

A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: EXPLORING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: *The Human Resource Management (HRM) function is a critical one within the organization, having a significant impact on its success and competitiveness. However, often HRM practices are established only from one perspective, without considering other approaches that may reveal important practical implications. It is necessary to use a multi-perspective approach that includes different dimensions if we want to have a comprehensive understanding of the field. This article presents a holistic exploration of HRM by presenting twelve distinct perspectives that can be used in the analysis of various organizational phenomena, offering insights into strategic alignment of HR practices with company objectives, behavioural change, integration of new technologies, ethical and cross-cultural considerations, employee career management at every stage of life, legal compliance, economic evaluation, environmental sustainability, knowledge management, employee voice and employee well-being. The article can be useful to both HR professionals and researchers, highlighting the importance of using different perspectives when examining a particular phenomenon.*

Keywords: Human Resource Management, multi-perspective approach, HRM perspectives, practical implications.

1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays an essential role in the performance of organizations because companies can maintain a competitive edge in today's dynamic business environment primarily through employees. To understand the full scope of HRM, it is advisable to adopt a multi-perspective approach, highlighting the different facets that influence human resource management practices. The multi-perspective approach involves exploring the same phenomenon by using several perspectives (Larkin, Shaw and Flowers, 2019: 182). It allows an integrated, enriched, and balanced picture of a situation to be presented.

Since the early 1920s there has been a tendency in Human Resource studies to divide the field into different disciplines, and often these separate wings are unable to communicate with each other (Kaufman, 2014). In very many cases researchers tend to study only one side of the coin and completely ignore the other (Wright, Nyberg and Polyhart, 2018: 142). For example, early studies in the domain of Strategic Human Resource Management delineated the concepts of "commitment" and "control" in the relationship with employees, but later it was found that these would be different ends of the same spectrum. While scholars enjoy the luxury of choosing to focus on one aspect or another, organizations must analyse phenomena from multiple perspectives, because a decision made from one perspective could lead to favorable outcomes from one point of view and unfavorable from another perspective. Therefore, if HR research is to have a greater impact in practice, it is necessary to address both sides of the coin simultaneously (Wright, Nyberg and Polyhart, 2018:148).

Although the evolution of the field has produced a memorable journey from control to commitment, researchers' view of HR practices should be broadened from a preference for commitment to a realistic acknowledgment of the necessity to manage and regulate employee behaviour. Therefore, research should have an approach from multiple perspectives and try to create a complex picture of the studied phenomena/concepts, so that the research results can

be easily applied in practice. Additionally, HR researchers tend to focus more on larger companies and executive ranks, leading to a bifurcation of the field.

The aim of this paper is to present a holistic exploration of HRM by presenting different perspectives that should be used to analyse the same phenomenon. Often HRM policies are established considering the analysis of some phenomena from only one perspective, which could lead to inefficiency. In this regard, seven main perspectives, which are more often used by both researchers and practitioners, and five additional perspectives have been identified. The latter provide additional dimensions through which HRM can be analysed and are particularly relevant in today's evolving work environments where sustainability, knowledge management and employee well-being play an important role. The choice of perspective depends on an organization's priorities, values, and goals.

2. The Strategic Perspective

The interest in aligning different organizational functions with business strategy led to the emergence of a new discipline called Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), with the first relevant papers appearing in the early 1980s (Wright, Ulrich, 2017). Wright and McMahan (1992) defined strategic human resource management as "a pattern of implementations and planned activities for the management of human resources carried out with the aim of enabling an organization to achieve its objectives". A more recent definition presents SHRM as "the study of HRM systems (and/or subsystems) and their relationships with other elements that comprise an organizational system, including the organization's external and internal environments, the multiple players adopting HRM systems, and multiple stakeholders that assess efficacy and determine long-term survival" (Jackson, Schuler and Jiang, 2014). This definition highlights the relationship between human resource management systems and other elements of the organization, including organizational performance and effectiveness.

This perspective emphasizes HRM's role in driving business success and ensuring organizational sustainability. Strategic HRM involves the determining decision-makers regarding human resources practices, the structure of human capital reserves (skills and aptitudes), the specification of the necessary behaviours in the field of human resources and the analysis of the effectiveness of the decisions taken (performance, satisfaction, absenteeism, etc.), considering the strategies of business and competitive situations (Wright and McMahan, 1992). By linking HRM practices with strategic goals, organizations can optimize their human capital and enhance their competitiveness. Employees should no longer be treated only as "workforce" involving short-term expenses that must be minimized as much as possible, but as human capital assets that provide long-term value and must be maximized (Kaufman, 2015, pp. 389-390).

But this perspective assumes that recruitment, assessment, and development processes deal with people who have consistent skills sets, which can be objectively examined and measured, and thus being possible to predict job performance. However, people are more processual, context-dependent, and their performance can be affected by changes in personal life or some elements of the work context, like job/task characteristics, resources, social relationships etc (Poncheri, 2006).

3. The Behavioural Perspective

The behavioural perspective focuses on the interactions among an organization's employees and how these interactions influence human resource management practices. In order for an employee to excel in their job, the ability to perform is not enough. The willingness to perform (motivation, job satisfaction, personality, values, and expectations) and the opportunity to perform (working conditions) are also needed (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982). A positive workplace environment and strong employee-employer relationships are essential to the overall well-being of an organization. Research from this perspective focuses

on human behaviour, understanding the factors that determine employee engagement, and promoting organizational health.

Guest (2017) argues that organizations need to pay more attention to employee well-being, both for ethical reasons, as employee interests are often neglected, even though they are important stakeholders, and to increase performance. Considering social exchange theory, companies that promote employee well-being and positive working relationships will reap mutual benefits.

From this perspective we can also analyse some negative experiences that affect employee well-being, namely stress and burnout, which can be caused by poor job design, tasks, job characteristics and resources. Jobs that contain more tasks than employees can handle are experienced as stressful, leading to burnout. Companies should find ways to improve performance without the negative effects of work intensification. Negative experiences can lead to negative behaviours, i.e. stress at work can undermine work-life balance, thus causing conflict in the family. Certain HR practices can influence voluntary turnover or the appearance of intention to leave the organization, such as organizational/procedural injustice, perceived fairness of the reward system, violation of the psychological contract by the employer.

On the other hand, positive experiences favour the appearance of positive attitudes and behaviours, which could influence organizational performance. Positive experiences can be considered: psychological safety, well-being, organizational/procedural justice, job satisfaction, career satisfaction, knowledge sharing, intrinsic motivation, perceived organizational support, supervisor support, job autonomy. The positive attitudes and behaviours that can result are work commitment, organizational/affective commitment, organizational identification, self-efficacy, creativity, innovative behaviour. An important aspect is maintaining the work engagement of employees who are close to retirement age. This issue should be analysed also from the Employee Lifecycle Perspective.

Another aspect that influences the employees' behaviour is workplace flexibility, that needs to be looked at both from the behavioural perspective – as it allows employees to improve their work-life balance – but also from the strategic perspective. Flexible employment forms force the adoption of HR practices that focus more on talent, neglecting other employees.

4. The Technological Perspective

In an era characterized by digital transformation, the technological perspective of HRM focuses on the integration of technology in the management of human resources. Therefore, today we talk about Electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM), which was defined as the application of IT for the collection, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of [HR] data for business purposes (Stone et al, 2015: 216). In this case one can discuss the use of HR software, data analytics, artificial intelligence, and automation to streamline HR processes. Advances in technology have streamlined administrative activities, improving the experience of both employees and employers. The adoption of technology has revolutionized the field of HRM, making it more efficient and responsive. However, the widespread implementation of e-HRM technology doesn't automatically guarantee the effectiveness of organizational e-HRM (Wright, Dunford and Snell, 2001). Moreover, Bondarouk et al (2017) empirically examined the relationship between e-HRM and HRM service quality, and they concluded that if organizations do not have a strong HRM system to begin with, the implementation of e-HRM will fail. From this perspective, it is imperative to prioritize the HRM content over the IT content. Based on empirical research (Galanaki, Lazazzara and Parry, 2019), four types of e-HRM configurations were identified, which were named: "non-usage", "HR primacy", "Integrated e-HRM", and "IT primacy". The adoption of HRM technology is more widespread among large companies, and globally one out of five organizations have "non-usage"

configurations. This phenomenon can be better understood if we also analyse it from the Cross-Cultural Perspective and Employee Lifecycle Perspective.

5. The Ethical Perspective

From this perspective we can analyse whether decisions and actions related to human resources are taken with integrity, fairness, and transparency. We can address issues such as diversity and inclusion, equal employment opportunity and ethical decision-making in HR practices. Diversity offers a lot of opportunities, but it also presents several challenges that managers must face. Given the increasing individual differences, can all employees be treated the same? (Robbins and Judge, 2017) From this perspective, and from Legal and Compliance Perspective, practices regarding women on the labour market and gender inequality, harassment at work can be analysed and implemented.

6. Cross-Cultural perspective

Cross-cultural HRM emphasizes the impact of culture on HRM practices, especially in multinational organizations. Analysing practices from this perspective focuses more on creating HRM strategies that are culturally sensitive and effective in a global context. But are these practices still ethical? For example, diversity can also be analysed from this perspective, and if multinational companies adopt different HR practices for different cultures, because they are context sensitive (Cooke, Veen and Wood, 2017), how can we talk about equal treatment of employees, non-discriminatory?

7. Employee Lifecycle Perspective

This perspective considers the entire employee lifecycle within an organization. It involves HR processes related to recruitment, onboarding, development, retention, and retirement of employees. These aspects are also important from the perspective of experiential marketing, as companies must strive to provide positive experiences for employees at every stage in their careers in order to retain them. Therefore, companies must not only offer a job, but a lifestyle, a career adapted to the expectations and interests of employees (Grăjdieru, 2018). HRM practices must integrate micro and macro perspectives – individual, organization, society, action and structure. They must mediate between rigid structuralist approaches, which see careers as constituted by social structures, and individualistic approaches, which overemphasize individual actions and strategy (Mayrhofer, 2004: 189-190).

8. Legal and Compliance Perspective

From this perspective, HRM practices take into account legal and compliance considerations, which involve compliance with labour laws, regulations and industry standards. This perspective includes employment contracts, anti-discrimination laws, occupational health and safety regulations, and data privacy laws. The purpose of these procedures is to prevent legal problems and protect the rights of employees. However, these practices can often have implications from a behavioural perspective.

9. Economic Perspective

An economic approach to human resources involves evaluating HRM practices in terms of their economic impact on the organization, such as the return on investment (ROI) of HR initiatives (Phillips and Phillips, 2009). HR decisions that can be analysed from an economic perspective are related to staff development and reward. Based on research assessing the effects of different training initiatives on the operational and financial outcomes of 50 Canadian companies, it was found that enhanced organizational performance is closely tied to training efforts that demonstrated substantial benefit-to-cost ratios (Benabou, 1996). However, these aspects can also be approached from the behavioural perspective, as they can lead to the improvement of the working climate, absenteeism reduction, they can increase or

decrease motivation or affect organizational commitment. Studies show that there is a positive correlation between training and the affective and normative commitment components of the organisational commitment (Bashir and Long, 2015). But some companies take some precautions when sending employees to training programs to ensure that they recoup their investment, forcing them to sign an addendum to their employment contract requiring the employees to pay for the training or part of it if they will not remain in the company for a certain period. This practice can affect motivation and performance. Therefore, such decisions must be analysed from other perspectives, not only from the economic one.

10. Environmental Sustainability Perspective

This perspective considers HRM's role in promoting sustainability and environmental responsibility within the organization. This approach is increasingly important, considering the environmental legislation to which companies must adapt, as well as social responsibility actions. From this point of view, we can analyse practices related to eco-friendly workplace initiatives, green HRM, and reducing the organization's ecological footprint or other practices that align HRM with environmental goals and support sustainability efforts. These aspects can also be approached from behavioural, legal and compliance, or strategic perspectives.

11. Knowledge Management Perspective

This perspective explores HRM's role in managing, sharing, and leveraging organizational knowledge and intellectual capital. Key aspects that can be addressed from this point of view are knowledge creation, transfer, and retention, as well as the development of learning organizations. In a general sense, it investigates how the organization's intellectual assets can be capitalized. These aspects should also be analysed from the employee lifecycle perspective, because it is important to keep knowledge in the organization, even if employees leave.

12. Employee Voice Perspective

From this point of view, management styles can be analysed and to what extent the employee is allowed to "speak" in the company. This perspective emphasizes the importance of employee participation, feedback, and input in HRM processes and decision-making. From this perspective, the methods by which employees have the opportunity to express their opinion must be established (employee surveys, feedback mechanisms), as well as the mechanisms for employee involvement in decision-making. It is important to empower employees, improve communication, and enhance the quality of HRM practices through employee input. This perspective should be connected to Cross-Cultural, Knowledge Management and Employee Lifecycle Perspectives.

13. Employee Well-being and Health Perspective

This perspective addresses HRM's role in promoting the physical and mental health, safety, and well-being of employees. The concept as occupational health and safety programs, wellness initiatives, stress management, burnout syndrome, and work-life balance are usually studied together with work commitment, satisfaction, different types of leadership, motivation. Therefore, employee well-being can be analysed from a behavioural point of view - as it affects work motivation and performance, ethical - if there is a certain perceived inequity, from a cultural point of view - people from different countries can have a different stress tolerance, the stage in career and employee voice in the company.

14. Conclusions

Exploring the field of HRM through a multi-perspective approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the field. These perspectives are interconnected, as SHRM can have ethical implications or involve the economic evaluation of certain practices, the

integration of technology can change employee behaviour and the company's environmental protection policies.

Moreover, the business environment is constantly changing, shaped technological changes, social dynamics, and global business trends. For instance, the number of people who want to work remotely or on the basis of collaboration contracts is increasing and these changes force HR practitioners to adapt their strategies and practices. The integration of technology in HRM has the potential to revolutionize the way employees are selected, developed and the way knowledge management is carried out within the organization. Considering the impact of globalization on the labour market, ethical and intercultural perspectives are becoming more and more important. At the same time, the trend of sustainable development of companies leaves its mark on HRM practices.

HRM is a multi-faceted field, which can change considering the dynamics of the business environment. The perspectives discussed in this paper were identified based on an analysis of the specialized literature, but we do not exclude the possibility that there could be other less studied perspectives. But even so, the conclusions of the study are not affected. A multi-perspective approach allows us to better understand the complexities of the field and the interdependencies between different dimensions. Given the complexity of the business environment, practitioners cannot afford to set policies and practices from a single perspective, and researchers must provide support by continuously exploring these perspectives. If practices are based on research results from one perspective, they could lead to negative effects within an organization from other perspectives. Of course, it is difficult for HRM policies and strategies to be satisfactory from all points of view, but we should be aware of these implications and try to analyse the phenomena from several perspectives in order to have the best possible results.

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