

Key Elements of the HRM Challenges in the Technology Era 21st Century

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Abstract

There is a strong belief that the roots of the Human Resource Management discipline were extracted from organizational psychology discipline. However, there are some challenges for successful organizations to achieve their goals. The wise organization leadership relies on human capital development and enhancement as they are the real engine of any day to day work. This paper aims to investigate the Challenges of Human Resource Management Professionals in COVID-19 Pandemic and Human Resource Management Challenges in the 21st century (technology era). Highlighting the importance of human resource manager's challenges are the main objectives of this paper as well as the HRM influencing factors. Also, it is trying to elaborate on the challenges caused by COVID-19 and the recent 21st century. The paper explores the most important challenges by investigating these elements using quantitative method. A total of 200 HRM professionals were targeted to answer the designed open-ended surveys. 150 responses were recorded and collected. The response rate was 97% of the total response rate.

Keywords

Human Resource Management Professionals, 21st Century, COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Introduction

No doubt, human resources management is the beating heart of any successful organization with an insight into the future that seeks to achieve its vision, goals, and strategic plan. The organization's leaders are always trying hard to reach the organization goal not only by giving the orders but through following up what has been agreed on based on the organization strategic plan. It is very crucial

and magnificent that any plan should include Human Resource Management (HRM) consultations and recommendations. It is not only to stop on that, but it is also more and more than only that. The HRM has to work really strict and hard to provide the organization with valuable and excellent employees, recruit, orient, train, and so on. Small, medium and large organizations, whether a Micro or big business doing, public or private they all, in fact, doing all the possible to recruit the best talented, professional staff and ensure keep them for the longest period of time healthy and satisfied, so they can perform the best they can to meet the organization goals. Perhaps, by not doing so, the organization will not arrive at its final destination wished to reach, it is really will be difficult to achieve its objectives.

However, for organization to do so it perhaps will face some or verities of challenges some of these challenges have been studied and to some extent solved in different strategies and some are still under great controversy. However, there are several challenges that HR managers face while trying to manage their human resources efficiently. HR issues can be highly challenging and can sometimes lead to escalating HR costs. It is why leadership and HR managers must focus on making policies that drive employee motivation and job satisfaction. Despite everything, the HR managers regularly come across challenges that affect organizational productivity.

In today's world, where technology is playing significant roles in today's modern businesses, it becomes really unwise for organizations to operate effectively in the business world if the human force not well equipped with the latest technology and techniques. It is an integral part of the functions of HRM and responsibilities to ensure that all the staff properly train the workforce and to see what are the basic needs for the human force to achieve the competitive advantages of business in the 21st century. Today's HRM facing a variety of issues and challenges that how they can best manage and solve all the arising issues and challenges with splendid ways. HRM facing a variety of challenges to meet these challenges for the future, tomorrow the humane recourse department must be much sophisticated than their predecessors (Byars and Rue, 2006).

Because one international or multinational organization cannot perform their activities well when their HR manager knows the diversity of techniques to hack it with these issues and to how they can be prepared an unobjectionable force for the organization to face the rapidly competitive business word and to operate in the situation. All the organizations should prepare their human resources people keeping in view the global environment or market place to ensure competitive advantage. The human resource manager will have to build or develop such a framework that allows flexibility to develop such a workforce that will be the workforce for tomorrow (Du Plessis et al., 2008). The main aim of the paper is to address the HR issues and challenges in the light of a variety of literature work by different authors. However, outlines of the related research literature, objectives, and methodology used in this study are discussed in the following two sec-

tions, where the data analysis approach used in this research and research findings are presented in the last two sections in this research. The research conclusion and suggestions of the findings of this study are detailed in the final section of the article.

2. Literature Review

Literature is rich in expectation regarding the HRM challenges as well as the expectations of the new elements and obstacles might be faced by HR. A decade ago Luthans (1998), reported that organizations in the 21st century will have to face new competition and changes in the world economics. Although internationalization and information technology receive most of the attention in this new environment, deregulation may prove to be the most complex and far-reaching change affecting many industries.

It is a fact that these organizations are facing unprecedented change and competition in the 21st century (Luthans, 1998). Although internationalization and information technology receive most of the attention in this new environment, deregulation may prove to be the most complex and far reaching change affecting many industries.

Several researchers point out that there are a variety of challenges considered to be the most challenging elements that HR facing in our 21st, these challenges are retention of the employees, globalization, retrenchment of the employees, women workforce, multicultural workforce, change in the demand of the government, technology, and initiating the process of change (Hashim, 2016). Indeed, continuous development in any sector is the most vital element for any work to be accomplished well, therefore, leadership development is on the most important top ten human resources challenges, then organizational effectiveness, change management, and compensation. However, it's worthy to mention that some researchers pointed out in the earlier of 2000s that technology, E-commerce, workforce diversity, globalization, and ethical consideration of the organization which may directly or indirectly affect the organization competitive advantages, especially with technological advancement the effect on recruitment, training and development and job performance with great extent can be studied in the organization (DeCenzo and Robins, 2001; Dessler, 2000).

Technology refers to the ways and methods of organization living and work, advertising, attracting, recruitment, and orientation and training, etc. The reality that these processes and ways have been changed by the current modern technology. Technology and the information provided by high-tech or analyzed by it, whether input or output has really changed the HR work nature and all aspects of our daily life dramatically. By all the odds, the information provided by the technology touches all ideas which are essential for the economy.

Another interesting element that has been addressed in the literature is electronic commerce, which refers to the trading activities performing via the internet. It is real and fact that everyone now can easily observe and conduct business

or any activities online, it becomes the foundation for a new business order. Now customer's expectations have been totally shifted and changed in regard to convenience, speed, price, and services. Now no doubt that the vast majority of profit and non-profit organizations are trying hard to get full benefits of the on-line methods of doing things, perhaps those who are knowledgeable workers on the on-line business are most likely preferred by any organization. This becomes currently one of the greatest challenges for HRM and the HR Managers makes several strategies to take procedure over control on-line business.

Therefore, HR Managers now forced or should be in line with the current situation when it comes to considering new or existing human capital who have the ability to attract, motivate, retain, and to serve as maximum customers as possible. Furthermore, workforce diversification has become a real challenge that HRM has to rethink about it and considered very carefully, this has to be by high attention to effectively manage the workforce that especially for those who come from different backgrounds with respect to regions, cultures, race, and gender and belief as well. Nevertheless, organizations have to pay great attention to how can develop their international influence or and perhaps consider seriously operating or dealing on an international scale. This concept which is referred to as globalization has become also a real issue facing a lot of big organizations.

Indeed, various businesses are really struggling to gain the right competitive and advanced elements and play more vital roles in their field of business. They try to adapt themselves to the dynamic changing market in every possible way more than before. Perhaps, high-technology and other significant factors are really important to consider not only for the organization's competitive advantages but either for the internal process and HRM chronological matters so they can really focus and head over to the other elements of external competition. Organizations have to consider the importance of expending their efforts so they can be more competitive in the global market. Certainly, the relationship between employees and organizations is confirmed by so many results is playing a big role and it is in fact a challenge for all the time's HR (Wiesner and Millet, 2003).

It is appropriate for HRM to follow the updates in regard to the employee's psychological contract, employees become more mature and different by the time of how they look at their job and career bathe, it is crucial for them to be appreciated and their work is valuable and important for the organization.

Attention to incentives, especially compensation, appreciation, and recognition incentives, etc. is very important to retain those employees who are sincere and have the seriousness in workmanship. Several authors have referred to the most challenges faced by human resource managers (Beatty & Schneier, 1997; Golden & Ramanujam, 1985; Hashim, 2016; Stavrou-Costea, 2005), these challenges are solvable and the HRM's would be able to overcome them in case of giving enough concentration on the tasks to achieve the organization's objectives. Wherefore, it depends on how they will manage and overcome these challenges.

As the HRM's were able to build good and flexible strategies that enable the employees to develop themselves by training them, they can work for the betterment of the organization. Below chart displays the well-known challenges in 21st century faced by HRMs:

However, the more roles and responsibilities the more challenges and obstacles might rises accordingly, now since we are all aware of the most known challenges stated above, there must be new roles and responsibilities for HRMs to keeping pace with the current situation and in line with the new tasks and challenges. Many researchers have referred to some millstones Functions of HR on 21st century (Buono, 1998), we perhaps agreed that these are the most important Functions, but new functions might raise based on the new roles and responsibilities. Below are HRMs functions in 21st century:

- Human resource planning.
- Job Analysis design.
- Recruitment and Selection.
- Orientation and Induction.
- Training and Development.
- Promotion/Transfer/Termination.
- Compensation and remuneration.
- Motivation, welfare, health and safety.
- Industrial Relation.
- Maintenance & equal employment.

On the other hand, strategic adaptability is also a virtual factor which perhaps enables the organization to stand in front of the new and existed arrival and originations, this kind of factor will need more focus and consideration as it becomes real challenge organizations have to deal with.

3. Methodology

This paper aims to identify the challenges faced HR in the coming century and during the COVID-19 pandemic; the study targeted all HR Professionals either managers, directors, unities or heads. Professionals who could be academics will need to participate in the study tool.

Perhaps, mixed methods research is a systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study for purposes of obtaining a better picture and deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Mixed methods can be integrated in such a way that qualitative and quantitative methods maintain their original structures and procedures (Johnson et al., 2007).

Combined model used in this study is exploratory. Exploratory designs begin with a primary qualitative phase, then the findings are validated or otherwise informed by quantitative results. This approach is usually employed to develop a standardized (quantitative) instrument in a relatively unstudied area. The qualitative phase identifies important factors, while the quantitative phase applies them to a larger and/or more diverse sample (Montes-Borrego et al., 2009). The

combinational model used in the study is explorative. The steps of article are described in the following. First, literature is examined and questions are designed. In the next step, in order to recognize identifying indicators, some interviews are executed with industry experts.

The study adopts a questionnaire survey as a study tool which is the best way to gather big data from different spaced geographic regions or areas. The open-ended questionnaire was developed on reviewing the related literature and items (Golden & Ramanujam, 1985; Stavrou-Costea, 2005). The academics expert-selected randomly and conformed by identifying the answers of a period of work in the HR area so for those worked ten years and above considered otherwise removed. For data analyzing SPSS was used to analyse the gathered data, the reliability test was examined, as well as the other related techniques.

4. Data Analysis

The paper stands for interviewing the concerns HR experts as they are the study target to answer the structured questioner. The gathered data from these tools were analyzed after checking the data screening process then the reliability and of course the validity.

As mentioned earlier, the study aims to identify the main challenges faced by HRM in the 21st century (technology era) and during the COVID-19 Pandemic, therefore, the quantitatively analyze the relationship between multiple variables was needed and correspondingly to this need, the cross-tabulation analysis was used to describe the situation as reported by the responses. There were some other analyses used to understand more about these challenges. The designed questionnaire was distributed among 150 top experts and HR managers in different fields.

5. Study Results

This section displays the analyzed data based on the gathered information, the demographic variables of responses are expressed in below **Figure 1**.

Although the random sampling techniques were applied, **Figure 1** displays the demographic variables of responses, it shows that females were contributed to the study with 19.6% where Male represents 80.4%. This could be interpreted as the total number of responses were male which can be understood that the majority of those who work in HRM are male. This could be one explanation where might be due to the responder's rate were highly from males than females.

It is obvious from the study descriptive analysis based on the demographic segmentation responses that age segment of 26 - 35 recorded the highest segment of responses with 37.4%, then 36 - 45 with 28.6. Followed by 18 - 25 segment with 6.1% and finally 46 - 55 with 2.7%, as displayed in **Table 2** and **Figure 2**.

The result in **Table 1** showed that males represented 80.4% of the total response rate with 119 responses, where the female represented 19.6% with 29

responses. Based on the cross-tabulation analysis, **Table 3** displays the HRM challenges base on response answers, (73) responses which are represented around 49.4% of the respondent's rate; clearly classified the Leadership development as the top HRM challenges based on their opinion, and this came in line with both genders with different in answers rate. However, Staffing, which refers to recruitment and availability of skilled local labor as well, was classified as the second challenge based on the responses with (29) responses which are represented around 19.6%, of the respondent's rate; where male responses with 23 responses where female responses 6 responses. Learning and development as one of the HRM challenges recorded as the third important challenge with (17) responses which are represented around 11.5% of the respondent's rate; where male responses with 15 responses where female responses 2 responses.

The responses looked at the change management as a very important element classified at fourth classification with (6) responses. Whereas benefits costs which refer to health and welfare and HR effectiveness measurement were in the fifth with 5 responses and Succession planning, Compensation and Organizational effectiveness were ranked successively in the following ranks.

Table 4 displays the responses based on the Education Level, 46.7% of the responses were undergraduate, where 17.1% postgraduate, and 15.2% were Academic level Doctorate.

Demographic responses based on occupation shown in **Table 5**, it is shown that 26.1% of the represented were academic and educators HR specialists, this enhances the level of study validity and credibility, and 19.6% of the where HR staff working in government sectors.

However, the majority of the responses were in public sector with 82.8% were 8.0% of the privet sector as shown in below **Table 6**.

Table 7 was created to illustrate the descriptive analysis of the respondents, it showed the valid percent of 50.0% in regard to HRM challenges base on response opinions was Leadership development with 75 Frequency responses. The respondents believed that leadership development is the factor that should be considered.

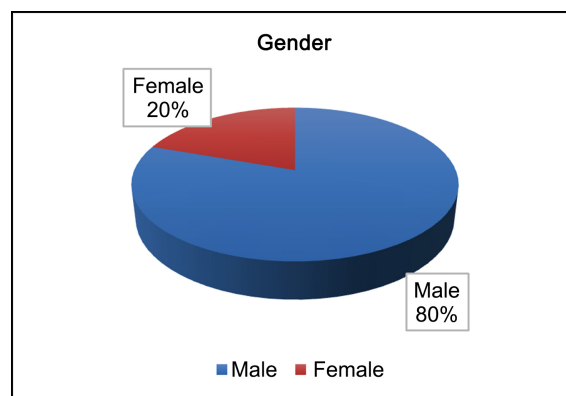


Figure 1. Demographic responses.

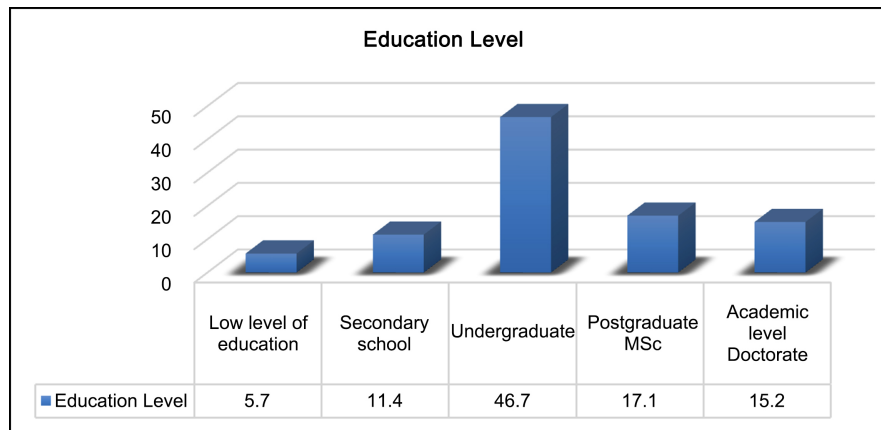


Figure 2. Demographic responses based on education level.

Table 1. Demographic responses based on gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	119	80.4	80.4
Female	29	19.6	100.0
Total	148	100.0	

Table 2. Demographic responses based on age.

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	37	25.2	25.2
18 - 25	9	6.1	31.3
26 - 35	55	37.4	68.7
36 - 45	42	28.6	97.3
46 - 55	5	2.7	100.0
Total	148	100.0	

Table 3. Challenges base on demographic responses gender and opinion.

Please classify the HRM challenges attached from top to base on your opinion											
Gender	Change management	Leadership development	HR effectiveness measurement	Organizational effectiveness	Compensation	Staffing: Recruitment and availability of skilled local labor	Succession planning	Learning and development	Staffing: Retention	Benefits costs: Health & welfare	Total
Male	6	57	2	3	3	23	2	15	4	4	119
Female	0	16	3	0	0	6	1	2	0	1	29
Total	6	73	5	3	3	29	3	17	4	5	148

Table 4. Demographic responses based on education level.

Education Level	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low level of education	6	5.7	5.7
Secondary school	12	11.4	17.1
Undergraduate	49	46.7	63.8
Postgraduate MSc	18	17.1	81.0
Academic level Doctorate	16	15.2	96.2

Table 5. Demographic responses based on Occupation.

Occupation	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Professional (Doctors, lawyers, engineers, journalist etc.)	5	10.9	10.9
Professional and executive officers HRM	3	6.5	17.4
Administrative/managerial and HR HOD	4	8.7	26.1
HR Consultant specialist	1	2.2	28.3
Academic/educators HR specialist	12	26.1	54.3
Own business	2	4.3	58.7
Government staff HR unit	9	19.6	78.3
Other	4	8.7	87.0

Table 6. Demographic responses based on sector.

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public sector	72	48.0	82.8	82.8
Self employed	5	3.3	5.7	88.5
Private sector	7	4.7	8.0	96.6
Other	3	2.0	3.4	100.0
Total	87	58.0	100.0	

Table 7. HRM challenges base on response opinions.

Description	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Change management	6	4.0	4.0
Leadership development	75	50.0	54.0
HR effectiveness measurement	5	3.3	57.3
Organizational effectiveness	3	2.0	59.3
Compensation	3	2.0	61.3
Staffing: Recruitment and availability of skilled local labor	29	19.3	80.7
Succession planning	3	2.0	82.7
Learning and development	17	11.3	94.0
Staffing: Retention	4	2.7	96.7
Benefits costs: Health & welfare	5	3.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	

6. Conclusion

The HRM roles become day by day more challenging roles, the factors surrounding these roles are more real now, which confirmed by this study. This study aimed to examine the challenges faced by HR Professionals and HRM in the 21st century (the era of technology). Empirical findings indicated that there are some different challenges faced the HRM Professionals in the 21st century (the era of technology) in terms of the HRM priorities (Luthans, 1998). The study was conducted during the COVID-19 quarantine times, where getting in touch with the respondents was a bit difficult, however, the study manage to achieve its goals. These challenges are similar to these challenges being mentioned in the related literature. Leadership development was one of the highest challenges faced by HRM. To sum up, as the employees are the hub of the organization, it is important for an organization to concentrate more on leadership development aspect to be examined, trained and follow-up in every organization, the findings of this study are vital to any organization that considering the employees in the first place.

As the gap between the principles and practice is evident in the area of HRM and business management studies, it is wise for organizations to check from the employee's side. Future studies are suggested that accommodate other important aspects, which determine the decision-making behavior of individuals in organizations related to HRM matters. Further, development, implementation, and transmission of a robust and effective code of ethics in as we have discussed in

the previous pages those dominant issues and challenges which are facing by HR managers and organization.

The first foremost work by HR is to developed sound organizational structure with strong interpersonal skills for employees, and also to train employees by introducing them to the concept of globalizing human resource management to perform better in the global organization context. All these issues and challenges like workforce diversity, leadership development.

Change management, organizational effectiveness, Globalization, E-Commerce, succession planning, and compensation, etc., Can be the best management by HR manager when they will work with HR practices, such as rigid recruitment and selection policy, division of jobs, empowerment, encouraging diversity in the workplace, training, and development of the workforce, fostering innovation, proper assigning of duties and responsibilities, managing knowledge and other functions as are shown. Nutshell when HR works enthusiastically by keeping all the practices in mind, competitive advantages can thus be accomplished, the value of human resources can be improved, organization efficiency can be enhanced, and the organization will sustain to survive.

Finally, our data lead us to the belief that an accurate understanding of the challenges that face HRM can only be obtained by continuing research and examination. Examining the interaction between the organization-specific and HR function-specific factors continually also would help in understanding some important and new raising challenges. Notwithstanding, some very important elements such as leadership development identified as one of the highest challenges faced by HRM which aligned with several previous works of literature, more focused on new other factors such as Electronic Human Resources Management are recommended.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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