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**EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON JOB SATISFACTION
AMONG OPERATIONAL-LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN THE
GARMENT INDUSTRY: EVIDENCE FROM DHAKA,
BANGLADESH**

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Abstract:

This research investigates the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and job satisfaction among operational employees in the garment industry of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the study examines how supportive HRM practices foster positive employee attitudes and enhance job satisfaction. The HRM practices examined include training and development, employee involvement and participation, and performance appraisal. Considering the garment industry's crucial role in Bangladesh's economy, understanding the impact of these practices on employee satisfaction is vital for boosting workforce efficiency and organizational performance. A quantitative research design was adopted, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 384 employees selected through simple random sampling. The findings reveal that employee involvement and participation ($\beta = 0.377$, $p < 0.001$) is the strongest predictor of job satisfaction, followed by performance appraisal ($\beta = 0.160$, $p = 0.001$). In contrast, training and development ($\beta = -0.135$, $p = 0.003$) shows a small but significant negative association, suggesting that current training programs may not fully align with employee expectations or perceived usefulness. These results underscore the importance of participatory management and equitable performance evaluation systems in promoting employee satisfaction and commitment. The study contributes to HRM literature in emerging economies by identifying participatory management and

fair performance appraisal practices as the most influential predictors of job satisfaction among operational garment workers, providing actionable insights for HR managers and policymakers to enhance employee involvement and organizational performance.

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Keyword:

Employee Involvement and Participation, Garment Industry, Job Satisfaction, Performance Appraisal, Training and Development



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Introduction

The garment industry is widely recognized as the backbone of Bangladesh's economy, accounting for the largest share of national export revenue and serving as a major source of employment (BGMEA, 2023; World Bank, 2022). In recent years, the garment sector has contributed approximately 80%–85% of the country's total export earnings, making it the most significant industrial sector for foreign currency generation. The industry employs more than four million workers, most of whom are operational-level employees located in urban industrial areas such as Dhaka (BGMEA, 2022; ILO, 2020). The concentration of garment factories in and around Dhaka enables efficient management of production, logistics, and export operations, which is essential for meeting the strict delivery schedules required by international buyers (Islam & Hossain, 2021). Improved road connectivity, access to inland container terminals, and links with export processing zones further enhance Dhaka's logistical advantages (World Bank, 2020). As a result, Dhaka not only contributes significantly to Bangladesh's industrial output but also plays a vital role in fulfilling global sourcing demands, ensuring timely shipment, and maintaining the country's competitive position in the global textile and apparel industry (Rahman et al., 2022; Morshed & Knorringa, 2021).

Operational-level employees, including machine operators, sewing line workers, assistants, and quality inspectors, form the backbone of garment manufacturing in Dhaka's factories. Their skills and performance directly influence productivity, product quality, and global competitiveness. Despite their crucial role, these workers often face challenging working conditions, including long working hours, strict production targets, relatively low wages, limited training opportunities, restricted career advancement, and minimal participation in organizational decision-making (Asia Garment Hub, 2024; Fouzder et al., 2020; ILO, 2017; Syed, 2022). These issues frequently result in low engagement, insufficient recognition, high

turnover, and reduced job satisfaction, ultimately affecting the overall efficiency of the industry (Rahman, Siddiqi, & Basak, 2022; Anzum, 2021; Sarker & Afroze, 2014; Ahmed, Azmin, & Harada, 2021).

Given that operational-level employees are crucial for continuous production and sustaining competitive export performance, it is important to analyze organizational practices that can improve their job satisfaction. Ensuring fair performance evaluations, enhancing skills through training opportunities, and encouraging employee involvement in decision-making can significantly boost job satisfaction and reduce turnover (Kuvaas et al., 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Understanding and applying these practices is essential for maintaining productivity and fostering a positive work environment in Dhaka's garment sector (Rahman, 2020; Sarker & Afroze, 2021).

Existing research suggests that HRM practices such as training and development, employee involvement and participation, and performance appraisal can significantly enhance job satisfaction, retention, and productivity (Ng & Feldman, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Ali & Tariq, 2022). However, the inconsistent implementation of these practices in Bangladesh's garment industry often creates a gap between organizational objectives and employee well-being, leading to labor disputes and decreased productivity (Groyyo Consulting, 2023).

Despite the economic importance of the sector, empirical studies examining the direct effect of specific HRM practices on job satisfaction among operational-level employees remain limited, particularly in Dhaka's labor-intensive garment factories. Most studies focus on management-level employees or address HRM practices in general terms, leaving operational workers underrepresented in the literature (Sarker & Afroze, 2021; Syed & Mahmud, 2022). Addressing this gap is critical for designing HRM strategies that enhance employee satisfaction, promote well-being, improve productivity, and reduce turnover in Dhaka's garment factories.

This research investigates the impact of HRM practices, specifically training and development, employee involvement and participation, and performance evaluations on job satisfaction among operational employees in Dhaka's garment sector. It aims to fill existing gaps in the literature and provide practical recommendations for HR managers, policymakers, and factory owners to strengthen HRM practices, improve employee satisfaction, and enhance productivity within the industry.

Research Objectives

Based on the gaps identified, this study aims to:

1. Assess the relationship between training and development and job satisfaction among operational-level employees in Dhaka's garment industry.
2. Examine the relationship between employee involvement and participation in decision-making and job satisfaction among operational-level employees in Dhaka's garment industry.
3. Analyze the relationship between performance appraisal practices and job satisfaction among operational-level employees in Dhaka's garment industry.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices play a vital role in the success of organizations, especially in labor-intensive fields such as the garment industry. Efficient HRM strategies can significantly influence employee motivation, boost job satisfaction, and increase retention rates (Kuvaas et al., 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). The apparel sector in Bangladesh, especially in Dhaka, mainly consists of operational workers, including machine operators, sewing line employees, and quality inspectors (Rahman, 2020; BGMEA, 2022). These employees are essential to the production process, yet their job satisfaction is frequently overlooked in HRM practices (Rahman et al., 2022). Important HRM practices such as training and development, employee involvement and participation, and performance evaluation have been extensively researched in different sectors for their impact on job satisfaction. The subsequent sections examine these HRM practices and their effects on job satisfaction.

Training and Development

Training and development are crucial HRM practices that can greatly influence employees' job satisfaction. Kuvaas et al. (2020) suggest that successful training programs enhance employees' abilities and increase their job satisfaction by offering avenues for career advancement and personal development. Studies show that when workers believe their organization is committed to their growth, they sense appreciation and assistance, which enhances positive job attitudes and contentment with their positions (Loqmane, 2025).

In the garment sector, workers at the operational level frequently face restricted opportunities for skill enhancement, resulting in dissatisfaction and elevated turnover rates (Rahman, 2020). Research by Sarker and Afroze (2021) revealed that employees who underwent ongoing training experienced increased engagement in their positions and enhanced confidence in their skills, resulting in higher job satisfaction. Nevertheless, numerous employees in Bangladesh's garment industry continue to indicate insufficient training options, which significantly affects their job dissatisfaction (Groyyo Consulting, 2023). This implies that enhancing training and development initiatives may boost job satisfaction and retention levels among operational employees in Dhaka's garment sector. Organizations that emphasize ongoing learning and skill enhancement foster settings where employees feel capable, dedicated, and content with their roles, ultimately bolstering overall organizational performance (Smith & Johnson, 2023; Kumar et al., 2022).

H1: There is a positive relationship between training and development opportunities and job satisfaction among operational-level employees in Dhaka's garment industry.

Employee Involvement and Participation

Employee involvement and participation in decision-making are vital aspects of HRM that can enhance job satisfaction. Kuvaas et al. (2020) contend that employees who participate in work-related decision-making processes experience greater empowerment, appreciation, and engagement, resulting in enhanced job satisfaction. When workers feel a sense of ownership regarding their responsibilities and the results of their efforts, they tend to be more driven and dedicated to their positions. This feeling of independence and involvement fosters a constructive workplace atmosphere, which is particularly important in demanding fields such as the garment industry. A recent study conducted by Morshed & Knorringa (2021) revealed

that operational-level workers in Bangladesh's garment sector frequently encounter difficulties in participating in decision-making, adversely affecting their job satisfaction. Employees reported feelings of disempowerment and isolation when they were excluded from decisions that directly impacted their work methods.

Ahmed, Azmin, and Harada (2021) discovered that employees who had the chance to engage in decision-making expressed greater job satisfaction. Additionally, Rahman et al. (2022) emphasize that engaging employees in process enhancements and issue resolution cultivates a feeling of empowerment and contentment. This discovery is especially significant regarding Dhaka's garment factories, where worker involvement is frequently limited, and employees feel alienated from organizational choices. Likewise, Syed & Mahmud (2022) discovered that greater employee engagement in decision-making significantly boosts job satisfaction for operational-level workers in the garment factories of Bangladesh. They determined that when workers are acknowledged and empowered through active involvement, their motivation rises, resulting in enhanced satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Morshed and Knorringa (2021) argue that involving employees enhances job satisfaction while also decreasing absenteeism and turnover, as employees perceive themselves as more valued and aligned with the company's objectives.

H2: There is a positive relationship between employee involvement and participation in decision-making and job satisfaction among operational-level employees in Dhaka's garment industry.

Performance Appraisal and Job Satisfaction

Performance appraisal is another HRM practice that greatly affects job satisfaction. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) indicate that a transparent and equitable performance evaluation system can inspire employees by offering clear feedback and acknowledging their successes. A recent study by Uraon and Kumarasamy (2024) discovered that when employees view the performance evaluation process as equitable in various aspects of justice, it enhances their job satisfaction and their desire to remain with the organization.

In the garment sector, performance appraisal is frequently viewed as irregular or unjust, resulting in discontent among workers at the operational level (Rahman, 2020). Studies show that employees tend to express greater job satisfaction when performance evaluations are linked to rewards such as promotions or raises, making the results tangible, since they perceive the system as just and meaningful (Virkar et al., 2024). Study by Kuvaas et al. (2020) suggests that when performance evaluations are associated with concrete rewards, like bonuses or promotions, they are more likely to boost job satisfaction. On the other hand, if appraisals are not connected to significant rewards, employees might perceive their efforts as unacknowledged, leading to discontent and disengagement. In Bangladesh's garment sector, many factories lack a formal evaluation system, leading to employee dissatisfaction and elevated turnover rates (Groyyo Consulting, 2023).

Moreover, performance evaluations act as a crucial tool for career advancement, as they assist employees in recognizing their development opportunities within the company. When these evaluations are carried out fairly and positively, employees are more inclined to perceive their workplace as supportive, which enhances their job satisfaction (Rahman et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, in the absence of appropriate acknowledgment or helpful feedback, employees experience a lack of motivation and feel unappreciated, which diminishes their job satisfaction. H3: There is a positive relationship between performance appraisal practices and job satisfaction among operational-level employees in Dhaka’s garment industry.

Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), which explains that social interactions in organizations are based on reciprocal exchanges of resources. SET posits that employees respond positively when they perceive organizational investments such as training and development, employee involvement and participation (EIP), and performance appraisals (PA) by exhibiting attitudes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Molla, 2022).

In the context of Bangladesh’s garment sector, operational-level employees who receive growth opportunities through training, are engaged in decision-making processes, and experience fair performance evaluations are more likely to feel valued and motivated. Such practices enhance employee satisfaction, commitment, and overall productivity. Conversely, inadequate or unfair HRM practices may result in low motivation, dissatisfaction, and reduced performance, potentially affecting organizational outcomes (Rahman & Kabir, 2023; Hossain, 2021; Mollah & Hossain, 2022; Sultana, 2021).

Based on these principles, the framework demonstrates the direct relationship between key HRM practices and job satisfaction among operational-level employees. The independent variables (IVs) in this study are Training and Development, Employee Involvement and Participation, and Performance Appraisal, which are expected to positively influence the dependent variable (DV), Job Satisfaction (see Fig. 1).



Figure. 1: Conceptual Framework

This framework provides a clear understanding of how specific HRM practices directly affect job satisfaction and forms the basis for developing the hypotheses to be tested in the context of Dhaka’s labor-intensive garment sector.

Methodological Approach

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the effect of human resource management (HRM) practices on job satisfaction among operational-level employees in the garment sector in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire comprising two parts: demographic information and questions assessing study variables. The questionnaire was developed based on prior research on HRM practices and job satisfaction to ensure content validity (Armstrong, 2020; Robbins & Judge, 2017). The independent variables training and development, employee involvement and participation, and performance appraisal were measured using items adapted from previous empirical studies. Similarly, the dependent variable, job satisfaction, was also measured using items adopted from prior research, assessing employees' satisfaction with job duties, supervision, work environment, and overall work experience. All measurement items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Likert, 1932).

The target population comprised operational-level employees working in garment factories in Dhaka. A simple random sampling technique was applied to ensure representativeness, with 384 respondents selected, which is suitable for quantitative analysis (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 391 were returned, yielding a high response rate. After screening for completeness and consistency, 386 questionnaires were deemed valid for analysis. A pilot study was conducted prior to the main survey, and the reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with values above the acceptable threshold indicating adequate internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' demographic characteristics, while Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships and effects of HRM practices on job satisfaction. Statistical significance was assessed at the 5% level (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019). Regarding the demographic profile of the respondents, 57.3% were female and 42.3% were male. The majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 30 years (63.1%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (24.6%). In terms of educational attainment, most respondents had secondary-level qualifications, with 38.8% having completed the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and 26.5% the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). Monthly income data indicate that more than half of the respondents (55.8%) earned between BDT 20,001 and 30,000. Additionally, a large proportion of respondents had 2–4 years of work experience (41.5%), followed by those with 5–7 years of experience (26.2%).

Research Results and Discussion

The reliability of all study constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α) to examine internal consistency. As shown in Table 1, the values of Cronbach's alpha for training and development ($\alpha = 0.831$), employee involvement and participation ($\alpha = 0.882$), and performance appraisal ($\alpha = 0.840$) indicate a strong level of reliability, exceeding the recommended minimum benchmark of 0.70. The reliability coefficient for job satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.721$) also meets the acceptable standard, demonstrating good internal consistency of the items used to measure this construct (Hair et al., 2010; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Overall, these results confirm that the measurement scales were reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Values for Each Construct.

Number of variables	Cronbach's Alpha(α)
Training and development	0.831
Employee Involvement and Participation	0.882
Performance Appraisal	0.840
Employee Job Satisfaction	0.721

To examine the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, a correlation analysis was conducted using the Pearson correlation coefficient. The results of the analysis are presented below in Table 2. Based on the correlation analysis, employee involvement and participation (IV2) shows a strong connection with employee job satisfaction (DV) ($r = 0.426$, $p < 0.01$). Performance appraisal (IV3) is also positively associated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.255$, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, training and development (IV1) shows a weak negative correlation with job satisfaction ($r = -0.148$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that in this scenario, greater training is somewhat linked to decreased job satisfaction. Typically, the nearer the Pearson correlation coefficient is to 1 or -1 , the more robust the association between the two variables, where positive values suggest a direct relationship and negative values suggest an inverse relationship.

Table 2: Correlations Analysis

		Correlations			
		IV1	IV2	IV3	DV
IV1	Pearson Correlation	1	-.047	.029	-.148**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.354	.567	.004
	N	386	386	386	386
IV2	Pearson Correlation	-.047	1	.262**	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.354		.000	.000
	N	386	386	386	386
IV3	Pearson Correlation	.029	.262**	1	.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.567	.000		.000
	N	386	386	386	386
DV	Pearson Correlation	-.148**	.426**	.255**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.000	
	N	386	386	386	386

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

The ANOVA findings in the table indicate that the complete regression model is statistically significant ($F = 36.142$, $p < 0.001$). This shows that the independent variables IV1 (Training and Development), IV2 (Employee Involvement and Participation), and IV3 (Performance Appraisal) together significantly influence the dependent variable, employee job satisfaction

(DV). The model accounts for some of the variation in job satisfaction, as shown by the ratio of the mean square of regression to the mean square of residuals. The p-value ($p = 0.000$) indicates that the model effectively predicts employee job satisfaction derived from the chosen HRM practices.

Table 3: Regression Model Anova^a

Model		ANOVA ^a				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.437	3	1.479	36.142	.000 ^b
	Residual	15.634	382	.041		
	Total	20.071	385			

a. Dependent Variable: DV

b. Predictors: (Constant), IV3, IV1, IV2

Table 4 presents the coefficients obtained from the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the effects of HRM practices on job satisfaction. The results indicate employee involvement and participation (IV2) emerged as the strongest predictor, demonstrating a positive and statistically significant impact on job satisfaction ($B = 0.225$, $\beta = 0.377$, $t = 8.052$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of employee engagement in decision-making correspond to greater job satisfaction. The results are consistent with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that supportive organizational practices encourage employees to reciprocate with positive attitudes, such as increased job satisfaction.

Performance appraisal (IV3) was identified as the secondary predictor, showing a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction ($B = 0.139$, $\beta = 0.160$, $t = 3.408$, $p = 0.001$). This suggests that fair, transparent, and well-communicated performance evaluation systems enhance employees' sense of recognition and contribute to higher satisfaction levels. Properly implemented performance appraisal mechanisms also help employees identify development opportunities, which strengthens their organizational commitment.

Training and development (IV1) presented an unexpected finding. Although training is generally assumed to improve satisfaction, the analysis revealed a small but significant negative effect ($r = -0.148$, $p = 0.004$; $B = -0.081$, $\beta = -0.135$, $t = -2.973$, $p = 0.003$). This unexpected finding suggests that the content, relevance, or implementation of training programs may not fully meet employees' expectations, potentially causing dissatisfaction among operational-level staff.

Table 4: Connection Between the Independent Variable and The Dependent Variable Regarding T Coefficients.

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B		Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.031	.218		13.888	.000
	IV1	-.081	.027	-.135	-2.973	.003

IV2	.225	.028	.377	8.052	.000
IV3	.139	.041	.160	3.408	.001

a. Dependent Variable: DV

Conclusion

This research finds that training and development, employee involvement and participation, and performance appraisal significantly affect job satisfaction among operational-level workers in Dhaka's garment sector in Bangladesh. The results suggest that employee involvement and participation, along with performance appraisal, have the most significant positive impact on job satisfaction, emphasizing the necessity of involving employees in decision-making and conducting equitable and transparent performance evaluations. While training and development demonstrates a small negative association, this suggests that current training programs may not fully meet employee expectations.

These findings indicate that garment factories implementing effective HRM practices can enhance employee satisfaction, motivation, and overall productivity. Employees who receive support from participatory management and transparent performance evaluation systems are more likely to feel valued and committed to their roles. The findings contribute to HRM literature in emerging economies by identifying participatory management and fair performance appraisal practices as the most influential predictors of job satisfaction among operational-level garment workers.

For effective implementation, managers are advised to emphasize participatory management, clear evaluation methods, and well-structured training initiatives to enhance employee satisfaction and efficiency. Future studies should broaden the focus to incorporate different areas of Bangladesh or other developing nations, explore additional HRM practices such as compensation and career advancement, and utilize longitudinal approaches to track changes in job satisfaction over time. These actions will yield greater understanding of the elements that affect employee satisfaction and aid in developing more efficient HRM strategies in the garment industry.

Theoretical And Practical Implications

The findings of this research provide several theoretical and practical insights for HRM in the garment industry. Theoretically, this study contributes to the HRM and job satisfaction literature by offering empirical evidence on the differential effects of HRM practices on employee satisfaction. The strong positive impacts of employee involvement and participation and performance appraisal support prior research that identifies these practices as key determinants of job satisfaction. Additionally, the weak negative effect of training and development highlights the importance of contextual relevance in HRM interventions. Anchoring the model in Social Exchange Theory further explains how organizational investments in employee support and empowerment are likely to enhance job satisfaction. Overall, the study emphasizes the need to consider context-specific HRM effects, particularly in high-demand manufacturing sectors in developing countries.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer important guidance for HR managers and organizational leaders in the garment industry. The results suggest that prioritizing employee involvement and participation in decision-making, along with implementing fair and

transparent performance appraisal systems, can significantly enhance job satisfaction. Training programs should be carefully designed to align with employees' immediate job responsibilities to maximize effectiveness (Noe, 2017). By adopting strategic HRM initiatives that focus on participation, appraisal, and targeted support, organizations can improve employee satisfaction, strengthen engagement, and reduce turnover, thereby promoting a more productive and committed workforce.

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