

**Review paper****Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Retention: A Review of Literature.****Abstract**

*Human Resources (HR) are the most valuable asset of any organisation. Even though organisations advanced with technology, they need HR to operate the technology. With this advancement in the industries completion among the organisations are very high. This opens numerous pathways and opportunities in the hands of the HR. the major challenge by most of the organisation today is not only managing their workforce but also retaining them. Therefore, securing and retention of skilled workforce plays a vital role for any organisation due to knowledge and skills of the employees are central to the Therefore, securing and retention of skilled workforce plays a vital role for any organisation due to knowledge and skills of the employees are central to the institution's ability to be economically competitive for growth and sustainability. Additionally, employee satisfaction is another HR issue faced by the employers today. When taken to account the importance and sensitivity of the issue retention to any organisation, this study tries to review the various available literature and research work on the HRM practices and employee retention.*

**Key terms:** HRM Practices, Job satisfaction, Employee retention

**1. Introduction**

Turnover of skillful employees is a major concern of managers and administrators in today's business world due to the costs incurred to replace and lost productivity of them. Employees leave their jobs due to many reasons, but research has shown the following as primary reasons; conflict or dislike of boss or supervisor, not fitting into the organizational culture, or being attracted to another employer who meets the expectations of employees (Thomas, 2009). Therefore, reducing employee turnover by means of effective retention practices is the most important area of interest to any organisation with highly skilled labour force.

Turnover can be either voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary turnover is a decision by an employee to break the relationship with his or her organisation. This happens when the employee chooses to leave the organisation. In such a circumstance, the organisation loses a valuable employee and his skills and/or talent to be replaced. An involuntary turnover means an employee being terminated by the organisation. It happens due to many reasons such as decline in revenue of the company, retirement, resizing, restructuring, etc. In every case, an employee leaving either voluntary or involuntary is not due to a negative relationship with the

40 organisation. In addition, involuntary turnover is unavoidable, where it is a part of business  
41 cost and life (Thomas, 2009).

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43 The current workforce combines with four distinct generations which include the  
44 traditionalist, the baby boomers, the Generation Xers and the Millennials or Generation Yers  
45 (Hammill, 2005). Each generation has its own distinct features which describe the  
46 characteristics of the people and societal changes that shaped them (Kaye & Jordan-Evans,  
47 2014). There needs also vary according to their generation For instance, the concept of work-  
48 life balance is one of the major concerns in the workplace by Generations Xers and Yers  
49 compared to the traditionalists and baby boomers. For the first two generations, work is the  
50 most important aspect of their life, while life is the most important reigns for the Generation  
51 Xers and Yers. It is also evident that Xers and Yers highly value their personal time over  
52 company time (Brennan, 2010).

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54 Having said so, generational differences can be either an obstacle or a means to improve  
55 organisational performance. Managers and organisations need to develop and  
56 utilise multimodal human resource management (HRM) strategies to get the maximum  
57 benefits out of their employees. Organisations have to identify ways of how to best utilise  
58 their people such as using the work ethics and expertise of baby boomers to train and educate  
59 the younger employees.

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61 Meanwhile, in order to earn the trust of the Xers organisations can encourage their  
62 participation in organisational growth and to lead the business into meeting future targets. At  
63 the same time, organisations must develop the Yers too by providing continuous guidance  
64 and encouraging them to take part in non-virtual teams (Brennan, 2010). This will help to  
65 establish well-organised and highly motivated teams within the organisations, leading  
66 to lower turnover. The ultimate goal of a successful employer should be the acceptance  
67 and utilisation of generational differences in their business growth and development through  
68 creating an effective workplace, which leads to reduced turnover.

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## 70 **2. Objectives of the Study**

71 This study on review of literature on retention initiatives undertakes the following objectives:

- 72 1) To find out the various research works that have been done in the area of employee  
73 retention.

- 74 2) To highlight the various factors which affect retention initiatives in an organisation.
- 75 3) To explore the relation between HRM practices with job satisfaction leading to employee
- 76 retention.

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### 78 **3. Methodology**

79 The study is descriptive in nature and only secondary data have been used in it. The  
80 secondary data consist of the books and various research journals

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### 82 **4. Employee Retention**

83 Employee retention refers to the hierarchical arrangements and practices utilised as a part of  
84 the organisation to keep key workers from leaving the association. Employee retention is the  
85 exertion by a business to keep attractive laborers with a specific end goal to meet business  
86 targets (Frank et al., 2004 cited in Natalie et al., 2011, cited in Mittar, Sharmishtha &  
87 Agarwal, 2014, p. 9). Employee retention is holding the capable well performing employees  
88 in the organisation for a longer period of time in order to achieve competitive advantage. As  
89 per Berry and Morris (2008, p. 2) retention is a continuation of the employment of the  
90 workers, particularly high caliber and productive workers. Employee retention in an  
91 organisation relies upon the way the organisation maintains its HRM practices to address the  
92 issues and requests of its employees. However, retention is multi-dimensional factor of an  
93 organisation's human resource policies which begins with recruiting right people who are  
94 dedicated to the organisation and to stick them with the organisation business  
95 portfolio(Freyer, 2014 cited in Madiha et al., 2009 cited in Fatima, 2011, cited in Mittar,  
96 Sharmishtha & Agarwal, 2014, p. 9). In addition, the authors discussed a range of retention  
97 strategies, including bonuses, promotions, and personal communication from top managers.  
98 They also discussed whether retention bonuses should be tied to performance and offer  
99 suggestions for implementing performance-based rewards (Mittar, Sharmishtha & Agarwal,  
100 2014, p. 11).

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102 The idea of employee retention begun during 1970's and mid 1980's while people and  
103 organisations are unaware of the significance of holding the potential employees and its  
104 advantages to the organisation. Before that, as usual people join the organisation to earn to  
105 meet their daily needs, they stay longer time in the organisation and even for their work life.  
106 However, job mobility and voluntary job changes made an evolution in many industries as  
107 the employees found themselves with the problem of employee turnover. So, the management

of the organisations critically evaluated and developed employee retention as a management tool to retain the potential employees in the organisation (Mckeown, 2004, cited in Ng'ethe, Namusonge, & Iravo (2012, p. 297-298). However, the fundamental reason for employee retention is to prevent the capable workers from leaving the organisation as this could effect on the services offered by the organisation (Chiboiwa, 2009, cited in Nair & Malewar, 2013, p. 83).

Staff turnover is vital for the organisation. It has a direct impact on the smooth running, productivity, performance and long-term sustainability of the organisation. As such, employee retention should be the primary focus of the organisation in order to maintain a strategic distance from the unpredictability and high cost of selecting an expert and qualified workforce to the organisation. Addition to this, when competent employees leave the organisation, there are movements of the clients/customer towards those employees who are loyal to those employees, this results to the organisation loss of both employee(s) and the customers. Meanwhile, high turnover may impact directly and indirectly to the reputation, image, productivity and sustainability of the organisation (Hong, Hao, Kumar, Ramendran, and Kadiresan (2012). On a few occasions, subordinates who are loyal to the leaving employee may leave the organisation as well. Therefore, employee retention is to be considered more important than hiring a new employee (Mittar, Sharmishtha & Agarwal, 2014, p. 10).

Sunderji (2004) mentioned that it is the presence of de-motivators (job dissatisfaction) and the absence of motivators (no job satisfaction) that cause employees to jump ship. He derived this from Fredrick Herzberg's (1968) two factor theory. Herzberg identified two factors, i.e.; - the motivating factors and satisfying factors. The main conclusion he made with the application of this theory to employee turnover is that if the employees are motivated and satisfied with their jobs, then they have no intention or no reason to jump into another ship. Sunderji (2004) suggested the following as reasons for employees leaving their jobs: (1) The top two motivators leading to job satisfaction were a sense of achievement, and recognition for the achievement; (2) The top two de-motivators leading to job dissatisfaction were bureaucratic and unfair company policies and administration, and poor supervision; and (3) Salary is an extrinsic factor: - therefore, an average or generous salary did not lead to job satisfaction; rather, it leads to no job dissatisfaction.

## **5. Relationship between HRM Practices and Employee Retention**

There is enough source of evidence to justify the positive relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. Irshad (2011) carries out a literature study on factors affecting employee retention. He summarised the findings of numerous researchers and highlighted their suggestions in terms of the management practices that can be helpful to improve absenteeism, employee retention and better quality of work. HRM practices include in the study are compensation & rewards, job security, training and development, supervisor support culture, work environment, and organisation justice (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Solomon, 1992; Snell & Dean, 1992; Arthur, 1994; Snell & Youndt, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Ichniowski, Shaw & Prennushi, 1997, cited Moynihan, Gardner, Park, & Wright, 2001) and Irshad, 2011). Cappelli (2000, cited in Irshad, 2011) use the similar factors whilst Cole (2000, cited in Irshad, 2011) suggests that employees are the loyal with organisations when they see value, sense of pride and thus work to their fullest potential. The same findings are reported by Van Knippenberg (2000, cited in Irshad, 2011).

Retention and turnover are two sides of a coin. The factors leading to employee retention are the opposite of the factors on turnover. This demonstrates the importance of employee retention and turnover in an organisation. If an employee happy about their organisation his/her tendency to stay is more, allowing the organisation to achieve competitive advantage. According to Moore (2002, cited in El Sagheir, 2014) lack of job satisfaction might be the cause of employee turnover and Boundrias et al.(2009, cited in El Sagheir, 2014) suggested that the causative factor for employee turnover might be the low level of empowerment. Hatton and Emerson (1998, cited in El Sagheir, 2014) mention that low level of support of superior might lead to employee turnover as founded by Salman, Iqbal and Chandran (2010, cited in El Sagheir, 2014).

A study conducted by Sheikh, Ul-Qamar and Iqbal (n.d.) on the impact of HRM practices on employee retention. The HRM practices (career development opportunities, supervisor support, working environment, rewards and work-life policies) are the variables of the study. Based on the data collected from 101 respondents, the study was concluded with a positive relationship between the above mentioned HRM practices and employee retention. They recommended that if the organisations wish to improve employee retention, management should focus on improving the HRM practices.

Hong and his colleagues concluded their study in Malaysia, justifying that HRM practices such as training, compensation and appraisal systems have a significant relationship between employee retention in the university Y lecturer's retention (Hong, Hao, Kumar, Ramendran and Kadiresan, 2012, p. 75). However, the fourth HR factor (employee empowerment) has lesser contribute to the retention of the lectures in the university. They also conclude that empowerment could be the attributed to the Asian culture or conformity to higher authority (p. 60). This indicates to retain employees in higher education institutions need to consider HRM practices which are aligned to employee retention.

A study conducted in Thailand's manufacturing industry on the effects HRM practices on employee retention concluded with positive relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. Compensation & benefits management and reward system, training and development and employee empowerment are the HRM practices used in this study. The study also revealed that the employees stay longer in the organisation if they are attached with attractive compensation and reward system. The study also found that training can play a role in increase staff retention accompanied with compensation and reward system Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn, & and Rojniruntikul (2014, p. 164).

From the early US models of HRM emerged the concept of best practices where the adoption of certain HR practices would result in improved organisational performance. This can be happened by retaining the potential employees longer period in the organisation. According to Stavrou-Costea (2005, cited in Hong, Hao, Kumar, Ramendran, & Kadiresan, 2012, p. 61) the main factor for the success of an organisation is the effectiveness of HRM practices. This can be visible in the organisations that possess good HRM practices to retain the employee's base longer period of time. Therefore, both HRM practices and employee retention have a significant relationship directly and indirectly.

**Leadership** is one of the key practices to determining whether the employees stay or leave the organisation. Leadership styles directly and indirectly influence employees to decide whether to leave the organisation or to stay with the organisation. Because employees do not leave the organisation they leave their managers. Izdor & Iheriohanma (2015) mentioned that employee retention and performance can be achieved through adopting an appropriate leadership style that would align with business strategies with employees motivation and morale (p. 185). Similarly, Wakabi (2016) found positive influence on

leadership style and staff retention in the organisation, his discussions are based on the leadership styles, employee turnover/retention and role of leadership and staff retention.

**Reward** is one of the key leading HRM practices as established by many authors (Ahmad, Tariq, & Hussain, 2015; Irshad & Afridi, n.d.; Kwenin, Muathe & Nzulwa, 2013; Patel & Patel, 2014; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). If the employees are attached to attractive reward system their stay in the organisation will be longer. Similarly, if the employees are rewarded according to their performance, they tend to stick to their organisation (Sutherland, 2004; Shoaib et al., 2009, cited in Kwenin, Muathe & Nzulwa; 2013).

**Salary** is another key leading practice that influences on employee retention. Grace (2014) mentioned that “believe it or not, money is very important in every people’s lives, ” she further stated that whether we believe or not, the employees are working for money, it means we all are working for money. However, if the organisations are able to pay good salary to its employees, employees will feel their work is appreciated by the organisations and their intentions to stay in the organisations will be higher (Lai, 2011).

**Compensation** is also one of the key leading HRM practices (Ahmad, Tariq, & Hussain, 2015; El Sagheir, 2014; Irshad & Afridi, n.d.; Hong et al., 2012; Mahmud & Idrish, 2011; Mishra & Mishra, 2013; Nirmala, 2014; Mittar, Saini & Agarwal, n.d.). Hong et al (2012 cited in El Sagheir, 2014) found that compensation has a positive relationship with retention of employees. Similarly, Mittar, Saini and Agarwal (n.d.) and Williams et al. (2007, cited in Thite & Russell, 2010) conclude that an effective compensation system has a positive effect on employee retention.

**Training and development** is investing in employees to build and develop their skills. It is another key HRM practices that influences on employee retention at any age (Anis et al., 2010; Thite & Russell, 2010; Hong et al., 2012; Sinha & Sinha, 2012; Irshad & Afridi, n.d.; Mishra & Mishra, 2013; Mittar, Saini & Agarwal, n.d.; El Sagheir, 2014 and Nirmala, 2014). Huselid (1995, cited in El Sagheir, 2014) as supported by Bamberger (2009, cited in El Sagheir, 2014) suggests that training is an important determinant of employee retention.

**Career development** is also a key HRM practices (Irshad & Afridi, n.d.; Mahmud & Idrish, 2011; Patel & Patel, 2014). Allen, Shore and Griffeth (2003, cited in Sheikh, Ul-Qamar,

&Iqbal, n.d.) have mentioned that the employee's intention to leave organisations are reduced based on the opportunities provided by the organisations for employee development, lack of training and promotional opportunities are the main reasons for high-performers to leave the organisation.

***Employee Recognition*** is acknowledging the performance of an individual employee. Yazinski (2009, cited in Sinha & Sinha, 2012) stated that recognition of skills related to individual job accomplishments is an effective retention strategy for employee at any age. In addition, there are studies indicated positive impact on employees long stay in the organisation by acknowledging individual work accomplishment related to the job and the organisation(Redington, 2007, cited in Sinha & Sinha, 2012).

Therefore, the following HRM practices will be used to develop study model; (1) Leadership, (2) Reward, (3) Salary, (4) Compensation, (5) Training and development, (6) Career development, (7) Recognition, (8) Commitment, (9) Employee empowerment. It is a combination of most of the prominent HRM practices used by most of the researcher. They have used combination 4 or 5 or sometimes more.



278 Table 1: Factors, Contributing authors and Research papers

HRM Practices	Authors' /Year	Research papers
Leadership	Ng'ethe, Namusonge, & Iravo (2012)	Influence of Leadership Style on Academic Staff Retention in Public Universities in Kenya. ( <i>International Journal of Business and Social Science</i> )
	Chitra (2013)	Roles of leaders in employee retention - A Pragmatic study with reference to private sector bank employees. ( <i>International Research Journal of Business and Management</i> )
	Nair & Malewar (2013)	Effective Leadership-Employee Retention-Work Life Balance: A Cyclical Continuum. ( <i>IOSR Journal of Business and Management</i> )
	Izidor & Iheriohanma (2015)	Nexus between Leadership styles, Employee Retention and Performance in organizations in Nigeria. ( <i>European Scientific Journal</i> )
	Wakabi (2016)	Leadership Style and Staff Retention in Organisations. <i>International Journal of Science and Research</i>
Rewards	Irshad & Afridi (2011)	Factors affecting employees retention: Evidence from literature. ( <i>Abasyn Journal of Social Sciences</i> )
	Kwenin, Muathe & Nzulwa (2013)	The Influence of Employee Rewards, Human Resource Policies and Job Satisfaction on the retention of Employees in Vodafone Ghana Limited. ( <i>European Journal of Business and Management</i> )
	Patel & Patel (2014)	To Study the Impact of HR Practices on Employee Retention - a Case Study of L & T Ltd, Hazira, Surat. ( <i>Indian Journal of Research</i> )
	Terera & Ngirande (2014)	The Impact of Rewards on Job Satisfaction and Employee Retention. ( <i>Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences</i> )
	Ahmad, Tariq, & Hussain (2015)	Human Resource Practices and employee retention, evidences from banking sector Pakistan. ( <i>Journal of Business and Management Research</i> )
Salary	Lai (2011)	The influence of compensation system design on employee satisfaction. ( <i>African Journal of Business Management</i> )
	Grace (2014)	Money is the Best Motivator in the Workplace
Compensation	Irshad & Afridi (2011)	Factors affecting employees retention: Evidence from literature. ( <i>Abasyn Journal of Social Sciences</i> )
	Mahmud and Idrish (2011)	The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Turnover of Bank Employees in Bangladesh. ( <i>World Review of Business Research</i> )
	Hong et al (2012)	An Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Retention in Institute of Higher learning: A Regression Analysis. ( <i>International Journal of Business Research and Management</i> )
	Mishra & Mishra	Review of Literature on Factors influencing Attrition and Retention.

	(2013)	<i>(International Journal of Organizational Behaviour &amp; Management Perspectives)</i>
	Nirmala (2014)	Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Faculty retention in higher education: An empirical study in Mysore City. <i>(EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review)</i>
	Ahmad, Tariq, & Hussain (2015)	Human Resource Practices and employee retention, evidences from banking sector Pakistan. <i>(Journal of Business and Management Research)</i>
	Mittar, Saini & Agarwal (2014)	Human Resource Management Practices for Employee Retention in Apparel Export Houses in Delhi NCR. <i>(Scottish Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Scientific Studies)</i>
Training and development	Anis et al (2010),	Human Resource Practices and employee retention, evidences from banking sector Pakistan. <i>(Journal of Business and Management Research)</i>
	Thite & Russel (2010)	Work organization, human resource Practices and employee retention in Indian call centers. <i>(Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources)</i>
	Irshad & Afridi (2011)	Factors affecting employees retention: Evidence from literature. <i>(Abasyn Journal of Social Sciences)</i>
	Hong et al (2012)	An Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Retention in Institute of Higher learning: A Regression Analysis. <i>(International Journal of Business Research and Management)</i>
	Mishra & Mishra (2013)	Review of Literature on Factors influencing Attrition and Retention. <i>(International Journal of Organizational Behaviour &amp; Management Perspectives)</i>
	Nirmala (2014)	Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Faculty retention in higher education: An empirical study in Mysore City. <i>(EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review)</i>
	Mittar, Saini & Agarwal (2014)	Human Resource Management Practices for Employee Retention in Apparel Export Houses in Delhi NCR. <i>(Scottish Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Scientific Studies)</i>
Career Development	Hong et al (2012)	An Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Employee Retention in Institute of Higher learning: A Regression Analysis. <i>(International Journal of Business Research and Management)</i>
	Nirmala (2014)	Effectiveness of Human Resource Management Practices on Faculty retention in higher education: An empirical study in Mysore City. <i>(EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review)</i>
	Mittar, Saini & Agarwal (2014)	Human Resource Management Practices for Employee Retention in Apparel Export Houses in Delhi NCR. <i>Scottish Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Scientific Studies</i>
Recognition	Sinha & Sinha (2012)	Factors Affecting Employee Retention: A Comparative Analysis of two Organizations from Heavy Engineering Industry. <i>(European Journal of Business and Management)</i>
	Kwenin, Muathe	The Influence of Employee Rewards, Human Resource Policies and Job Satisfaction on the retention of

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	&Nzulwa (2013)	Employees in Vodafone Ghana Limited. ( <i>European Journal of Business and Management</i> )
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## **6. The HRM Practices, Job Satisfaction and Employee Retention Model**

The biggest challenge in the organisations today is to retain their talented employees. The rapid growth in the industries with high competition among the competitors, every organisation tries to withhold their employees to get the competitive advantages. As we all know employees are the most valuable asset of the organisation the success and failure depends upon how much they are satisfied with their work and organisation. Satisfying individual worker is the most difficult task facing most of the organisation today. Also, there are numerous opportunities available for qualified human resources in the industry, making the employers to satisfy and retain them. However, there is no single strategy or retention policy which may satisfy each and every employee in the organisation due to different personalities, demands and expectations of the employees.

The concept of employee satisfaction was pioneered by Hoppock in 1935 and defined as the “subjective reaction or satisfaction of employees with physical and psychological aspects of their work environment” Hoppock (1935, cited Lai, 2011, p. 10719). Chang (2005, cited Lai, 2011, p. 10719) has a similar definition, “it is the feeling or attitude of employees toward their work environment”. Wang (2005, cited Lai, 2011, p. 10719) mention both “employee satisfaction” and “job satisfaction” as the same. As Hoppock mentioned, if the employees are satisfied with their job, their stay in the organisation is most likely higher. This aligns with Herzberg’s two factor theory (1968) and Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs (1943). Both the theories reflect on employees motivation and motivational factors. Therefore, to achieve employee job satisfaction, organisations have to invest on employees training and development to improve their knowledge and skills. In addition, management has to allocate a reasonable pay/bonus based on employee performance to maintain their job satisfaction (Kehinde et al., 2012, cited in Mittar, Saini & Agarwal, n.d., p. 10).

Herzberg’s (1987, cited in Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011, p. 3) address the following condition to create job satisfaction among the employees by the managers; Providing opportunities for achievement; Recognizing workers contributions; Creating work that is rewarding and that matches the skills and abilities of the employee; Giving as much responsibility to each team member as possible; Providing opportunities to advance in the company through internal promotions; Offering training and development opportunities so that people can pursue the positions they want within the company.

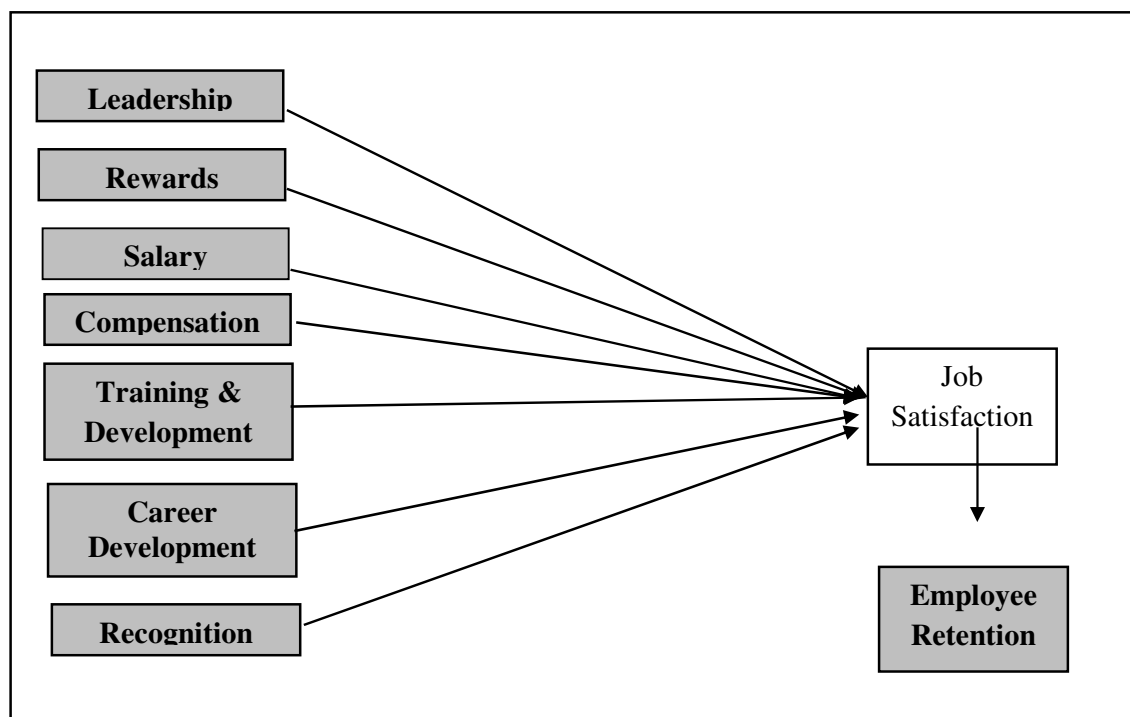


Figure1: HRM Practices, Job Satisfaction and Retention Model

The above model clearly illustrates the direct relationship between HRM practices and job satisfaction leading employee retention. If the HRM practices are well managed and organized in addressing the needs and demands of both the employees and organisation, it will lead employees' satisfaction towards the job organisation and reduces employee turnover. Thus the job satisfaction and turnover negatively correlated to one another. The model also clearly defines the HRM factors exist in the organisation will not only help to attract new employees, but will lead to retain the existing employees in the organisation. Satisfied with the job always results retain on the job/organisation (Kwenin, math & Nzulwa, 2013; Terera & Ngirande, 2014) and job satisfaction is the pleasure that the individual employee feels about his job or his work (Berry & Morris, 2008, p. 3)

## 7. Conclusion

An employee base of an organisation is complex and difficult to know it. They are the main asset for whom the organisation depends. Retaining them will help the organisational growth in the long run and will also add their goodwill. But the most challenging task for most of the organisations today is employee retention and their satisfaction. Although this paper tried to

explore the area of HRM practices and employee retention by the various researchers, still much scope remaining for more exploration in the field of HRM practices and employee retention. However, by taking into consideration the factors like leadership, rewards, salary, compensation, training & development, career development, recognition, employee engagement, appraisal system, superior support etc. Needless to say that these factors should be conducted by the HR professionals in order to understand the level and extend of the issue among the human resource of the organisations.

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