

eISSN: 2981-1554

Original Article (Qualitative)

Developing a human resource sustainability scenario with a foresight approach

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Receive:

21 October 2025

Revise:

09 December 2025

Accept:

31 January 2026

Keywords:

Human resource retention, employee values, organizational transformation, psychological factors, economic factors, scenario, foresight

Abstract

The present study aims to develop a human resource sustainability scenario with a foresight approach. The research method is qualitative and applicable. The statistical population of the study includes 18 academic experts and human resource managers of government departments in Sirjan, selected through purposive sampling. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview. The MICMAC and Wizard Scenario methods were used to analyze the findings. The results showed that among the eight components of "changes in the labor market, changes in technology, changes in employee values, changes in organizational structure, changes in employee expectations, psychological factors, economic factors, organizational culture and work environment", and changes in employee values have the most impact and organizational culture and work environment have the most impact than other factors. Also, a total of eight scenarios with high compatibility for the future of human resource sustainability in the government sector are ahead. However, two scenarios of human resource excellence and stability (optimal and ideal scenario) and successful organizational transformation with a high standard (possible scenario, but with the risk of bureaucracy and forced persistence) have been introduced as the most important and likely paths to achieving goals, which have higher priority than others.

Please cite this article as (APA): Hadian, H., Ahmadi, Y. and Fathizadeh, A. (2026). Developing a human resource sustainability scenario with a foresight approach. *Journal of New Approaches in Management and Marketing*, 4(4), 89-109.



<https://doi.org/10.22034/jnamm.2026.567498.1231>



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Publisher: Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Human resource is considered one of the important and fundamental resources of organizations, and organizations need specialized and committed human resources to achieve their goals (Babaei Meybodi & Alirezai, 2020). Today, retaining competent employees is the main problem of government organizations; a problem that, if solved, will lead to greater profitability and effectiveness in the organization. On the other hand, losing employees is costly for the organization. It should also be noted that most organizations spend significant amounts of money every year to attract and retain their employees, while each organization is able to attract a number of other active employees of the organizations if appropriate methods are adopted, in addition to maintaining existing human resources. Undoubtedly, the current world is a world of organizations and the custodians of these organizations are humans; who breathe life into the body of the organization, set it in motion, and manage it (Roth et al., 2022). Research shows that human resource retention is influenced by many factors such as career development opportunities, work stress, financial and non-financial rewards, independence and autonomy, flexibility in work schedules, work-life balance, appropriateness of job roles and responsibilities, creating more responsible teams, ensuring a balance of human resource expectations with realistic job characteristics, social capital and support, human resource management practices and leadership (Matongolo et al., 2018; Jadon & Upadhyay, 2017; Kossivi & Kalgora, 2016). Today, retaining and maintaining human resources is the most difficult challenge for organizations in the public and private sectors. Human resource turnover in various fields is increasing rapidly, and the shortage of human resources in this sector in developing countries has been predicted by the World Health Organization to be 12.9 million people, which is a very high figure. Due to the shortage of skilled labor, employees expect more financial and non-financial benefits and are not willing to work under any conditions (Bharath et al., 2023). This research, using a foresight approach, is an attempt to predict and design scenarios for the sustainability of human resources, considering the upcoming social, economic, technological and organizational trends. The scientific contribution of the research is in the development of a theoretical and analytical framework that combines human resource management and futures studies, and from a scientific perspective, it can provide a strategic decision-making model in government human resources policies. On the other hand, its practical contribution to managers and planners of government organizations is in identifying key factors for retaining and motivating employees in the future horizons and helping to formulate effective recruitment and retention policies in Sirjan County. Therefore, an attempt is made to answer the question: how to formulate a human resource retention scenario with a foresight approach?

Theoretical Framework

Human Resource Retention

Human resource retention, especially active and specialized human resources, is one of the main and priority goals of organizations. Retaining and maintaining human resources means creating and maintaining a suitable and balanced work environment for employees, encouraging them to continue working with the organization, and improving their job satisfaction. This process includes measures such as providing financial and non-financial benefits, professional advancement, providing training and development opportunities, promoting positive organizational interactions and a healthy work culture, and solving problems and creating an organizational environment that is appropriate to the needs of employees (Adibzadeh et al., 2023).

Karami Moghaddam & Vishlaghi (2025) investigated the identification and explanation of legal and administrative factors affecting human resource retention using a mixed approach in government organizations. The results of the study indicate that a fair payment system in laws, the right to legal promotion and advancement, job security based on the law, determining salaries and benefits based on the approved and unified government table, legal protections in crisis situations, and equality and prohibition of legal discrimination were raised as the most important legal factors.

Hadian et al. (2025) investigated the identification of drivers affecting the retention of human resources in the government and non-government sectors of Sirjan city. The research findings showed that the drivers affecting the retention of human resources in the public and private sectors include: changes in the labor market (intense competition for talent, emergence of a new generation of workers, hybrid work), changes in technology (automation and artificial intelligence, need for new skills), changes in employee values (meaningfulness of work, personal development, meritocracy, work-life balance), changes in organizational structure (flat organizations, teamwork, flexibility in job roles), changes in employee expectations (soft skills development, social responsibility, transparency and fairness), psychological factors (mental health, motivation and job satisfaction, sense of belonging), economic factors (salaries and benefits, job security), organizational culture and work environment (effective and positive leadership, transparent and open communication, supportive and positive culture, diversity management, balance between organizational culture and individual culture, fairness and equality).

Research Methodology

The research method is qualitative and applicable. The statistical population of the study includes 18 academic experts and human resource managers of government departments in Sirjan who were selected through purposive sampling. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview.

Research findings

The MICMAC and Wizard Scenario methods were used to analyze the findings. The results showed that among the eight components of "changes in the labor market, changes in technology, changes in employee values, changes in organizational structure, changes in employee expectations, psychological factors, economic factors, organizational culture and work environment", changes in employee values have the most impact and organizational culture and work environment have the most impact than other factors. Also, a total of eight scenarios with high adaptability are ahead for the future of human resource sustainability in the government sector. However, two scenarios of human resource excellence and stability (optimal and ideal scenario) and successful organizational transformation with high standards (possible scenario, but with the risk of bureaucracy and forced persistence) have been introduced as the most important and likely paths to achieving goals, which have higher priority than others.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of developing a human resource persistence scenario with a foresight approach. The results showed that a fair payment system in laws, the right to legal promotion and advancement, job security based on the law, determining salaries and benefits based on the approved and unified government table, legal protections in critical situations, and equality and prohibition of legal discrimination were raised as the most

important legal factors. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Karami Moghaddam & Vishlaghi (2025), Hadian et al. (2025), Isiaka (2025), Bamiri et al. (2025), Safarloo et al. (2024), Suryani & Syamsulbahri (2024), Butson et al. (2023), Bekhit et al. (2023), Adibzadeh & Roknabadi (2023), Karami Moghaddam & Vishlaghi (2025).

According to the research results, the following suggestions were made:

The organization should allocate a specific budget for training employees in new technologies (such as artificial intelligence, data analysis, and automation tools) and require employees to dedicate specific hours to this training to prevent skills from becoming obsolete.

In goal-setting sessions, ensure that each employee understands how his or her daily work contributes to achieving the organization's macro, social, or value goals (sense of meaningful work).