

# Impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Employees Attitudes Towards Early Retirement: A Case Study of Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation

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**Abstract:** *This paper aimed to study the impact of human resources management practices on employees' attitudes towards early retirement in Gaza electricity Distribution Corporation in Palestine. The research surveyed the employees who have been working for 10 years and more. Number of respondents was 390. Study sample 194. A total of 225 questionnaires were distributed, and 191 valid questionnaires were collected with response rate of 84.9%. The research followed the analytical descriptive methodology approach. Data analysis was done by using SPSS. The most important findings of the research results showed that GEDCo employees with a percentage 62.51 % have attitudes towards early retirement due to the effect of HRM practices. Consequently, it could be confirmed human resources management practices affect employees' attitudes towards early retirement in Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCo. Findings also showed that plans and training programs in GEDCo 76.44 % are weak and not effective. Moreover, employees showed that training process in the organization is based on discrimination, this contributed to push them to think of early retirement. Large number of employees 70.95% confirmed that their incomes are not suitable for what they give of efforts. Moreover, most of them indicated that their salaries are not enough to meet the basic needs for life; this actually pushed them to think of early retirement. GEDCo's performance appraisal technique, according to 65.70% of employees, is unprofessional since it does not provide complete feedback and does not assist employees in understanding problems.; it is not attended by incentives and rewards; these reasons increased their attitudes towards early retirement.*

**Keywords:** Human Resources Management Practices (HRMP), Attitudes, Early Retirement

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## 1. Introduction

According to Davis, (2003), early retirement is a psychosocial process that can be determined by different factors (e.g. social norms, working conditions, demographic factors, marital status, incentives, and pension systems) and likewise can produce different outcomes (e.g. stress, mental health problems, general health, and life satisfaction).

As indicated by Wang, (2013), retirement might be voluntary or involuntary, early or late, whole or partial, and voluntary or involuntary. A combination of choice and circumstance typically influences the decision to retire early or late. Individuals who decide to pursue leisure activities rather than continue working are thought to have taken voluntary early retirement. (Dorn et al, 2010).

Early retirement is affected by "push and pull" forces. Negative conditions that contribute to early retirement, such as poor health or a lack of job satisfaction, are known as push factors. In

a recent review of longitudinal research on the determinants of early retirement, poor health and high physical and psychosocial job demands were identified as risk factors for early retirement. Positive characteristics that urge a person to retire early, such as a desire to spend more time volunteering or participating in leisure activities, are known as pull factors. (Reeuwijk, K. G et al 2013).

It is clearly known that people who plan to retire early have different expectations than those who plan to retire later. As a result, one of the most essential issues to discuss has been the trend toward early retirement, because selecting a retirement strategy is one of the most crucial financial decisions a person will make. On the other hand, numerous reasons, including health issues, psychological disorders, and physical limitations could be indicated for the early retirement phenomenon.

The current paper aims to look into many aspects that may contribute to early retirement especially those which are related to HRM practices. Accordingly, this paper will explore if there are any influences among HRM practices and early retirement for those who work in Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCo).

To acquire a thorough picture of the anticipated retirement, Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCo) needs to identify what variables impact early retirement. With this knowledge, the company should be able to implement effective policy initiatives. The elements that influence employees' views regarding early retirement were explored in this paper from the standpoint of HRM (training and development, compensation and rewards, performance appraisal system,) practices.

In the literature, Allen, et al, (2003) indicated that human resources management practices play a critical role in the development of organizational commitment and decreasing of employee turnover in general. It has also been revealed that affectively committed older employees plan to retire later when the financial benefits are the best, but employees with high levels of continuation commitment plan to retire when the financial rewards are the best (Luchak, et al 2008). When reviewing prior studies on early retirement, it becomes clear that many early retirements were the consequence of a medical or psychological ailment (Lund, et al 2005); other early retirements were the result of a financial hardship (Lund, et al 2005).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Human Resource Practices (HRP) and Attitudes Towards Early Retirement**

According to Elrehail et al (2019) human resource management practices can be described as a set of internally consistent and coherent practices aim to reinforce and promote employee motivation, competence, and commitment. They also manage human skills and talents to achieve the organization's goals (Ana et al., 2019).

Many previous studies demonstrated that human resource management practices play a critical role for getting employees commitment (Alkalha, et al, 2012; Vratskikh, Al Lozi, and Maqableh (2016). Such practices include: recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, teamwork growth as well as performance appraisal.

Organizations should apply ideal HRM practices in order to strengthen those qualities that are critical to organizational existence. Obeidat and Abdullah, (2014) reported that human resource management practices are important factors for achieving competitive advantage. Mohyin et

al, (2012) showed that an active human resource management plays a major role in improving employee commitment, which aids in the achievement of organizational objectives. Accordingly, the employees' attitudes towards early retirement will certainly be reduced. Kotler & Armstrong, (2013) stated that HRM practices can be regarded as an organization's joint effort to provide an effective management system for achieving competitive advantage and work productivity.

### **Training and Development**

According to Bimpitsos & Petridou, (2012), employees' abilities and skills are expected to improve as a result of training. It is advantageous for employees to gain creative knowledge in order to improve their attitudes, abilities, and proficiencies. As a result, the organization's entire performance will undoubtedly increase. Hunger & Wheelen, (2013), indicated that training is a very crucial human asset which assures that employees are updated with existing market situations. As reported in Saengchai et al, (2019), Training and development reinforces an organization's official endeavor to improve its performance as well as employee self-motivation by offering a variety of learning activities and methodologies.

In addition, (Bimpitsos and Petridou, 2012; Paşaoğlu, 2015) in their research proved that the staffs' commitment which leads to organizational performance could be enhanced by training programs. Consequently, organizational commitment will be increased and attitudes to early retirement might be decreased. As reported in recent studies (e.g Bisharat et al., 2017; Obeidat et al., 2016; Paşaoğlu, 2015), there is a significant relationship between training and organizational commitment. In addition, Maheshwari and Vohra (2015), however, concluded that training provides employees with the skills that boosts their understanding of the organizational processes and further raises the degrees of their organizational commitment. This in turn might reduce employees' attitudes towards early retirement.

### **Compensation and Rewards System**

Lim and Ling, (2012) defined compensation as a package involves medical compensation, accommodation, travelling benefits, salary and other rewards. They also reported that compensation of employees depends on their performance, knowledge, skills etc. A Study conducted by Sial et al. (2011) indicated that compensation has a significant relationship with employee's commitment and leads to higher performance. Employees are motivated to contribute their best efforts to develop innovative ideas that lead to improved business functionality, improved employee performance, and organizational commitment through the use of a rewards system. (Aktar et al ,2012).

In Newman & Sheikh, (2012) it was found that employees are motivated to do their best work through a compensation system that encourages them to be more enthusiastic and hardworking. Organizations recognize the efforts of employees, involvement and achievements and reward them according to their path of responsibility. Recent studies (e.g Longenecker & Abernathy, 2013) enlighten the relationship among rewarding employees and enhancements in employee performance. Thompson & Alvesson, (2005) reported that while experience, qualification, and seniority are among aspects that reward system depends on. For the success of every program, entire details regarding compensation and rewards must be communicated to each employee. As a result of this communication, each individual would be motivated toward his work (Marx et al, 2013). Accordingly, it is clear that compensations and reward practice can influence employees performance and commitment to the organization. Hence, their intentions or attitudes towards early retirement might be at a low level. The current paper focuses on measuring the correlation between these variables.

### **Performance Appraisal System**

Shrivastava and Purang, (2011) indicated that performance appraisal is debatably considered one of the most crucial ones among HRM practices that have been investigated in terms of organization performance and appears to be an indispensable part of any HRM system. Survival, success, and competing power of organizations depend on the commitment of their employees, and this may, to a large extent, depend on how satisfied the employees are in respect of the organization's appraisal mechanism' (Abdulkadir, Isiaka & Adedoyin, 2012).

Numerous empirical researches (e.g Daley, 1993; Ghorpade, et al., 1995; Pettijohn, et al., 1999; Mayer and Davis, 1999; Guthrie, 2001; Kuvaas, 2008; Omusebe et al, 2013) confirmed that effective performance appraisals lead to a number of important work outcomes, such as high quality and productivity, job satisfaction, trust and commitment.

As reported in past and recent studies (e.g., Chiang & Birtch, 2010; Taylor et al .1995; Kallio, et al, 2016; Karkoulian et al, 2016) that over the years, several organizations have been worried about the failure of their performance appraisal systems, precisely about improving employee performance, contributing to a wide range of HRM practices, and recognizing the full potential of this practice regarding organizational effectiveness.

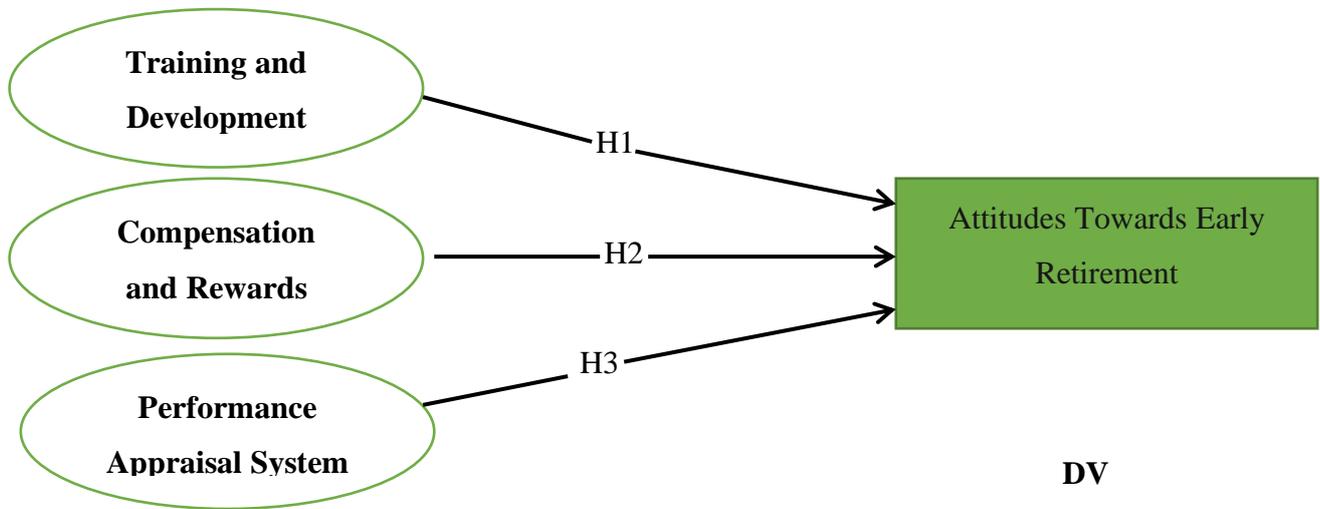
In the literature, many researchers investigated how early retirement could be correlated to different variables; (e.g Guido et al, 2008) found the early retirement can be significantly affected by work importance and firm policies. According to Tordera et al, (2010), early retirement is influenced by high organizational pressures. On the other hand, Foster (2008), showed that depression, anxiety are significantly related to early retirement. (e.g El-Hamidi ,2010; Samana ,2008)) Found that early retirement is significantly affected by gender. As reported by Al Qahtany (2009), many variables including: motivations, security and administrative consequences all can impact early retirement. On the other hand, Al Ghamidy ,(2001), revealed that 50% of the employees have attitudes towards early retirement due to additional income, nature of work variables.

This paper investigated how employees' attitudes towards early retirement can be influenced by a number of human resources management practices focusing on (training & development, compensation & rewards, performance appraisal system).

### **3. Methodology**

To illustrate the main properties of the data, this paper used an analytical descriptive quantitative technique. From the population of 390 employees, a random sample was selected. A minimum of 194 questionnaires were gathered to be representative, according to the statistical equation. A total of 225 questionnaires were distributed, with 191 valid questionnaires collected, resulting in an 84.9% response rate. The major data for the study was collected via a questionnaire survey. Closed-ended questions were added in the questionnaire to enable data gathering easier. The design of questionnaire affected the response rate and the reliability and validity of the data collected. Most of the items of the instrument are based on questions used in previous research. Individual question design, clear structure of the questionnaire form, clear explanation of the questionnaire's purpose, and pilot testing all help to increase response rates, validity, and reliability. As a result of the literature review, the study has adopted three hypotheses to be tested.

The variables of this study's conceptual model are shown in the following diagram:



#### IV

**H1:** There is no significant effect at level 0.05 of (Training and Development) on (employees' attitudes towards early retirement).

**H2:** There is no significant effect at level 0.05 of (Compensation and Rewards) on (employees' attitudes towards early retirement).

**H3:** There is no significant effect at level 0.05 of (Performance Appraisal System) on (employees' attitudes towards early retirement).

#### Results and Discussion:

**Table 1: Correlation coefficient of each field and the whole of questionnaire**

No.	Field	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1.	Impact of Training and Development Practices in the Company	.882	0.000*
2.	Impact of Compensation and Rewards Practices in the Company	.916	0.000*
3.	Impact of Performance Appraisal System in the Company	.910	0.000*

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (1): clarifies the correlation coefficient for each field and the whole questionnaire. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05. Accordingly, the correlation coefficients of all the fields are significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . It could be indicated that the fields are valid to be measured what they were set for to achieve the main objective of the study.

## Research Hypothesis

**Table 2: Means and Test values for all paragraphs**

Item	Mean	Proportional mean	Test value	P-value (Sig.)
<b>All paragraphs</b>	3.13	62.51	1.68	0.047*

\*The mean is significantly different from 3

Table (2) shows the mean of all **paragraphs** equals 3.13 (62.51%), Test-value =1.68, and P-value=0.047 which is smaller than the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The sign of the test is positive, therefore the mean of all **paragraphs** is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the respondents agree to all **paragraphs** in general. As it is clear that there is approval by 62.51% that human resources management practices (HRM) have a positive impact on employees' attitudes towards early retirement in Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCO). This main result does not confirm the assumption adopted by the researcher. According to the researcher's point of view this result is not optimistic, but such a result has indicated that the more professional HRM practices the less attitudes towards early retirement. On the other hand, not all HRM practices applied in GEDCO have the same order in their impacts on employees' attitudes towards early retirement. Consequently, the following order shows the percentage of each field :

- a) Impact of Training and Development Practices in the Company 58.98 %
- b) Impact of Compensation and Benefits Practices in the Company 67.44 %
- c) Impact of Performance Appraisal System in the Company 65.701 %

**H1:** There is no significant effect of HRM practices (Training and Development) on (employees' attitudes towards early retirement).

**Table 3: Means and Test values for "Training and Development Practices in the Company"**

	Item	Mean	Proportional mean (%)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1.	Plans and training programs in the company are weak.	3.82	76.44	8.67	0.000*	1
2.	I think of early retirement because I have not got any training course in the field of my work since the beginning of hiring.	2.50	50.00	-4.50	0.000*	8
3.	My attitude increases towards early retirement because I have been suffering	2.75	55.05	-2.25	0.013*	5

	from lack of interest by the administration concerning training and development					
4.	My skills in the work neither renewed nor evolve and this motivates me to move toward early retirement	2.69	53.76	-2.89	0.002*	7
5.	My attitude increases towards early retirement because the company does not identify training needs in advance.	2.89	57.80	-1.06	0.146	4
6.	I think of early retirement because the company does not believe that training and development of workers is important.	2.94	58.84	-0.53	0.297	3
7.	I did not participate at least once a year in training programs outside Gaza Strip for the development of evolutionary career so I think of early retirement	2.73	54.63	-2.27	0.012*	6
8.	The company discriminate among employees concerning training , this push me to think of early retirement	3.24	64.84	2.14	0.017*	2
	<b>All paragraphs of the field</b>	2.95	58.98	-0.59	0.279	

\* The mean is significantly different from 3

**Table (3) shows the following results:**

- The mean of the field “Impact of Training and Development Practices in the Company” equals 2.95 (58.98%), Test-value = -0.59, and P-value= 0.279 which is greater than the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$  . The mean of this field is insignificantly different from the hypothesized value 3. It can be concluded that the respondents medium agree to field of “Impact of Training and Development Practices in the Company ”.

**H2:** There is no significant effect of HRM practices (compensation and benefits) on (employees' attitudes towards early retirement.

**Table 4: Means and Test values for “Compensation and Benefits Practices in the Company”**

	Item	Mean	Proportional mean (%)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1.	Lack of financial incentives push me to think of early retirement.	3.41	68.26	3.73	0.000*	5
2.	Compensation package offered by the company are not commensurate with the relative importance of the work that I do and do not give me my full rights as an employee, which leads me to think of early retirement.	3.63	72.67	6.27	0.000*	1

3.	I find that my salary does not provide me and my family with the social security for a long-term .So I think of early retirement.	3.52	70.32	4.68	0.000*	3
4.	My income is not suitable for what I give of effort so I think of early retirement.	3.55	70.95	5.07	0.000*	2
5.	I find that the salary that I get and its accessories could not meet my basic needs so I think of early retirement	3.46	69.21	4.22	0.000*	4
6.	Compensation system related to over time is not applied fairly so, I think of early retirement.	3.27	65.34	2.36	0.010*	6
7.	Savings system applied in the company as well as the end of service reward is not acceptable for me, and this increases my attitude towards early retirement	3.20	64.08	1.78	0.038*	7
8.	Social allowances for the wife and children is unacceptable and this motivates me to move toward early retirement	2.95	59.05	-0.40	0.346	8
<b>All paragraphs of the field</b>		3.37	67.44	4.11	0.000*	

\* The mean is significantly different from 3

**Table (4) shows the following results:**

The mean of the field “Impact of Compensation and Benefits Practices in the Company” equals 3.37 (67.44%), Test-value = 4.11, and P-value=0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The sign of the test is positive, so the mean of this field is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3. It could be concluded that the respondents agreed to field of “Compensation and Benefits Practices in the Company ”.

**H3:** There is no significant effect of HRM practices (performance appraisal system) on (employees' attitudes towards early retirement).

**Table 5: Means and Test values for "Performance Appraisal System in the Company"**

	Item	Mean	Proportional mean (%)	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1.	Performance appraisal system which applied in the company is non-professional	3.48	69.51	4.69	0.000*	1
2.	Performance appraisal criteria used in the company is not clear and this increases my attitude towards early retirement	3.21	64.26	2.02	0.022*	6
3.	I want to retire early because the company did not inform me the results of the performance appraisal since the employment.	3.10	62.00	0.90	0.185	8

4.	Performance appraisal process used in the company in unfair and this leads me to think of early retirement	3.14	62.84	1.34	0.091	7
5.	because the senior management does not link between granting promotions and the results of performance appraisal of the employee, so I think early retirement	3.36	67.16	3.44	0.000*	3
6.	Not motivating workers through positive findings leads me to think of early retirement	3.46	69.21	4.24	0.000*	2
7.	I think of early retirement because the performance appraisal system applied in the company does not take into account the specific job description.	3.28	65.61	2.62	0.005*	5
8.	I prefer early retirement because the performance appraisal system applied in the company does not help, mainly to understand the problems.	3.32	66.46	2.96	0.002*	4
<b>All paragraphs of the field</b>		3.29	65.70	3.16	0.001*	

\* The mean is significantly different from 3

The mean of the field "Impact of Performance Appraisal System in the Company" equals 3.29 (65.70%), Test-value = 3.16, and P-value=0.001 which is smaller than the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The sign of the test is positive, so the mean of this field is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3. It could be concluded that the respondents agreed to field of "Performance Appraisal System in the Company "

#### 4. Conclusion

##### Conclusions related to Training and Development Practices

The paper revealed that there is a significant effect of HRM practices concerning training and development on employees' attitudes towards early retirement in GEDCo. Most of employees indicated that plans and training programs in the company are weak and not effective which create a feeling of disappointment and dissatisfaction for them. On the other hand, employees showed that training process in the organization is based on discrimination. This means that huge number of individuals have not received any training course since hiring. This really moved their attitudes towards early retirement. They also moderately agreed that the organization does not believe in the importance of training and development for employees.

##### Conclusions related to Compensation and Rewards Practices

The findings of the study demonstrated that remuneration and rewards have a significant impact on employees' attitudes toward early retirement in GEDCo. A considerable number of employees reported that their incomes does not correspond to the amount of effort they put in. Furthermore, the majority of them demonstrated that their salaries are insufficient to cover their basic necessities and do not provide them with long-term social security; this result may be due to that financial system at GEDCo is not enough professional and need to be restructured. Accordingly, these reasons moved employees attitudes towards early retirement. Results also displayed that compensation system concerning over time works is not applied fairly; this means that not all overtime hours are recognized by the organization's management which makes employees feel with disappointment and frustration.

## **Conclusions related to Performance Appraisal System**

The findings revealed performance appraisal systems had a significant impact on employees' attitudes toward early retirement at GEDCo. A large majority of employees believe the organization's performance appraisal system is unprofessional; this outcome could be attributed to senior management's failure to relate promotions to performance appraisal results. On that other hand, employees are not satisfied absolutely with performance appraisal system. Most employees at GEDCo regard the appraisal system as worthless because it does not aid in the understanding of problems and is not accompanied by incentives and rewards. The findings of this study also revealed that the GEDCo's performance rating criteria are unclear, unjust, and do not take into account the unique job description.

## **Recommendations**

Superior attention should be devoted for training and development plans, programs and activities to boost the knowledge and skills of the staffs. GEDCo also should realize that training process is an investment, it is also recommended to review the salaries, incentives and reward system. Increase of living cost and the continuous requirements makes it necessary to improve the scale of the salary to meet the employees' responsibilities and needs. On the other hand, organization should struggle to offer individuals opportunities to improve their salary through applying multiple levels of promotion in the early years of work. Performance appraisal system should be applied in a specialized manner that would measure staff performance, enable corrective action and provides employees with continuous feedback, focusing on the strength points to be improved. This will certainly encourage the employees to learn and develop themselves. Even if the organization is not taking the outputs as a guide to career development, the individual can seek the development by his own, based on professional clear feedback and identified criteria.

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