent with the ideas of social exchange theory, which holds that people develop connections based on perceived costs and benefits. By implementing HRM practices that enhance employee well-being and job satisfaction, private universities can foster a positive social exchange, resulting in increased employee commitment and retention.
3. **Resource-Based View (RBV):** The study contributes to the RBV by highlighting the importance of HRM practices as valuable resources that contribute to sustained competitive advantage for private universities. The effective management of human resources can serve as a distinctive competence that differentiates universities from their competitors.
4. **Organizational Commitment Theory:** The positive relationship between HRM practices and employee retention shown in the research backs up the ideas of organizational commitment theory, which posits that employees with higher levels of commitment are more likely to stay with the organization. HRM practices that promote commitment can thus be seen as influential factors in shaping employee retention.
5. **Contingency Theory:** The study's findings also align with contingency theory, suggesting that the effectiveness of HRM practices in promoting employee retention may depend on various contextual factors such as the university's size, culture, and external environment. Further research could explore the moderating effects of these variables.

In conclusion, the practical implications of the study offer actionable steps for private universities in Lebanon to improve employee retention through HRM practices. The theoretical implications contribute to existing organizational and management theories, providing empirical evidence and advancing our understanding of the relationship between HRM practices and employee retention in the higher education sector.

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