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The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship Between Human Resources Management Strategies and Employees Performance in Waha Oil & Gas Company in Libya

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ABSTRACT

The structure of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to help an organization accomplish its objectives is known as strategic human resource management. This study aims to investigate the relationship between HRM strategies and employee performance in the Libyan oil and gas sector. Accordingly, 321 survey data were collected from Waha Oil Company employees in Tripoli, Libya. The structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was used to analyze the data as well as hypotheses testing. The findings demonstrated that human strategies significantly affect both job satisfaction and employee performance. Job satisfaction influences employee performance. Besides, training and development, recruitment and selection significantly affect job satisfaction, while performance appraisal significantly influences employee performance. The findings are beneficial to HRM department to enhance their emphasis on the crucial factors that boost employee performance through improving job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic human resource management is the structure of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to help an organization accomplish its objectives (Booze & Hachicha 2018). As per Cooke & Xiao (2020), the past three decades have seen the concept of strategic human resource management (HRM) playing a significant role in management research and practice, with the sustained analysis in the field typically focusing on how strategic HRM can add value and, consequently, contribute to organizational success. Thus, human resource strategies and employee performance are closely related. Human resource strategies refer to organizations' plans and actions to attract, retain, and develop their workforce. On the other hand, employee performance refers to the extent to which employees meet or exceed the performance expectations set by their organization. Effective human resource strategies have a significant impact on employee performance. For instance, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits influence employee performance (Aburumman *et al.*, 2020 & Siddiqua *et al.*, 2022). The most important resource for any organization today, regardless of how prosperous or developed it is, according to Rigby & Ryan (2018), is its human resources because these employees have helped the organization become prosperous and developed. Human resource management (HRM) strategies are critical for organizations to attract, develop, and retain their employees. The oil and gas sector in Arab region are a highly competitive industry, and organizations need effective HRM strategies to remain competitive. However, there is a gap in the literature on how HRM strategies impact employee performance in the oil and

gas industry.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between HRM strategies and employee performance in the Libyan oil and gas sector. Oil and gas sector play an important role in an economy (Bakare *et al.*, 2018). Specifically, the study will explore how recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits impact employee performance in the oil and gas sector. The findings of this study will contribute to the literature on HRM strategies and employee performance in the oil and gas sector. It will provide insights into how organizations can improve their HRM strategies to enhance employee performance and their overall business performance. The study will also be useful for policymakers, researchers, and banking sector practitioners interested in improving HRM practices and enhancing employee performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource management (HRM) strategies have become increasingly important in enhancing employee performance. HRM strategies include various practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits. These practices have been found to have a significant impact on employee performance. Job satisfaction has also been identified as a crucial factor in enhancing employee performance.

SHRM and Job Satisfaction

According to Ogbonnaya and Valizade, (2018), job satisfaction is a mediating variable on the relationship between strategic HRM and employee performance. Besides, many scholars and practitioners stated that

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efficient strategic HRM will lead to higher job satisfaction. Mehreza and Bakria (2019) explained the impact of strategic HRM on job satisfaction and its likely positive relationship with some of the aspect of job satisfaction. According to various authors, strategic HRM influences employees' ability to find meaning in their work and be satisfied with it. It is anticipated that strategic HRM, such as, upward communication systems, teamwork, and problem-solving groups. These allow employees chances and autonomy to assist in decision-making, will favor various aspects of job satisfaction.

Additionally, Al Damoe, Hamid, & Sharif (2017) found that in New Zealand, strategic HRM will impact employee attitudes such as organizational commitment, fairness, and work satisfaction. The findings demonstrated a substantial association between strategic HRM and work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational fairness. Guest (2017) asserts that HRM will increase workplace stress levels. It could also have an effect on extrinsic factors of job satisfaction, such as salary satisfaction. For instance, a worker who earns a high salary may have greater job satisfaction but may also experience greater stress due to the higher salary. According to research by Langer, Feeney, and Lee (2019), strategic HRM has a positive association with employee work satisfaction in the Dutch public sector, although personal differences had no bearing on job satisfaction. These characteristics include gender, age, and educational attainment. According to this study, strategic HRM is linked to improved levels of workplace dedication, trust, job satisfaction, and effort in the United Kingdom.

According to some academics, implementing strategic HRM in Britain would result in higher levels of work intensity but lower job satisfaction levels (Ashton, 2018). Additionally, Zhang *et al.* (2019) stated that HRM practices are not primarily designed to higher levels of job satisfaction, but can impact the individual aspects of job satisfaction like satisfaction with pay or sense of achievement. Hence, this study proposes as follows:

H1: Human resources management strategies have a significant influence on the job satisfaction in oil and gas companies in Libya.

HRM Strategies and Employee Performance

Several studies have examined the relationship between HRM strategies and employee performance. For Instance, Hassan (2016) evaluated the effect of HRM strategies on employee performance in the Pakistani textile industry. The findings show that these strategies positively impact performance because independent variables have been proven to positively influence change and because the training methods (formal and informal) used by organizations assist employees develop communication skills. The study also found that performance appraisals are a significant component that influences employees' organizational commitment. Makhamara, (2017) focused on all permanent staff members in the health industry, including senior management, middle management,

lower management, and ordinary workers (hospitals). Findings of the study indicated that human resources management strategies influenced employee performance in the health sector in Kenya. The result reveals that the said human resources management strategies, averagely or lowly influence employee performance, implementation and sensitization of human resources management strategies contingent to the sector that will steer up employee performance. In a sample of Iraqi public universities, Kareem and Hussein (2019) investigated how HRM strategies affect organizational effectiveness and employees' performance. The findings demonstrate a statistically significant association between employee performance and organizational effectiveness in HRM strategies. The findings of this study greatly aid in the development of HRM strategies that will allow for the improvement of employee competency and an increase in the ability of the workforce to accomplish desired organizational goals and objectives.

H2: Human resources management strategies have a direct influence on employee performance.

H2a: Recruitment and selection have a positive relationship with the employee performance in oil and gas companies in Libya.

According to Janjua and Gulzar (2014), there is a strong correlation between the hiring and selection practices and employee performance. Successful firms recognize the value of the recruitment and selection process as well as the organization's remuneration structure as a crucial element to achieving success. Findings by Osman & Al-Qudah (2014) could also be used as a factor in the planning process for HRM and the implementation of an associated program to increase management awareness and another employees' involvement. Management can also use the findings to make decisions about hiring, selection, and compensation. The results showed a significant correlation between employee performance and these factors at Malaysian Skills Institute (MSI).

H2b: Training and development have a positive relationship with employee performance in oil and gas companies in Libya.

Sal and Raja (2016) stated that there is a relationship between employee performance and training because the employees are aware of the training and are motivated by it; hence, training and development lead to higher performance. They also state that staff training and development should be actively pursued and made mandatory, and employers should provide the required training courses for all employees to achieve this. Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan, and Hashim (2014) reported a substantial association between the factors; the study also reported an impact of the study on employee performance because it revealed that HRM is more crucial to organizational management. Employees will be more than competent when they possess the knowledge and skills necessary to complete the task. Staff training and development provides the chance to improve their professional lives and secure better positions within the organization,

which will improve effectiveness. However, if employees are skilled, they become the major resource and assets of the organization.

H2c: Performance appraisal has a positive relationship with the employee performance in oil and gas companies in Libya.

According to Andoh-Mensah Mensah and Kusi, (2019), there is positive relationship between performance appraisal and employee's performance. It can further be concluded that performance appraisal enhances staff performance. Performance appraisal also helps to provide the opportunity for growth and development, address the areas of deficiency, provide feedback on employees' degree of efficiency, and serve as a tool for control. Ugoani (2020) noted a favorable relationship between performance evaluation and employee performance; employee behavior greatly affects how much an organization works. It is a crucial management activity and approach for effective management because every firm pays its employees based on their performance.

H2d: Compensation has a positive relationship with employee performance in oil and gas companies in Libya. Baledi and Saed (2017) found a positive relationship between compensation and employee performance because employers show interest in financial and non-financial compensation by giving employees more bonuses and annual bonuses, increasing job satisfaction and productivity. Additionally, undertaking a number of research in the future that will examine how other aspects of compensation structures affect how well employees perform when other aspects of job satisfaction are used. According to Susanto & Siswoyo (2020), compensation has a favourable linkage with employee performance as it encourages subordinates' participation in decision-making and the development of positive relationships. The managers must think about balancing financial remuneration like bonuses and other benefits with non-financial advantages like health insurance, prizes for exceptional managers, etc. It takes highly motivated managers to increase members' trust.

Job Satisfaction and Employees' Performance

According to Abdulkhaliq & Mohammadali (2019), job satisfaction positively and significantly impacts employees' performance at Al Hayat Company. This is because the employees are the most expensive part of any firm but also have the potential to boost productivity and increase profitability. Khan *et al* (2016) found a positive relationship between employee performance and job satisfaction because higher-level employees who are satisfied in their jobs will carry out their responsibilities with the utmost care. Adetunji *et al* (2018) looked at how selected microfinance banks in Oshogbo Metropolis' employees performed in terms of job satisfaction. Because employers raise employees' occupation status levels at the appropriate times and help them gain experience through internal and external training, the results of regression studies revealed a favorable association between employee

performance and job satisfaction.

The association between job satisfaction and employees' performance was also explored by Inuwa (2016). This relationship is significant and positive as job satisfaction also serve as a catalyst for HRM and organizational behavior. The impact of job satisfaction on employee performance is also examined by Ndulue & Ekechukwu, (2016) using Nigerian Breweries. The results of the study showed a linear association between job happiness and workers' productivity. Because of the study's findings, it was advised that the management of the business should offer its employees comfortable working environments to raise morale.

H3-There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction on employees' performance.

Job Satisfaction as Mediating Between SHRM and Employees' Performance

Job satisfaction has been identified as a critical mediator between HRM strategies and employee performance. Khauoe *et al.* (2015) examined how HRM methods affected job satisfaction at FELCRA Berhad. Workers will benefit from the study's findings because management will be more focused on their needs. As a result, employees will be more motivated to work and devoted to the company that consistently looks out for their welfare. This study will help firms retain workers and reduce turnover rate due to improved job satisfaction. Employees are also expected to help firms realize their goals and should not just resign.

According to Mira, Choong and Thim (2019), human resources management strategies play a great role in leading organizations to competitive advantage in a dynamic global market. The study observed a positive relationship between HRM strategies and employee performance. Rodjam, Thanasrisueb Wong, Suphuan, and Charoenboonm, (2020) stated that HRM strategies have a positive correlation with job satisfaction because it strongly affects the profit margin of the industries, but still, there is a need to implement HRM in developing economies. Vabi *et al.* (2020) noted a positive and significant relationship between employee performance and job satisfaction. The study provides management with guidance in areas where employee performance can be improved through job satisfaction. It also advanced the fields of organizational behavior and HRM.

H4: job satisfaction has a significant mediating influence on the relationship between human resources management strategies and employees' performance.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

A total of 361 survey data was selected and distributed based on the G power calculations to represent the total population in the dataset. Data were collected from Waha Oil Company employees in Tripoli, Libya. HRM strategies in this study was measured by 4 items developed and recently used by (Gupta, 2020) 6 items were used to measure training and development, 5 items were used to

measure recruitment and selection, 5 items to measure performance appraisal, and 6 items were used to measure compensation.

Data Analysis technique

The SEM technique was used due to the nature of the abstract analysis model utilized in this study and the fact that SEM is one of the typical tactics employed by researchers in SHRM analysis, especially to evaluate the causal analysis model and study/research hypotheses (Hair *et al.*, 2019). In this work, AMOS version 24 was used to estimate model activity and structural models. SEM enables the researcher to simultaneously test a number of complex hypotheses by assessing the impact of numerous independent and dependent components in an extremely structural model (Gefen, 2000).

Reliability and Validity

The coefficient alpha method evaluates the scale's internal consistency, determines whether the scale's items measure the same underlying constructs, and determines whether the scales are error-free (Pallant, 2011; Sekaran, 2010). The reliability of the scales used in this study is assumed if the Cronbach's coefficient alpha value of each tool are more than the minimal values of 0.60 to 0.70 suggested by researchers (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Pallant, 2011).

Convergent validity is tested by assessing the factor loadings and the constructs' associated T-values and AVE. The rest of the items for all the constructs have factor

loadings greater than 0.50 and statistically significant (C.R. > 1.96). All constructs' AVE values were higher than 0.05, as indicated by Fornell & Larcker (1981). Consequently, it may be said that convergent validity was confirmed.

FINDINGS

Model fit

The empirical analysis displayed a favorable fit statistic and a strong standardized factor loading, both of which point to a perfect fit of the measurement model to the data. A well-fitted model was produced by focusing on the combination of methods for evaluating standardised factor loadings and residual covariance (Hair *et al.* 2010). The data in Table 4.14 showed that the CMIN has 482 degrees of freedom and is 937.817. The observed p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicated that the structural model failed to perfectly fit the population (Hair *et al.* 2010). The Bollen-Stine bootstrapping process, however, revealed a strong path and that the model was supported with a substantial degree of confidence ($p > 0.05$). The structural model demonstrated a close fit in the population, with a PCLOSE (P-value of the population RMSEA) of 0.941. The model is significant with the exact fit as supported by the results (PCLOSE > 0.05) (Arbuckle 2011). An excellent parsimonious fit for the structural model was indicated by the normed χ^2 value of 1.950, which is < 3.0 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). The RMSEA value (less than .08) was also within the limit of 0.057 which is another evidence for a model fit and within the RMSEA value range.

Table 1: Model fit indices

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	937.817	--	--
DF	482	--	--
CMIN/DF	2.073	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.941	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	0.069	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.057	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.158	>0.05	Excellent

Hypotheses Testing

Path analyses are used to evaluate the proposed hypotheses in this study; they also simultaneously estimate the mediation model equations (Fairchild & McQuillin, 2010). The first hypothesis, H1, asserted that the HRM strategies have a significant impact on job satisfaction. The analysis showed that job satisfaction and HRM strategies are significantly correlated, as shown in Table 2. "The standardized estimate value of 0.404 *** indicates a positive link, and the p-value of 0.000 with a standard error of 0.071 and a critical value of 5.665 (which offer a significant model at $p = 0.001$), indicate a significant relationship between the tested variables". Hence, H1 is supported.

The next hypothesis, H1a, postulates a positive relationship between recruitment and selection and job satisfaction in Libyan oil and gas firms; these variables were shown to have a strong positive impact on job satisfaction based on the analysis as evidenced by the coefficient value

of 0.211 ***, a critical ratio of 3.883 (higher than 2.0), a standardized error of 0.054, and a significant p-value of 0.001. Hence, H1a is supported. In confirming H1b; Training and development have a positive relationship with the job satisfaction in oil and gas companies in Libya. The result showed that the coefficient value is 0.169*** with the standardised error .037 and critical ratio 4.546, which presents a significant model at $p < 0.001$. Based on the coefficient value, there is a significant relationship between training and development and job satisfaction in oil and gas companies in Libya. Thus, the analysis showed that H1b is supported.

Hypothesis H1c proposed that performance appraisals have a positive relationship with job satisfaction. The results showed that performance appraisals have a coefficient estimate of 0.060, critical ratio (C.R) = 1.459, and standardised error of 0.041 ($p = 0.145$); hence, performance appraisals have a negative relationship with job satisfaction and H1c is not supported. Hypothesis H1d

proposed that compensation has a positive relationship with job satisfaction in oil and gas companies in Libya. The results showed that compensation has a coefficient estimate of 0.122, critical ratio (C.R) = 2.422, standardised error = 0.050, and $p = 0.051$. Hence, compensation has a negative relationship with job satisfaction and H1d is not supported. Hypothesis H2 proposed that Strategic human resource management directly influences employee performance. The results showed that human resources management has coefficient value of 0.335***, critical ratio of 5.483 which is greater than 2.0, standardised error of .061, and $p = .000$. Therefore, H2 is supported. Hypothesis H2a predicted that recruitment and selection have a positive relationship with the employee performance in oil and gas companies in Libya. The results showed that recruitment and selection have a coefficient value of 0.055, with a critical ratio of 1.363 which is less than 2.0, standardised error of 0.041 and $p > .005$. Therefore, H2a is not supported. Hypothesis H2b predicted that training and development have a positive relationship with employee performance in oil and gas

companies in Libya. The results showed that training and development have a standardised estimate of 0.120**, $p < 0.001$, standardised error = 0.030, and critical ratio > 2.0 (in this case; 3.974). Therefore, H2b is supported. Hypothesis H2c predicted that performance appraisal has a positive relationship with employee performance. The results showed that performance appraisal has a standardised estimate of 0.089**, $p = 0.005$, standardised error = 0.032, and critical ratio > 2.0 (in this case; 2.807). Therefore, H2c is supported. Hypothesis H2d predicted that compensation has a positive relationship with the employee performance in oil and gas companies in Libya. The results showed that compensation has a standardised estimate of 0.068**, $p > 0.005$, standardised error = 0.038, critical ratio < 2.0 (in this case; 1.783). Therefore, H2d is not supported. Hypothesis H3 proposed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employees' performance. The results showed that job satisfaction has a coefficient estimate of 0.268, critical ratio (C.R) = 3.500, standardised error = 0.069, $p = 0.004$. Thus, H3 is supported.

Table 2: Hypotheses Results

H	Path-B	Path-A	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	
H1	Human resource strategies	Job satisfaction	0.404	0.071	5.665	***	Supported
H1a	Recruitment selection	Job satisfaction	0.211	0.054	3.883	***	Supported
H1b	Training and development	Job satisfaction	.169	0.037	4.546	***	Supported
H1c	Performance appraisal	Job satisfaction	0.060	.041	1.459	0.145	Not supported
H1d	Compensation	Job satisfaction	.122	.050	2.422	.051	Not supported
H2	Human resource strategies	Employee performance	.335	.061	5.483	***	Supported
H2a	Recruitment and selection	Employee performance	0.055	.041	1.363	0.173	Not supported
H2b	Training and development	Employee performance	0.120	.041	3.974	***	Supported
H2c	Performance appraisal	Employee performance	0.089	.032	2.807	.005	Supported
H2d	Compensation	Employee performance	0.068	0.038	1.783	.075	Not supported
H3	Job satisfaction	Employee Performance	.268	.069	3500	.004	Supported

Mediating Effect

As seen in Figure 4.13, the predictor variable (HRM strategies) significantly influences the mediator variable (job satisfaction), which in turn significantly influences the dependent variable; the predictor also significantly influences the dependent variable when the mediators' influence is absent (Barron & Kenney, 1986).

Additionally, Figure 4.13 demonstrated that a single mediator model was used for the mediation analysis in this study (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2010). According to the single-mediator model, managers' intentions to retain older staff are directly impacted by their stereotypical beliefs.

There is also an indirect effect between human resources management strategies and Job satisfaction, and Job satisfaction and employees' performance. These results showed that this study illustrated a necessary empirical condition recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986);

1. Human resources management strategies is significantly related to job satisfaction.
2. Job satisfaction is significantly related to employees' performance.
3. The relationship of human resources management strategies with employees' performance exists through job satisfaction.

Table 3: Mediation results

			Estimate	SE	CR	P
Job satisfaction	<---	Strategic human resource management	0.573	0.071	5.658	***
Employee performance	<---	Job satisfaction	0.262	0.069	2.870	.004
Employee performance	<---	Strategic human resource management	0.632	0.061	5.485	***

CONCLUSION

The research demonstrated that both subjects human resources management strategies and job satisfaction

were viewed as major factors to the success of employees' performance, nevertheless, this study was concerned with two critical concerns in the fields of job satisfaction and

human resources management strategies, The results of this study also showed a substantial relationship between job satisfaction and human resources management strategies, we discovered that job satisfaction significantly improved the link between human resources management strategies and employees' performance, and it was demonstrated that as job satisfaction climbed, so did performance. The significance of human resources management methods for determining has thus been supported by this finding, which also highlighted the connection between employee satisfaction and performance.

As a result, it is clear that a key element in sustaining and improving employees' performance is job happiness. Additional evidence that the job satisfaction is crucial for improving the connection between human resources management strategies and employee performance. Without a doubt, job satisfaction and human resources management strategies were found to be effective partners in boosting employees' performance.

In conclusion, HRM strategies have a significant impact on employee performance, and job satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in this relationship. Recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and compensation and benefits are all essential HRM practices that impact employee performance. These practices also affect job satisfaction, which, in turn, influences employee performance. The findings of this literature review suggest that organizations should focus on improving HRM practices to enhance job satisfaction and, ultimately, employee performance. Further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms through which HRM practices impact job satisfaction and employee performance.

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