

Factors influencing employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry

Dalina Alpons Pereira¹, Meor Rashidan Abdullah², Walton Wider^{1,*}, Jem Cloyd M. Tanucan³,
Harvey Pak Ting Lee¹, Leilei Jiang⁴, Lester Naces Udang^{5,6}

¹ Faculty of Business and Communications, INTI International University, Nilai 71800, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

² School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang 43400, Selangor, Malaysia

³ College of Education, Cebu Technological University, Cebu 6000, Philippines

⁴ Faculty of Education and Liberal Arts, INTI international University, Nilai 71800, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

⁵ Faculty of Liberal Arts, Shinawatra University, Pathum Thani 12160, Thailand

⁶ College of Education, University of the Philippines, Diliman 1101, Philippines

* **Corresponding author:** Walton Wider, walton.wider@newinti.edu.my

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Abstract: Organizations are gradually focusing on creating a healthy workplace for their employees and becoming more people-centric. This occurs because a healthy workforce increases the work performance of the organisation and the personal development of its employees. This study aims to investigate the HR functions that impact employee motivation in the Malaysian banking sector. The three HR functions that were selected were training and development, rewards and recognition, and career management. The study utilised a cross-sectional design, and the research instruments were adapted from a number of past studies. A total of 350 respondents from the Malaysian banking industry were recruited. Using SPSS Version 26.0, the research hypotheses were examined. The results show that rewards and recognition are not significant predictors of employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry; however, training and development and career management are significant predictors of employee motivation. These results will help the human resources department develop and improve its HR operations.

Keywords: employee motivation; training and development; rewards and recognition; career management; banking industry; human health

1. Introduction

According to Statista (2024), employment in Malaysia's finance and insurance industries has steadily increased. From 2015 to 2023, the number of people employed in this sector rose from 349,000 to 382,000. This growth demonstrates the rapid expansion of the financial services industry over the years. Despite this growth in Malaysia, the global banking sector faced significant challenges in 2023. According to the Financial Times, over 60,000 jobs were cut worldwide in the banking sector, one of the largest layoffs since the financial crisis (Khalid, 2023). The significant job cuts were due to a drop in fees resulting from a slowdown in initial public offerings (IPOs) and deal-making activities. For example, UBS's acquisition of Credit Suisse resulted in at least 13,000 job losses, with additional cuts expected as the merger progresses to eliminate duplicate roles.

Banking is one of the commercial operations that holds a large market share in providing various services to consumers from diverse backgrounds (Djouhara, 2015; Khalfi and Saâdaoui, 2023). The issue for banks is that when the industry is understaffed, the cycle of resignations and recruiting tends to perpetuate itself. Previous research on turnover has found that many organizations face challenges in

acquiring and retaining talent due to increased demand and better opportunities, prompting employees to move to other organizations (Awang et al., 2013; Minzlaff et al., 2024). According to a survey by the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), Malaysian businesses, including banks, incur over \$6 billion annually in costs due to employee absences (Chan and Mah, 2021).

Human beings are generally able to keep moving forward because they are motivated to do so (Sam et al., 2024). Motivation is like a fuel tank that must be refilled when it runs low to boost or accelerate a journey. Whether considered a need or a desire, motivation is an emotional state that compels us to make some sort of change, either to ourselves or our surroundings. Motivation is the source of energy that allows us to respond to our environment in a flexible, creative, and problem-solving manner (Alwaely et al., 2024; Reeve, 2018; Teoh et al., 2022). Offering transparency in objectives and flexibility in approach can enhance motivation for tasks. Having your needs met in a clear and empowering manner can significantly affect your drive (Ryan et al., 2021).

Employee well-being is critical in the banking industry, as employees are an asset to the bank (Devi et al., 2022). A bank achieves its goals when the organization provides effective training, rewards, and career guidance to its employees (Hassan, 2022). The banking sector benefits both the economy and the country, promoting economic progress and establishing new horizons. It also helps create new jobs and opportunities for millions of workers, making human resource functions critical to employee motivation (Almuayad and Chen, 2024). The HR department is essential for the smooth operation of any business, starting with establishing policies tailored to the specifics of the job, ultimately ensuring the company's continued success (Nusraningrum et al., 2024; Rai and Maheshwari, 2024). Companies are increasingly focusing on their employees, as this has been shown to increase productivity and reduce turnover (Pereira et al., 2024). For businesses and organizations to succeed, Human Resource Management (HRM) is indispensable. Dewhurst et al. (2009) noted that increasing employee motivation can boost corporate revenues. Furthermore, employees who are content, happy, and motivated are more productive (Bellet et al., 2024). Human resources must also facilitate employees' dynamic participation in both organizational and individual processes, taking into account each individual's unique skills, experiences, and personality traits.

The primary goal of this research is to investigate the effects of HR functions on employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry. The three most important HR functions used to study employee motivation in this research are training and development, rewards and recognition, and career management. As a part of the financial services industry, it is critical to improve or enhance HR functions in Malaysia's banking industry. In the banking industry, where the work is repetitive and laborious, this study is conducted to improve employee motivation and directly increase organizational performance.

1.1. Underpinning theory

The theory of social exchange will serve as the theoretical basis for this investigation. According to the social exchange theory, social behaviour develops

through a series of exchanges between individuals (Yamao, 2024). Profits should be maximised while expenses are kept to a minimum in this deal. Having meaningful relationships with other people makes you feel a sense of duty, belonging, and confidence (Brown and Mitchell, 2010; Törrönen et al., 2023). Belief that one's contributions to a social exchange relationship are rewarded in kind is at the heart of positive evaluations of those relationships (Van et al., 2007), as seen in indicators like psychological ownership (Avey et al., 2012), identification with the leader (Gu et al., 2015), and organisational justice (Xu et al., 2016). According to this theory, people always think about what's in it for them when engaging in conversation with others. The two most essential and fundamental characteristics are self-interest and interdependence (Stafford and Kuiper, 2021). When two people engage in a transaction, they typically do so to satisfy some material or psychological need or gain. They need reassurance that their requirements are being considered. There is some degree of dependency wherever there is a social trade. Two parties are mutually dependent on one another in any type of social transaction. If this reliance yields a favourable result, the connection will be maintained; however, if the outcome is negative, the two parties will not collaborate (Tiwari et al., 2022). Employee motivation is greatly influenced by HR functions such as training and development, rewards and recognition, and career management (Chu et al., 2023). Failure to perform the three HR functions listed above may result in high employee turnover, low-profit organisations, non-performing employees, absenteeism, and even reputation damage in the banking industry (Salman et al., 2023). As a result, the social exchange theory will be applied throughout this research to ensure that the relationship between employee motivations and the three HR functions mentioned in this study is studied and observed.

2. Literature review

2.1. Training and development and employee motivation

In general, training and development can uncover hidden abilities and maximise their use to help the company become more productive (Anwar and Shukur, 2015). Training and development help to increase the knowledge, skills, and methods that people require in order to demonstrate a result that can affect the company and persuade the employer to enter a competitive state (Sultan et al., 2020) The best way to benefit the workforce and achieve organisational goals is to select appropriate training. Several authors acknowledged this in their research, stating that training is critical to the success of any organisation (Gardi et al., 2020). According to Ismael et al. (2021), the two main types of business training are on-the-job and off-the-job training. Managers and supervisors conduct on-the-job training to advance employee competencies and supplement their expertise. Off-the-job training is a type of instruction that takes place in a location other than the actual workplace for a set period of time. The goal of providing training somewhere other than the workplace is to provide employees with a stress-free environment in which they can focus solely on learning.

Many businesses have been advised in recent years to embrace a variety of staff development and performance training programmes in order to increase their

productivity and competitiveness. These recommendations are based on widely held beliefs and statements that professional development and training have a significant impact on the success of an organisation (Kwakye and Bempah, 2021). Digital training is becoming increasingly popular and has played an important role in recent years. Digital technologies are rapidly transforming industries and organisations, delivering new capabilities that would have previously taken months or years in weeks or even days. According to Ignatius (2022), employees are aware of the value of technological proficiency in the workplace. Employees reported a need for more digital skills to adapt to job changes brought on by the pandemic, and they anticipated that they would require training in cloud-related skills by 2025 (Ignatius, 2022). As a result, we hypothesised:

H1: Training and development have a positive effect on employee motivation.

2.2. Rewards and recognition and employee motivation

The term “reward” refers to a broad category of ideas that include anything that a boss is willing to suggest in exchange for her (or his) handouts and that a worker might find useful (Edet et al., 2023). The absence of an incentive policy creates a hostile work environment, hampering employees’ efforts and potentially leading to their resignation from their positions. The incentive system will become more important for these sources. The JDI (job descriptive index) tool is used by employers to assess employee job satisfaction. This JDI instrument includes pay, job, coworkers, promotions, and supervision. Employee job satisfaction fosters supportive engagement with their relevant colleagues and may aid in increasing the employee’s effectiveness (Gopinath, 2020). A reward is something of value received in exchange for performing an action or meeting an obligation (Iridianathan et al., 2022). An employee receives a reward in the form of monetary compensation from their employer in exchange for his or her services or labour. According to Armstrong (2002), the reward system is the company’s comprehensive set of policies, procedures, and practises for compensating workers in accordance with their contribution, ability, competence, and market value. The organisational reward system, which includes the practises, structures, and procedures that will provide and maintain appropriate types and levels of pay, benefits, and other forms of reward, is developed on the basis of the organization’s reward philosophy, strategies, and policies. According to Robert (2005), a reward system is the process of creating and enforcing strategies, policies, and procedures that encourage employees to feel valued and invested in the company’s success. A study by Judge et al. (2010) found that money is the only incentive (reward) that can even come close to meeting the needs for survival, happiness, respect, and safety. Especially in terms of economic and political significance, this is true. In addition, a study by Machova et al. (2022) suggested that financial incentives (e.g., salary increases, bonuses) are found to be the most effective motivational tools across all generations. As a result, we hypothesised:

H2: Rewards and recognition have a positive effect on employee motivation.

2.3. Career management and employee motivation

There are few theoretical and systematic approaches to the study of careers in organisational contexts—how organisations shape and are shaped by careers. According to Arthur et al. (1989), the concept of a career is independent of any theoretical or academic perspective. Career management is the term for the policies, procedures, and services that businesses provide to help their employees succeed in their careers. It is also known as “organisational support for career development” or “organisational sponsorship.” Employees’ perceptions of their responsibilities, successes, and career-related accomplishments are reflected in their perceptions of job satisfaction. Career satisfaction has been defined as a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic outcomes, and it is thus measured using both objective and subjective criteria (Kong et al., 2012; Zhao et al., 2024). Career satisfaction is a strong predictor of future success. An objective assessment of professional success provides more or less concrete indicators of a person’s professional situation (Kong et al., 2012). Eby et al. (2005) defined professional management as “the process by which individuals develop insight into themselves and their environment, set career objectives and plans, and obtain feedback regarding career development”. Similarly, Grobler. (2006) defined career management as “the process of establishing and implementing goals, plans, and strategies that enable HR professionals and managers to meet workforce demands and enable individuals to achieve their career ambitions”. Career management is concerned with providing opportunities for employees to grow their skills and careers in order to ensure that the organisation has the talent flow it requires and to meet individual desires (Chew and Girardi, 2008). It is concerned with how careers develop and how people advance, either through promotions or by expanding or enriching their jobs in order to take on more responsibility or make better use of their talents and abilities. It is based on an understanding of career dynamics and the integration of organisational needs with those of specific personnel. As a result, we hypothesised:

H3: Career management has a positive effect on employee motivation.

Overall, the above studies highlight the individual influences of training, rewards, and career management on employee motivation. However, a significant research gap remains in exploring the potential synergistic effects of these factors. Studies examining these constructs in isolation may not fully capture the dynamic interplay that likely influences employee motivation. Research focusing on their integrated impact is needed. Understanding this interplay has significant implications for organizations seeking to maximize employee engagement, productivity, and overall performance.

To further elucidate this concept, **Figure 1** presents a conceptual framework. This framework delineates the hypothesized interplay between training, rewards, and career management on employee motivation. Careful analysis of this model can yield valuable insights into the potential for these factors to interact and influence employee motivation from a more comprehensive perspective.

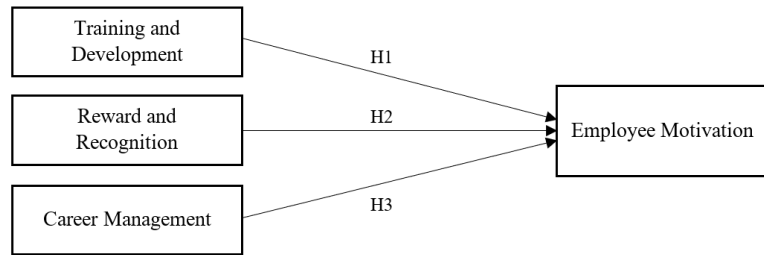


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Methods

3.1. Sample

This study focused on Malaysian employees in the banking industry. The sample size was calculated using the G*Power software, which is commonly employed for power analysis in quantitative research. The research model included three predictors, and the analysis parameters were set to a statistical power of 0.95, a significance level of 0.05, and an effect size of 0.15. These settings resulted in a sample size requirement of 119 participants.

The effect size of 0.15 was chosen based on conventional benchmarks for small to medium effect sizes in social science research, which are often adequate for initial explorations into new areas of study. The formula used in G*Power for determining the sample size for multiple regression, considering the specified effect size, power, and alpha level, follows the non-central F-distribution:

$$n = \frac{(k + 1) \times F_{power}(\alpha, df_1, df_2)}{effect\ size^2}$$

where:

- n is the required sample size.
- k is the number of predictors.
- F_{power} is the F-value derived from the desired power level.
- α is the significance level.
- df_1 and df_2 are the degrees of freedom.
- $effect\ size$ is the hypothesized effect size.

In this study, data collection followed a snowball sampling strategy, starting with initial survey participants who then referred additional eligible respondents, thereby facilitating the recruitment process. This method is particularly useful in accessing a wide network of industry-specific professionals quickly and efficiently.

3.2. Data collection

The study employed a convenience sampling method to collect data, wherein the questionnaire was distributed to bank employees through the author's networks of friends and colleagues in the banking industry. The selection of this approach was based on its ability to facilitate swift dissemination and retrieval of the questionnaires, resulting in time and cost savings. The questionnaires were distributed electronically, mainly through email and other digital communication platforms commonly utilized in the industry. Participants were urged to promptly fill out the survey and submit it before the specified due date. The advantage of this approach lies in its utilization of

pre-existing relationships and networks, which usually result in higher response rates as a result of the personal connections between the researcher and the participants. In addition, disseminating questionnaires through established connections within the industry enhances the reliability of data collection, as respondents are more inclined to devote proper attention to the task and offer well-considered responses.

3.3. Research instrument

3.3.1. Employee motivation

This construct consists of six items adapted from Pratheepkanth (2011) and scored on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (strongly agree). An example of an item includes “I feel motivated coming to work every day”. The Cronbach’s alpha value was 0.66.

3.3.2. Training and development

This construct consists of five items adapted from Manivannan and Bhuvanewari (2020) and scored on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Examples of items include “there is a lot of chance or opportunity to learn new things in my organisation”. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.92.

3.3.3. Reward and recognition

This construct consists of five items adapted from Pratheepkanth (2011) and scored on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item including “my organisation reviews staff benefits and compensation policies regularly”. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.76.

3.3.4. Career management

This construct is made up of four items adapted from Chew and Girardi (2008), using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item includes “my organisation develops career plans for the employees”. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.87.

3.4. Data analysis

We used Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 to analyse the data. The data was subjected to descriptive analyses in order to determine the frequency distribution of the respondents’ backgrounds. After that, multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the distinct predictors of employee motivation. A significance value of 0.05 was used as the cut-off point for all statistical tests.

4. Results

Table 1 summarises the demographic information gathered. In total, 350 bank employees participated in this study, and their gender, age, number of years of work experience, job position, and salary range were analysed. 36% of participants are male, while 64% of participants are female. In terms of age group, 31–41 and 42–52 age groups dominate the workplace in the Malaysian banking industry. Approximately 84% of Malaysia’s banking industry is made up of these two age groups. In terms of work experience, nearly 77% of employees had worked in the banking industry for

more than 7 years. Furthermore, 27% of total respondents are executives, 36% are senior executives, and the remaining 37% are assistant managers and above. Salary ranges from RM4,000 and above for 253 respondents, with 28% of total respondents earning between RM2,500 and RM4,000.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents ($N = 350$).

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	127	36
	Female	223	64
Age	22–30	25	7
	31–41	185	53
	42–52	110	31
	53 and above	30	9
Work experience	1–3	20	6
	4–6	60	17
	7–10	115	33
	11 and above	155	44
Job Position	Executive	96	27
	Senior Executive	126	36
	Assistant Manager	93	27
	Manager and above	35	10
Salary Range	RM 2500–RM 4000 (\approx USD526.32–USD842.11)	97	28
	RM 4001–RM 7000 (\approx USD842.32–USD1473.68)	125	36
	RM 7001 and above (\approx USD1473.89 and above)	128	37

Table 2 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis used to investigate the predictors of employee motivation. According to the findings, the combination of training and development, reward and recognition, and career management explained 74.2% of the variance in employee motivation. Furthermore, the results provide support for the research hypotheses. Specifically, employee motivation was found to be significantly predicted by training and development ($\beta = 0.446$, $p < 0.01$), strongly supporting hypothesis H1. Career management was also a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.360$, $p < 0.01$), confirming hypothesis H3. However, reward and recognition did not demonstrate a significant influence on employee motivation ($\beta = 0.165$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the rejection of hypothesis H2. **Figure 2** presents the hypothesis testing results.

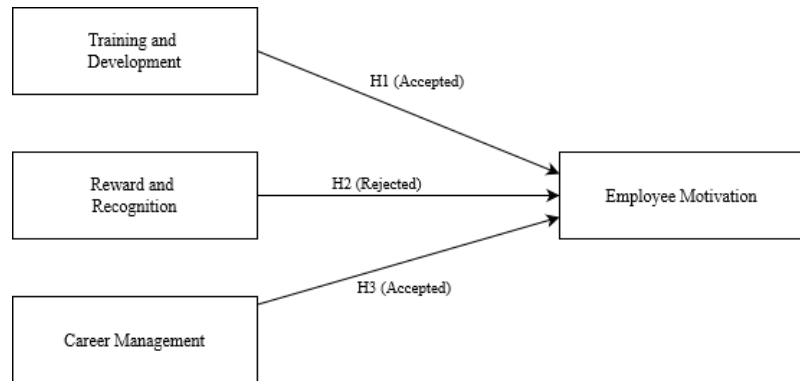


Figure 2. Hypothesis testing results.

Table 2. Predictors of employee motivation ($n = 350$).

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>df</i>	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Employee Motivation	Training and Development	29.783**	0.742	(3.346)	0.446	3.465	0.002
	Reward and Recognition				0.165	1.265	0.215
	Career Management				0.360	2.602	0.014

Note: ** $p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

The goal of this study is to determine the impact of human resource functions on employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry. The study focuses on three HR functions in particular: training and development, rewards and recognition, and career management.

This study’s findings show that training and development are the strongest predictors of employee motivation in Malaysia’s banking industry, supporting H1. Our findings support previous research by Gardi et al. (2020) and Kwakye and Bempah (2021). Furthermore, the significance of training and development as a predictor of employee motivation is underscored by its potential to enhance employee knowledge, skills, and work methods. By feeling more equipped and confident in their roles, employees are likely to experience increased motivation, leading to improved performance and increased organizational competitiveness (Sultan et al., 2020). Choosing appropriate training strategies, aligned with specific employee needs and organizational goals, is crucial for maximizing these motivational benefits (Gardi et al., 2020). Both on-the-job and off-the-job approaches offer distinct advantages: on-the-job training fosters practical skill development while directly impacting the work environment, and off-the-job training allows for focused knowledge acquisition and broader skill-building. These training approaches can work in tandem to boost employee competence (Ismael et al., 2021), ultimately enhancing overall motivation.

Due to their importance in the field and within the HR department, training and development have become staples in most businesses. These functions have a direct bearing on the success of an organisation by fostering greater proficiency among workers (Mozael, 2015). According to Nunvi (2006), the goal of training is to maintain and improve performance on the job, while the goal of development is to enhance skills for future employment. According to Singh and Mohanty (2012), training is an important tool for increasing employee productivity, which affects organisational

performance and effectiveness. Training also enhances employees' abilities by motivating and transforming them into well-organized and well-mannered individuals, which has a positive impact on the organization's performance. In short, employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry is influenced by training and development.

The H3 of this study was that career management has a positive effect on employee motivation. According to Subramanian et al. (2019), positive attitudes toward organisational performance and the career management system can predict retention intentions. Increases in retention rate simultaneously increase employee motivation to continue contributing their best to the organisation. Career development is defined as the stage of continuous learning and improvement in terms of individual and professional skills that leads to career advancement, revolution, and increased opportunities. Employers must make an effort to address human resource needs by providing adequate materials, mechanisms, and a proper working environment to ensure continuous individual growth so that employees are more dedicated and well prepared to take on new career roles and responsibilities as well as face work challenges (Othman and Lembang, 2017). When an organisation provides multiple opportunities for career advancement, it motivates employees to stay with the organisation for a longer period. Employees who have more opportunities for advancement feel more responsible, which leads to a sense of belonging to the organisation. This will encourage the employee to stay with the bank longer and continue to give their all. As a result, there is a strong link between career management and employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry.

Furthermore, research highlights the importance of organizational support and career satisfaction as key components driving employee motivation within the context of career management. Often termed "organizational support for career development" or "organizational sponsorship," this support reflects how invested an organization is in fostering employee growth (Subramanian et al., 2019). Employees' positive perceptions of this support directly influence their career satisfaction—the combination of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards they feel from their work (Kong et al., 2012). Importantly, career satisfaction doesn't just predict retention, but also serves as a strong indicator of an individual's future success, showcasing the long-term benefits for both the employee and the organization (Kong et al., 2012). Therefore, organizations that prioritize career management initiatives, foster a culture of support and development, are likely to see a positive impact on employee motivation, satisfaction, and overall success.

The study's final finding, which is connected to H2, shows that reward and recognition have no effect on employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry, which goes against Robert's hypothesis (2005). Following the global financial crisis, banks' remuneration practises came under increased regulatory scrutiny, and as a result, changes were made to the structure of remuneration to reduce the incentive for excessive risk-taking and the prevalence of the "bonus culture," as well as to eliminate the practise of "reward without performance" (Zalewska, 2022). This finding underscores the importance of motivation within the post-financial crisis banking sector. It suggests that factors beyond conventional monetary rewards may exert a

stronger influence on employee drive and engagement. Further research is warranted to investigate alternative motivational drivers specifically pertinent to this context.

5.1. Recommendation

According to the findings of this study, training and development and career management have an impact on employee motivation in the Malaysian banking industry. In contrast, rewards and recognition have the least impact on employee motivation in the Malaysian banking sector. There are a few recommendations or suggestions that the Malaysian banking industry could implement to increase employee motivation. For a long time, professional training has been provided in the banking industry. In many cases, it has provided substantial benefits to bank employees and has been shown to provide a competitive advantage to a bank (Falola et al., 2014) as well as improve bank organisational performance (Glaveli and Karassavidou, 2011). It is not about the amount of training provided, but about how the training is delivered. The trainings that are provided to employees need to have an impact. To provide effective training, the training method must be interesting, engaging, and relevant to the staff. Gamified learning can be implemented by HR departments. Gamification is the practise of incorporating game-like elements into training and development programmes. These features appeal to the competitive natures of learners by allowing them to beat the clock, accumulate points on a leaderboard, or earn badges (Oke et al., 2023). Organizations must focus on self-development training in addition to providing impactful training. Bank jobs can be stressful and draining at times, but by providing more self-development training, employees will be motivated to perform well daily. Employees frequently believe they are too busy to participate in training that requires a significant time commitment, which is understandable. In addition, a bank's human resources department must collaborate with government bodies such as Human Resources Development Corporations to create simple and accessible self-development programmes for employees.

Career development is essential for every employee because it helps determine the employee's future. It is recommended that organisations, specifically the Human Resources department, provide employees with career counselling. Employees will benefit from career counselling as they gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Employees will then be able to choose their career path. Organizations must provide employees with career counselling so that they can determine whether their goals align with the job's goals. Every employee expects career development to motivate them to work hard (Afiyati, 2018). According to Niati et al. (2021), work motivation has a substantial impact on career progression. As a result, organisations should provide career counselling for the benefit of both employees and the organisation itself. Aside from career counselling, job rotation is another method for increasing employee motivation. Career development examines the relationship between the organisation and its employees from two perspectives: the organization's and the employees'. Job rotation as a method of career management will encourage employees to seek out alternative employment opportunities. According to Naim and Lenka (2017), employees are more engaged in their

organisation when they have access to self-advancement because they are emotionally attached to the organisation, which eventually causes employees to stay in their organisation.

According to the findings of this study, there is no statistically significant link between rewards and recognition and employee motivation in the banking industry. Nonetheless, rewards and recognition are important factors in employee motivation. As a result, organisations should prioritise non-monetary rewards. Workers' interest in their jobs is maintained as a result of this initiative. Non-monetary incentives can be given to employees in the form of time off for volunteering, tangible rewards, or team outings. One example of how a non-monetary benefit can encourage creativity, high employee engagement, and positive business outcomes is Google's 20% time-off policy for employees working on their own projects. Google's most well-known products, like Maps, Gmail, and AdSense, all started out as side projects for the company's employees. Therefore, it is recommended that the banking sector put more emphasis on non-monetary rewards that inspire employees to contribute actively to the organisation.

5.2. Limitation, future research, and conclusion

One limitation of this study is that it only focuses on three HR functions: training and development, rewards and recognition, and career management. However, numerous HR functions could potentially influence employee motivation, suggesting a broader scope for future research. The research methodology used here, while effective for a preliminary investigation, may be considered simplistic and favor more complex analyses. Advanced statistical techniques and mixed-method approaches could yield deeper insights into the dynamics of HR functions and employee motivation.

Another constraint is the relatively small sample size of 350 respondents from Malaysia's banking industry, which may not fully represent the diversity and complexity of the sector. This is critical as different levels of employees might exhibit varied motivational perceptions or needs. Additionally, future research might focus on comparing employee motivation across different tenure lengths, potentially revealing how longevity in the banking sector influences motivational factors. This research is also limited by its cross-sectional nature, capturing only a snapshot in time. Conducting this study longitudinally could provide more comprehensive insights into how employee motivation evolves in response to changes in HR practices. Expanding the research to include a wider range of HR functions and employing a variety of research techniques could provide a more detailed understanding of how these functions impact employee motivation. This would also align with the requirements of higher-indexed journals looking for rigorous methodological applications.

The findings of this study are significant because they illuminate how selected human resources functions can affect the motivation of staff within the Malaysian banking sector. We propose a framework for analyzing the dynamics between businesses and their staff, emphasizing the role played by key HR functions like training and development and career management, which were identified as crucial. Nevertheless, the banking industry must take appropriate actions and make informed

decisions to address HR functions effectively if it wants to maintain its competitive edge in the market. Our research contributes to the social exchange theory by exploring how specific HR functions are integral to sustaining employee motivation. Future studies should consider a broader range of HR functions and adopt more complex methodologies to build upon these findings.

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