Research Article

The Mediating Effect of Job Expectations on Selected Human Resource Management Practices and Career Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

As companies face changes from globalization, new technologies, and a younger workforce, Human Resource Management (HRM) has become more important in keeping employees satisfied and motivated. This study looked into how HRM practices and job expectations affect the career satisfaction of Generation Z alumni. The researchers used a descriptive quantitative method with 91 participants. The data were analyzed using frequency counts, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. The results showed that HRM practices have a strong and direct effect on career satisfaction. While job expectations also had a positive connection with satisfaction, they did not serve as a link between HRM practices and satisfaction. This means that HR practices alone can already help increase how satisfied employees feel in their careers. Based on the findings, organizations can focus on improving HR practices such as fair salary, open communication, giving feedback, and providing training or growth opportunities. These can make employees feel valued and more engaged at work. The study also suggests that HR planning should support not just work performance but also overall employee well-being.

Keywords: *Generation Z, Human Resource Management Practices, Job Expectations, Career Satisfaction, Mediating Effect*

Background

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a key role in hiring, training, and keeping employees. According to Thirtieth (2022) and Posada (2023), fair pay and recognition help the employees feel valued. Petrescu and Simmons (2008) also added that career growth programs also motivate workers to stay. Likewise, Ling et al. (2018) and Wijaya et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of continuous development in improving employee satisfaction. The way employees experience their jobs and

career growth can be shaped by how they are treated at work. Greenhaus and Kossek (2014) explained that career satisfaction reflects how people see their own progress and chances for advancement. In a related view, Liu et al. (2022) and Jiang and Johnson (2018) found that guidance from leaders and regular feedback help increase that satisfaction. Likewise, Akkermans et al. (2020) mentioned that having freedom at work and a healthy company culture makes employees feel more fulfilled in their careers. Generation Z refers to individuals that are born between 1997 and 2013. By 2025, they are expected to make up around 27% of the global workforce. This group values technology, meaningful work, inclusivity, and ethical behavior in companies (Zurich, 2023; Magano et al., 2020; Pandita, 2021; Pichler et al., 2021). Because of this, employers need to adjust their HR practices to match what Gen Z finds important and to create workplaces that keep them motivated. Job expectations, on the other hand, refer to how employees understand their roles, duties, and what is expected from them.

Method

The researchers employed a quantitative, correlational research design to examine how job expectations mediate the relationship between selected human resource management practices and career satisfaction. The study targeted employed Generation Z alumni (born 1997 and later) from the 2019 batch of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Human Resource Management at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines – Maragondon Campus, with a total population of 119. Using Raosoft with a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 91 was determined through random sampling. Data was collected via an adapted and validated questionnaire, divided into four sections: demographic profile, influence of HR practices, job expectations, and career satisfaction. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used for data analysis to examine the relationships among latent variables.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Demographics

Demographics	
Age	
24-26	89.01%
27-29	9.89%
30 and above	1.10%
Sex	
Male	34.07%
Female	65.93%
Marital Status	
Single	92.31%
Married	7.69%
Employment Status	
Employed Full-time	96.70%
Employed Part-time	1.10%
Self-employed	2.20%

Table 2: Influence of selected Human Resource Management Practices to the Respondents and their Job Expectations

Selected Human Resources Management Practices	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Career Appraisal	4.253	0.643	Very Influential
Career Development	4.289	0.648	Very Influential

Selected Human Resources Management Practices	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Career Training	4.388	0.639	Very Influential
Composite Mean	**4.310**	**0.583**	**Very Influential**
Job Expectations	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Verbal Interpretation**
Prestige Factor	4.484	0.633	Very Influential
Intrinsic Value Factor	4.560	0.583	Very Influential
Extrinsic Value Factor	4.689	0.474	Very Influential
Composite Mean	**4.578**	**0.498**	**Very Influential**

Table 1 revealed that the majority of respondents—primarily female, single, full-time employed individuals aged 24–26. The results indicate on Table 2 shows that all selected human resource management (HRM) practices—Career Appraisal (M = 4.253, SD = .643), Career Development (M = 4.289, SD = .648), and Career Training (M = 4.388, SD = .639)—were perceived as "Very Influential" in shaping employees' experiences, suggesting that these practices significantly contribute to employees' positive career outcomes. These findings are consistent with recent research indicating that well-implemented HRM practices enhance employee motivation, commitment, and satisfaction (Nguyen & Pham, 2022; Gupta & Shaw, 2023). Regarding job expectations, all dimensions—Prestige Factor (M = 4.484), Intrinsic Value Factor (M = 4.560), and Extrinsic Value Factor (M = 4.689)—also received "Very Influential" ratings, with extrinsic factors (e.g., salary, benefits) receiving the highest mean. This supports findings by Lee and Kim (2021), who emphasized that clear alignment between job expectations and organizational offerings significantly enhances career satisfaction. Moreover, the overall high mean scores (grand mean of job expectations = 4.578, SD = .498) underscore the crucial mediating role that job expectations play in translating HR practices into career satisfaction, in line with the mediational models proposed in recent organizational behavior literature (Chen, 2024; Ahmed et al., 2023). These results suggest that HRM strategies tailored to meet employees' multifaceted job expectations are likely to yield more favorable career satisfaction outcomes.

Table 3: Significant relationship between the selected HRM practices, Career Satisfaction and Job Expectations

Variables	Computed p-value	Critical p-value	Decision	Pearson r	Verbal Interpretation
Human Resource Management Practices and Career Satisfaction	0.00001	0.05	Reject Ho	0.665621 881333629	Strong Positive
Human Resource Management Practices and Job Expectation	0.00001	0.05	Reject Ho	0.66777 7083	Strong Positive
Job Expectation and Career Expectation	0.000012	0.05	Reject Ho	0.44107859	Moderate Positive

In Table 3, the computed p-value (p = .00001) indicates a statistically significant relationship between selected HRM practices and career satisfaction, as it is well below the 0.05 threshold. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that HRM practices significantly influence career satisfaction among Generation Z alumni. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r = .666) reveals a strong positive relationship, suggesting that improvements in HRM practices are associated with increased career satisfaction. This aligns with HR attribution theory, which posits that employees' perceptions of HR efforts as supportive and aligned

with their values enhance satisfaction and well-being (Hewett et al., 2019). These findings support recent literature emphasizing the importance of tailored HRM strategies in meeting Gen Z career expectations. Moreover, the computed p-value (p = .00001) indicates a statistically significant relationship between selected HRM practices and job expectations, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (p < .05). Based on the results, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r = .666) shows a strong positive link between HRM practices and career satisfaction. This highly means that when HRM practices improve, employees also tend to feel more satisfied with their careers. This findings aligns with the HR attribution theory, which explains that employees feel happier and more engaged when they view HR efforts as supportive and thus aligned with their personal values (Hewett et al., 2019).

The study also found a significant correlation between HRM practices and job expectations (p = .00001), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (p < .05). The computed coefficient (r = .668) further shows that effective HRM practices are linked with higher job expectations among Generation Z alumni. Similar

findings were noted by Alsakarncha et al. (2023), who explained that strong HR systems boost employee engagement and organizational growth. Harpaz and Rowold (2020) also noted that Generation Z values structure, work-life balance, and meaningful work which are factors that can be strengthened through effective HR practices. In addition, Mesmer-Magnus and Chen (2021) highlighted the role of continuous learning and purpose-driven HR programs in influencing how Gen Z forms their expectations and job satisfaction. The data also revealed a significant relationship between job expectations and career satisfaction (p = 0.000012), confirming that job expectations affect how Gen Z alumni feel about their careers. With a Pearson coefficient of r = 0.441, this result indicates a moderate positive link—showing that higher job expectations generally come with greater career satisfaction. These findings align with the works of Bell et al. (2020) and Qualtrics (2023), which noted Gen Z's strong desire for meaningful work and consistent feedback. Similarly, according to Deloitte (2021) learning and development opportunities are key to improving satisfaction and engagement among Gen Z workers

Table 4: Mediating effect of Job Expectations on selected HRM Practices and Career Satisfaction

	Estimate	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Influence of Human Resource Management Practices → Career Satisfaction (Direct effects)	0.823	0.129	<.001	0.570	1.077
Influence of Human Resource Management Practices → Job Expectation → Career Satisfaction (Indirect effects)	-0.005	0.086	0.953	-0.174	0.164
Influence of Human Resource Management Practices → Career Satisfaction (Total effects)	0.818	0.096	<.001	0.630	1.007

Note: Delta method standard errors, normal theory confidence intervals, ML Estimator

The analysis revealed a strong direct effect (estimate = 0.823, SE = 0.129, p < 0.001) between selected HRM practices and career satisfaction, indicating that improvements in HRM practices are significantly associated with higher career satisfaction among Generation Z alumni. The low standard error confirms the reliability of this estimate. This finding aligns

with Alhammadia and Yahyab (2021), who emphasized that HRM practices are key drivers of employee satisfaction and organizational success by prioritizing the workforce as vital assets. Conversely, the indirect effect of job expectations as a mediator was found to be statistically insignificant (estimate = -0.005, SE = 0.086, p = 0.953), with a 95% confidence

interval ranging from -0.174 to 0.164. These results suggest that job expectations do not mediate the relationship between HRM practices and career satisfaction in this context. As Waninger (2023) notes, Gen Z tends to prioritize work-life balance, personal growth, and meaningful work environments over traditional job expectations, which may explain the lack of a mediating effect.

The total effect of selected HRM practices on career satisfaction among Generation Z alumni from PUP-Maragondon is statistically significant (estimate = 0.818, SE = 0.096, p < .001), with a 95% confidence interval of 0.630 to 1.007. The results clearly suggest that organizations and/or companies should provide more attention to important areas of HRM, such as hiring, training, performance evaluation and employee recognition. Providing in these areas can help the organization meet the expectations of Gen Z while improving employee satisfaction and retention; this is on the practical side. Meanwhile, the results shown on the table suggest that organizations and companies should provide more attention to important areas of HRM, such as hiring, training, performance evaluation and employee recognition. Providing in these areas can help the organization meet the expectations of Gen Z while improving employee satisfaction and retention. This supports Cherif (2020), who also found a connection between HRM efforts and organizational commitment.

Conclusion

The study showed that job expectations do not strongly connect HRM practices and career satisfaction among Generation Z alumni. Instead, HRM practices alone have a clear and direct effect on how satisfied employees feel in their careers. This means that organizations can focus on simple but effective practices like fair pay, open communication, giving feedback, and offering growth or training opportunities. These can already make employees feel more valued and motivated at work. It is important to note that this study only involved one university and used self-reported answers, which may not fully represent all employees. Future researchers may include more schools or work-places and look into other factors such as company culture, leadership, and work-life balance to gain a wider understanding of what shapes career satisfaction.

Acknowledgement

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