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Examining the Impact of Compensation Benefits, Training & Development, Work Environment and Reward & Recognition on Employee Retention in the Medical Industry: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract: The challenge of retaining employees is an essential issue in the health care setting worldwide, where turnover directly affects the quality of patient care, organisational financial welfare, and institutional stability. In the context of the Malaysian healthcare industry, namely, in public and private hospitals in Klang Valley, Selangor, this master's thesis proposal will quantitatively study the effect of four human resource management practices, including Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Work Environment, and Reward and Recognition, on employee retention in the medical sector. The research is based on the Hierarchy of Needs developed by Maslow and the ERG Theory by Alderfer and includes the use of a cross-sectional survey design and a structured questionnaire based on validated instruments. SPSS version 30.0 will be used to perform the data analysis, where descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression will be used to find out the predictive power of each independent variable on employee retention. The proposed study will result in an evidence-based and hierarchical retention driver model, which will enable healthcare administrators and policymakers to implement a strategic model to efficiently allocate resources to minimize turnover and increase the sustainability of the employee workforce in Malaysia.

Keywords: *Training and development, compensation, work environment, reward and recognition, employee retention, medical industry*

1. Introduction and Background

The long-term success and efficacy of any healthcare system depend on the stability and competency of the employee staff. Employees are the most crucial professionals in charge of taking care of patients and making sure they get the treatment they need. They are also the most significant people for the reputation of the institution, patient satisfaction, and clinical outcomes. Because of this, the most essential strategic goal for healthcare companies all over the world is to keep employees who are skilled and professionally engaged. Keeping employees is more than simply a number on a human resources report; it is a complicated organizational issue that affects the quality of treatment, the ability to keep operations running, and the organization's finances.

The healthcare business all over the world has a hard time keeping enough employees on staff. This is made worse by an older workforce, companies fighting for trained personnel, and the high levels of stress that come with working in healthcare environments. Retention is an organization's strategic capacity to keep its people for a long period by using policies that foster commitment and lower the likelihood that they will leave (Anilkumar & Pravitha, 2024). Many things can change it. Researchers believe that these elements come from many different domains, such as economics, psychology, and organizations. Some examples are fair pay, opportunity to advance in your career, a decent place to work, and meaningful acknowledgment (Vijayakumar, 2020). In high-pressure jobs like healthcare, where things like supervisor support, work-life balance, and job features are particularly crucial to an employee's decision to stay or leave (Nadeem & Malik, 2021), these elements all work together very strongly.

In Malaysia, research on employee retention has proliferated across diverse sectors, encompassing manufacturing, services, and finance. Nonetheless, focused academic research on the issues affecting employee retention in the domestic healthcare industry remains in its nascent phase. The healthcare system in the area is different from others since it has both public and private services, people from different cultures, and

national health policies that change. These things could influence how universal retention factors work. Research has addressed general retention issues (Zainal et al., 2022), yet a significant deficiency exists in identifying and prioritizing the most critical strategic human resource management (HRM) levers, namely Training and Development, Compensation and Benefits, Work Environment, and Reward and Recognition, that most significantly influence Malaysian employees' intentions to remain in their positions.

The effective healthcare system is built on a solid and efficient workforce. But the medical sector is facing an epidemic of high turnover rates among employees, and it is a costly problem worldwide. This effect leads to a vicious circle of higher operating costs related to frequent recruitment and training, loss of organizational knowledge, low employee morale, and, most importantly, worsened patient safety and care quality (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Anilkumar & Pravitha, 2024).

This crisis is not spared in the Malaysian healthcare system. In spite of the vital contribution of employees in the delivery of services, the healthcare institutions in Malaysia still struggle with high levels of employee shortages and retention. Other antecedents of turnover that have been found in previous research are unfavourable working conditions, the perceived lack of fair compensation, poor career advancement opportunities, and insufficient organisational support (Kudtho et al., 2022; Zainal et al., 2022). However, these results are still in pieces and mostly descriptive, which provides minimal guidance on practical intervention in the strategy.

Particularly, there is a critical research gap: to date, no empirical research has ever been carried out to quantitatively assess and compare the concomitant predictive effect of four strategic HRM levers upon employee retention in the Malaysian healthcare setting, namely Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Work Environment, and Reward and Recognition. Although the importance of these factors at the individual level has already been determined in international studies (Alshamrani et al., 2023; Kumari, 2022; Geetha and Muthukumar, 2022), their interdependence and the rank of their effectiveness in one integrated model have not been studied in Malaysia. As a result, healthcare administrators and policymakers do not have an evidence-based framework to use in the allocation of resources. In the absence of this knowledge, interventions will be generic, misplaced, and eventually ineffective in dealing with the unique system and cultural processes of the Malaysian employee workforce.

2. Literature Review

The literature review is structured and analytical, and covers in detail the academic literature on the topic of employee retention, considering specifically the four independent variables of this study: compensation and benefits, training and development, work environment, and reward and recognition. The main objective is threefold: firstly, to contextualize these constructs theoretically within known models of organizational behaviour and human resource management; secondly, to synthesize existing research findings on the effects of these constructs in global and regional studies; and finally, to determine the missing links in the literature, especially in the Malaysian context, thus proving the need and relevance of the study.

Employee Retention

Employee retention refers to the capacity of a healthcare organization to retain its employees throughout the years. This very significant outcome could be influenced by many factors, such as job satisfaction, organizational loyalty, work-life balance, and the above-mentioned HR strategies (Biason, 2020). Retention of employees is related to improved patient outcomes, reduced costs, and sustained presence of organizational knowledge.

This study outlines employee retention as the effective organizational outcome of having a stable and competent employee workforce over a period of time. It is the most important dependent variable that indicates the level of success in the collaboration of management and human resources. Retention is not merely the absence of turnover, but rather an understanding that employees are willing to remain with the organization and that they are devoted to it (Holtom et al., 2008). It is a multi-dimensional construct, which is dependent on a complex interaction of the independent factors already discussed.

According to Bashir et al. (2023), the negative effect of workplace violence on the sustainable performance of employees is directly identified as impaired social well-being. This is aggravated by unhealthy workplaces, with Wu et al. (2020) identifying a critical role of the work environment in workplace violence, burnout and work attitudes among hospital employees. Moreover, Rony et al. (2023) relate work-life imbalance to unhappiness and family spillovers, and Oliveira et al. (2021) investigate the effect of the primary health care setting on employee motivation and stress.

Theoretically, these reasons have a potent disruptive effect on the foundational levels of Maslow's hierarchy and the ERG theory by Alderfer, resulting in an effective trigger of turnover. The safety issues and workplace violence directly assault the basic safety and security needs of Maslow's model, which creates a climate of both psychological and physical danger that must be solved first; then higher needs can be met.

At the same time, unfavourable working conditions, high workload, and work-life balance significantly undermine the relatedness needs of Alderfer not only by destroying the team relationships and support networks but also by frustrating the needs of growth because the conditions of burnout and stagnation instead of professional advancement are created. This loss of relatedness and development is a simultaneous hindrance to the realization of Maslow's esteem needs (the absence of respect and recognition) and self-actualization (the impossibility of finding significant professional satisfaction).

The mechanism of retention of the employees therefore occurs through a vital process: the lack of safety and relatedness results in burnout and affects well-being and motivation, which eventually dominate the rest of the retention processes and ignite exit intentions. Thus, the top-level threats to safety and belonging should be the main priority and urgent in the context of employee retention strategies aimed at a stable base on which high-order retention drivers such as recognition or development are to be implemented.

Compensation and Benefits

Competitive pay is a noteworthy problem that influences job satisfaction and the ability to retain employees. A proper level of financial compensation can ensure economic stability and organizational credit for their hard work (Suryadi et al., 2022). Compensation and perks satisfaction is usually a crucial yet unnoticed feature in an employee's decision to remain with a company (Fitri, 2024). Healthcare-related organizations interested in retaining qualified employees in their staff must understand the impact of compensation on them (Samosir et al., 2021).

Employees can get paid in various forms, including a basic salary, shift bonuses, overtime, bonuses, and complete benefits in the form of health, pension, and paid leave (Prakash and Philimis, 2022). A fair and competitive pay system is closely related to how inclined employees are to justice, as well as how satisfied they are with their jobs in general (Nor et al., 2024). The more the magnitude of work performed by employees is compensated and rewarded, the better the quality of work they are capable of and the greater the stakes involved in employee as a profession, the more employees will feel valued and remain in the organization (Watkins and Fusch, 2022). Yet, health caregivers often leave their jobs since they are not satisfied with the salary (Macaraig et al., 2024).

Studies have continued to confirm that competitive pay is a key driver in employee retention. The research conducted in various countries indicates that employees who believe that their wages are reasonable in relation to their colleagues and the living standards have a higher chance of remaining in the job (Alshamrani et al., 2023). Strategic pay management is thus an important feature of an all-inclusive rewards system that is expected to make employees come, stay, and work hard.

Compensation and benefits are a very important aspect of the job market and are usually regarded as a significant element in maintaining and inspiring employees. Competitive compensation plays two roles in the employee field, which is highly stressful with great responsibility and a shift-based work setting; it not only ensures employees have a sense of financial stability but also acts as a signal that the organization values and appreciates the employee role (Suryadi et al., 2022).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Alderfer ERG theory are two constructive concepts that can be applied in explaining this variable. To Maslow, the basic physiological and safety requirements of an employee (e.g., a paycheck, job security) are to be fulfilled first, before the further needs of esteem and self-actualization can come into play and be motivating. The theory of ERG, which is a simplified and more adaptable version, assumes that the needs of Existence (material and physiological well-being), Relatedness (social and esteem needs through relationships), and Growth (personal development) may be fulfilled in parallel. In case of the frustration of higher-level needs, people can even revert to more intensive attention to the lower-level ones.

These theories put the key centrality of equity into perspective. Employees will never evaluate the reasonableness of their contributions (work, ability, education) against the results (pay, perks, recognition) of their colleagues, both in and out of their company. This analogy strikes the Relatedness and Esteem needs. The misperceptions of those who feel ill-treated make them frustrated in terms of their need to have their needs fairly met and to be treated with respect, which results in their dissatisfaction and wish to quit. Moreover, salary is regarded as a pillar hygiene factor or Existence need; the lack or supposed lack of it leads to significant dissatisfaction. Although proper remuneration does not ensure motivation, it is crucial to ensure that employees are not actively unhappy and that they stay in the organization because otherwise, they will have to jump back to satisfying only their existence needs, which will cut off the contact with the higher goals of a workplace (Fitri, 2024).

Training and Development

It is evident that retaining employees on staff and providing them with consistent training and career development are correlated. Such possibilities assist employees in performing their work better, learning to work with new technologies, and moving up the career ladder. This will leave them happier and more dedicated to their jobs (Kumari, 2022). In the medical field, where things evolve fast, continuous learning is not just convenient but also vital to maintain your skills and confidence levels (Fabian, 2024).

Healthcare training and development programs are well-organized means through which employees receive more knowledge, advance their skills, and perform excellently in their professions (Prakash and Philimis, 2022). Such efforts indicate that the company is concerned with the development of its staff, which makes them feel important and part of the team. Access to career ladders, specialized certifications, and leadership training is also an excellent way to retain ambitious employees (Nguyen and Duong, 2021).

A positive learning environment in which skill development is promoted must be established to retain employees. The reason is that it has a direct influence on their capability to deliver safe and effective care and seek professional fulfilment (Ojediran & Adebayo, 2022).

The Company is also making long-term investment in the growth of its employees in terms of Training and Development. This is not just another in-service training for employees. It implies that the clinical workers are fully committed to the lifelong learning process, professional development, and career advancement. This variable is founded on the assumption that the prospect of advancement is an effective non-financial inducement and an important approach to ensure that professionals do not become disengaged and leave their jobs.

Based on the theory of human motivation put forward by Maslow, according to which people are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, this technique contends that training and education in corporations go beyond merely upskilling the employees; they also satisfy even more basic psychological needs such as achievement, recognition, and growth (esteem and self-actualization). The eventual result of meeting these needs is a more productive, creative, as well as a more committed workforce.

It also agrees with Alderfer ERG Theory, which asserts that growth needs, or the need for personal growth, meaningful success, and increased skill, are especially important. Organizations meet these basic needs when they make people flourish.

It is a common observation that people tend to make remarks regarding the differences between training and other forms of learning. Training usually involves the conduct of short, structured seminars aimed at improving

short-term job performance and providing competence in some clinical skills, new technologies, or safety laws. All development is about improvement in a way that would benefit you in your work in the long term. It is a leader-level preparation of employees for future roles, sponsorship of advanced degrees (e.g., Master's or Doctorate in medical Practice), and definite clinical ladder programs that employ better skills and reward them (Prakash and Philimis, 2022).

Working Environment

Employees are motivated to remain in the job due to the work environment they have. It entails such elements as having enough workers, a culture of respect, teamwork, and physical safety. A healthy working environment can help employees become less burned out, happier with their professional activities, and have more intentions to remain (Alshamrani et al., 2023).

According to Xuecheng et al. (2022), for tasks to be bearable, the presence of the right equipment and materials, efficient communication, and positive relations with colleagues and superiors are important. One of the main factors that impact employee turnover is a toxic or non-supportive workplace environment with increased stress levels, conflict, and resource limitations (Prakash and Philimis, 2022). Healthcare institutions must therefore ensure that the workplaces of their employees are safe, clean, and conducive.

The most appropriate way to consider the working environment of employees is as a complex ecosystem comprising structural, relational, and cultural components that work together. It is probably the most complicated and powerful independent variable that affects retention, since it directly affects the daily experienced reality of the employee's practice. A good working environment is a valuable asset that contributes to less stress on the job, whereas a bad environment is a leading source of burnout and turnover (Alshamrani et al., 2023).

Such is the type of climate that cannot be seen, yet it is based on common principles. It has a culture of safety (with no fear of being punished because of a mistake), professional autonomy (with no interference with clinical judgment), organizational justice (equitable policies and decisions), and an overwhelming belief that the organization is indeed interested in the well-being of its employees (Xuecheng et al., 2022).

Reward and Recognition

Formal and informal recognition of employees in their work is among the most valuable things that can be done to ensure their engagement and retention in the job. The reward and recognition systems demonstrate the effort of employees and may increase their motivation and commitment to the organization (Prakash and Philimis, 2022).

Perks can be monetary (such as bonuses or promotions) or nonmonetary (such as prizes, recognition, and new vacancies). Proper recognition helps employees feel valued at work, particularly when things do not go well, and it motivates them to perform the right things (Noordin et al., 2021). It is not necessarily the biggest factor leading to people quitting, but employees might seek employment elsewhere in case they do not feel valued (Thompson and Muda, 2021).

Reward and Recognition is a process of a firm formally and informally demonstrating to employees that the firm appreciates and values their efforts, contributions, and their devotion. Such approaches are highly significant to employees, as at times their job can be emotionally draining, and it is difficult to observe the impact. They expressed gratitude to the organization by fulfilling essential emotional and social needs that are impossible to buy with money (Prakash and Philimis, 2022).

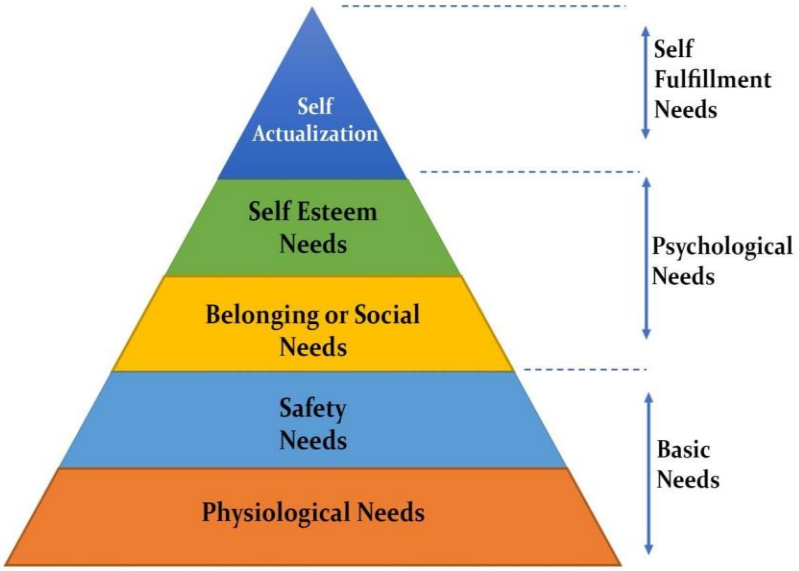
Reward and recognition have always been found to be major retention factors, as shown empirically. Their benefits include the article by Tirta and Enrika (2020), which examines the effect of "Reward and Recognition" on millennial retention with the help of job satisfaction. Moreover, Alsakarneh et al. (2023) associate talent management practices, which involve reward systems by default, with retention, and Sorn et al. (2023) consider the efficiency of compensation (as one of the most important types of rewards) in employee retention.

The conceptual insight here is the way in which these practices satisfy different yet complementary psychological needs. Money and payment are the main ways to satisfy the esteem needs of Maslow's hierarchy, namely, the lower part of this category that requires respect of others, status, and the real feeling of accomplishment with the use of fair and competitive financial recognition (Watkins and Fusch, 2022; Hansail and Pallangyo, 2020). At the same time, non-monetary appreciation and a supportive work environment directly address Alderfer's relatedness needs and Maslow's higher-level esteem needs. They meet the human need to belong and be appreciated and validated by supervisors and colleagues, creating a sense of belonging and status through respect (Naz et al., 2020; Andriani et al., 2022).

The convergence of these two-way streets, where external esteem and stability are ensured by financial rewards, and interpersonal relatedness and internal esteem are determined by social recognition, is usually combined into greater job satisfaction, which is a strong and well-established mediator of employee retention (Kiran et al., 2024; Tirta & Enrika, 2020).

Underpinning Theories

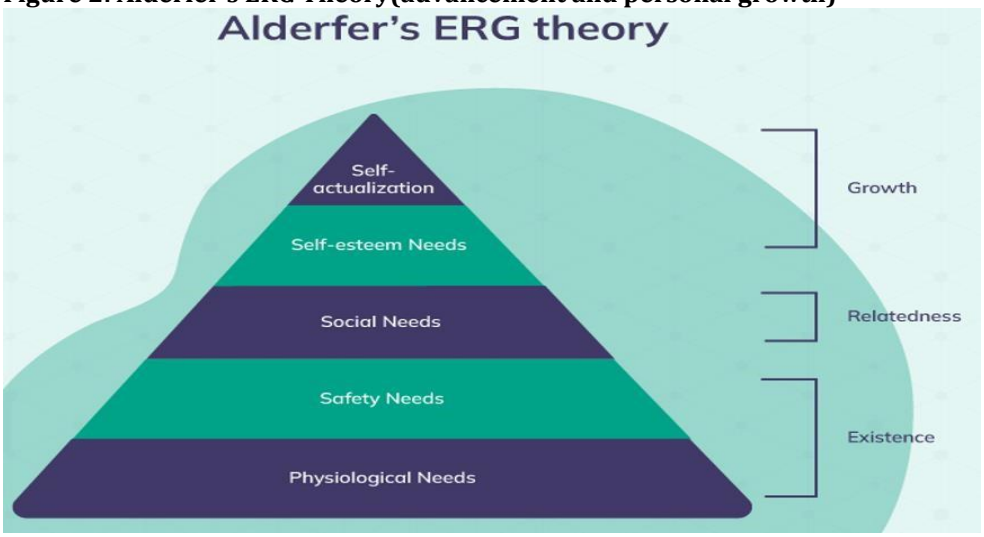
Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory



The Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943) of Abraham Maslow is a primitive psychological theory on the basis of what motivates people and how motivation influences their behaviour, including choices in areas of occupation such as retaining employees. Maslow argued that human needs are organized in a pyramid that comprises lower-level deficiency needs, which one must fulfil before they motivate one to fulfil higher-level growth needs (Maslow, 1943). This theory provides an organized framework for how various organizational practices address needs on some level and affect an employee's choice to continue working with a particular employer.

The concept is based on the idea that the maximum retention is the one that involves all the levels of the organization systematically. When a hospital pays effectively (physiological), is safe (safety), but lacks a supportive team (belonging) or the possibility to ascend (esteem/self-actualization), the employees will experience frustration-regression and go in search of jobs that will accommodate these higher-order desires. The hierarchy is suitable to the variables of the study: compensation is associated with lower-order needs of deficit, the Work Environment is related to needs of safety and belonging, Recognition is related to esteem needs, and Training and Development is connected to self-actualization and esteem needs. Although contemporary observations note the fact that the hierarchy is not universally rigid, its persuasive viability in correlating particular HR practices with the fundamental human motivations has been extremely important in formulating an integrated retention strategy.

Figure 2: Alderfer's ERG Theory(advancement and personal growth)



This theory explains how employees remain at the job: competitive pay and safe working conditions satisfy their wants for existence; good working relationships and the support provided by their boss satisfy their needs for relatedness; training and opportunities to advance in their careers satisfy their needs for growth. Whenever their higher-order needs are not provided, people are more likely to pay attention to their lower-order needs. That is why employees may go despite the good pay they get: they have no opportunity to develop.

The ERG Theory (1969) by Clayton Alderfer narrows down and restructures Maslow's hierarchy in a more adaptable and empirically based model of human motivation, which consists of three chief categories of needs: Existence (E), Relatedness (R), and Growth (G). The given theory is especially applicable to the active and stressful healthcare setting, since it allows following multiple needs at the same time and explains the phenomenon of frustration regression, when a person who cannot fulfil a higher-level need can turn to the intensification of his or her attention to a lower one (Barat, 2022). This is what makes it a powerful platform to examine the complex factors that lead employees to stay in the job.

This is demonstrated in needs such as the desire to grow, to be successful, to be skilled, and to be creative. They coincide with the concepts of Maslow regarding the self-actualization and the internal component of esteem. It is in this way that companies can help the staff to improve. When the employees get a chance to enhance their competences, keep learning, specialize, and develop their work, they may reach their potential, feel satisfied, and learn to exploit their abilities (Fabian et al., 2024). The publicity, the reward, or the augmented freedom or responsibility can also be a pointer to the progress and accomplishment that will satisfy this aspect of the requirement even further. Connection to Retention and Theoretical Integration with Maslow:

ERG Theory explains the behaviour of employees in a more holistic way. Compared to the rigid hierarchy of Maslow, ERG believes that an employee could be aided by growth needs (such as receiving a certification) without their relatedness needs (such as arguing with their manager) being satisfied completely. The overall idea of frustration-regression is, however, quite simple. When the growth needs of an employee are not considered regularly (that is, there is no opportunity to grow in that place), he or she can revert to the needs of relatedness (finding a better team elsewhere) or existence (demanding more pay). On the other hand, the existence needs would be at stake (e.g., when staffing is in danger) and the concerns about relatedness or development would be secondary. Maslow and Alderfer theories are complementary to each other in a way that they create a multi-layered, effective framework to be applied in this investigation.

They justify the choice of the four independent variables used by them by matching them with the basic human needs: Elements of the Work Environment and Compensation are related to Existence/Safety; Recognition and Relational Work Environment are related to Relatedness/Belonging-Esteem; Training and Development, along with achievement-oriented Recognition, are related to Growth/Self Actualization.

In this theoretical framework, it is assumed that the retention rates among employees will be maximized when healthcare organizations employ comprehensive measures that address all three categories of ERG needs or all five tiers of needs and therefore, eliminate the frustration-regression process which contributes to turnover.

Hypothesis Development

H1: Compensation and Benefits have a positive relationship with Employee Retention

The hypothesized assumption of the first one is that compensation and benefits are basic hygiene factors (Herzberg) or Existence needs (Alderfer). The physiological and safety needs, both of which are highly fulfilled by well-compensated employees, job security, and all-inclusive benefits, must be fulfilled properly before considering the motivators of a higher order (McLeod, 2024; Barat, 2022). Within the framework of the ERG theory by Alderfer, compensation directly responds to the requirement of material and physical health, and it is the lower layer of the employment exchange (Barat, 2022).

This relationship is empirically supported by a considerable amount of research. The researchers determined that equitable and competitive compensation has a direct relationship with job satisfaction and, therefore, retention (Suryadi, Utomo, and Setiorini, 2022). On the same note, both Fitri (2024) and Samosir et al. (2021) have shown that strategic compensation management is not only an administrative issue but a crucial tool in decreasing turnover intentions. This was further supported by Alshamrani et al. (2023), who discovered that employees who are determined to have a fair salary in comparison to the market standards demonstrate much greater organizational commitment.

On the other hand, the lack of satisfaction with remuneration is always listed as one of the main triggering factors of voluntary turnover since employees tend to express their desire to join other organizations with a better financial package (Macaraig, Hong, and Lay, 2024; Sorn et al., 2023; Prakash and Philimis, 2022). Hence, according to the overlap of the motivational theory and the consistent empirical validation, this study asserts that a competitive and equitable compensation package is a necessary condition for employee retention.

H2: Training and Development have a positive relationship with Employee Retention.

The second hypothesis is based on the so-called Growth part of the ERG Theory developed by Alderfer that suggests that the intrinsic urge of a person to develop, master, and gain some meaningful accomplishment is one of the most potent motivators (Barat, 2022). In the Maslowian system, training and development will meet higher needs, namely the Esteem need that is fulfilled through greater competence and recognition, and the Self-Actualization need that is fulfilled through the fulfilment of professional potential. By investing in formal training, specialized licenses, and defined career advancement opportunities, healthcare organizations indicate their long-term investment in the value and future of the employee, thus developing psychological attachment and loyalty.

This relationship is strongly supported by empirical research in different industries. Both Nguyen (2020) and Kumari (2022) indicated that the availability of professional development opportunities has a strong positive effect on employee retention, mediated by augmented job satisfaction and perceived organizational support. In a systematic literature review, Fabian et al. (2024) found that effective implementation of training and career development interventions is strongly related to improved company performance due to the large extent of employee retention and skills competence. Alajlani and Yesufu (2022) and Alsakarneh et al. (2023) applied the findings to the service and education sectors, which proves that talent management practices that include training are central to retention. Although a small proportion of the research in particular settings (e.g., food manufacturing; Jiang and Po, 2023) showed no significant direct correlation, the bulk of the evidence, especially in knowledge- and caring-intensive professions such as employee, supports a positive correlation. This research therefore supports the hypothesis that the perceived investment in professional development has a direct negative effect on turnover intention.

H3: The Working Environment has a positive relationship with Employee Retention.

The third hypothesis deals with the complexity of the working environment that includes physical safety, sufficient resources, adequacy of staffing, supervisor support, and collegiality. In theory, this variable is quite specific since it caters to several categories of needs in both the Maslow and Alderfer framework. A safe and

well-equipped workplace will meet the needs of Safety (Maslow) and Existence (ERG), whereas a supportive, respectful, and collaborative culture will meet the needs of Belongingness (Maslow) and Relatedness (ERG) (Barat, 2022; Xuecheng, Iqbal, and Saina, 2022).

Employee retention is continuously determined by the work environment, which has been established as one of the strongest factors. Alshamrani et al. (2023) and Zainal et al. (2022) also verified that good working conditions are positively yet significantly related to an employee's choice to remain. In healthcare, Wu et al. (2020) were able to show that work environments negatively affect workplace violence and burnout, which, in turn, directly harms retention. On the same note, Bashir et al. (2023) and Oliveira et al. (2021) emphasized that a malign or under-invested setting undermines social welfare and professional drive.

The effect of the surroundings is so vast that it may nullify the positive effect of competitive salary or training when employees feel unsafe, unsupported, or disrespected in their day-to-day life (Prakash & Philimis, 2022; Andriani et al., 2022). Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is that a relationally supportive, safe, conducive work environment is a key predictor of the intention of an employee to stay.

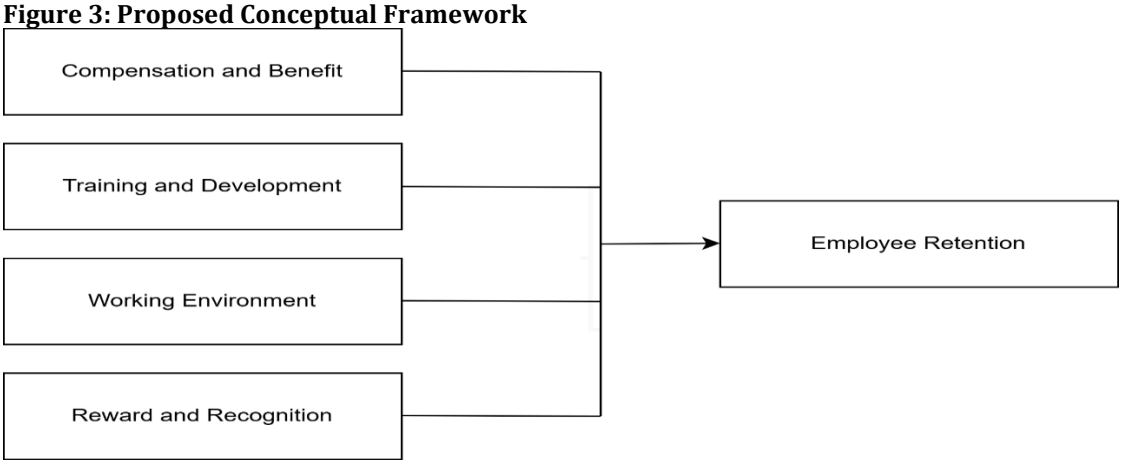
H4: Reward and Recognition have a positive relationship with Employee Retention

The fourth hypothesis is developed on the assumption that reward and recognition systems are critical to serve the need for Esteem needs (Maslow) and need for Relatedness (Alderfer). Existence is met through compensation and psychological needs are met through recognition, where one wants to feel valued, respected and appreciated by others. The esteem needs include self-esteem (competence, achievement) and the esteem of other people (status, recognition) (McLeod, 2024). According to the ERG theory by Alderfer, the need to receive interpersonal recognition and external validation has to be considered an essential element of Relatedness (Barat, 2022).

On a case-by-case basis, however subtle, recognition and retention are empirically related. Caredo et al. (2022) and Syed Noordin et al. (2021) have discovered that both monetary and non-monetary recognition have a considerable impact on employee retention, compensating the employee with a feeling of value and equity in the organization. The authors of the study by Nor et al. (2024) and Geetha and Muthukumar (2022) confirmed that an effective recognition program increases job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn decreases turnover. Tirta and Enrika (2020) particularly noted recognition to be one of the primary drivers of millennial retention and that it works through the mediating variable of job satisfaction. It is necessary to note, though, that this relationship is contingent.

In their Khyber Medical College investigation, Shah et al (2021) discovered that there was a non-significant correlation between recognition programs and their perceived authenticity, equitability and alignment with the organizational culture. Although this is a caveat, empirical evidence and theoretical reasoning paint a more favourable picture of a positive relationship. Thus, the hypothesis of the proposed research is that reward and recognition systems implemented in a meaningful and equitable way can play a crucial role in the emotional attachment of an employee towards the organization and their intention to remain in the organization.

Figure 3: Proposed Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework of the study is that four independent variables, namely, Compensation and Benefits (CB), Training and Development (TD), Working Environment (WE), and Reward and Recognition (RR), have a direct impact on the dependent variable, Employee Retention (ER).

All the theoretical and empirical relationships presented in the previous literature review are combined into the conceptual framework of this research to create an integrated research model. According to it, four key independent variables related to strategic human resource management practices, such as Compensation and Benefits (CB), Training and Development (TD), Working Environment (WE), and Reward and Recognition (RR), have a direct impact on Employee Retention (ER) as the primary dependent variable.

3. Research Methodology

The way this chapter is presented is meant to help the reader understand how research is done step by step. It starts by stating the reason why the selected study design and method are the most appropriate. Then, the population of the study is indicated with clarity, and the sample size and sampling procedure are provided in detail. The questionnaire, which is the information-gathering tool, is then explained. This involves the way it has been made, the components that it comprises, and the scales that were applied in the quantification of each variable. Next, procedures for ensuring that the tool works and is correct are examined. The chapter goes on to discuss how the data will be considered and what statistical tests will be applied to determine whether the hypotheses are accepted.

Research Design

The correlational research design is quantitative and is applied to observe the correlation among the variables without any manipulation. Our methodology is a cross-sectional survey.

The research design used in this study is that of a quantitative, correlational research design and the survey methodology is cross-sectional. The chosen methodological approach is the most suitable decision because it best allows examining and quantifying the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables (Training and Development, Compensation, Work Environment, Reward and Recognition) and the dependent variable (Employee Retention) without affecting the environment or the variables in any way (Singh, Vadakedath, and Kandi, 2023).

This quantitative method is necessary to collect numerical data on a large sample of the population to be able to conduct a statistical analysis that would objectively examine the suggested connections. This research method falls under the positivist paradigm, which focuses on objectivity, generalization, and theoretical confirmation. In this case, it appraises the motivational theories of Maslow and Alderfer regarding retention (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

The correlational design is suitable because the researcher can establish the existence and the strength of systematic correlations between the variables. It is used to determine the association between the variation in employee retention and the variation in the four predictor variables. This design is selected on purpose over an experimental design since the interest is to comprehend the present perceptions and associations of the situation in a naturalistic environment instead of determining cause-and-effect through manipulation (Fulk, 2023).

The cross-sectional survey approach also allows you to get the information from all the employees at a given time. The method is effective and can be selected to create a snapshot of the views, attitudes, and behavioural intentions prevalent within the employee community of Klang Valley, Selangor, at the time the study will take place. A longitudinal design may monitor changes over time, whereas the most helpful and suitable for answering the main research questions and testing the research hypotheses is the cross-sectional design. (Mulisa, 2023).

This quantitative, correlational, and cross-sectional design is not a novel approach to management and HRM research, which is confirmed by the fact that it has been used in other works on retention in different industries, including healthcare, services, and logistics (e.g., Alshamrani et al., 2023; Zainal et al., 2022; Syed Noordin et

al., 2021). Such a mixture of quantitative, correlational, and cross-sectional designs is not new in management and HRM studies, having been adopted in related research in numerous industries, such as healthcare, services, and logistics (e.g., Alshamrani et al., 2023; Zainal et al., 2022; Syed Noordin et al., 2021). It offers the systematic, evidence-based guideline that is required in the realization of the research aims.

Population

The population of the study will include employees who are currently working in full-time clinical roles in designated public and private hospitals and medical centres in the Klang Valley, Selangor area of Malaysia. The professions are challenged by numerous healthcare needs and requirements in this area. With such an easy-to-reach, yet very essential group, we can better understand what retains employees in a high-pressure and urban hospital scenario. The findings can benefit many employees in the country.

The healthcare facilities will be selected strategically to ensure that there is a variety of types of places, i.e., public and private hospitals and private medical centres and clinics. In this way, a wider range of management styles, corporate culture, and potential methods of retaining people will be observed.

Sampling Technique

The sampling strategy adopted in this study was a non-probability, convenience approach, and it was used to select the participants in the target population. Mulisa (2023) adds that in non-probability sampling approaches, such as the convenience sampling technique, the units are selected based on their ease of access, willingness to participate, and accessibility to the researcher. This is unlike in a random selection process, whereby all the individuals in the population have a known probability of getting selected.

The selection of such a methodology is determined by multiple practical and contextual limitations of conducting research in working local healthcare facilities:

Uncomplicated and achievable: It may be difficult and time-consuming to secure the consent of institutions to exercise random sampling in many of the busy hospitals and clinics. Convenience sampling also presents great ease of access to the data collection of the employees who are willing and able to participate when it is convenient, during their shifts or breaks.

The sampling strategy will entail the researcher (or assigned assistants) going to the sampled institutions, seeking on-site permission from unit administrators, and personally requesting the employees on duty and not attending to critically ill patients to fill out the survey. It is not a method that ensures the sample is statistically representative of the whole population, which is a significant weakness that must be considered in the context of the study, but it is an acceptable and often used approach in the exploratory and correlational research of social sciences, including studies on healthcare workforce problems (Mulisa, 2023; Alshamrani et al., 2023).

The research is going to be based on the multi-site approach across the four hospitals given in Table 3 in both the government and non-government sectors, which will help remove the risk of bias and increase sample diversity. The given technique is intended to embrace the range of experiences and perspectives, and this will render the findings more applicable in the healthcare context of the Klang Valley, Selangor.

Justification for Convenience Sampling

Both the considerations of the practical and the methodological essence give the rationale to the choice of a non-probability convenience sampling method as an instrument of this study that can be justified in the framework of healthcare workforce research.

To begin with, accessibility and institutional gatekeeping. There is a high challenge in acquiring access to employees in active clinical settings. Medical centres and hospitals are high-stakes environments where research participation is unimportant to patient care. Getting formal permission to perform random sampling on different shifts, units, and institutions is usually time-consuming and administratively difficult to get through (Mulisa, 2023). Convenience sampling will allow the researcher to sample data from participants who are readily available and are on duty and are willing to participate during specified breaks without interfering with clinical activities.

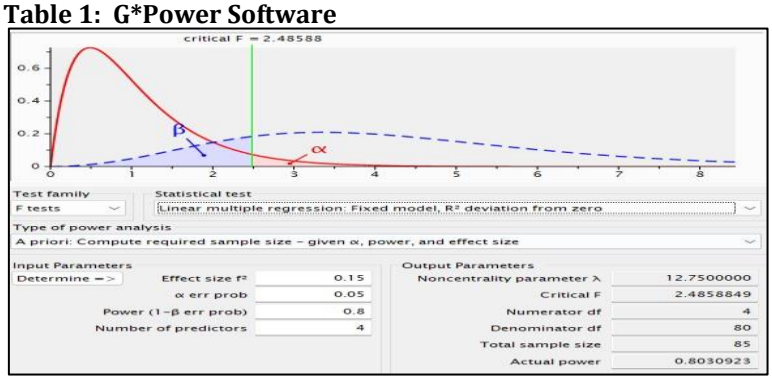
Second, it is resource- and time-efficient. The given research is conducted in the framework of the master's degree programme, which has strict timeframes and financial limitations. Convenience sampling is a feasible and practical way of getting a sufficient sample size in the necessary amount of time, and at the same time, one can conduct a robust statistical analysis (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The fact that the sample size is determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table also confirms that the sample that is obtained is statistically adequate to perform a multiple regression analysis.

Third, methodological precedents in the field of healthcare and retention research. In quantitative research on employee retention, job satisfaction and organisational behaviour, convenience sampling is highly used and accepted by academicians in healthcare and service sectors. Many peer-reviewed articles referenced in this proposal have been effective in applying this method to produce valuable and publishable results (Alshamrani et al., 2023; Syed Noordin et al., 2021; Zainal et al., 2022; Jiang and Po, 2023). Therefore, its use in this case is consistent with the methodological practice.

Fourth, heterogeneity using multi-site sampling. In an aim to reduce the limitation in nature of low generalisability, the current study utilises a multi-site sampling design in four different healthcare institutions, both state and privately owned hospitals. The strategy will increase the sample diversity as it will cover the variation in compensation systems, management approaches, organisational cultures, and demographics, and will make the findings more representative of the population of the Klang Valley employees (Islam et al., 2022; Mulisa, 2023).

Sample Size

Table 1: G*Power Software



The selection of the appropriate sample size is of great importance to ensure that the findings of the study are both statistically valid and reliable. With the accepted methodological principles of a quantitative study, it was followed by a rigorous a priori power analysis was conducted to determine the necessary minimum sample size (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Singh, Vadakedath, and Kandi, 2023).

To perform a multiple linear regression (F-test) of the data, we used the GPower 3.1.9.4 software. The parameters were configured in the following way:
Statistical Test: Linear multiple regression, fixed model, and increase in R2.
Effect Size (f2): 0.15 (a medium effect size, by standard criteria).
The probability of an alpha error (a) is 0.05, and it implies that 5 percent of the time the outcome is significant.
Power (1 - b): 0.80 (an 80 percent probability of rejecting an incorrect null hypothesis).
Quantity of Predictors: 4 (the independent variables: CB, TD, WE, and RR).

The G*Power estimate indicated that no less than 85 people will be required to complete the poll. It is the minimum number of surveys that should be completed to have an 80 percent probability of identifying a statistically significant effect of the independent variables on employee retention, given that an effect of medium magnitude in the population exists. Therefore, the aim was to obtain data from at least 85 employees so as to ensure that the study has sufficient statistical power to test hypotheses with reliability. A sample size that exceeds this minimum is more likely to increase the reliability and validity of the results in the context of the defined population.

The unit of analysis of the study is the individual employee. This methodological term is the basic word that defines the main object or thing where data are collected, compiled, and eventually conclusions are reached. The use of the individual as the unit of analysis is a deliberate outcome of the research questions, theory, and objectives of the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

The research aims to explore how the differences in the perceptions of individual employees about compensation, training, working environment, and recognition relate to the corresponding variation in their behavioural intention to stay with or leave their employer. Constructs that are being tested, including perceived fairness of compensation, satisfaction with growth opportunities, feeling of safety and support, and feeling of being valued are all psychological and subjective, and located in the individual. The research should be conducted on the individual level to adequately evaluate the proposed linkages according to the motivational theories (Alderfer, ERG Theory, and Maslows, Hierarchy).

This choice is enormous in the establishment of the research. It requires a data collection tool (the questionnaire) which will evaluate the perception and intentions of individual employees. It also indicates that correlation and multiple regression are the primary tests that will be applied in statistics to find out how the various variables observed in the units under consideration are related to one another. The primary objective of the research is not a comparison of the organizations, although the employees are employed in various healthcare organizations. Rather, it is to learn enough about the fundamentals of the psychology behind retention amongst individuals in this population group. Consequently, the individual employee will be the most significant element of the future analysis and interpretation of the results.

4. Implications of the Study

The Medical Industry

This study will have important effects on the medical field since it goes beyond anecdotal evidence and provides a theoretical framework based on real-world data for understanding employee retention. It will make three significant contributions that help fill in gaps in theory, practice, and context.

Theoretical Significance: The research plays a proactive role in assessing and improving the predetermined organizational concepts in the specific setting of healthcare. This proposal will explore how the Hierarchy of Needs and ERG Theory, as developed by Maslow and Alderfer, can be applied to the Malaysian employee population, and whether these well-known frameworks of motivation can be used to predict behaviour in a highly stressful, self-sacrificing profession. The results will be able to add to the scholarly discussion as they will either support the universal applicability of the frameworks or point out essential contextual remodels of the healthcare industry, which will benefit the theoretical body of knowledge of health services management and organizational psychology.

Contextual and Methodological Significance: It will address a notable deficiency in location-specific literature. While the factors leading to turnover are thoroughly analysed in Western settings, there is a lack of robust, quantitative research focused on the Malaysian employee workforce. This study will give a full, data-driven look at a healthcare system that is changing quickly. It will give insights that consider the cultural, economic, and institutional factors in the area. Methodologically, it will demonstrate the use of stringent multivariate analysis to address a complex human resource issue in healthcare, serving as a model for future localized studies in similar contexts.

Practical and Strategic Importance: This study will provide hospital administrators, employee directors, and healthcare policymakers with a practical, prioritized diagnostic tool. It does not just give a general list of "important factors." Instead, it seeks to explain how much each one (compensation, training, environment, recognition) counts. This evidence-based hierarchy is immediately valuable because it gives leaders data on where to devote limited resources to get the best results for retention. If, for instance, the work environment is the most important aspect, it would strongly suggest that strategic expenditures in leadership training and staffing ratios are preferable to, say, separate bonus plans. This study will provide a paradigm for building sustainable workforce stability, a crucial prerequisite for great patient care and institutional resilience.

5. Conclusion

The study has provided an elaborate background, which has placed the research in the strategic human resource management field. An accurate problem statement is a formulation of a research gap: no quantitative study has been conducted to compare the concomitant predictive value of Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Work Environment, and Reward and Recognition on Employee retention in the context of the Malaysian healthcare setting. Based on this gap, five research objectives and five research questions are developed. The scope presents the limits of the study, which is limited to employees in some chosen public and private hospitals in the Klang Valley, Selangor, and applies a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design. The importance of the research is expounded in three aspects: theoretical (a validation of motivational theories in the Malaysian healthcare setting), practical (it offers the healthcare administrator an evidence-based hierarchical retention framework), and methodological (it fills a contextual gap in the localised retention research).

This project is thus situated at the confluence of a significant global health concern and a critical local research deficiency. It seeks to go beyond basic discussions about turnover by looking closely at the link between certain HRM practices and keeping employees in Malaysia. This study aims to clarify the strength and importance of relationships by collecting empirical data from employees in specific healthcare facilities in Klang Valley, Selangor. The results are intended to transition from theoretical knowledge to practical application, providing hospital managers and policymakers with evidence-based guidance on formulating focused and effective retention programs. Not only will this add to academic debate, but it will also serve the wider goal of making the Malaysian healthcare system stronger by having a happier and more stable employee workforce.

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