

**The relationship between human resource management practices and organizational performance by mediating role of work motivation: A conceptual model**

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**Abstract.** The main objective of this study is provide a conceptual model for the relationship between HRM practices (selection, training & development programs, career development, performance management, and reward) and organizational performance by mediating role of work motivation. HRM practices are the main engine of work motivation and organizational performance, through suitable selection systems, sufficient training and development programs, fair and quick career development systems, fair performance management systems, high reward and benefits, and a high level of motivation in the work environment, which contributes to enhancing and improving organizational performance. Social exchange theory supported these relationships, where the organizational performance is impacted by HRM practices (selection, training & development programs, career development, performance management, and reward) and work motivation. This study recommended examining the proposed framework by using advanced statistical methods in order to examine the previous hypotheses and provide the results to help decision-makers in organizations.

**Key words:** HRM Practices, Organizational Performance, Work Motivation

## **1. Introduction**

Public sector organizations in developing countries seek to introduce changes and improvements to enhance their level of performance. It is clear that these organizations are continuously looking for new ways and methods of development, which can assist in achieving effectiveness and efficiency (Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2017). The performance of public organizations in countries around the world, particularly in developing countries has gained a

great deal of attention from researchers and practitioners worldwide (Cheong, 2020). Moreover, several developing countries are currently facing distinct challenges preventing economic stimulation and growth and they can be in the form of weak organizations, heightened unemployment rate, and poor infrastructure, lack of access to finances coupled with ineffective regulations and relevant laws (Srivastava & Dhar, 2016). Some developing countries are characterized by large economies, while others have small economies, lacking domestically produced intermediate inputs and capital equipment (Zahonogo, 2016).

Academics and practitioners have been in constant debate concerning the significance of HRM practices in the performance of organizations (Al Dalaien, Ibrahim & Aburumman, 2020). The argument in favor of the positive contributions of HRM practices to performance states that the former is able to transform human resources into strategic assets, considering the potential for complementarities among practices and resources of the organization (Aburumman, Salleh, Omar & Abadi, 2020). The argument proceeds by contending that HRM practices engagement can determine the success of the organization (Al Dalaien, Ibrahim & Aburumman, 2020; Wood, 2018), as such practices assist in achieving the organizational goals in terms of profitability, maximization of shareholder's wealth, significant return on assets/equity, efficient operations, and excellent customer services provision (Dar, Bashir, Ghazanfar & Abrar, 2014).

HRM practices reflect a unique method for the formation and shaping of the work attitudes and behaviors of employees to enhance organizational performance (Al Azzam & Jaradat, 2014; Ibrahim, Hamid, Babiker & Ali, 2015). Prior studies (e.g. El-Ghalayini, 2017; Farouk, Abu Elanain, Obeidat & Al-Nahyan, 2016; Zamanan et al., 2020) indicated that employee behaviors are formed through HRM practices and they affect the performance of organizations. Therefore, organizations should follow HRM strategies to enhance employee motivations and productivity (Faisal, Lee, Malul & Shoham, 2015). In this regard, motivations have a key role in employee's performance, and organization performance (Zameer, Ali, Nisar & Amir, 2014). It is thus crucial for the firm bring about employee motivation through HRM tools (Jouda, Ahmad & Dahleez, 2016; Sunday, Ahmad, Fauzi, Hamid & Azhar, 2018), like job enrichment, job security, appropriate salary level and incentives to enhance their performance and to meet the firm goals (Zameer, Ali, Nisar & Amir, 2014).

At level of firms, organizational management is of top significance among managers and practitioner (Abosed, Eze & Sowunmi, 2018). This is particularly true after the organization reforms and the new technology adoption, making performance management as one of the central components that organizations have to gauge and implement (El-Ghalayini, 2017). To this end, HRM practices can be utilized to boost performance among employees and ultimately, performance of the organization. It is pertinent for organizations to acknowledge and accept the importance of motivating employees to increase their performance and it is for this reason that majority of managers in organizations are focused on HRM practices (Jouda, Ahmad & Dahleez, 2016). Therefore, HRM practices in an organization have to be promoted by talent recruitment and management for enhancement of its performance (Taamneh, Alsaad & Elrehail, 2018).

This study aims to provide a conceptual model for the relationship between human resource management practices and organizational performance by mediating the role of work motivation. Academics and practitioners may find the findings of this study valuable in its provision of a deeper insight into the HRM practices role in organizational performance. Moreover, the results of this study may be valuable to other researchers for referencing information on the HRM practice role in organizational performance, upon which prior approaches can be assessed to resolve similar management queries and researches can be revised. Researchers are enabled to determine logical flaws, assumption errors, and management questions that have not been sufficiently addressed by prior studies' objectives and designs. This study contributes to literature dedicated to the mediating role of work motivation on the relationship between human resource management practices and organizational performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 HRM Practices**

Human resource management practices are defined as a strategic, integrated, and coherent approach to the employment, development, and well-being of the people working in organizations (Armstrong, Landers & Collmus, 2016). Meanwhile, Boxall and Purcell (2011) defined human resource management practices as the process through which management builds the workforce and tries to create the human performances that the organization needs. According to Schuler and Jackson (1987), HRM practices can be defined as attracting, motivating, and retaining employees to ensure the organization's survival.

In prior literature, studies evidenced that human resource management practices implementation is a crucial approach through which positive outcomes can be generated and maintained. According to Guest (2002), the HRM impact on performance largely hinges on the response of the employees to HRM practices, and as such, the impact will be according to the employees' perception of such practices. In this regard, the existence of a robust selection, training and development, career development, performance management, and reward system had a positive relationship with the performance of organizations (Abosedo, Eze & Sowunmi, 2018; Rana & Malik, 2017),

There are several HRM practices that have been examined in the literature. For example, Jouda, Ahmad, and Dahleez (2016) conducted an examination of the HRM practices impact on the performance of employees with practices including recruitment and selection, training, and development, compensation and incentives, performance appraisal. Moreover, Imna and Hassan (2016) also focused on the effects of HRM practices namely, compensation, career planning, performance appraisal, training, and employee involvement, on the performance of employees. Similarly, Rana and Malik (2017) examined the HRM practices of selection, training and development, career development, performance management, and reward system on the performance of organizations.

Human resource management practices have been contended to facilitate positive interactions, particularly managers in their consideration and concern for their subordinates' needs (Gould-Williams, 2007). There is however no consensus as to what exactly constitutes HRM practices and throughout the past several years, different practices have been proposed and drawn up with no consensus on which one of them or a set of them constitutes a human resource management aspect. In this study, human resource management is measured through its practices of selection, training and development, career development, performance management, and reward system.

Selection refers to a process of decision making as to the selection of the top suitable applicants out of numerous ones for a job position. The general tendency in the business world is to employ like-minded people, as a result of which, a homogenous and inflexible organization is developed that lacks diversity and adaptability. The primary premise in the process of selection is to select the maximum potential information concerning the candidates to determine if they are suitable for the job position, considering there are factors that influence such information seeking (Prasad, 2005). In this regard, the candidates are chosen with the use of various methods to assess their role suitability (Armstrong, Landers & Collmus, 2016) and the methods include individual interviews, interviewing panels, selection boards, and assessment centers. The recruitment processes that organizations often adopt can have innumerable obstacles to implement despite the well-established plan on selecting and involving qualified management teams in the processes.

Training and development play a key role in ensuring that employees possess suitable skills, knowledge, and abilities for job completion. Therefore, the selection of the right kind of training ensures that employees have the suitable skills to run the business, which are constantly updated through best HR practices. In order to satisfy the present and future business demands, the training and development process has taken a strategic stance as advocated by several studies; for example, Stavrou, Brewste, and Charalambous (2010) pinpointed the training and development practices in cross-national cases. Apospori, Nikandrou, Brewster & Papalexandris (2008) assumed that a huge part of organizational performance level depends on training and there is a need for developing employees based on a training and development plan to maximize their productivity and work quality. Moreover, such a strategy mitigates turnover and absenteeism of staff and assists in motivating the employees. To be in competition lead, training and development should be considered by any organization as the core and it should be incorporated into the strategies of the organization connected to business goals and performance.

Career development is an interventionist program in the HR field and does not entail merely accelerating career developments through a structured system, with members of the organizations divided into authority levels, obligations, monetary benefits, and time spent on the job, but also functions to facilitate proactiveness of workers to change and feel confident that the changes in the organization fit the new environment (Thite, 2001). It also maximizes the opportunity of employment and increases the tasks varieties available to employees, adding

more value to the organization through their development and loyalty to its employ (Kaye, 2005). An effective plan of career development assists in harvesting talent from the internal pool, enabling the organization to align the skills and competencies of employees to the objectives of the organization. It also allows managers to make informed decisions when it comes to remunerating and succession planning, recruiting, retaining workers, which in effect, keeping workers commitment and result-oriented (Kapel & Shepherd, 2004).

Performance management relates to conducting a comparison between pre-determined objectives and the employees' actual output. This indicates that if the company is achieving the desired results, then the employees in effect are optimally achieving the objectives – otherwise, there may be some employees that are underperforming and not able to reach their target objectives (Stredwick, 2000). Performance management refers to a strategic and integrated approach towards individual and team performance who are attempting to deliver the best for organizational success. On the other hand, Khan and Baloch (2017) referred to rewards as the entire tangible benefits and provisions received by the employee as part of the employment relationship. Rewards do not pertain merely to the archaic concept of payment week after week, rather it is a holistic value scheme recommended by the employer to the employee that encapsulates compensation (base pay, short and long-term incentives), benefits (health benefits, work-life, and others), and careers (training, development and career development).

## **2.2 Organizational Performance**

One of the top significant variables in the field of management and indicator of a successful organization is organizational performance (Ghaith, Mutia, Mayssoon, & Abdul Malek, 2018). Organizational performance refers to the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs or goals and objectives (Mumbi & Makori, 2015). In literature, a generally positive and significant relationship has been established between HRM practices and organizational performance (e.g. Abdullah, Alodat, Aburumman, Hoque & Ige, 2019; Ghaith, Enas, Mutia, & Abdul Malek, 2018; Amin, Ismail, Rasid & Selemani, 2014; Farouk, Abu Elanain, Obeidat & Al-Nahyan, 2016). Also, high involvement in HRM practices has a positive role in organizational performance (Moideenkutty, Al-Lamki & Murthy, 2011). Meanwhile, competing perspectives of HRM impact on performance supported by the AMO theory revealed that HRM activities maximized the abilities and motivation of employees and provide them with the avenues through which they can participate and positively impact the performance of organizations (Van de Voorde, Paauwe & Van Veldhoven, 2012). The mixed perspectives indicate a conflict of interest between organization and employees and HRM activities were argued to facilitate higher productivity and profitability among organizations, negating or relegating the interests of employees.

The dynamic competitive environment in the market has forced firms to be proactive in determining and adopting strategies to ensure their sustainability and survival (Ghaith, 2020; Salleh, Omar, Aburumman, Mat & Almhairat, 2020). Organizational performance largely

depends on the use of HRM practices that are successful in the attraction, development, and retention of qualified, committed, and engaged staff and this premise has been mentioned time and again in prior literature (e.g., Amin, Ismail, Rasid & Selemani, 2014; Sunday, Ahmad, Fauzi, Hamid & Azhar, 2018).

HRM practices are the top elements of the organization that improves its performance (Idris, Wahab & Jaapar, 2016; Yousef, Hazril, & Ghaith, 2021). HRM practices in fact have a significant and positive relationship with organizational performance (Rana & Malik, 2017; Goodarzi & Bazgir, 2015) and in the same way, HRM practices positively affect the performance of organizations (Aguta & Balcioglu, 2015). Moreover, the selection process as HRM practices and its relationship with organizational performance is important in each organization (Harky, 2018). Ekwoaba, Ikeiji, and Ufoma (2015) indicated that selection has a positive influence on organizational performance. It was also concluded by Saviour, Kofi, Yao, and Kafui (2017) that employee selection determines the performance of the organization to a significant level and is a must to the achievement of organizational goals.

Mansoor, Shah, and Tayyaba (2015) supported a positive relationship between training and development, and organizational performance. Moreover, Emeti (2015) and Weru, Iravo, and Sakwa (2013) found a positive significant relationship between training and development, and organizational performance. From the perspective of Ndibe and Campus (2014) if the right employees are exposed to systematic training, then a significant level in the organizational performance can be discerned. On the other hand, career management has a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance in a way that the former has a statistically significant explanation of the latter (Lyria, Namusonge & Karanja, 2017). In addition, Amin et al. (2014) and Rana and Malik (2017) found a positive significant relationship between career development and organizational performance.

In the field of management, performance management influences the performance of organizations (Listiani & Kartini, 2015). Rana and Malik (2017) revealed a significant and positive relationship between performance management and organizational performance and the same was supported by Abosede, Eze, and Sowunmi (2018). According to Nirmala and Mekoth (2015), the relationship between performance management and organizational performance is significant and based on the above findings. On the other hand, the reward system was evidenced to have a significant and positive effect on organizational performance (Abosede, Eze & Sowunmi, 2018; Rana & Malik, 2017). Meanwhile, David et al. (2018) found a positive significant relationship between reward system and organizational performance.

### **2.3 Work Motivation**

Work motivation refers to a process that directs and sustains performance (Salleh, Zahari, Said & Ali, 2016). Andriani, Kesumawati, and Kristiawan (2018) indicated that motivation is psychological forces determining the direction of the level of effort exerted by an individual, the persistence level that he maintains in the face of problems. The concept of motivation may also be described as the reason behind the behavior of people on the job – it's the stimulation that drives people to do things through inducements and incentives. Sansone and Harckiewicz

(2000) related that motivation directs specific behaviors towards goal achievement. Moreover, many prior studies (e.g. Ghaith, Enas, et al., 2018; Pancasila, Haryono & Sulisty, 2020; Affulbroni, 2012) illustrated that motivated employee have a tendency to be more productive compared to non-motivated counterparts.

Employee motivation at work significantly influences employees' performance (Emeka, Amaka & Ejim, 2015). Thus, it can be stated that motivation enhances the organizational goals and improves both productivity and performance (Ochola, 2018). In this regard, Muogbo (2013) revealed a significant relationship between motivation and organizational performance in that motivated workers significantly influenced workers' performance. Moreover, motivation was found to have a positive influence on employee performance and organizational performance (Abubakari & Adam, 2018).

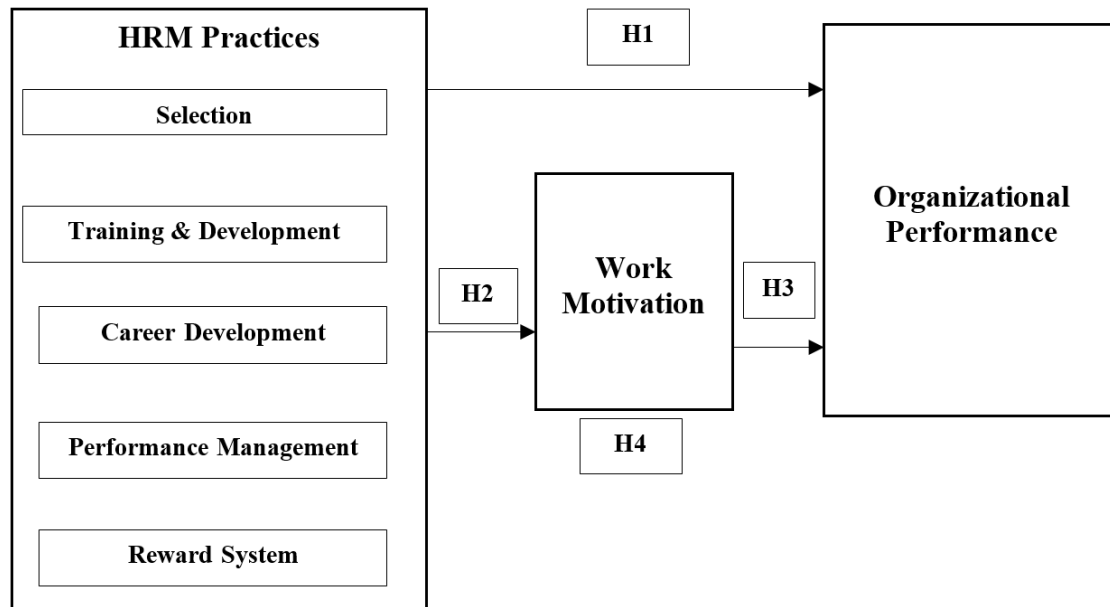
The identification of major factors motivating employees in the workplace is a must for the organization to acknowledge and understand them in order to influence behavior among employees towards high performance with the help of suitable strategies (Ghaith, Enas, et al., 2018; De Plessis et al., 2015). HRM practices positively affect perceived organizational performance, and in this relationship, motivation is assumed to have a mediating effect. According to Faisal, Lee, Malul, and Shoham (2015), motivation enhances HRM practices (financial incentives), which in turn, affects productivity and performance in a positive direction. Also, work motivation mediates the relationship between career development and performance (Sapta & Sudja, 2018). In another related study, work motivation was found to have a mediating effect on the indirect influence of career development on organizational performance (Maggis, Yuesti & Sapta, 2018). Furthermore, HRM practices have a significant effect on employee performance but via mediating effect of work motivation (Abd Halim et al., 2018; Rumasukun, Rante, Wambraw & Bharanti, 2015).

### **3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development**

The main objective of this study is provide a conceptual model for the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance by mediating role of work motivation. In the current study, HRM practices (selection, training & development programs, career development, performance management, and reward) constitute the independent variables of the study, while the construct of organizational performance constitutes the dependent variable. Finally, the constructs of work motivation mediate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. A conceptual model of this study has been developed by social exchange theory.

The researchers indicated that social exchange theory is based on the principle of reciprocity (Aburumman, Salleh, Omar & Abadi, 2020; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ghaith & Mutia, 2019; Karim, Majid, Omar, Aburumman, 2021). The principle of reciprocity refers to the equal exchange of either positive or negative commitments between any party (Aburumman, Salleh, Omar & Abadi, 2020). Therefore, if organizations provide a positive behavior such as suitable

selection systems, sufficient training and development programs, fair and quick career development systems, fair performance management systems, high reward and benefits, and a high level of motivation in the work environment, thus employees will behave similarly and will commit to positive behaviors by a high level of performance, which contributes to enhancing and improving organizational performance. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model of this study.



**Figure 1:** A conceptual model of this study

Therefore, the following hypotheses are drawn from the above discussion:

**Hypothesis (1):** There is a positive relationship between HRM practices (selection, training & development programs, career development, performance management, and reward) and organizational performance.

**Hypothesis (2):** There is a positive relationship between HRM practices (selection, training & development programs, career development, performance management, and reward) and work motivation

**Hypothesis (3):** There is a positive relationship between work motivation and organizational performance.

**Hypothesis (4):** Work motivation mediate the relationship between HRM practices (selection, training & development programs, career development, performance management, and reward) and organizational performance.

#### 4. Conclusion

The main objective of this study is provide a conceptual model for the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance by mediating role of work motivation. HRM practices are the main engine of work motivation and organizational performance, through suitable selection systems, sufficient training and development programs, fair and quick career development systems, fair performance management systems, high reward and benefits, and a



high level of motivation in the work environment, which contributes to enhancing and improving organizational performance. Social exchange theory supported these relationships, where the organizational performance is impacted by HRM practices (selection, training & development programs, career development, performance management, and reward) and work motivation. Therefore, organizations should develop robust strategies to enhancing and improving organizational performance. As a consequence, the intent of this paper is to discover the factors that affect organizational performance, to urge more future studies about these factors, to present a general view of what the organization needs to identify the related issues with organizational performance. Moreover, future studies should be examining the proposed framework by using advanced statistical methods in order to examine the previous hypotheses and provide the results to help decision-makers in organizations, as well as examine that other HRM practices such as employee empowerment, teamwork, employment security, information sharing, and job description, and their impact on work motivation and organizational performance.

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