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An Examination of Sustainable HRM Practices on Job Performance: An Application of Training as a Moderator

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Abstract: This study attempts to examine the role of sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on job performance and encompasses training as a moderator variable to further evaluate the association among HRM practices and employee's job performance. The study seeks to measure the effect of selection, participation, and employee empowerment on job performance in the publicly owned universities of Pakistan. The descriptive survey research design was utilized for this study. The target population was the entire teaching staff of two publicly owned universities (namely "The University of Agriculture Peshawar" and "Hazara University Mansehra" Pakistan). By using a convenient sampling technique, 130 sample participants were selected from the target population. The reliability scales were tallied by using Cronbach's Alpha. The findings of the study are gleaned by using regression to investigate the role of HRM practices in job performance and whether training moderated the association between HRM practices and employee performance. Through Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS), Hayes process was used regarding the moderation effect of training between HRM practices and job performance. The main results of regression analysis validate that HRM practices, such as selection, participation, and employee empowerment, have a significant and positive effect on employee job performance. Specifically, the study suggests that training significantly moderates the effect of HRM practices on the performance of employees and that sustainability of HRM practices has a great impact on job performance. Based on the outcomes the study confirms that the proposed hypotheses are statistically significant. Furthermore, directions for future research are offered.

Keywords: selection; participation; employee empowerment; sustainability; job performance; training; sustainable HRM practices; public sector universities; Pakistan

1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the act of managerial activities and responsibilities concerned with developing and maintaining a competent employee [1]. HRM is concerned with the personnel in an organization and how they contribute to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Senyucel [2] defined HRM as a "combination of people-centered management practices that recognizes employees as assets and those that are geared to creating and maintaining a skillful and committed workforce for achieving organizational goals". The HRM function of an organization concentrates

on the management level. It consists of practices that help the organization to effectively manage employees during the different phases of the employment, including pre-hire, staffing, and post-hire. HRM practices directly affect employee motivation, their behavior, and skill improvement to boost organizational performance [3].

The organizations use different HRM practices to achieve their appropriate goals. Accurate human resource management in an organization, such as a friendly environment, pay appreciation for performance, providing feedback to employees, a fair evaluation system for employees, an award ceremony, employee empowerment, extrinsic and intrinsic motivational rewards, recruitment and selection, training and involvement of employees, and performance evaluation, guarantee overall organizational performance.

HRM practices involve all management decision and actions. The role of practices starts with the hiring of people by an organization. Thus, appointing new personnel requires the achievement of HRM practices [4]. While employed, employees must to be included in the organization's structure through training and socialization. After this process, key elements of HRM are evaluated in the development of staff members and encourages them through compensation and reward systems [5]. Employee selection, training, assessment, communication, and compensating one's domestic workers could pose many difficulties and challenges for organizations [6]. It is very difficult to manage personnel in an efficient way. The personnel issue needs to be precisely confronted, otherwise it will harm the benefits of the organization [7].

HRM practices could be an obvious cure to motivate the personnel's expertise, attitude, and manner, which affect the performance of organizations as well as employees. A positive employee attitude can help them give maximum effort in the hopes of getting promoted in the organization [8]. Previous studies have demonstrated a direct and positive connection among HRM practices and job performance [6,9]. HRM practices also show a positive relationship with organizational performance [10]. With the HRM practices implementation, everyone can be self-assured that personnel will be fairly treated [11].

In addition, some comparable studies with the same concept have revealed a significant relationship of HRM practices and job performance [12–14]. Siddiqi et al. [12] have proposed a significant role of HR Practices in the academic staffs' performance. Further, he described that by training existing staff, the organization can obtain precise and accurate knowledge, and better direction to increase academic staff performance.

New public management is adapting traditional practices of HR in the public sector area of Pakistan, from permanent appointments to seniority and performance-based endorsement [15]. The effect of HRM practices on employee performance has been the subject of much attention. Previously, researchers have conducted research in many countries regarding HRM practices [16,17]. Sustainable HRM is an innovative concept, which is still in the pioneering stage and reflects attempts to link sustainability to HRM. The definition for sustainable HRM was recently presented by Ehnert et al. [18],

“... the adaption of HRM strategies and practices that enables the achievement of financial, social, and ecological goals, with an impact inside and outside of the organization and over a long-term time horizon, while controlling for unintended side effects and negative feedback”.

Minor studies have investigated this concept in developing countries, such as Pakistan [19,20]. However, evaluation of the sustainable HRM practices on job performance across the university sector is nearly non-existent and very limited. Hence, the current study deliberately assesses this concept in Pakistan. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of sustainable HRM practices in job performance in publicly owned universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KPK) in Pakistan. To the authors' knowledge there has never been a study carried out in regard to the correlation between sustainable HRM practices and employee job performance in the aforementioned province of Pakistan. Thus, the present study is based on an inventive idea whose purpose is to examine the hypothetical association of sustainable HRM practices and job performance. Furthermore, the present study argues the role of HRM practices and hypothesizes the effect of training on job performance.

Additionally, the present study observes the moderating role of training among the association of HRM practices and job performance. In the current study, the HR practices that are considered are selection, participation, and employee empowerment, and a call for how these practices can play a role in employee job performance. The main reason for choosing these practices is that they connect sustainability to HRM practices. Sustainable HRM is one of the innovative concepts that some scholars and practitioners have researched [16,21]. As there is no previous study regarding sustainable HR practices (functions), in our study we choose sustainable HRM practices to evaluate employee performance. The purpose of the study is to increase the knowledge of sustainable HRM by revealing the practices, such as selection, training participation, and employee empowerment on employee performance. The present study has made an attempt to address the research questions that remain unsettled regarding HRM practices and how the organization can avoid failure by motivating employee interest. Employee interest in HRM practices is needed to evaluate the extent to which they are pursuing HR practices in accomplishing their career goals.

The current study examines the role of sustainable HRM practices on employee job performance and focuses on the moderating role of training between the association of HRM practices and job performance that exists in the mentioned universities. Here, the independent variables in HRM Practices are selection, participation, and employee empowerment. The dependent variable is job performance and training is the moderating variable.

The rest of the article consists of the subsequent sections. Second, relevant literature is reviewed and hypotheses are developed. In Section Three, research methods are presented. In Section Four, the results of the study are presented. Section Five includes discussion, conclusions, and recommendations. Furthermore, the limitations of the study and future research directions are discussed.

2. Review of Literature and Hypotheses

2.1. Sustainable HRM Practices

Sustainable HRM can be explained as “the adaptation of HRM practices and strategies that enable them to achieve the financial, ecological and social goals of the organization over a long term horizon, while controlling for negative feedback and unintended side effects” [22]. The Paradox theory creates links between sustainability and HRM by Enhert and Herry [23]. They recall this theory as “sustainability”, as it is defined as reproduced resources and balance consumed, bringing about paradoxical choice situations and pressure for performance in sustainable HRM that need to be keenly dealt with and that can be a source for transformation and innovation”. HR practices and job performance have been the subject matter of several research scholars. They have conducted research studies that have been preserved in their precious books and collections. Development and formulation of HR practices that can ensure a high level of employee performance result in increased attainment and achievement. High-quality management practices are a key driver of job performance [24]. The Action theory approach of performance provides various features that help to describe the directive method of learning and behavior. This approach not only includes the repertoire of training techniques but helps to illuminate the high order cognitive functioning that helps individuals regulate their learning and performance [25]. Paille et al. [26] argued that sustainable HRM contributes to improving green performance through staff members and organizational support, and has direct and indirect effects on the organization and the labor force. Wikhamn [16] explored the impact of sustainable HRM practices on customer satisfaction in Swedish hotels. The findings of his study indicated customer satisfaction is dependent on sustainable HR practices in the organization. He concluded in his study that sustainable HR practices impact customer satisfaction positively and these practices have a significant role in enhancing organizational performance.

Sustainable HRM highlights the importance of HR practices for organizational outcomes that go beyond financial performance [18]. Developing more sustainable practices is important to ensure a clean Earth in the future, healthy and happy employees, and many others emotive issues that

some business leaders brush off. However, sustainability is good business. When employees of the organization truly care about mitigating waste and improving the efficiency of the business, it can pay off in dollars. Sustainability is something that every forward-thinking company should be at least considering when it comes to developing strategies for improvement and growth.

According to the Ehnert [27], maintains sustainable HRM entails not only attracting and retaining motivated and talented employees but also providing them with a healthy work environment and opportunities to develop.

It is important to define the characteristics of both sustainable HRM practices and sustainable HRM because they have different meanings. Sustainable HRM is highly concerned with context, for instance, the potential harm of HRM practices on employees. Researchers examined sustainable HRM based on the synthesis and simultaneous effects of high-performance work systems on organizational performance and employee harm and they have found that flexible high-performance work arrangements, such as tele-working and compressed working week, could have a negative effect on organizational performance. It is important to indicate particular HRM policies considered as part of a high-performance work arrangement and analyze their impacts on organizational profitability and employee wellbeing [28]. Another interesting study discusses the strategic potential of sustainability as a concept for HRM and examines the key paradoxes of sustainable HRM. The results of this study show that realizing efficient and effective, as well as sustainable, HRM systems may create paradoxical choice situations and tensions that need to be actively coped with [29]. De Prins et al., in 2015, defined the “ingredients of sustainable HRM” in terms of “Respect”, “Openness”, and “Continuity” (ROC), and they broaden the scope from a single career-perspective to a more integrated HRM and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) perspective. Based on these researches, we can say that sustainable human resource management is a promising domain for theory-building in HRM, focusing on both research and practice [30]. Literature supporting the role of HR in promoting, driving, or enabling sustainability in organizations abound. The central role of the HR function enables it to play a key role in promoting sustainability practices through broad, deep, internal and external relationships. Researchers tend to focus on strategic issues and sustainability. This study addresses that gap by presenting a framework of suggested sustainable HRM practices. The current study is paying special concentration and interest to three HR practices that manipulate job performance. They are selection, participation and employee empowerment. Also, training is used as a moderator. The views of the numerous research scholars about job performance are enumerated in the following sections.

2.1.1. Selection and Job Performance

The HR function should embrace sustainability, not only for organizational effectiveness and long-term economic benefits, but also for ethical reasons and for responsible leadership [31]. Selection is an essential practice of HR whenever it selects the right people with necessary characteristics, knowledge, and qualification in the right job to fit the organization’s environment and culture [32]. It is accomplished by finding the right person for the particular job that fulfills the unfilled post of the organization [6]. Jepsen and Grob [33] demonstrated in their study that applying a sustainable selection process in the organization shows not only a commitment to the planet, people, and profits, but may serve as the competitive differentiator in the employee marketplace.

Johnson [34] examined the selection of qualified and top employees in the organizations. It is an effective way to achieve organizational goals. He suggested that the proper selection process is helpful in the increase of sales and output of the organization. Harris [35] highlighted that having a fair method of employee selection is very effective in achieving the organizational goal.

Kepha et al. [36] determined the recruitment and selection influence of the performance of the employees in Kenya research institutes. There is growing evidence that HRM practices plays a significant role in attaining high quality personnel. Specifically, selection has been singled out as a main practice of HRM that can have an influence on the level of employee performance in the organization. The findings of their study showed that the relationship between recruitment and

selection and employee performance were highly significant ($p = 0.000$). Oaya et al. [37] investigated the recruitment and selection strategy on employee job performance. Their study revealed that the best method of the recruitment and selection is to enable organizations to select a productive and creative workforce. Further studies described that fair selection on the basis of the capability of the candidates creates enthusiasm in the candidates and they perform better for the organization. On the basis of the above, it is clear that employee selection has an important role in performance. Thus, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Sustainable selection process is positively related to Job performance.*

2.1.2. Participation and Job Performance

Participation is a process by which all employees of an organization are involved in, and have authority and influence on, decisions related to development activities that will affect them. Some prior studies demonstrated that participation of employees is positively correlated to employee performance [38]. Bhatti et al. [39] revealed that employee participation and involvement in the workplace affect the employee's job performance. Paul [40] revealed employees who are close up to the work of the organization are skilled and the most competent to make suggestion regarding improvements and success of the organization. Therefore, employees of the organization should be authorized and allowed to increase their participation in the organization's decision making [41]. Wagner [42] explored the association among participation and the performance and satisfaction. Findings of his study revealed that participation can have a statistically significant effect on performance.

A sustainable work system and employee participation encourages and promotes business sustainability. On the basis of the above arguments, it is clear that employee participation plays a significant role in job performance. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Sustainable employee Participation has a positive correlation to Job performance.*

2.1.3. Employee Empowerment and Job Performance

Empowerment means encouraging and motivating the employees to make decisions with higher level management of the organization. Employee empowerment is defined as providing the power and authority to employees to make decisions for the organization. There are some observed facts to maintain the use of employee involvement. Spreitzer and Mishra [43] stated a study of forty-three firms in the U.S. automotive industry. The Big Three (Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors) proved a positive association between employee involvement and productivity of labor. Empowerment is also an arrangement of power-granting, in which all the employees of the organization can make decisions themselves with independence, information, and responsibility [44,45].

Geralis and Terziovski [46] showed that practice of empowerment has a positive effect on output, service quality, and performance in Australian banks. Likewise, more empowered teams were found to be more proactive and productive and had job satisfaction; customer service level was higher, as was team commitment and organizational commitment, than those with lower levels of empowerment [47]. Chebat and Kollias [48] showed that empowerment affects the behavior of employees and their attitudinal nature (i.e., self-efficacy, role conflict, adaptability, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction). The outcomes of empowerment are well known, which enhance its perception. Personnel and other organizational aspects should be considered to achieve more insight into employees' perception of empowerment [49].

Bakri [50] demonstrated that employee empowerment has a significant influence on job performance. It has been found by many scholars around the world that job satisfaction of employees has a positive association with employee performance. They also expressed in the study that

there is a significant relationship among empowerment and job satisfaction and job performance. Essentially, employee empowerment provides sustainable opportunities for employees in accordance with their aspirations and talents to acquire knowledge and skills and to apply them in a favorable work environment in order to achieve individual and organizational performance. Therefore, we posit that:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Sustainable Employee Empowerment is positively related to Job performance.*

2.1.4. Training and Job Performance

Training is defined as the giving of helpful and useful skills, ideas, and knowledge by teaching to be able to perform a practical job in a skilled way. Training is the continuous effort and attempt designed to improve the skill and performance of the employee [51]. Employees who are well-trained can easily share their skills and updated knowledge by using their creativity to improve the output of the organization [52]. Nassazi [53] assessed the effects of training on an employee's job performance in telecommunication companies in Uganda. A qualitative research approach was adopted using a questionnaire distributed to 120 respondents. The findings indicated that training has a positive effect on employee performance. The results of his study could prove useful to HR policy decision-makers, managers, and academic institutions, as well as government.

Githinji [54] explored the effects of training on employee performance among international civil servants in Somalia. He collected primary data from the 144 staff from the United Nations Support Office for the African Mission in Somalia. Findings of his study revealed that in general, training improves employee engagement and helps to improve the performance of the employees. Further training increases employee enthusiasm for work. In short, training and employee job performance have a significant and positive relationship.

Amos and Natamba [55] showed that job training has a positive and significant effect on employee job performance. Hanif [56] examined the effect of training on employee performance in the hotel industry of Lahore, Pakistan. His study found that job training improved employees' skills and enthusiasm for their work. In short, training is a learning process that increases knowledge and sharpens skills, enhancing employee performance. Like sustainability training, fostering workplace dialogue can also increase sustainability knowledge and skills in an organization. Therefore, on the basis of aforementioned literature, it is plausible that training plays a significant role in job performance. Therefore, we posit that:

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Training is positively related to Job performance.*

2.1.5. Moderating Role of Training in HRM Practices and Job Performance

Skinner's theory of reinforcement emphasizes the learning behavior of a person and suggests that the learner will repeat behavior that is attached with a positive outcome or result. This theory suggested that the training and development programs should be aligned with the organizational objectives and a positive outcome should be expected with such training programs [57]. Social learning theory is a theory of learning process and social behavior, which proposes that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement [58]. Expectancy theory was originally presented by Victor Vroom; this theory can be used to influence employee behavior. Employees would be motivated to be involved in Human Resource Development activities if they expect that it will benefit them by enhancing their performance. Employee will feel encouraged to attend training if they expect that it will enhance their knowledge and if they know that the outcome of these efforts will be rewarded [59]. These theories play vital roles in influencing employee behavior in the organization.

The ultimate goal of Human resource development is to influence employee behavior (task performance and organizational citizenship behavior) to enhance both individual and organizational performance and to enable both to achieve their goals. Therefore, it can be concluded that all the aforementioned theories are very useful in influencing employee behavior. This ultimately would improve employee and organizational performance.

The above literature shows that HRM practices, such as selection, participation, and employee empowerment, have a positive and significant relationship with job performance [34,39,48]. Additionally, prior studies show that employee empowerment has a positive and significant moderating effect on the association of HRM practices and job performance [60], while employee participation has moderating effects on the relationship between high performance work systems and the perception of quality of care [61]. However, the moderation of training still needs to be explored. Hence, on the basis of this, we examined the moderating role of training on the relationship of sustainable HRM practices (i.e., selection, participation, employee empowerment) and job performance. Thus, we assume that:

Hypothesis 5a (H5a). *Training has a moderate effect between the relationship of sustainable selection and job performance.*

Hypothesis 5b (H5b). *Training has a moderate effect among the relationship of sustainable participation and job performance.*

Hypothesis 5c (H5c). *Training has a moderate effect on the correlation between sustainable employee empowerment and job performance.*

3. Research Methods

3.1. Conceptual Framework

The present study focused on exploring the association among sustainable HRM Practices and job performance with the insertion of training as a moderator variable in publicly owned universities of KPK, Pakistan. The conceptual model (Figure 1) of the study has been constructed on the basis of a literature review.

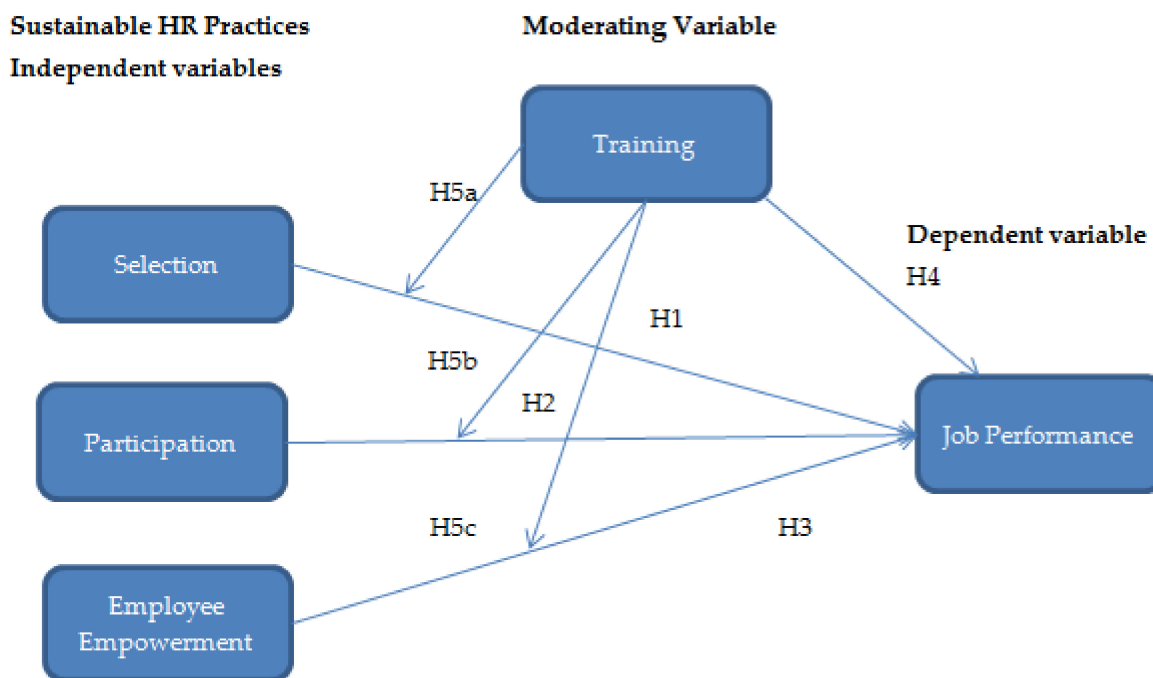


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study and hypotheses.

Figure 1 showed that in our study, we have chosen three sustainable HRM practices, namely, sustainable selection, sustainable participation, and sustainable employee empowerment. A sustainable selection process can have a long-term impact on an organization's profitability, productivity, and employee happiness. Sustainable participation of employees means achieving living and working conditions that support people in engaging and remaining in work throughout an extended working life. Furthermore, employee empowerment means giving employees a certain degree of autonomy and responsibility for decision-making regarding their specific organizational tasks. Employee empowerment should be sustainable; this practice positively effects the organization's output. These practices can make the biggest impact on the individual and organizational performance.

The term sustainable HRM practices provides a dual relationship between sustainability and HRM practices. In other words, HRM practices improve sustainability, and as a result, sustainability contributes better to the longer-term performance of the firm. In the present research, sustainable HRM practices reflect those practices that contribute to enhancing sustainability, which results in improving long term performance of the firm.

The model tested in this study is "fair selection of employees promotes employee's job performance (H1)", and "selection relates positively to job performance". Participation, employee empowerment, and training also positively correlate to job performance (H2, H3, and H4, respectively). In addition, training is the moderator between sustainable HRM practices (selection, participation, and employee empowerment) and job performance (H5a, H5b, and H5c). The conceptual framework and assumed hypotheses of the present study are given in Figure 1.

3.2. Population, Sample, and Procedure

The population considered for this study was two publicly owned universities, namely Hazara University situated in District Mansehra, and Agriculture University Peshawar (Peshawar Campus) from Pakistan. The number of faculty members of Hazara University and Agriculture University were reported as 360 and 293, respectively (Source: Registrar office). Data was gathered from the faculty members of the selected universities and hard copies of close-ended questionnaires were distributed individually from May to July, 2017. However, the total sample size of 130 was selected through the convenient sampling technique. The majority of the respondents (70: 53.4%) were male

and the remainder was female staff; almost 29% of them were between 36–40 years old. The majority of the respondents (60: 45.5%) had 5-years job experience. Furthermore, 60.3% of the respondents were lecturers and the remainder were assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors. Lastly, 52.7% of the respondents held a MS or MPhil qualification and 41.2% held doctorate degrees. Table 1 reported the demographic data of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic data for respondents.

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	70	53.4
Female	60	45.8
Age		
25–30 years	26	19.8
31–35	51	38.9
36–40	38	29
41-above	15	11.5
Experience		
1–5 years	60	45.5
6–10 years	54	41.2
11–15 years	11	8.4
16-above	03	3.8
Designation		
Lecturers	79	60.3
Assistant Professor	43	32.8
Associate Professor	03	2.3
Professor	05	3.8
Qualification		
MS/MPhil	69	52.7
Doctor	54	41.2
Master	07	5.3
Total	130	100

3.3. Data Collection Instruments (Measures)

To the best of author’s knowledge, there is no validated scale for measuring sustainable HRM practices. Therefore, in the current study, the construction of instruments is based on traditional HRM practices. These may not cover the entire scope of sustainable HRM practices as proposed by scholars in the field but they do reveal practical examples that enable the organization to achieve its goals while reproducing its HR base. These instruments are elaborated below:

Selection (S): Selection is the process of collecting information about the job candidate in order to decide who should be hired for positions [62]. A three items questionnaire was used for assessment of selection, adopted from Wright et al. [63]. Items included “candidates for this job take formal tests before being hired”. Items of the variables are presented in Appendix A.

Training (T): Training is an attempt to enhance employee skill, knowledge, and performance in the organization. In the education sector, providing training opportunities for academic staff is a more professional orientation towards their function as teachers. In this sector the aim of training focuses on boosting teaching skills. A five-items questionnaire for training was used for this study, which was initially developed by Ahmad [64]. The questionnaire for training included items such as, “I (teaching staff) receive training to perform task”, and “I (teaching staff) receive training to execute multiple tasks”, and so on. Items are presented in Appendix A.

Participation (P): Participation is a process through which all the staff members of an organization are involved in every part of the activity and have power over decisions related to development activities of the organization. Participation was measured with the five-item scale adopted from Scott et al. [65]. Items for this variable were included “my seniors are receptive and listen to my suggestions and ideas, and I am free to decide how to do my job”.

Employee Empowerment (EE): Employee empowerment is as “a transfer of power” from the employer to the employees [66]. The concept of empowerment increases employees’ motivation at work in the organization through the allocation of authority to the lowest level employees in an organization. Employee empowerment was measured with a twelve-item scale developed by Spreitzer [43]. An example item is, “I (employee) can decide on my own how to go about doing my work”. Appendix A presents all items of the variables.

Job Performance (JP): Performance is the process or action of accomplishing or carrying out an action, task, or function. It is the accomplishment of a given task. Job performance is an employee’s output and results in terms of quantity and quality expected from every employee in the organization. Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well. It also relates to the act of doing a job. It means reaching a goal or set of goals within a job, role, or organization [67]. Job performance was measured with a five-item scale. These were adopted from Janssen and Van [68] and used for assessment of employee job performance. Example items include, “employee (I) always completes the duties on time”. These measures used a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Likert scaling is a bipolar and unipolar scaling method that measures a positive or negative response to a statement [69].

3.4. Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 (IBM: Chicago, USA) was used for data analysis. The major results of all variables in this study were established by Cronbach’s alpha reliability test, descriptive and correlation tests, regression analysis, and Hayes process moderation.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability Analysis

A Cronbach’s alpha reliability range above 70% for each variable indicates that the collected data is reliable [70]. Hair et al. [71] recommended that given data would be considered reliable if the alpha value was greater than 60 percent [72]. In Table 2, the results of the Cronbach’s alpha showed that inclusive data is observed within a given reliability range.

Table 2. Measures of various HRM practices.

	No.of Items	Alpha Value	Comments
Selection	03	0.60	Reliability of 0.60 and 0.70 or more than 0.70 is the standard criteria for demonstrating the internal consistency of new and recognized scales [73]
Training	05	0.85	
Participation	05	0.82	
Employee Empowerment	12	0.76	
Job Performance	05	0.60	

4.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Mean, standard deviation, and correlation of the variables are stated in Table 3. Correlation analysis is used as a productive approach to test the relationship between the two variables, whether it is solid or weak [74]. Job performance is positively correlated with selection ($r = 0.299, p < 0.01$) and training ($r = 0.242, p < 0.01$), and with participation and employment ($r = 0.358, p < 0.01$) ($r = 0.384, p < 0.01$), respectively. These results support the main hypotheses of the study.

Table 3. Mean standard deviation and correlation.

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4
Job performance	2.00	0.617	1			
Selection	1.20	0.825	0.299 **	1		
Training	1.00	0.898	0.242 **	0.017	1	
Participation	1.00	0.733	0.358 **	0.285 **	0.051	1
Employee Empowerment	2.00	0.585	0.384 **	0.11	0.086	0.288 **

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

4.3. Regression Analyses and Results Explanation

For the present study, the multiple linear regression (SPSS Version 25) was used to test the main hypotheses. We used mean values of the variables for the analysis. Mean values provide consolidated measurement of the variable and all the dimensions of the variable into a single standardized value [75]. Table 4 results illustrate the effect that HRM practices have on employee job performance. Here, HR practices are the predictor variables and job performance is the predicted variable. For this study, three HRM practices, including selection, participation, and employee empowerment are used as predictor variables and training is used as a moderating variable.

Table 4. Regression analysis between HRM practices and job performance.

	Job Performance				
	B	T-Statistic	p-Value	F-Statistics	R-Square
Selection	0.224	3.547	0.001	12.579	0.089
Participation	0.302	4.342	0.000	18.85	0.128
Employee Empowerment	0.405	4.708	0.000	22.169	0.148
Training	0.167	2.827	0.005	7.992	0.059

Dependent variable: Job Performance. Independent variables: selection, participation, empowerment; $p < 0.05$ is significant.

In Table 4, the main findings of the regression analysis indicate the relationship between HRM practices, such as selection, training, participation, and employee empowerment with the dependent variable “job performance”. The findings of the regression analysis illustrate that selection and job performance have a significant and positive relationship with the results of (R-square = 0.089; $F = 12.57$; $\beta = 0.224$; t -value = 3.54; and p -value = 0.001). Value of R^2 shows 78 percent variation occurred in employee performance due to selection. Beta value has a positive sign, which shows that selection and employee performance have a positive relationship. The T-value is greater than 2 and p -value is less than 0.05, which means variables have a positive and significant relationship. Hence, the results support Hypothesis 1. Also, Table 4 depicts the findings of participation and job performance (R-square = 0.128; $F = 18.85$; $\beta = 0.302$; $T = 4.34$; p -value = 0.000). The R-square value implies that a 12 percent change happens in the predicted variable due to a predictor variable. Furthermore, p -value is significant with the value of 0.000, and the value of the T-ratio is greater than 2, which means the explanatory variable participation and outcome variable job performance have a positive and significant relationship. Therefore, the results support Hypothesis 2.

Similarly, the regression analysis indicated the positive and significant effect of employee empowerment on job performance (R-square = 0.148; $F = 22.16$; $\beta = 0.405$; $T = 4.70$; p -value = 0.000). In the results, the Beta value reveals a positive sign, the p -value is less than 0.05, and value of the T-ratio is greater than 2, which mean that these variables have a positive and significant relationship. The value of R^2 shows 14 percent variation in the dependent variable because of employee empowerment. Therefore, outcomes fully support Hypothesis 3.

Furthermore, we regressed and found out the relationship of the moderator variable Training and job performance with the findings ($R^2 = 0.05$; $F = 7.99$; $\beta = 0.167$; $T = 2.82$; and p -value = 0.005). The value of R-square implies 5 percent variation in the dependent variable due to the moderator

variable (Training). The value of Beta is positive, and p -value is significant at the 0.005, so the moderator variable Training and predicted variable job performance positively and significantly correlate to each other. Therefore, results are fully support Hypothesis 4.

4.4. Hayes Process Moderation Analysis

We employed Hayes process (version 3) [76] through the computer software SPSS (version 25) to confirm the moderation hypotheses for the present study. To analyze the direct effect of selection, participation, and employee empowerment on job performance, we used regression analysis technique, as well as for moderation impact of Training we used Hayes process. In Table 5, Hayes process [76] moderation (Moderator1, Moderator2, and Moderator3) are discussed regarding moderation effect of Training between HRM practices and job performance. In Hypothesis 5a, the present study predicted that Moderator1 (selection* training) has significant and positive effect on job performance. In Table 5, findings showed that $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.58$, so these results support Hypothesis 5a. Moderator2 (participation*training) has a significant and positive effect on job performance, with the results showing $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.66$. Therefore, these outcomes fully support Hypothesis 5b. Furthermore, Hypothesis 5c is acceptable because Moderator3 (employee empowerment*training) has a positive and significant influence on job performance. Findings showed that $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.062$, so these are fully support Hypothesis 5c.

Table 5. HRM Practices with inclusion of moderation and Job Performance (Hayes Process Moderation).

	Job Performance				
	B	T-Statistic	p -Value	F-Statistics	R-Square
Moderator1 (Selection*Training)	0.058	4.60	0.000	21.18	0.142
Moderator2 (Participation*Training)	0.066	4.96	0.000	24.65	0.162
Moderator3 (Employee Empowerment*Training)	0.062	4.79	0.000	23.01	0.152

Calculation by using Hayes process (version 3).

5. Discussion

In the present study, we scrutinized the effect that sustainable HRM practices (selection, participation, employee empowerment) have on employee performance, as well as the moderating role of training in public sector universities of Pakistan. The current study explored an affirmative and positive association among sustainable HRM practices and job performance. Moreover, the study showed that training has a positive moderating role in examining the correlation between HRM practices (selection, participation, employee empowerment) and job performance. Furthermore, the practical implications are discussed.

The present study contributes to the literature on sustainable HRM and expands the knowledge by illustrating the interrelation among sustainable HRM practices and employee job performance. HRM practices have become a popular field of research for researchers and practitioners due to the significant effect on organizational performance and innovative performance [77,78]. The current study fills the mentioned gap by investigating the correlation between sustainable HRM practices (selection, participation, employee empowerment) and job performance in the context of publicly owned universities in Pakistan. We found a positive connection between sustainable HRM practices and job performance. In this study, outcomes demonstrated that the explanatory variable selection and the dependent variable job performance have a positive relationship. Our findings of selection and job performance are consistent with the past research results of Nadarajah et al. [6] and Mol et al. [79].

In the present study, we also derive a positive and significant effect of participation on job performance. These findings were in-line with the previous research results of Bhatti and Qureshi [39]. They developed their study in the banking sector of Pakistan. Employee empowerment also has a positive and significant effect on the job performance. The main outcomes of the explanatory variables employee empowerment and job performance are compatible with the previous study outcomes of Engstrom et al. [80] and Choi et al. [81]. They showed similar findings in their studies.

Furthermore, training and job performance have a positive and significant association and the findings are consistent with the prior studies [82–84]. The outcomes of this study fully supported the hypotheses that there is positive relationship among HRM practices and employee job performance.

Many studies have been undertaken regarding the direct relationship between HRM practices and job performance, as well as organizational performance [77,85]. A research study for the moderating role of training between sustainable HRM practices and employee performance is still being explored. The current study scrutinized this gap and showed that sustainable HRM practices (selection, participation, employee empowerment) have a positive and significant influence on job performance with inclusion of training. Therefore, training positively moderates the relationship of HRM practices and job performance.

Likewise, the selection with inclusion of training has affirmative and positive effects on job performance. Also, participation with inclusion of training has significant and positive effects on job performance and employee empowerment. The inclusion of moderating variable training has affirmative and positive impacts on employee job performance. This suggests that proper implementation of sustainable HRM practices can improve employee job performance.

6. Conclusions and Recommendation

The most important and powerful factor in an organization is Human Resources (HR) or Human Assets. Recently, human resources have become one of most valuable resources or assets that cannot be denied in the public sector. Sustainable HRM is the only way forward for HR if it wants to stay relevant. The word sustainability means “longer” or “durable”; it means that what you do today has a positive effect on tomorrow. However, few organizations are capable of being completely bound to its potential. The purpose of the current study was to recognize the correlation between sustainable HRM practices, such as selection, participation, empowerment on job performance, and training as a moderator. This study was carried out in two publicly owned universities (Hazara University Mansehra and the Agriculture University Peshawar) from Pakistan. Findings and other relevant results of the study confirmed that HR Practices, such as selection, training, participation, and employee empowerment, have a significant and positive effect on job performance. It was also identified that training has a positive moderating role on job performance. HRM practices have a positive and significant effect on job performance in both types (whether or not training is incorporated as a moderator). This study shows that sustainable HRM practices accompany job performance by indicating the significant moderating role of training.

HR practices can play a significant and essential role in employee performance in any organization. The findings of the recent study suggest that universities (organizations) in the KPK can enhance their performance by implementing high-involvement HRM practices. Therefore, in order to improve employee performance, organizations should implement sustainable HRM practices to strengthen and boost their future performance. Our study contributes to the sustainable HRM research and systems [23] by presenting HRM practices as sustainable HRM practices in the education sector (university level). However, findings suggest that applying sustainable HR practices would lead to improved organizational and employee performance, as well as employee well-being. The current study makes a contribution to the understanding of sustainable HRM. The practical contribution of this study is the observation of sustainable HRM practices used in the university sector (organizations), and how to implement these practices to improve employee performance. Thus, it has stated that the implementation of sustainable HRM policies plays a central role in boosting employee performance. The present study showed that selection criteria must be clear for all employees to be fair and objective. Furthermore, an employee empowerment system should be launched within the organization; when the organization empowers personnel it will make them more confident and freer to do work in their own way, which is very essential to achieve organizational goals. An additional piece of the practical implications of the current study is that a well-designed training program should be designed for workers to improve their talent and ability to perform current jobs.

It is recommended that the management of the organization revise its sustainable HRM practices by considering employee problems, identifying them and confronting the inequities they face. The acknowledgment method should be launched in order that an employee's effort can be properly acknowledged and rewarded. To achieve the required objectives, the organization should encourage the employee's effort through awards system and motivate them in different ways, rather than discouraging them based on poor performance or unfair conditions.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

It is extremely essential to highlight some limitations of this study. First, for the data collection, the cross-sectional study design was applied; in order to avoid the uncertainty of a casual relationship, future research should employ a longitudinal study design to the present study model. Secondly, the study's outcomes are only being generalized to the faculty members in publicly owned universities in Pakistan. It means the existing study is limited to one sector; therefore, it is suggested that to overcome the limitations of the present research, it should be increased to other institutions and organizations. Furthermore, the current study is carried out in the context of one developing country, Pakistan. Future studies should be performed by investigating the model in other less-developed nations to boost generalizability of the outcomes. Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to consider other HRM practices, such as reward systems, pay for performance, promotion, and fair evaluation systems, while focusing on employee job performance. Finally, future researchers should be required to identify the additional possible moderator and mediator inclusion of the variables in this process.

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Appendix A (Questionnaires)

Selection

1. Candidates undergo structured interviews (job-related questions, same questions asked of all candidates, and rating scales) before being hired.
2. Experienced and qualified workers have the opportunity to be promoted to positions of superior pay and/or responsibility within the department.
3. Candidates for this job take formal tests (paper and pencil or work sample) before being hired.

Training

1. Teaching staff (I) receive training in workplace to improve their skills on a regular basis.
2. The administration believes that continual training and promoting of employees' skills are important.
3. Teaching staff (I) receive training to execute multiple tasks.
4. Teaching staff (I) is cross trained so that they can perform other tasks if necessary.
5. Teaching staff (I) is encouraged to learn specific skills, rather than develop a broad skill base.

Participation

1. Generally how much say or influence do you have on how you perform your work?
2. To what extent are you able to decide how to do your work?
3. Generally how much say or influence do you have on who does what on in your work group?
4. Generally how much say or influence do you have on decisions which affect your work?
5. My superiors are receptive and listen to my ideas and suggestions.

Employee Empowerment

1. The job I do is very meaningful for me.
2. My work activities are personally important to me?
3. The work I do is very important to me?
4. I am self-assured about my talent to perform my work?
5. I am confident about my abilities to execute my job activities?
6. I have the necessary skills for my job?
7. I have essential autonomy in determining how I perform my work?
8. I can make a decision on my own to perform my duties?
9. I have significant opportunity for independence in how I do my work?
10. My impact on what happens in my department is significant?
11. I have an immense deal of control over what happens in my department?
12. I have considerable influence over what happens in my department?

Job Performance

1. I always complete the duties specified in my job description.
2. I meet all the formal performance requirements of the job.
3. I fulfill all responsibilities required by my job.
4. I never neglect aspects of the job that I am obligated to perform.
5. I often fail to perform important duties.

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