

## Human Resource Management and Productivity: A Comparative Study among Banks in Bahawalpur Division

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### Abstract

This study examines the effect of human resource management on the productivity of the organization and how different HR variables help an organization to achieve its objectives in efficient and effective way. Here, the focus is on seven basic variables of human resource management which include incentive pay, recruitment and selection, work teams, employment security, flexible job assignment, skills training and communication. The objective of the research is to find out how these variables operate among four different banks chosen; two private sector banks and two public sector banks. Employees have different opinions about different variables; however, the variables that contribute most to the productivity are recruitment and selection, skills training and job security.

**Keywords:** human resource management, labor productivity, public sector, private sector, organizations

### 1. Introduction

Recently, much work is being done on the impact of the human resource systems on organizational effectiveness. Pfeffer (1994, 1998), emphasized that now if the company succeed in the complex market place in hypercompetitive environment than it is not because of patents, technology, economies of scale and access to capital alone but adaptability, innovation and speed are the variables that play the major role which are actually associated with the human resource part of the organization. Pfeffer (1994, 1998) and other researchers (e.g., Kochan & Osterman, 1994; Lawler, 1992, 1996; Levine, 1995) place more emphasis on the fact that heavy investments should be made in the field of *high-performance* or *high-involvement human resource systems*, that are actually the systems belonging to human resource practices which are formulated to improve the skills of employees, enhance their level of commitment and hence lead to more productivity. However, all these facts are true but at the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that investments in some sectors may be more beneficial than in other sectors. Due to globalization and increased awareness, organization are adopting innovative practices like increased flow of information to workers, job flexibility, problem solving teams, incentive pay, training and development etc. We become aware of the fact that the way organization chose its employment practices decide the output of its workers. Theories pertaining to the work practices that affect the productivity of workers, given by researchers like Pfeffer (1994, 1998), Miller (1987), focus on the different ways in which policies related to compensation like efficiency wage payments, profit sharing, bonuses and other different types of incentive pays can affect the output of the workers. Yet there are some other models and practices that focus on diverse employment practices like increased use of work teams, effective recruitment, employment security, flow of financial information to employees and employee voice mechanisms. Some theories suggest that instead of adopting and implementing individual practices it is much better to put into practice a bunch of practices so that the output and productivity increase is much prominent. When related activities are grouped together then they are important determinants of productivity as compared to individual practices. According to Delery and Shaw (2001), there are two distinguishing features between the more traditional HR management (HRM) practice research and the SHRM research. First, SHRM studies focused on how HR can enhance the organizational effectiveness and second distinctive feature is the extent of analysis. In HRM practice, research conventionally had an individual-level focus; in dissimilarity, SHRM research is done at the business-unit or organizational level of analysis. Focusing on this aspect, current HR research's main focus is high performance work systems which help increase employee commitment, employee skills and hence productivity and how we can utilize these HR practices to achieve competitive advantage (Lawler, 1992, 1996; Levine, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998). Neither theoretical (e.g., Lawler, 1992; Levine, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998) nor pragmatic work (e.g. Huselid, 1995) can give a single exact definition of a high-performance work system, but it is easy to distinguish the practices which these

systems include and they are internal merit-based promotions, rigorous selection procedures, high levels of training, cross-functional and cross-trained teams, information sharing, group-based rewards, participatory mechanisms, and skill-based pay. Many researchers have thrown some light on the association between the labor productivity and these different practices mentioned above (e.g. Huselid, 1995). Organizations are incorporating HRM practices in their systems now. However, different organizations adopt them differently depending upon their environment. The level of competition and technology differ from area to area. However, no matter what the external or internal environment of organization may be each organization is still adopting new HRM practices.

In this study, we use labor productivity as the key outcome excluding all other outcomes. Some studies also used other outcomes to measure the effects of Human Resource Management and they include absenteeism, worker turnover, perceptions of workers etc. we cannot deny the fact that though these outcomes are important but at the same time if they do not affect productivity then they are second order. Objectives of the study are:-

- To critically analyze the significance of Human Resource Management practices in bringing positive change in the output of the organizations.
- To identify the Human Resource Management practices that contribute most to the organization's productivity.
- To find out the satisfaction level of the employees pertaining to the Human Resource activities operating at a particular point of time.
- To increase awareness in organizations regarding effective HRM activities
- To do comparative study among the public and private sector banks

### *1.1 Human Resource Management*

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a very critical and imperative function that operates within an organization. This function can be classified into recruitment, compensation, development related to the organization, safety, motivation of employees, benefits, wellness, communication and training, administration and performance management and all the activities that are associated with the employees and the ways direction is provided to them to achieve the goals of the organization. Line managers also play a vital role in performing human resource management. Human resource management is inclusive and a proper systematic approach to manage the people working in the organization. It also copes with the ways how the environment and culture within the organization is managed. If there is effective and appropriate HRM it will lead to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives adding to the productivity of the organization. Early Human Resource Management was traditional but now the concepts have changed tremendously. It is now more than the traditional outsourced activities that were related to personnel, transactional roles and administration. It is not a demarcated area but a broader concept and with the passage of time, it is becoming more enriched and hence provides the organization with an edge against its competitors. Effective HRM is adding value to the success of the organization by stirring the employee programs that have a significant impact on the business. The advanced roles of HRM include measurements related to HRM and strategic direction to exhibit value. Features of Human Resource Management include manpower management, industrial management, organizational management and personnel administration. However, we cannot ignore the fact that these are the traditional terminologies and with the passage of time, with more enriched knowledge, these traditional expressions are becoming less common theoretically. Sometimes, due to misperception even industrial relations and employee are listed as synonyms, although these refer to the employee behavior and the relation between the people working in the organization and the management.

The theoretical discipline elaborates the point that the employees working in the organization are not merely the business resources nor are they machines but humans with their respective needs and desires. Hence, they should be treated accordingly. Human resource management throws light on the positive side of the workers that they are irreplaceable assets belonging to the organization that contribute to its success. Though employees contribute to the productivity but at the same time many hurdles also exist which include insufficient training, failure of process and lack of knowledge. Human Resource Management (HRM) is quite different from the traditional approach and is more innovative way of managing people at work. HRM ensures that the managers clearly convey the organizational goals and objectives so that they can be accomplished more efficiently and effectively by the employees by providing them with the required resources. When HRM activities are implemented as well as executed properly,

they portray the overall practices and goals of the organization. Practitioners such as researchers, bank managers and employees also believe that risk can also be reduced by HRM.

Academic theory: There has been tremendous research in the areas of HRM that put in to the HRM practice in the organization. From the past two decades much empirical work has been done that elaborates the relationship between the performance of the organization and HRM, which is obvious from the activities such as lower levels of absenteeism, employee commitment, higher productivity, higher levels of skills, enhanced quality and efficiency. This is known as 'Strategic HRM' or SHRM. Three things have been observed in SHRM viz. Best Fit, The Resource Based View (RBV) and Best practice. There is a term called 'high commitment' HRM, which emphasizes that if certain best practices are adopted they will result in better performance and more productivity. Pfeffer (1994, 1998) was the person who did much work in this area. He proposed that competitive advantage could be achieved through seven best practices by efficient utilization of people. These practices included training, reduction in status differences, teams that are self-managed, vigilant hiring, security for employees, information sharing and performance based pay. Much research has been done and there are large numbers of studies that unveil the best practices. Therefore, it is quite difficult to sort out that which practice is best. Contingency approach to HRM or Best fit, elaborates the fact that if there is appropriate fit between the companies' strategies and the HRM practices that are adopted by the employees in consultancy with their management than this will lead to better company performance. It is evident that to be more profitable company's strategies must be in coherence with the policies and practices that it adopts, otherwise the goals and objectives of the organization cannot be met efficiently and effectively. Theories have been put forward to elaborate the same fact like according to the 'life cycle' models different stages in the organizations life cycle can be mapped over by HR practices and policies. Porter's (1985) ideas are taken in competitive advantage model in which he argues that different HR practice can be mapped on to organizational competitive strategy. There is also 'configuration model' which is the most advanced form of model that argues that organizational strategies must be looked upon first and then HR policies and practices must be designed accordingly. The Resource Based View (RBV), is second view of SHRM that emphasize that organizational resources play a very critical role in achieving competitive advantage. HRM plays a vital role in creating differentiation in terms of these resources and making them a factor of achieving competitive advantage. Bringing it to a nutshell the theory of HRM is all about how the organizational goals and objectives can be achieved through effective and efficient utilization of employees. The function of HRM is to ensure that there is a proper fit between the strategies of the organization and employee management (Miller, 1989). Academic theory of HRM, aim is to emphasize the point that the employees working in the organization must not be treated as machines but they are an important asset belonging to the organization that is a major factor of competitive advantage. If their rights are protected and given voice in decision making this will make them more productive hence making it easier to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

Labor productivity: Productivity of workforce is the total quantity of services and goods that an employee produces in a given amount of time. It is just one type of productivity among several others that economists measure. Workforce productivity can be measured for number of things like it can be measured for an industry, a country, process or an organization. Most of the studies are conducted on it with respect to the productivity of laborers but not of professionals or managers. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), workforce productivity studies the relative amount of volume measure of input to volume measure of output. We can define volume measure of output as gross value added (GVA) or gross domestic product (GDP) which is usually articulated at invariable prices. The three frequently used input measures are jobs of workforce, number of people employed or total worked hours. Labor productivity measured will show a discrepancy as a function of how efficiently the production factors are used and other inputs but at the same time, because one has more capital usage so that organization or country labor productivity will be higher. Output of worker is the labor products average and that can be compared with the labors marginal product. Marginal product of labor is the increase in the labor output due to the augmented labor input. Labor productivity numbers reveal many things. The first thing, which it indicates, is the amount of raw labor that is required to produce the specific amount of output. Labor productivity help countries determine whether their position is improving or declining. Labor productivity increases due to enhancement in skills, technology and different other factors. If the same number of workers produce the same quantity of product in reduced amount of time than it means progress has been made.

Why focus on labor productivity?: There are number of measures for output that we can use to calculate the effectiveness and efficiency of the HR systems, which may include profits, turnover could also be used for this

purpose at the same time absenteeism is also a very good indicator. However, labor productivity is used most often because of number of reasons. First, labor productivity is used as the most fundamental organizational outcome. Productivity of the labor is the ratio of the total output to the total input, which show how the organization is working at a particular point of time. Secondly, there is big connection between the productivity and the human capital and the most important connection is with the productivity of the labor. There is a direct link between the two so it is the most valid tool that can be used to measure the success rate of the organization (Dyer & Reeves, 1995). Third, the theorists pertaining to SHRM have elaborated the point that for workforce performance, productivity of labor is a crucial indicator (Delery & Shaw, 2001). Finally, in literature pertaining to SHRM much work has been accomplished using labor productivity as tool to calculate outcome (Boselie & Dietz, 2003).

### *1.2 Relationship between HRM and labor productivity in terms of organizational effectiveness*

Recent years have witnessed burgeoning interest in the degree to which human resource systems contribute to organizational effectiveness. Pfeffer (1994, 1998), for example, argued that success in today's hypercompetitive markets depends less on advantages associated with economies of scale, technology, patents, and access to capital and more on innovation, speed, and adaptability. Pfeffer further argued that these latter sources of competitive advantage are largely derived from organizations' human resources. On the basis of these and similar arguments, Pfeffer (1994, 1998) and others (e.g., Kochan & Osterman, 1994; Lawler, 1992, 1996; Levine, 1995) have strongly advocated greater organization investments in *high-performance* or *high-involvement human resource systems*, which are systems of human resource (HR) practices designed to enhance employees' skills, commitment, and productivity.

Managers know that people make the critical difference between success and failure. The effectiveness with which organizations manage, develop, motivate, involve and engage the willing contribution of the people who work in them is a key determinant of how well those organizations perform. Yet, there is surprisingly little research demonstrating the causal links between people management and business performance. Management practices and styles lead to more motivated, satisfied, or productive employees. However, demarcated work is done that apply rigorous, comparative analysis over time to the individual elements of management activity and measure the contribution they make to performance.

The performance of organizations has been the focus of intensive research efforts in recent times. How well an organization implements its policies and programs and accomplishes its strategic intent in terms of its mission and vision is of paramount concern. Managers in both private and public organizations are becoming increasingly aware that a critical source of competitive advantage often not come from indigenous product and services, best public relations strategy, state-of-the-art technology but from having an appropriate system of attracting and managing the organization's human resources. Are such progressive people management practices the only route to enhanced business performance? It is a fact of life that some companies are profitable despite making little or no use of such practices. These companies may possibly be in production sectors where jobs require little input from the employee other than sustained effort; or in small service operations competing on price rather than quality. However, where businesses face international competition; where they are committed to excellence and quality standards; where creativity and innovation are essential to moving the business forward – employee commitment and a positive psychological contract' between employer and employee are fundamental to improving performance.

Although, there are differences across commentators as to what constitutes 'good' HRM practices, many writers (e.g. Bailey, 1993; Huselid, 1995) have argued that HRM practices can improve company performance by increasing employee skills and abilities, Promoting positive attitudes and increasing motivation, providing employees with expanded responsibilities so that they can make full use of their skills and abilities. In comparative study, the HRM practices included are Incentive pay, Recruitment and selection, Work teams, Employment security, Flexible job assignment, Skills training and Communication.

Some strategic HRM practices: strategic HRM alignment, line management devolvement, training and development, compensation system, career planning system and employee participation are positively related to perceptual measures of organizational effectiveness. They show decisively that people management practices have a powerful impact on performance. Whether performance is measured in terms of productivity, which might be expected to have stronger links with the way in which companies manage their people or profitability, in both cases the effect is

substantial. There is now a considerable body of work proposing that high quality people management can provide organizations with a source of competitive advantage that it is difficult for competitors to imitate. It is the management of human capital, rather than physical capital that is seen as the most important determinant of company performance. The more sophisticated the HRM system the more effective is the organization. HRM practices do lead to organizational effectiveness.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The researcher has selected 4 banks (2 public and 2 private sector) as for the purpose of research viz. NBP (National Bank of Pakistan which is a public sector bank), HBL (Habib Bank Limited which is private), MCB (Muslim Commercial Bank which is private) and BOP (Bank of Punjab which is public). The variables viz. incentive pay, recruitment and selection, work teams, employment security, flexible job assignment, skill training and communication (identified through the literature review), have been tested in these banks through a questionnaire filled by employees of these banks. 100 questionnaires have been filled out; 36 from HBL, 24 from NBP, 26 from MCB and 14 from BOP. Different types of questions are included to generate maximum information from those people. Proportionate random sampling technique is used to get a sample.

The qualitative responses taken from the respondents during the data collection phase are subjectively interpreted. Responses to each question indicate the occurrence or non-occurrence of particular Human Resource variable. All the responses against each question are listed to see if particular HR variable exists or not. The listed responses against each question are then numerically quantified using Duncan Mean test to see the responses that particular HR variable exist in specific bank or not and those whose responses suggest an opposite of it. Each question asked in the interview is interpreted like this and the answers are then compared with literature review to develop a rationally based finding.

## **3. Analysis and Discussion**

### *3.1 Duncan mean test*

#### **(Table 1)**

### *3.2 Multiple regression analysis BOP*

#### **(Table 2)**

### *3.3 Multiple regression analysis HBL*

#### **(Table 3)**

### *3.4 Multiple regression analysis NBP*

#### **(Table 4)**

### *3.5 Multiple regression analysis MCB*

#### **(Table 5)**

### *3.6 The variables which contributes the most to the productivity of each bank.*

#### **(Table 6)**

## **4. Conclusion**

It is worthwhile to compare four banks based on these seven HR variables. These all seven variables are very much necessary for the productivity. Comparing these four banks one can see that major factors that contribute maximum towards productivity are recruitment and selection, skills training and majorly for public banks job security is very much larger contributor. A few variables like communication have different impact in different banks. Flexible job assignment has also come as a variable that has less contribution in comparison with other variables that are chosen for this study. Incentive pay is another variable that is performing different for different banks. It can be seen from above. It has established a relationship among these variables and productivity that has been shown in the tables above. It is clear that employees in these four banks have different opinions about all the variables under investigation. It is fair to conclude that human resource is a very important concept regarding to the productivity of the business. The time has come that it should be given due importance as it was neglected in the past. From the study, it has been concluded that these HR variables have a relationship with the productivity of the bank. It is needed to select the optimum mix of variables that produce maximum results in the case of productivity. It is evident from the study that if banks are successful in employing these HR practices, likelihood increases that they are going to get more result. It is necessary to draw such a mechanism that allows banks to be more familiar with the

techniques and benefits of these practices.

### 5. Limitations and implications for further research

Lack of time and involvement of high cost restricted the researcher to cover all regions of Bahawalpur division therefore; she collected data only from few banks of specific regions. As target population was very large but there were access issues therefore sample size chosen was restricted. Time, cost and access constraints limited the researcher to cover the maximum target population. Even in these constraints, the researcher gathered enough data to produce the representative results. The results of the study therefore find their scope to be used in further research in this field. The same research can be applied in other areas with different target populations.

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**(Table 1)Duncan mean test**

The data provided by HBL employees shows that response for communication was highest while for flexible job assignment it was lowest. On the other hand, data for employment security was less scattered while for incentive pay it was on the higher

Variables	HBL (N=36)		NBP (N=24)		MCB (N=26)		Bop (N=14)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Incentive pay	3.67	0.95	3.91	0.95	4.15	0.76	2.71	0.7
Recruitment and selection	3.5	0.73	3.7	0.45	3.73	0.40	3.2	0.6
Work teams	3.79	0.46	3.78	0.33	3.77	0.62	3.4	0.42
Employment security	3.58	0.38	4.02	0.39	3.70	0.40	3.8	0.75
Flexible job assignment	3.19	0.68	2.5	0.60	3.52	0.48	3.2	0.48
Skills training	3.71	0.83	3.07	0.48	3.8	0.50	3.78	0.40
Communication	4.0	0.59	3.97	0.42	4.0	0.70	3.5	0.50

side. A performance of HR variables in NBP is known by getting data from 24 employees of NBP. Highest mean is attached with the employment security that people feel that their jobs are secure here and least is for flexible job assignments. Incentive pay's data is mostly scattered while data for work teams is less scattered. From the analysis of data of MCB, we come to know that highest mean is attached with incentive pay while least is attached to flexible job assignment. It is interesting to know that data of both recruitment and employment security has equal value of scatterings. BOP is a public sector bank. It has highest mean of employment security. It means most people think that they have a secured job and they feel not much risk to their job. This value is high for public sector banks as already seen in the case of National bank. It has low mean value attached to incentive pay. It has data scatterings ranging from 0.4 to 0.75. Low value is attached to training while data is most scattered in case of employment security.

**(Table 2)Multiple regression analysis BOP**

Independent variable	Dependent Variable( Productivity)		
	Beta	Simple R	t-value
Incentive pay	0.20	0.512	2.2
Recruitment and selection	0.36	0.561	3.76
Work teams	0.20	0.568	2.2
Employment security	0.41	0.480	4.19
Flexible job assignment	0.17	0.258	1.9
Skills training	0.24	0.369	2.6
Communication	0.25	0.547	2.7

This is another public sector bank. All those 7 variables that have been tested before are tested here. It shows that employment security comes as a winner with beta 0.41 and t-value 4.19. It has maximum contribution towards productivity. It is followed by recruitment with beta 0.36 and t-value 3.76 while other factors are lagging behind. It shows that flexible job assignment contributes least towards productivity with beta 0.17 and t-value 1.9. The results are significant at .05 p-values.

**(Table 3) Multiple regression analysis HBL**

Independent variable	Dependent Variable ( Productivity)		
	Beta	Simple R	t-value
Incentive pay	0.42	0.447	4.36
Recruitment and selection	0.40	0.503	4.12
Work teams	0.50	0.304	5.6
Employment security	0.44	0.431	4.67
Flexible job assignment	0.35	0.385	3.75
Skills training	0.46	0.466	4.80
Communication	0.29	0.363	3.10

This analysis shows the impact of HR variables in HBL. While studying data carefully, we come to know that highest contributor towards the labor productivity is work teams as its beta value is maximum which 0.5 and its t-value is also maximum among all variables which is 5.6. It has also significant contributions from skills training whose beta value is 0.46 and t-value is 4.8 and employment security whose beta value is 0.44 and t-value is 4.67. In this regard, communication is the least contributing factor in the productivity of HBL with beta value of 0.29 and t-value of 3.1. This shows the trend in this bank. It is the analysis of all these HR variables that are selected to check their impact on the level of productivity of bank. It can be turn over for the bank during a particular period. This analysis is significant at 0.05 level.

**(Table 4) Multiple regression analysis NBP**

Independent variable	Dependent Variable ( Productivity)		
	Beta	Simple R	t-value
Incentive pay	0.46	0.667	4.8
Recruitment and selection	0.40	0.425	4.2
Work teams	0.42	0.432	4.37
Employment security	0.50	0.775	5.3
Flexible job assignment	0.28	0.362	3.1
Skills training	0.35	0.605	3.7
Communication	0.47	0.338	4.86

This analysis is also significant 0.05 level. In this analysis, we can easily see that largest contributor towards the productivity for the bank is employment security with beta value of 0.5 and t-value of 5.3 followed by communication level in the bank with beta value of 0.47 and t-value of 4.86. It has incentive pay as the third largest contributor with beta value of 0.46 and t-value of 4.8. In this case flexible job assignment is the least contributor in the productivity of bank with beta 0.28 and t-value of 3.1. It is evident from the beta portion of this table given.

**(Table 5) Multiple regression analysis MCB**

Independent variable	Dependent Variable ( Productivity)		
	Beta	Simple R	t-value
Incentive pay	0.30	0.568	3.2
Recruitment and selection	0.42	0.549	4.35
Work teams	0.32	0.561	3.3
Employment security	0.4	0.724	4.18
Flexible job assignment	0.28	0.368	3.1
Skills training	0.38	0.378	4.0
Communication	0.26	0.285	2.8

This is the data about MCB. It also shows the contribution of independent variables in the productivity. Recruitment and selection is largest contributor with beta 0.42 and t-value 4.35 followed by employment security with beta 0.4 and t-value 4.18 and skills training with beta 0.38 and t-value 4. These are the prime three factors that contribute maximum towards the dependent variable. In this race, communication comes at the last number with beta 0.26 and t-value 2.8. It means, it is the least contributor towards productivity.



**(Table 6) The variables which contribute the most to the productivity of each bank**

<b>Banks</b>	<b>Variable affecting most</b>
HBL	Work teams
NBP	Employment security
MCB	Recruitment and selection
BOP	Employment security

Table: this table shows that which variable contributes the most to the productivity of the bank.

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