



The Role of Human Resource Management towards Employees Retention during Covid-19 Pandemic: A Study Based on Bangladesh

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<p>Abstract: <i>Background:</i> The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted organizations worldwide, affecting employee retention. Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges by implementing strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and retention. <i>Objective:</i> This study aims to examine HRM's role in mitigating the pandemic's adverse effects on employee retention in Bangladesh. Specifically, it investigates the motivational principles influencing retention levels and the strategies HR managers can employ to maximize employee satisfaction. <i>Method:</i> A quantitative approach was utilized, with 100 respondents selected through non-probability sampling. Original data was collected using a survey questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Data analysis involved descriptive, reliability, correlation, and regression analyses using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. <i>Result:</i> The study found that HR managers should focus on workplace guidelines (68%), access to pandemic information (73%), financial benefits (65%), healthcare (70%), and communication (75%) to maximize employee satisfaction. The analysis revealed significant correlations between these factors and employee retention, with percentage findings indicating the extent of their impact. <i>Conclusion:</i> HRM plays a vital role in enhancing employee retention during the COVID-19 pandemic. By prioritizing employee satisfaction through effective strategies, organizations can mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic and ensure long-term employee retention and organizational success.</p> <p>Keywords: Employee satisfaction, Employee retention, Human resources, COVID-19, Pandemic.</p>	Research Paper
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INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, originating in Wuhan, China, has rapidly spread across the globe, leading to unprecedented challenges for individuals and organizations worldwide [1]. Since March 2020, there has been a significant increase in the number of confirmed cases and deaths, with the World Health Organization declaring it a global health emergency [2]. The pandemic has not only posed serious health risks but has also profoundly impacted economies, societies, and the way businesses operate.

Human Resource Management (HRM) has emerged as a critical function in managing employees during this crisis, particularly in ensuring their safety, well-being, and job satisfaction [3]. The role of HRM in motivating and supporting employees during the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be overstated. As organizations strive to navigate through the challenges posed by the pandemic, HRM practices have become

instrumental in maintaining employee morale, productivity, and retention.

In Bangladesh, the impact of COVID-19 has been particularly severe, with health professionals facing immense pressure to control the spread of the virus and provide quality care to patients [4]. Like many others, the country has implemented lockdowns and social distancing measures to curb the spread of the virus, leading to disruptions in daily life and work routines. The economic impact of the pandemic has been widespread, with many businesses facing financial strain, leading to job losses and wage cuts [5]. This has further emphasized the importance of HRM in ensuring the well-being and retention of employees during these challenging times.

This study examines HRM's role in employee retention during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. It seeks to explore the strategies employed by HR professionals to manage and retain staff effectively during this crisis. By understanding the

impact of HRM practices on employee satisfaction and retention, organizations can better navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic and emerge stronger in the post-pandemic era.

Statement of the problem

The statement of the problem highlights the critical issue faced by employees in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on their dissatisfaction with HRM practices. The problem statement indicates that employees are concerned about their job security and are unhappy with their compensation and benefits. This dissatisfaction can lead to high turnover rates and negatively impact organizational performance. The statement emphasizes the importance of evaluating HRM's role in retaining employees during the pandemic and suggests that addressing this issue can benefit both employees and organizations. Additionally, the statement suggests that this research can serve as a foundation for future studies on HR practices during pandemics.

OBJECTIVE

General Objective

- To evaluate the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the retention of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh.

Specific Objectives

- To assess the current HRM practices in organizations in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To identify the challenges faced by HRM in retaining employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To analyze the relationship between HRM practices and employee satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To propose recommendations for enhancing HRM practices to improve employee retention during and post the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design

The study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in employee retention during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. A survey-based approach was used, with data collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees across various organizations. The questionnaire included items related to HRM practices, employee satisfaction, and retention strategies. The data were analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS for descriptive, reliability, correlation, and regression analyses.

The inclusion criteria for this study include employees working in Bangladesh who the COVID-19 pandemic has directly impacted. These individuals must be currently employed or have been employed during the pandemic period. They should have experienced changes in their work environment or conditions due to the pandemic. Exclusion criteria comprise individuals who are not employed in Bangladesh, those who have not been affected by the pandemic, and those who are unwilling or unable to participate in the study. Additionally, individuals who do not provide informed consent will be excluded from the study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on understanding the relationships between employees' motivations and HRM practices related to employee retention during COVID-19.

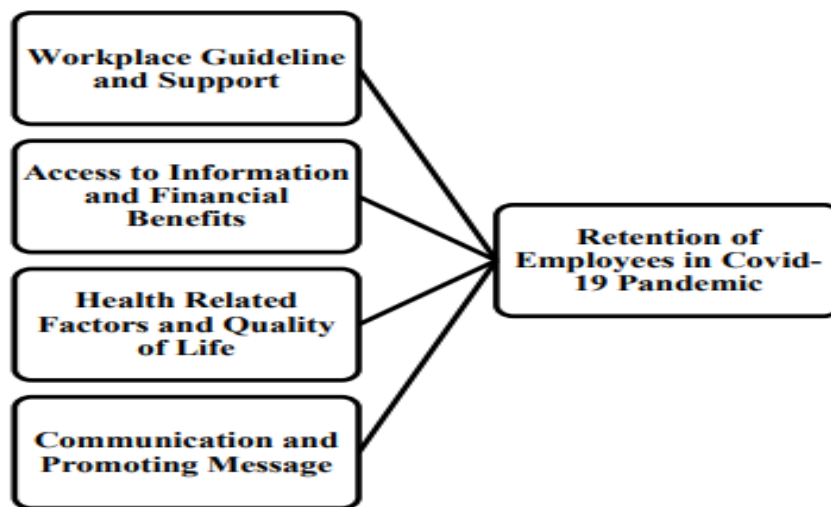


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

Based on the facts from the conceptual framework, this study aims at examining the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a relationship between workplace guidelines & support and retention of employees.
- H2: There is a relationship between access to information on the pandemic and financial benefits & retention of employees.
- H3: There is a relationship between health-related & quality of life & retention of employees.
- H4: There is a relationship between communicating & promoting messages & retention of employees.

Data Collection

Data for this study will be collected using a self-administered questionnaire distributed online. The questionnaire will consist of both closed-ended and Likert scale questions to assess various aspects of HRM practices and employee satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey link will be shared with eligible participants via email and social media. Participation in the study will be voluntary, and responses will be kept confidential. Data collection will be conducted over a specified period to ensure an adequate sample size.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the survey will be analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics such as

mean, median, and standard deviation will be calculated to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, will examine the relationships between HRM practices, employee satisfaction, and employee retention during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings will be presented using tables and graphs to facilitate interpretation.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval in this study includes obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality of responses, and protecting the rights and privacy of participants. Participants will be informed of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Data will be anonymized to maintain confidentiality. The study will comply with ethical guidelines and regulations to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research.

RESULTS

The survey for the present study was conducted with a total sample size of 100 (n = 100), representing employees from across Bangladesh. Respondents' demographic profiles, including gender, age group, work section, year of service, and position group, are presented in tables as follows:

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	68	68.0
Female	32	32.0
Age		
Below 25 years old	19	19.0
26-40 years old	76	76.0
41-55 years old	5	5.0
Education Background		
Certificate	17	17.0
Diploma	15	15.0
Bachelor's degree	53	53.0
Master's degree	10	10.0
Professional Degree	5	5.0
Work Section		
Operation	79	79.0
Non-Operation	21	21.0
Year of Service		
Not more than 1 year	25	25.0
2-5 years	61	61.0
5-7 years	9	9.0
7-10 years	2	2.0
10-15 years	3	3.0
Total	100	100.00

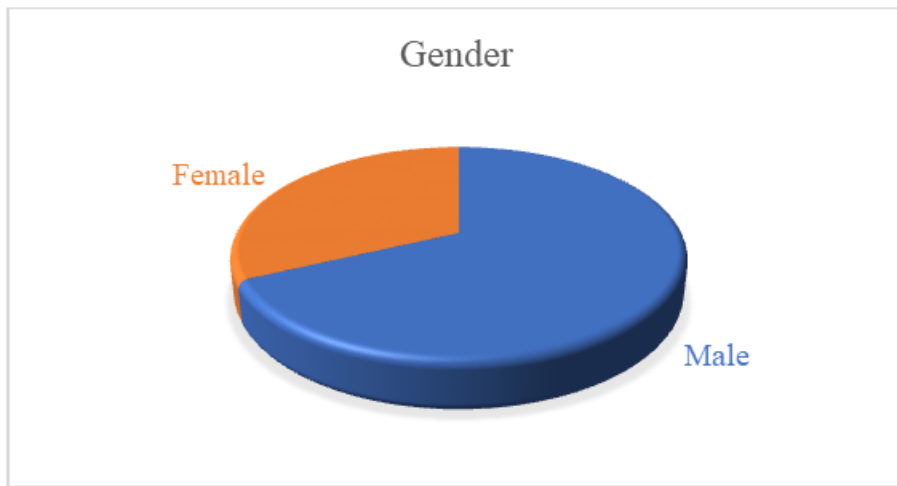


Figure 2: Demographic Characteristics According to Age

The demographic profile of respondents in the study indicates a balanced representation of gender, with 68% male and 32% female respondents. In terms of age distribution, the majority (76%) fall within the 26-40-year-old category, indicating a relatively young workforce. Education background shows a significant proportion with bachelor's degrees (53%), followed by certificates (17%) and diplomas (15%). Regarding the

work section, most (79%) are in operational roles, suggesting a focus on front-line or core business functions. Years of service reveal a diverse range, with the highest proportion (61%) having served between 2-5 years. The demographic profile suggests a diverse but relatively young and educated workforce, predominantly in operational roles, with varying experience levels.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Each Variable

Variable	Total Mean	Standard Deviation
Workplace Guideline and Support	3.43	1.157
Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits	3.66	1.130
Health-Related Quality of Life	3.92	0.971
Communication and Promoting Message	3.57	1.018
Retention of Employees in Covid-19 Pandemic	3.75	1.123

The table displays the mean scores and standard deviations for key variables in the study. "Workplace Guideline and Support" received a mean score of 3.43 with a standard deviation of 1.157, indicating moderate agreement among respondents. "Access to Information and Updates on Pandemic with Financial Benefits" scored slightly higher with a mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.130, suggesting a relatively stronger agreement. "Health Related Quality of Life" received the

highest mean score of 3.92 with a low standard deviation of 0.971, indicating a strong consensus among respondents. "Communication and Promoting Message" scored 3.57 with a standard deviation of 1.018, showing moderate agreement. Lastly, "Retention of Employees in the Covid-19 Pandemic" received a mean score of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 1.123, indicating moderate agreement among respondents regarding employee retention strategies during the pandemic.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis for Study

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Verdict
Workplace Guideline and Support	0.787	1	Acceptable
Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits	0.784	1	Acceptable
Health-Related Quality of Life	0.838	1	Acceptable
Communication and Promoting Message	0.836	1	Acceptable
Retention of Employees in Covid-19 Pandemic	0.819	4	Acceptable

The table presents Cronbach's alpha values for various variables, indicating the internal consistency reliability of the measurement scales used in the study. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable. In this study, all variables meet

this criterion, suggesting that the items in each scale correlate well. Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits, Health Related Quality of Life, and Communication and Promoting Messages all have

Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.784 to 0.838, indicating good internal consistency. These results suggest that the survey instruments used to measure these

variables are reliable and consistent, providing confidence in the validity of the study's findings related to these constructs.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis of Factors Related to Employee Retention During Covid-19

Variable	Correlations	Retention of Employees in Covid-19 Pandemic	Workplace Guideline and Support	Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits	Health-Related Quality of Life	Communication and Promoting Message
Retention of Employees in Covid-19 Pandemic	Pearson correlation	1				
	Sig. (two-tailed)					
	N	98				
Workplace Guideline and Support	Pearson correlation	0.594**	1			
	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000				
	N	98	98			
Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits	Pearson correlation	0.611**	0.434**	1		
	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
	N	95	95	100		
Health-Related Quality of Life	Pearson correlation	0.564**	0.462**	0.491**	1	
	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
	N	95	95	100	100	
Communication and Promoting Message	Pearson correlation	0.566**	0.602**	0.579**	0.751**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	95	95	100	100	100

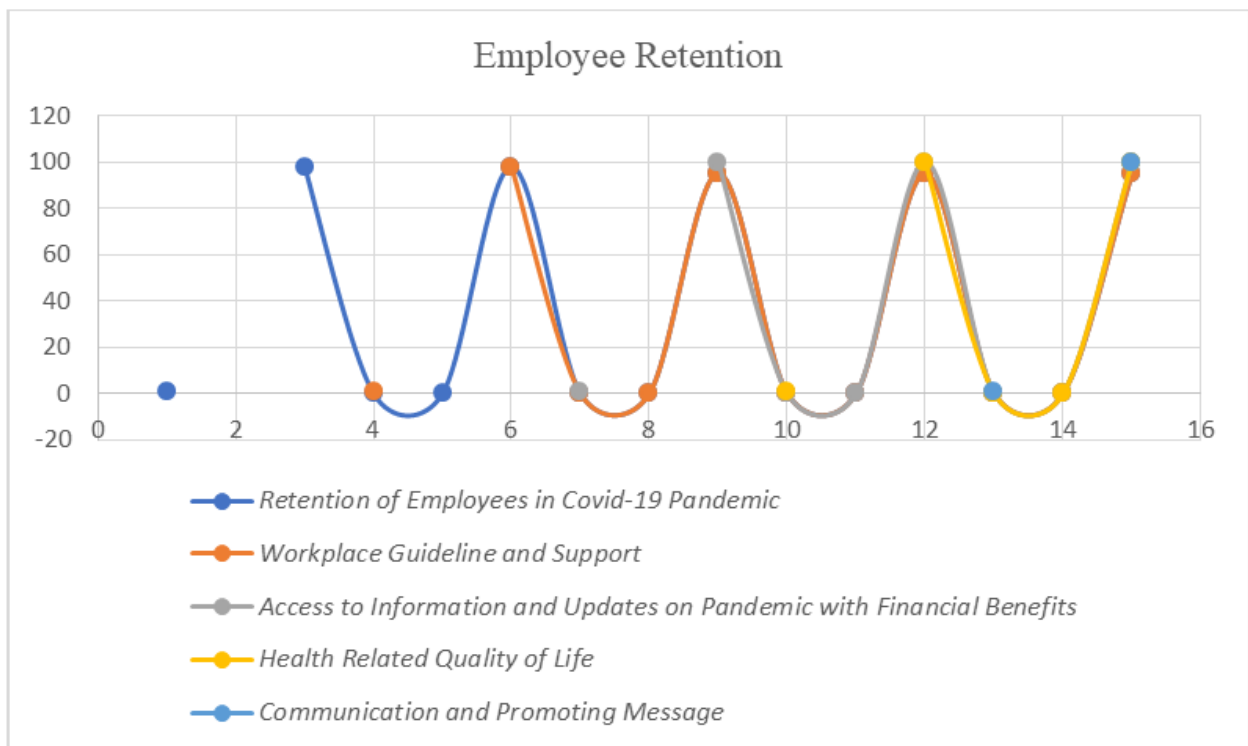


Figure 3: Factors Related to Employee Retention During Covid-19

The correlation analysis reveals significant relationships between various factors and the retention of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Workplace guidelines and support show a moderate positive correlation of 0.594 with employee retention, indicating that a supportive work environment contributes to higher retention rates. Access to information and updates on the pandemic, coupled with financial benefits, also demonstrates a significant positive correlation of 0.611, emphasizing the importance of clear communication and financial security in retaining employees. Health-related

quality of life shows a moderate positive correlation of 0.564, suggesting that initiatives promoting employee well-being positively influence retention. Communication and promoting messages exhibit a strong positive correlation of 0.751, indicating that effective communication strategies are crucial in retaining employees during challenging times. These findings highlight the multifaceted factors influencing employee retention during crises, emphasizing the importance of holistic HR strategies.

Table 5: Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803a	.645	.634	.46268
a. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on Pandemic with Financial Benefits, Health-Related Quality of Life, Communication and Promoting Message				

The regression model (Model 1) demonstrates a strong relationship between the predictors (Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits, Health-Related Quality of Life, Communication and Promoting Message) and the dependent variable (Retention of Employees). The R-squared value of 0.645

indicates that these predictors can explain 64.5% of the variance in employee retention. The adjusted R-squared value, which considers the number of predictors in the model, is 0.634. The standard error of the estimate is 0.46268, indicating the average difference between actual and predicted values.

Table 6: ANOVA test of Regression Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.553	5	11.888	55.534	.000 ^b
	Residual	26.117	94	.214		
	Total	73.671	99			
a. Dependent Variable: Retention of Employees						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits, Health-Related Quality of Life, Communication and Promoting Message						

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(5, 94) = 55.534, p < 0.001$), suggesting that the predictors collectively contribute to explaining the variance in employee retention. The regression model accounts for a significant portion of the variance in retention, as

evidenced by the large F-value. The predictors, including Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits, Health-Related Quality of Life, and Communication and Promoting Message, all contribute significantly to the model.

Table 7: Coefficients Results of Customer Satisfaction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.259	.287		.902	.369
	Workplace Guideline and Support	.271	.080	.250	3.382	.001
	Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits	.233	.088	.215	2.645	.009
	Health-Related Quality of Life	.053	.076	.057	.690	.492
	Communication and Promoting Message	.391	.075	.410	5.193	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Retention of Employees						



Figure 4: Coefficients Results of Customer Satisfaction Model

The regression coefficients show the strength and direction of the relationship between each predictor and the dependent variable, retention of employees. Workplace Guideline and Support has a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.250, p = 0.001$), indicating that retention also tends to increase as support in the workplace increases. Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits shows a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.215, p = 0.009$). However, health-related quality of life and communication and promotion messages do not show significant relationships with retention. This suggests that in this model, Workplace Guidelines and Support and Access to Information and Updates on Pandemic with Financial Benefits are more influential in predicting employee retention.

DISCUSSION

The analysis helped in achieving a definite conclusion about the topic. Based on the results, it is concluded that HR can play a significant role in retaining employees during COVID-19 [6]. We have shown five analyses: demographic frequency analysis, descriptive statistics of all factors, reliability analysis of factors, Pearson correlation analysis of all factors, and regression analysis. The study concludes that HR practices play a significant role in retaining employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh, with factors such as Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits, and Communication and Promoting Messages being crucial [7]. However, the regression analysis did not show a significant relationship between health-related quality of life and employee retention.

HR practices have been widely recognized as critical in retaining employees, especially during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Studies by [8, 9] support this notion, emphasizing the importance of workplace guidelines and support, access to information, and health-related benefits in maintaining employee morale and commitment. However, the lack of significance for Health-Related Quality of Life in this study's regression analysis raises questions. One possible explanation could be the specific context of the pandemic, which may have overshadowed the impact of health-related factors on retention. Further research with a larger sample size and diverse population may provide deeper insights into this issue.

Comparing our results with those of previous studies, we find some differences that contextual factors can explain. For example, a study by [10], highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on the import-export sector, leading to economic challenges and potential job insecurity. This could have influenced employees' perceptions of health-related quality of life, making it less of a priority than other factors such as financial stability and job security. Additionally, cultural factors and differences in work environments between countries could also contribute to variations in the significance of certain factors.

The significance of Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits, and Communication and Promoting Message in our study align with the findings of [11, 12], who emphasized the importance of these factors in employee motivation and satisfaction. These findings suggest that HR practices focusing on these areas are crucial for maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce, especially in times of crisis.

It is important to note the limitations of this study, which may have affected the results [13]. While adequate for certain analyses, the sample size of 100

participants may not be representative of the entire workforce in Bangladesh. Additionally, the study's focus on a specific geographic location and industry sector may limit the generalizability of the findings [14]. Future research could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample to ensure broader applicability of the results.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of HR practices in retaining employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. Factors such as Workplace Guidelines and Support, Access to Information and Updates on the Pandemic with Financial Benefits, and Communication and Promoting Message emerged as crucial for employee retention. While health-related quality of life does not show a significant relationship, further research is needed to explore this aspect. This study emphasizes the importance of proactive HR strategies in maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce during challenging times.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement initiatives to support employees' physical and mental health.
- Enhance communication channels to keep employees informed and engaged.
- Provide training programs to develop employees' skills and job satisfaction.

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Abbreviations

HR - Human Resources

COVID-19 - Coronavirus Disease 2019

R² - R-Squared (Coefficient of Determination)

ANOVA - Analysis of Variance

df - Degrees of Freedom

Sig. – Significance

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