

**Purpose** More attention should be paid to project managers' (PMs) job satisfaction as they play an important role in ensuring projects are completed successfully. **Practical implications** The study identified many HRM practices and policies that are significantly associated with PMs' job satisfaction, yet many of these are not implemented to a significant extent by the employers. Unfortunately, some practices are not implemented to a significant extent, and these include: systematically recruiting and retaining talented PMs, encouraging PMs to plan for their careers, offering performance and development coaching, and appraising employees. The data collected were analysed using partial least square–structural equation modelling, independent samples t–test and Pearson's correlation. Several HRM strategies that give rise to higher job satisfaction are identified, e.g. a system to recognise and develop talent, and taking active steps to identify and develop backups in case of emergency. **Originality/value** The originality of this research is that the HRM practices and policies that are associated with job satisfaction of PMs are uncovered. **Design/methodology/approach** A questionnaire survey was conducted on PMs who are working in construction firms and project management consultancy firms.