

# The Relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Teacher Motivation in Primary Schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur

Nor Muzaiyah Binti Nordin and Bity Salwana Binti Alias

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: [bity@ukm.edu.my](mailto:bity@ukm.edu.my)

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## Abstract

Teacher motivation is a critical determinant of effective school management, instructional quality, and the long-term sustainability of school organizations. In contemporary education, teachers are expected not only to deliver high-quality instruction but also to respond to curriculum reform, administrative requirements, technological change, and increasingly diverse student needs. In this context, human resource management (HRM) practices within schools are believed to play a significant role in shaping teacher motivation and sustaining professional commitment. This study was conducted to determine the level of HRM practices, identify the level of teacher motivation, and examine the relationship between these two variables in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. A quantitative approach employing a correlational survey design was used in this study. The study involved 252 primary school teachers selected from a population of 650 teachers. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Reliability analysis indicated high internal consistency for the study constructs, with Cronbach's Alpha values of .961 for HRM practices and .923 for teacher motivation, showing that the instrument was highly reliable for measuring the intended variables. The findings indicate that HRM practices in the studied schools are implemented at a high level, with a mean score of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.61, while teacher motivation is at a very high level, with a mean score of 4.51 and a standard deviation of 0.55. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between HRM practices and teacher motivation ( $r = .726, p < 0.01$ ). The findings suggest that effective HRM practices serve as an important organizational factor in enhancing teacher motivation and supporting the overall effectiveness of school management. The study concludes that school leaders and policymakers should continue to strengthen HRM-related practices as part of a broader strategy to sustain teacher motivation, professional well-being, and educational quality.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management Practices, Teacher Motivation, Primary Schools, Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Appraisal, Compensation and Rewards, Job Satisfaction, Educational Management, Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur

### **Introduction**

Teacher motivation is a central element in determining the effectiveness of educational systems and the sustainability of school organizations. In the context of modern education, teachers operate in a rapidly changing environment shaped by evolving curricula, pedagogical innovation, digital transformation, and growing accountability demands. As a result, the role of teachers has become increasingly complex and demanding. Teacher motivation therefore extends beyond a personal psychological matter; it is closely linked to professional commitment, classroom performance, school effectiveness, and student achievement. Teachers who are highly motivated are generally more committed to their profession, more resilient in facing workplace challenges, and more willing to engage in innovation and continuous improvement.

Teacher motivation may be understood as the internal and external forces that influence a teacher's willingness, energy, and commitment to carry out teaching responsibilities effectively and consistently. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal satisfaction that teachers derive from the teaching profession itself, such as enjoyment of teaching, a sense of responsibility, and fulfillment in seeing student development. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, relates to external factors such as recognition, rewards, promotion opportunities, fair evaluation, and administrative support. Both dimensions are essential in shaping professional behavior and sustaining work engagement over time.

However, numerous educational studies and reports have indicated that teacher motivation is increasingly challenged by rising workload demands, administrative pressures, time constraints, and performance expectations. In urban school contexts in particular, teachers often work in highly demanding environments where they must meet academic targets, respond to diverse student needs, and manage pressure from multiple stakeholders. If these demands are not balanced with sufficient organizational support, teacher motivation may weaken, thereby affecting both teacher well-being and the quality of educational delivery.

In this regard, school-level human resource management practices become highly important. The way schools manage training and development, performance appraisal, recognition, and administrative support can directly shape teachers' professional experiences. Supportive and well-implemented HRM practices help create a positive working environment in which teachers feel valued, fairly treated, and professionally supported. Such an environment is likely to strengthen motivation, reinforce work commitment, and contribute to overall school performance.

In Malaysia, the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013–2025) emphasizes the importance of teacher quality as a key factor in improving educational outcomes. This national aspiration cannot be achieved without ensuring that teachers remain motivated and professionally supported. Within this national agenda, it is important to understand the organizational factors that influence teacher motivation in real school settings. The Bangsar Zone in Kuala

Lumpur offers a relevant context for this study because it represents an urban educational environment characterized by complex professional demands and relatively high performance expectations. Therefore, this study focuses on the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur.

### **Problem Statement**

Teacher motivation has become an increasingly important issue in educational management due to the expanding complexity of teachers' professional responsibilities. Teachers today are expected not only to deliver effective instruction, but also to adapt to curriculum changes, integrate digital tools, manage administrative tasks, respond to parental expectations, and address diverse student learning needs. These multiple demands can place significant strain on teachers and may affect their motivation, particularly when school management systems do not provide sufficient support. In urban school environments, where expectations and performance pressures are often greater, the issue of teacher motivation becomes even more critical.

At the same time, school organizations differ in how they manage and support their teachers. Human resource management practices such as professional development, performance evaluation, recognition, and administrative support are not merely routine administrative activities; they shape the organizational climate in which teachers work. When such practices are implemented effectively, they can reinforce teacher confidence, commitment, and job satisfaction. Conversely, weak or inconsistent management practices may reduce motivation and undermine professional engagement. Although prior studies have examined issues such as job satisfaction, school leadership, and organizational climate, fewer studies have specifically examined the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation in urban primary school contexts.

The original document itself acknowledges that research focusing specifically on teacher motivation in urban primary schools remains limited, especially within the context of the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. This creates a clear research gap. Without empirical evidence on how HRM practices relate to teacher motivation in this context, school administrators and policymakers may lack the necessary insight to design more effective management strategies for strengthening teacher commitment and school performance. Therefore, this study is undertaken to examine the level of HRM practices, the level of teacher motivation, and the relationship between these variables in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur.

### **Research Questions**

This study is guided by three research questions formulated to examine both the status of the study variables and the relationship between them in a systematic manner.

The first research question seeks to determine the level of human resource management practices implemented in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. This question is important because it establishes the organizational context within which teachers perform their professional responsibilities. By understanding the level of HRM practices, the study is able to assess whether the management environment in these schools is perceived as supportive, structured, and conducive to teacher development.

The second research question focuses on identifying the level of teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone. This question is necessary because teacher motivation is a key determinant of professional commitment, teaching quality, and school effectiveness. Examining the level of teacher motivation provides a foundation for understanding the current motivational condition of teachers in an urban educational setting. The third research question examines whether a significant relationship exists between human resource management practices and teacher motivation. This is the central question of the study because it aims to determine whether organizational practices within the school environment are associated with teachers' motivational levels. Taken together, these questions allow the study to move from descriptive understanding to inferential analysis, thereby providing a more comprehensive examination of the issue.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the level of human resource management practices in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur?
2. What is the level of teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur?
3. Is there a significant relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur?

#### *Research Objectives*

The objectives of this study are developed in line with the research problem and are intended to provide a structured framework for examining the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation.

The first objective is to determine the level of human resource management practices implemented in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. This objective is important because HRM practices such as training and development, performance appraisal, rewards and recognition, and administrative support represent the organizational mechanisms through which schools manage and support teachers. By identifying the level of these practices, the study is able to assess the overall strength of the school management environment.

The second objective is to assess the level of teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone. This objective recognizes that teacher motivation is a multidimensional construct involving both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Determining the level of teacher motivation provides valuable insight into teachers' work engagement, commitment, and professional readiness within the studied school context.

The third objective is to examine the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation. This objective is central to the study because it seeks to establish whether supportive and effective HRM practices are associated with higher teacher motivation. By examining this relationship empirically, the study contributes to a stronger understanding of how organizational management influences teacher outcomes and supports school effectiveness.

Therefore, the objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the level of human resource management practices in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur.
2. To identify the level of teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur.
3. To examine the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur.

## **Literature Review**

### *Teacher Motivation in the Global Context*

Globally, teacher motivation is recognized as a critical factor influencing teaching effectiveness, professional well-being, and student achievement. Recent studies show that teachers with higher levels of motivation are more likely to demonstrate stronger professional commitment, greater willingness to engage in pedagogical innovation, and better adaptation to educational change. Based on Self-Determination Theory, teacher motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are supported, teachers are more likely to sustain positive attitudes, professional resilience, and commitment to their work.

Post-pandemic international studies have also emphasized the importance of supportive school environments and caring educational leadership in maintaining teacher motivation in the face of increased work pressure. Teacher motivation has been found to be closely linked to emotional well-being and burnout, with highly motivated teachers generally showing stronger resilience in challenging professional contexts. These findings indicate that teacher motivation should be understood not only in terms of personal drive, but also in relation to the wider organizational environment in which teachers work.

### *Teacher Motivation in Developing Countries*

In developing countries, teacher motivation is often shaped by structural constraints such as limited resources, heavy workloads, and restricted access to professional development opportunities. Studies show that extrinsic factors such as salary, job security, and access to basic facilities remain important in influencing teacher motivation in these contexts. Nevertheless, intrinsic motivation, including social responsibility, commitment to student development, and professional pride, continues to serve as a major source of persistence among teachers working in difficult conditions.

Research conducted in developing countries in Asia and Africa further suggests that school leadership and professional recognition significantly influence teacher commitment and motivation. Even in resource-constrained settings, supportive management practices can play a major role in sustaining teacher morale and work engagement. This indicates that organizational support remains relevant regardless of broader structural limitations.

### *Teacher Motivation in Southeast Asia*

Research on teacher motivation in Southeast Asia has grown in recent years in line with regional efforts to improve educational quality. Studies in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines show that school leadership style, interpersonal relationships, and collectivist cultural values strongly affect teacher motivation. In these contexts, support

from colleagues and social recognition often have a greater effect on motivation than material rewards alone.

Recent quantitative studies in the region also indicate that transformational leadership is significantly related to teacher motivation and job satisfaction. These findings reinforce the idea that school leaders play an important role not only in managing school operations but also in fostering a work environment that supports teacher motivation and professional well-being.

#### *Teacher Motivation in Malaysia*

In Malaysia, recent studies show increasing attention to the role of organizational support and professional well-being in teacher motivation. Research has found that administrative support, professional development opportunities, and recognition of performance are significantly related to motivation levels among teachers. Post-pandemic findings further show that workload and administrative demands affect teacher motivation, particularly in urban schools.

More recent studies in Malaysia also show that teacher motivation is closely related to self-efficacy and organizational commitment, with highly motivated teachers displaying greater professional confidence and a stronger willingness to implement innovation in teaching. Overall, the local literature suggests that teacher motivation in Malaysia is shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and that these need to be addressed in an integrated manner in line with national educational priorities.

#### *Dimensions of Teacher Motivation*

Teacher motivation in this study is conceptualized through two major dimensions: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

**Intrinsic motivation** refers to the internal drive that encourages teachers to perform their professional duties because they find value, satisfaction, and meaning in teaching itself. Teachers who are intrinsically motivated usually enjoy the act of teaching, derive satisfaction from student development, and feel a strong sense of responsibility toward their professional role. Such motivation is closely associated with autonomy, competence, and meaningful engagement in work. Studies indicate that intrinsic motivation is a powerful source of long-term professional commitment and emotional stability among teachers.

**Extrinsic motivation** refers to external factors that influence teachers' willingness to perform their roles, such as financial rewards, professional recognition, opportunities for advancement, supportive administrative practices, and constructive feedback. Although extrinsic motivation is external in nature, studies show that it plays an essential role in supporting and reinforcing teacher engagement, particularly when it is implemented in a fair and consistent manner. In demanding school environments, extrinsic motivation can function as an important structural support for maintaining morale and reducing work-related stress. Taken together, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should not be viewed as separate or competing elements. Rather, they complement one another in shaping teacher commitment, well-being, and professional performance.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the assumption that organizational practices within schools significantly influence teacher motivation. In this framework, human resource management practices are treated as the independent variable, while teacher motivation is treated as the dependent variable. The framework reflects the view that the quality of school-level management creates the professional environment in which teacher motivation either develops or weakens.

The independent variable, human resource management practices, consists of four dimensions: training and development, performance appraisal, rewards and recognition, and administrative support. These dimensions represent the key ways in which a school manages, develops, evaluates, and supports its teachers. Training and development strengthen teachers' professional competence and readiness to respond to changing educational demands. Performance appraisal provides a formal mechanism for feedback, accountability, and professional reflection. Rewards and recognition reinforce the value of teachers' contributions and help sustain work commitment. Administrative support reflects the extent to which school management provides practical and professional assistance that enables teachers to perform effectively.

The dependent variable, teacher motivation, is conceptualized through two dimensions: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal satisfaction teachers derive from their profession, including interest in teaching, enjoyment of classroom practice, and a sense of meaning in contributing to student development. Extrinsic motivation refers to external influences such as recognition, rewards, support, and conditions that make teachers feel valued and supported in their work. These two dimensions together provide a more complete understanding of teacher motivation as a professional and organizational phenomenon.

The framework assumes a direct positive relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation. In other words, schools that implement stronger, fairer, and more supportive HRM practices are expected to have teachers with higher levels of motivation. This conceptual assumption is consistent with the broader motivational literature, especially perspectives such as Self-Determination Theory, which suggest that supportive organizational conditions enhance human motivation by fulfilling key psychological and professional needs.

The framework therefore provides the theoretical and analytical basis for the study. It guides the formulation of the research questions and objectives, informs the operationalization of variables, and supports the interpretation of the findings. More importantly, it positions school management practices as strategic influences on teacher motivation rather than as routine administrative background factors.

### **Methodology**

#### *Research Design*

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational survey design to examine the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation among primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. A quantitative approach

was considered appropriate because the study aimed to measure clearly defined variables and analyze the relationship between them through statistical methods. The survey design enabled the researcher to gather data systematically from a relatively large number of respondents, while the correlational design allowed for the identification of the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This design is well aligned with the objectives of the study, which focus not only on identifying the level of each construct but also on examining the empirical relationship between them.

### *Research Setting*

The study was conducted in national primary schools located in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. This setting was selected because it represents an urban educational environment characterized by diverse student socio-economic backgrounds, demanding administrative expectations, and relatively high levels of professional pressure on teachers. Urban schools often present complex working conditions that make the issue of teacher motivation particularly relevant. Therefore, the Bangsar Zone provides an appropriate context for examining how organizational practices influence teacher motivation in real school conditions.

### *Population and Sample*

The population of the study consisted of 650 primary school teachers in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. From this population, a sample of 252 teachers was selected. The sample size was determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, which is widely used in educational research to determine an appropriate sample size relative to the study population. The use of this sampling framework supports the adequacy of the sample for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis and helps ensure meaningful representation of the target population.

### *Sampling Technique*

This study employed simple random sampling. The rationale for using this technique is that each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected as a respondent. This method helps minimize selection bias and increases the representativeness of the sample. Since the study aimed to obtain a general understanding of HRM practices and teacher motivation across schools in the Bangsar Zone, rather than focusing on a specific subgroup, simple random sampling was considered appropriate and methodologically sound.

### *Research Instrument*

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on previous studies and adapted to the Malaysian educational context. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections. Section A gathered demographic information about the respondents. Section B measured human resource management practices, including training and development, performance appraisal, rewards and recognition, and administrative support. Section C measured teacher motivation through its intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The use of the Likert scale was suitable because it allows respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement in a clear and standardized manner, while also facilitating quantitative data analysis.

### *Operationalization of Variables*

The independent variable in this study was human resource management practices. This construct refers to the range of organizational strategies and management practices used by schools to manage, develop, and support teachers in carrying out their professional responsibilities. In this study, HRM practices were operationalized through four dimensions: training and development, performance appraisal, rewards and recognition, and administrative support.

The dependent variable was teacher motivation, which refers to the internal and external forces influencing teachers' willingness, commitment, and enthusiasm in carrying out their duties. Teacher motivation was operationalized through two dimensions: intrinsic motivation, which includes internal satisfaction and interest in teaching, and extrinsic motivation, which includes motivation resulting from recognition, rewards, and organizational support.

### *Validity of the Instrument*

The instrument was developed with reference to the literature and aligned with the conceptual framework of the study. Content validity was addressed by ensuring that the questionnaire items reflected the conceptual dimensions of both HRM practices and teacher motivation as discussed in the literature. The items were structured to match the intended domains of the study variables, thereby supporting conceptual clarity and coherence. Because the constructs were drawn from established educational and motivational literature, the instrument was considered appropriate for measuring the variables in the Malaysian primary school context.

### *Pilot Study and Reliability*

A pilot study was conducted to evaluate the clarity, suitability, and internal consistency of the questionnaire items before the actual data collection process. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, one of the most widely used methods for examining internal consistency in quantitative research. The reliability analysis showed that the construct of teacher motivation recorded a Cronbach's Alpha value of .923, while the construct of HRM practices recorded a Cronbach's Alpha value of .961. These values are well above the commonly accepted threshold of .70, indicating that the instrument had excellent internal consistency and was highly reliable for use in the study.

The strong reliability coefficients indicate that the items within each construct consistently measured the same underlying concept. This supports the trustworthiness of the collected data and provides confidence that the instrument was stable and suitable for addressing the objectives of the study.

### *Data Collection Procedure*

After obtaining the necessary permission from the relevant school authorities, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the selected respondents. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire. The administration process was carried out in a structured and consistent manner to ensure the reliability of the responses. Once completed, the questionnaires were collected, screened, and prepared for statistical analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to basic principles of research ethics throughout the data collection process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. The confidentiality of respondents' identities and responses was maintained, and the information collected was used solely for academic purposes. No personal identifying information was disclosed in the reporting of the findings. These measures were important in ensuring respondent trust and encouraging honest participation.

### *Data Analysis*

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Two types of statistical analysis were used. First, descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, were used to identify the level of human resource management practices and the level of teacher motivation. These statistics were appropriate because they allowed the researcher to summarize the central tendency and variability of the respondents' perceptions regarding each construct.

Second, inferential statistics were employed to examine the relationship between the two variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationship between HRM practices and teacher motivation. This statistical technique was suitable because the study aimed to assess a linear relationship between two measured constructs. The use of Pearson correlation is also consistent with the correlational nature of the study design.

### **Summary of Methodology**

Overall, the methodology of the study was designed to provide a systematic and empirically grounded examination of the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation among urban primary school teachers. The use of a quantitative correlational design, a representative sample, a reliable questionnaire, and appropriate statistical techniques strengthens the credibility of the study and supports the validity of the findings.

### **Findings**

The analysis of the data provides clear evidence that both the independent and dependent variables in this study are at highly positive levels within the selected research context. Specifically, the findings show that human resource management practices in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur are implemented at a high level, with a mean score of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.61. This suggests that respondents generally perceive the management practices in their schools as supportive, organized, and conducive to professional functioning. The relatively moderate standard deviation further indicates that these perceptions are fairly consistent across the sample, reflecting a reasonably shared experience among teachers regarding the quality of HRM practices in their schools.

In relation to the dependent variable, teacher motivation was found to be at a very high level, with a mean score of 4.51 and a standard deviation of 0.55. This result indicates that the teachers in the study generally possess strong levels of commitment, enthusiasm, and positive engagement toward their profession. The lower standard deviation suggests a

relatively high degree of consistency in the motivational levels reported by respondents, implying that strong teacher motivation is not limited to a small subgroup but is broadly present among teachers in the schools studied.

More importantly, the inferential analysis reveals a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between HRM practices and teacher motivation, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = .726$  at  $p < 0.01$ . This finding indicates that higher levels of effective HRM practices are associated with higher levels of teacher motivation. In statistical terms, the strength of the relationship is substantial, suggesting that HRM practices are not peripheral or incidental factors, but rather central organizational conditions that are closely associated with teachers' motivational outcomes.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the schools involved in the study are operating within generally positive organizational conditions and that such conditions are likely contributing to the high motivation levels observed among teachers. The results also provide empirical support for the study's assumption that supportive and well-implemented HRM practices form an important organizational foundation for sustaining teacher motivation in urban primary school settings. Rather than viewing teacher motivation solely as a personal psychological trait, the findings indicate that it is also shaped by the institutional and managerial environment in which teachers work. This makes the results particularly important for school leadership and educational management, as they demonstrate that internal school practices have meaningful implications for teacher commitment and performance.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study offer important insight into the relationship between organizational practices and teacher motivation in the context of urban primary education. The very high level of teacher motivation recorded in this study suggests that, despite the increasing complexity of the teaching profession, teachers in the Bangsar Zone continue to demonstrate strong professional commitment and positive engagement with their work. This is a notable finding, especially given that urban schools are often associated with greater workload pressures, performance expectations, and administrative demands. In this respect, the results indicate that motivation can remain strong even in demanding educational contexts when the organizational environment is supportive.

The high level of HRM practices further strengthens this interpretation. It suggests that teachers perceive their schools as providing relatively effective systems of support in terms of professional development, performance appraisal, recognition, and administration. These practices likely contribute to a sense of fairness, professional value, and institutional support, which are crucial for sustaining teacher motivation. From an academic standpoint, this supports the broader view that motivation is not merely a function of individual disposition, but is shaped by structural and relational conditions within the workplace.

The strong positive correlation between HRM practices and teacher motivation provides the central analytical contribution of the study. This relationship suggests that schools with stronger HRM practices are more likely to foster motivated teachers. The strength of the correlation also indicates that this relationship is meaningful rather than marginal. This is

especially important because it reinforces the idea that management quality matters directly to teacher outcomes. In other words, teacher motivation is not simply improved through personal encouragement or general policy rhetoric, but through concrete organizational practices that influence teachers' daily professional experience.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings are consistent with the logic of motivational frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that individuals are more likely to remain motivated when their psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are supported. Although this study did not directly test those psychological mechanisms, the dimensions of HRM practices measured in the study—such as training, appraisal, recognition, and support—can reasonably be interpreted as organizational conditions that help fulfill such needs. Training and development may strengthen teachers' sense of competence, fair appraisal may enhance professional clarity and trust, recognition may reinforce value and esteem, and administrative support may foster relational security within the workplace. In this sense, the findings do not merely report a correlation; they also support a broader conceptual understanding of how organizational environments can sustain human motivation in educational settings.

The findings also align with the wider literature cited in the original document, particularly studies that link supportive school leadership, positive organizational climate, and professional recognition with stronger teacher motivation. However, the present study adds localized empirical value by focusing specifically on urban primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. This contextual contribution is important because motivation is often shaped by local institutional realities, and educational management strategies that work in one setting may not translate automatically to another. The study therefore enriches the Malaysian educational literature by showing that, within this specific urban context, teacher motivation remains highly responsive to organizational management practices.

Another important point for discussion is that the findings should not be interpreted as meaning that all motivational issues have been solved in the schools studied. A high mean score reflects a generally positive condition, but it does not eliminate the possibility that some teachers may still experience stress, fatigue, or dissatisfaction in specific areas. Rather, the results should be understood as indicating that the overall school environment is functioning well enough to sustain motivation at a high level for most respondents. This is an important distinction because strong findings should not lead to complacency; instead, they should encourage school leaders to preserve and deepen the practices that are already working.

Overall, the discussion of the findings leads to a clear conclusion: teacher motivation in urban primary schools is strongly shaped by the quality of school-level HRM practices. The study therefore reinforces the importance of viewing school management not merely as administrative coordination, but as a strategic factor in teacher engagement, professional well-being, and educational effectiveness.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study carry significant implications for educational practice, school leadership, and policy development. At the school level, the results suggest that teacher motivation can be meaningfully strengthened through intentional and well-structured HRM

practices. This means that school leaders should not regard training, performance appraisal, recognition, and administrative support as isolated managerial tasks, but as interconnected strategies for sustaining teacher commitment and improving professional performance. When such practices are carried out consistently and fairly, they contribute to a school culture in which teachers feel supported, valued, and professionally respected. This, in turn, has implications not only for teacher well-being but also for the quality of teaching and learning delivered to students.

One major practical implication is that school administrators need to invest more deliberately in supportive leadership and people-centered management. Teachers are more likely to remain motivated when they experience professional development opportunities that genuinely enhance their competence, appraisal systems that are developmental rather than punitive, recognition that is meaningful and credible, and administrative systems that reduce rather than intensify professional strain. Therefore, the study suggests that improving motivation is not simply a matter of encouraging teachers verbally, but of building institutional conditions that make motivation sustainable.

At the policy level, the findings imply that educational reforms should give greater attention to internal organizational processes at the school level. Policies often focus heavily on student outcomes, curriculum standards, and accountability mechanisms, yet the present findings show that teacher motivation is closely tied to how schools manage and support their human resources. As such, policymakers may need to consider how leadership training, school management standards, and teacher support systems can be strengthened to ensure that school environments are not only efficient, but also motivationally supportive. This is especially relevant in urban school settings, where teachers may face greater complexity and pressure.

The study also carries implications for professional development design. Training should not be treated as a routine compliance exercise, but as a strategic tool for enhancing teacher efficacy, confidence, and engagement. Well-designed development initiatives can reinforce the message that teachers are valued professionals whose growth matters to the institution. Similarly, recognition systems should move beyond symbolic gestures and instead be embedded in authentic school practices that acknowledge effort, innovation, and contribution in meaningful ways.

From an academic perspective, the study contributes to the body of knowledge on educational management by reinforcing the view that teacher motivation is partly an organizational outcome. This has implications for future scholarship, as it suggests that motivation research in education should continue to examine institutional and management variables rather than focusing exclusively on individual teacher psychology. In this sense, the study supports a more integrated understanding of teacher motivation as a function of both personal and organizational factors.

In summary, the implications of this study are clear: teacher motivation should be managed strategically. Schools that aim for sustained performance and instructional quality must treat HRM practices as a core part of educational leadership, not merely an administrative support

function. The stronger the organizational support given to teachers, the greater the likelihood that motivation, commitment, and performance will be sustained over time.

### **Limitations**

Although the study makes an important contribution to understanding the relationship between HRM practices and teacher motivation, several limitations must be acknowledged to ensure that the findings are interpreted appropriately and within their proper scope.

First, the study adopts a cross-sectional survey design, which means that data were collected at one specific point in time. As a result, the study is able to identify patterns and statistical relationships between variables, but it cannot establish causation with certainty. While the correlation between HRM practices and teacher motivation is strong and significant, the design does not allow the researcher to conclude definitively that HRM practices cause higher teacher motivation. It is possible that other unmeasured factors also contribute to the relationship, or that the relationship may operate in a more dynamic and reciprocal manner over time.

Second, the study is geographically limited to primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. Although this provides valuable insight into an urban educational context, it also means that the findings should not be generalized too broadly to all schools in Malaysia. Schools in rural areas, semi-urban areas, or other states may operate under different organizational conditions, resource levels, leadership styles, and cultural dynamics. Therefore, while the findings are meaningful within the context studied, caution is required when extending them to other educational environments.

Third, the study relies on self-reported questionnaire data. This method is useful for capturing perceptions, attitudes, and experiences efficiently from a large sample, but it also carries the risk of response bias. Respondents may provide answers that reflect social desirability, perceived expectations, or personal interpretation of the questionnaire items. In some cases, teachers may rate their schools or their own motivation more positively than their lived experience fully warrants, especially in professional contexts where honesty may feel sensitive. Thus, while the instrument demonstrated strong reliability, self-reported data should still be interpreted with a degree of caution.

Fourth, the study focuses specifically on HRM practices and teacher motivation without including other variables that may influence motivational outcomes. Factors such as workload intensity, emotional exhaustion, school culture, leadership style, student behavior, family circumstances, and individual personality traits could also affect teacher motivation. By narrowing the scope to two main constructs, the study achieves conceptual clarity, but it may not fully capture the broader ecosystem of influences that shape teacher motivation in real school settings.

Fifth, the study is quantitative in nature and therefore prioritizes measurable patterns over in-depth personal explanation. While the statistical findings provide important evidence of relationships and levels, they do not fully reveal how teachers personally interpret management practices, what aspects of school support matter most to them, or how motivational experiences differ across contexts. In other words, the study offers breadth, but limited depth in terms of lived experience.

These limitations do not undermine the value of the study, but they do define the boundaries of what the findings can confidently claim. Recognizing these constraints is academically important because it demonstrates that the study's conclusions are grounded, balanced, and transparent. It also provides a useful basis for designing stronger future studies that can build on the present findings.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for future research, school practice, and educational management.

For future research, it is recommended that longitudinal studies be conducted to examine how teacher motivation changes over time and how HRM practices influence motivation across different stages of teachers' professional experience. A longitudinal approach would allow researchers to move beyond static relationships and better understand whether strong HRM practices produce lasting motivational effects, particularly in changing educational conditions.

It is also recommended that future studies adopt mixed-method or qualitative approaches. While the present study successfully identifies statistical patterns, qualitative research such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies could provide deeper understanding of how teachers experience HRM practices in their daily professional lives. Such approaches would help uncover the meaning teachers attach to administrative support, recognition, performance evaluation, and professional development, thereby adding interpretive depth to the current findings.

Future research should also expand the scope of the study to include schools in different geographical and institutional contexts, such as rural schools, high-performing schools, under-resourced schools, or schools in other Malaysian states. Comparative studies across such contexts would help determine whether the strong relationship found in this study is stable across settings or varies according to environmental and institutional conditions.

In addition, future studies should consider incorporating additional variables that may interact with or mediate the relationship between HRM practices and teacher motivation. Variables such as job satisfaction, teacher self-efficacy, organizational commitment, burnout, work-life balance, leadership style, and school climate may provide a more comprehensive explanation of teacher motivation. Including such variables could strengthen the analytical model and contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of motivational dynamics in educational organizations.

At the practice level, school leaders are encouraged to review and strengthen their HRM-related systems in a more strategic and teacher-centered way. This includes ensuring that professional development activities are relevant and growth-oriented, that performance appraisals are constructive and transparent, that recognition practices are meaningful, and that administrative support reduces unnecessary burden rather than intensifying it. School leadership should view these practices as part of a long-term strategy for retaining motivated and effective teachers.

At the policy level, educational authorities should consider embedding teacher-supportive management principles more explicitly into school leadership development frameworks and administrative standards. Since teacher motivation is closely related to school-level management quality, policies that strengthen management capacity may produce indirect but significant benefits for teacher engagement and educational outcomes.

Finally, it is recommended that schools and policymakers avoid treating teacher motivation as a personal issue that teachers must manage alone. The findings of this study strongly suggest that motivation is shaped by organizational systems and leadership practices. Therefore, interventions aimed at improving motivation should address the institutional environment, not merely the individual teacher. This is perhaps the most important practical recommendation emerging from the study.

### **Conclusion**

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation in primary schools in the Bangsar Zone, Kuala Lumpur. Based on the findings, both human resource management practices and teacher motivation were found to be at high to very high levels, indicating that the schools involved in the study generally provide a supportive organizational environment and that teachers maintain a strong level of professional motivation. The study also established a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between human resource management practices and teacher motivation, demonstrating that the quality of organizational management is closely linked to teachers' motivational strength.

These findings suggest that teacher motivation should not be viewed solely as an individual psychological matter, but rather as an outcome shaped by the wider organizational practices of the school. When teachers receive appropriate professional development, fair performance evaluation, meaningful recognition, and consistent administrative support, they are more likely to feel valued, committed, and motivated in carrying out their teaching responsibilities. In this regard, human resource management practices function not merely as administrative procedures, but as strategic mechanisms that contribute directly to teacher well-being, professional commitment, and school effectiveness.

In the context of urban primary schools, where teachers often face demanding workloads and high performance expectations, the importance of a supportive management environment becomes even more critical. The study therefore reinforces the need for school leaders and education stakeholders to strengthen organizational practices that promote motivation, stability, and professional growth among teachers.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of teacher motivation by demonstrating that effective human resource management practices are a significant factor in sustaining teacher engagement and improving the overall quality of educational delivery. Future efforts to enhance school performance should therefore include deliberate attention to management practices that support teachers not only as employees, but as key human capital within the education system.

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