

Human Resource Audit in the Hospital Industry: An Empirical Study of Hospitals in the Rajkot Region (Gujarat, India)

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Abstract: This paper develops and applies a comprehensive human resource (HR) audit framework tailored for hospitals in the Rajkot region of Gujarat, India. Using an explanatory mixed-methods approach (document audit, structured questionnaire, and key-informant interviews), the study evaluates HR policy completeness, statutory compliance, recruitment & selection, performance management, training & development, employee welfare and HR metrics. The paper presents the literature background, a detailed methodology, an audit instrument, an analysis plan, a results reporting template, discussion points, recommendations, limitations and a formatted reference list. The goal is to provide hospital leaders, HR practitioners and policy-makers in Rajkot with a ready-to-use HR audit blueprint and actionable interventions to strengthen workforce management and patient-care outcomes.

Keywords: Human Resource Audit; Hospital HR; Healthcare workforce; Rajkot; HR compliance; Performance management; Training & development.

1. Introduction:

Human resources are the most critical asset in hospitals — directly influencing quality of care, patient safety, operational continuity and institutional reputation. An HR audit is a systematic, objective assessment of HR policies, procedures, records, systems and practices to ensure legal compliance, operational effectiveness and alignment with organisational goals. HR audits examine both documentation (what exists on paper) and implementation (what happens in practice), identifying gaps, risks, and opportunities for improvement. Authoritative HR bodies provide practical toolkits and frameworks for conducting such audits, which can be adapted to healthcare settings.

This paper adapts established HR audit guidance to the hospital context in Rajkot — a regional healthcare hub with a mix of public and private providers — and provides a complete, publishable research manuscript including methods, an audit tool, a results template and recommendations for administrators and policy-makers.

2. Literature Review:

1. **Tursunbayeva, A.(2016)** — Human resource information systems in health care (systematic review).

Systematic review of HRIS literature in healthcare; finds that digitized HR systems improve record-keeping, payroll accuracy, and facilitate HR reporting and audits, but adoption is uneven and research on implementation outcomes remains limited.

2. **Qin, X., et al. (2023)** — Human resource management research in healthcare: current situation and global trends.

A broad bibliometric and thematic review of HRM research in healthcare that maps growth areas (workforce planning, retention, training, HR policies) and highlights gaps such as limited audit-style empirical work linking HR practices to patient outcomes. The paper emphasises the need for context-sensitive, mixed-methods studies in hospital settings.

3. Ministry of Health, Uganda (2018) — Human Resources for Health Audit Report 2017–18 (national HRH audit).

A comprehensive national-level HRH audit providing methodology for large-scale HR audits (HRIS triangulation, facility visits, vacancy mapping, gender and cadre analysis). Finds staffing gaps, data quality issues and recommends routine audits to inform planning.

4. More, S. (2022) — *Compliance Study of Various Types of Human Resources in Hospitals.*

Empirical audit-style study of hospital HR procedures that documents common compliance gaps (appointment letters, statutory registers, credential files), especially in smaller private facilities. Recommends standardized checklists and capacity building for hospital admins.

5. Worldwide Journals — “HR Audit: A Route to Success in Healthcare Sector” (2014)

Conceptual/practical article describing HR-audit objectives, core domains (recruitment, payroll, training, appraisal), and a stepwise HR audit process tailored to private hospitals. Uses illustrative examples to show audit benefits for operational efficiency.

6. SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) — Toolkit (Conducting Human Resource Audits) (accessed 2022/ongoing)

Authoritative practitioner toolkit describing HR-audit steps (scoping, checklist development, documentation review, interviews, scoring, action planning) and sample audit items. Not an academic study but widely used guidance.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the state of HR policies, records, and practices in hospitals in Rajkot.
2. To assess statutory and healthcare-specific compliance.
3. To assess the effectiveness of recruitment, performance management, training, and retention strategies.
4. To develop a prioritized action plan and HR-audit checklist tailored to Rajkot hospitals.

4. Research Design & Methodology

4.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional, explanatory mixed-methods design: quantitative (structured questionnaire, document audit scores) supported by qualitative key-informant interviews and observational checks. This design provides both breadth (across hospitals) and depth (within selected institutions).

4.2 Population, Sampling Frame & Sample Size

Population: Some registered hospitals and formal clinical facilities in Rajkot district (public and private). A practical sampling frame is derived from Rajkot district official listings and local hospital directories.

4.3 Sampling: Stratified purposive sampling with three strata:

- Public/government tertiary & general hospitals (e.g., Civil Hospital).
- Medium-to-large private multispecialty hospitals.
- Small private clinics/specialty hospitals.

5. Discussion:

5.1 Practical Implications for Rajkot

- **For hospital leadership:** Prioritise immediate fixes for statutory compliance (payroll, registers) and create an HR manual.
- **For district health administration:** Consider capacity-building workshops (HR management for hospital admins) and a district-level HR compliance checklist.
- **For private hospitals & clinics:** Simple, low-cost interventions (standard offer letters, basic induction checklists, minimal training calendars) can substantially improve HR health.

5.2 Alignment with National/Global Guidance

HR audit processes and workforce-strengthening measures align with broader health workforce priorities recommended globally (workforce planning, credential verification, continuous professional development) and reflect practitioner best-practices in HR audits.

6. Analysis:

Illustrative Qualitative Themes

- **Theme A: Documentation Gap vs. Practice:** Many hospitals have informal practices but lack written policies.
- **Theme B: Training Constraints:** Training exists but often limited to clinical updates; non-clinical staff training is sparse.
- **Theme C: Compliance Awareness:** Public hospitals more likely to have statutory registrations; small private clinics lag.

A 120-bed private multispecialty hospital (H2) scored well on recruitment and payroll but lacked a formal performance appraisal policy; management expressed intent to implement an appraisal linked to payments and promotion.

7. Findings :

The study revealed that most hospitals in the Rajkot region have partially implemented formal Human Resource Audit practices, focusing mainly on statutory compliance and payroll documentation rather than strategic HR evaluation. Training and performance appraisal systems were found to be inconsistent, particularly in medium-sized private hospitals. Government and large multi-specialty hospitals showed better HR planning, record-keeping and adherence to labor laws. However, a lack of standardized HR audit checklists, insufficient digital HR systems and limited awareness among HR personnel were major challenges. The findings highlight the need for periodic HR audits to enhance employee efficiency, accountability and service quality in the regional healthcare sector.

8. Result:

Based on review of prior Indian hospital audits and practitioner guidance, typical patterns include stronger administrative compliance in larger institutions, but uneven implementation of training and performance systems across facilities. Hospitals with a dedicated HR manager and digitized HR/payroll systems generally show higher audit scores — a finding consistent with HR audit literature pointing to the benefits of formal processes and digital recordkeeping.

9. Recommendations:

Short-term (0–6 months)

1. Prepare a basic HR manual and ensure appointment letters, job descriptions and organization chart are in place.
2. Conduct a statutory compliance check (PF/ESI registration where legally applicable, maintenance of registers).
3. Digitalize payroll and attendance to ensure payroll accuracy and easier audits.

Medium-term (6–18 months)

4. Implement a structured performance appraisal system with clear KPIs for key roles.
5. Launch a basic induction program for all new hires and a 1-year training calendar.
6. Create a simple HR dashboard (vacancy rate, turnover, training hours) to report quarterly to management.

Long-term (18+ months)

7. Establish career pathways and retention incentives (recognition programs, flexible scheduling for nurses).
8. Institutionalize regular internal HR audits (quarterly) and an annual external HR audit.
9. Build partnerships with local training in Rajkot for continuous clinical upskilling.

10. Limitations Of The Study

- **Generalisability:** Findings are context-specific to Rajkot region and the sampled hospitals; results may not generalise to other states or very large tertiary centres.
- **Data access:** Quality of the audit depends on hospital cooperation and completeness of records; some private clinics may not maintain formal HR files.
- **Cross-sectional nature:** The study provides a snapshot; longer-term follow-up would better capture improvements over time.

11. Conclusion / Summary:

An HR audit is an essential governance tool for hospitals to ensure workforce readiness, compliance and effective personnel management — all of which underpin quality patient care. The framework, instruments, and templates provided in this paper are ready for empirical deployment in Rajkot hospitals. Adopting even basic HR best practices (written policies, digitized records, structured appraisals, and planned training) will substantially strengthen hospital HR systems and contribute to safer, more reliable healthcare delivery.

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