

Model for Employee Relationship in domestic organizations of Pakistan

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Abstract

Tracing the roots of evolution of HRM, this article is focused towards employee relation model in Domestic organizations of Pakistan. The article first traces the roots of SHRM and then pinpoints the context specific nature of HRM. By arguing the context specific nature of HRM, the article develops a conceptual model of employee relationship in domestic organizations of Pakistan. The article concludes by developing an argument that HRM in Pakistan is still in its infancy and it is informal in nature.

Keywords: Model ; Employee Relationship ; Domestic ; Organizations ; Pakistan

Introduction

The organizations are social entities composed of human beings (Perrow, 1986). The human beings are the most important and dynamic resources of the organizations (Barney, 1991). The management of employees within the organizations is quite old as are the organizations (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). The management of employee relationship received a lot of importance after the industrial revolution (George, 1972). As organizations and societies became more industrialized the management of employees similarly became complex. To handle this complexity various measures e.g. industrial psychology, personnel management, human resource management and strategic human resource management are introduced in the

organizations (Beer, Walton, Spector, Mills, & Lawrence, 1985; Guest, 1987; Hendry & Pettigrew, 1993; Huselid, 1995; Lundy, 1994).

The time period of 1980s witnesses the disappearance of industrial psychology and personnel management as they failed to develop effective mechanisms of employee relationship (Boxall & Purcell, 2000; Kaufman, 2001). This led to the introduction of more sophisticated mechanism of employee relationship which is named human resource management (Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, Andrade, & Drake, 2009; Lundy, 1994; Schuler Peter & Randall, 1993). Human resource management by its definition is management of employee relationship in the organization with a focus on improved performance of employees (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009; Green, Wu, Whitten, & Medlin, 2006; Huselid, 1995). This improvement in performance will ultimately lead to improve the overall performance of the organization. The human resource management is considered a reactive approach without integration with the organizational strategy. This pitfall of human resource management shifted the attention of both scholars and practitioner towards a more focused and proactive management of employee relationship within the organization (Boxall & Purcell, 2000; Hendry & Pettigrew, 1992). The new approach is named Strategic Human Resource Management, with a focus on attaining competitive advantage (Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Kaufman, 2001; Sparrow, Schuler, & Jackson, 1994). The strategic human resource management encapsulates the human resource management and integrates the strategy of organization with the human resources (Khilji & Wang, 2007; Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Lepak & Snell, 2002).

The employee relationship's management under the umbrella of sophisticated mechanisms of human resource management and strategic human resource management is quite popular all around the world (Brewster, 2007; Khan, 2010; Paauwe, 2009). However, the implementation of human resource management and strategic human resource management is context specific (Brewster, 2007; Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005; Rowley & Benson,

2002). In this view the aim of this paper is to examine the adoption of sophisticated means of employee relationship in domestic organizations of Pakistan. The paper will also examine either employee relationship model as used in western countries is applicable to domestic organizations of Pakistan or not.

For the purpose of this paper, HRM will be used to reflect Human Resource Management; SHRM will be used to reflect Strategic Human Resource Management and DO for domestic organizations of Pakistan.

Historical Discourse of SHRM:

The roots of SHRM are linked to human relations movement (Lengnick-Hall, et al., 2009; Taylor, Beechler, & Napier, 1996). As with human relations movement the field of employee relations in the organizations attained attention of scholars and practitioners in early 1920s (Kaufman, 2001). After the problems of employee relationship created by Taylor's scientific management, human relation movement came up with the underlying assumption of solving employee grievances (George, 1972). The human relation movement subsequently led to introduction of industrial psychology in the organizations (Lundy, 1994). The industrial psychology started as a mechanism to solve the problems created by work environment and resulting problems created in employee relationship with the organizations (Beer, et al., 1985). The industrial psychology is then replaced by Personnel management.

The personnel management is considered as a bureaucratic model of employee relationship see e.g. (Beer, et al., 1985; Khan, 2010; Lengnick-Hall, et al., 2009; Lundy, 1994; Martin-Alcazar, Romero-Fernandez, & Sanchez-Gardey, 2005). The purpose served by industrial psychology and personnel management are almost same. Both served the aim of administration of employee relationships in the organization, without any focus on performance of employees (Guest, 1987). However the personnel management is not considered to solve all the problems associated with growing industrialization and resulting complexity of employee relationship. With too much

bureaucratic structure personnel management also worked as a political device to control the organizational resources (Boxall & Purcell, 2000; Lundy, 1994). As a result the time periods of 1970s witnesses the emergence of HRM (Martin-Alcazar, et al., 2005). The term associated with the employee relationship with a focus towards performance of employees.

HRM is a broader term as compared to personnel management. HRM is management of employee relationship in the organization with a focus towards performance of employees (Boxall & Purcell, 2000; Fombrun, Tichy, & Devanna, 1984). It encapsulates all the activities that are focused towards maximization and integration of commitment of employees with the organization (Guest, 1999). This commitment is supported by flexibility and description of job through providence of healthy and safe working environment (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1992, 1993; Huselid, 1995). The different scholars have defined HRM differently, but broadly speaking HRM is management of employee relationship in a productive manner so that commitment of employees can be improved (Lepak & Snell, 2002). This commitment will lead to better performance and subsequently better performance of organization. Further to improve the performance of organization HRM involves various set of activities both at the level of organization and individual (Devanna, Fombrun, & Tichy, 1984; Lengnick-Hall, et al., 2009; Meyer, 2006; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005; Rowley & Benson, 2002).

The various HRM practices focused towards management of employees relationship are, recruitment, selection and performance appraisal (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009). These three practices are then reinforced by training and development with the underlying assumption of motivating and retaining employees (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009; Huselid, 1995). All these HR practices then lead to employee commitment and performance of organization (Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Khan, 2010). Although various HRM practices are tested empirically but very little evidence supported the notion of HRM and Performance of organization (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Huselid, 1995; Huselid, Jackson, & Schuler, 1997; Paauwe, 2009; Paauwe &

Boselie, 2005). This empirical handicap then resulted in the emergence of new field of employee relationship called SHRM (Kaufman, 2001).

The SHRM is vertical and horizontal integration of HRM within the organization to attain the competitive advantage (Huselid, 1995; Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Lepak & Snell, 2002). The SHRM is considered an approach focused towards linking Human resources with the organizational strategy (Lundy, 1994; Tichy, Fombrun, & Devanna, 1982). As it is evident unless or until human resources are not linked with the strategy or vice versa organization cannot attain and sustain competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Boxall & Purcell, 2000) . According to Barney (1991) the dynamic environment around the organizations has made human resources vulnerable to be explored in the competitive manner, so that competitive advantage can be attained. The relationship of human resources with the organizational strategy evolved a new debate of hard and soft SHRM (Khan, 2010; Khilji, 2003; Rowley & Benson, 2002).

There are two separate schools of thoughts towards SHRM. One school of thought (c.f. Devanna, et al., 1984; Fombrun, et al., 1984; Tichy, et al., 1982) is in favor of linking whatever the strategy of organization with the HRM. This school is also called as best fit model or hard HRM (Taylor, et al., 1996). This model basically is rooted in the work of Michigan scholars, who inspired by the work Chandler (1962) stressed that fit the strategy with the HRM. The underlying problem of this model is, it shadowed the human perspective in management of employee relationship and stressed the fit of strategy with the human resources (Brewster, 2007; Khan, 2010; Tichy, et al., 1982). The other school of thought which is also named as Harvard or softer HRM evolved in response to the criticism of Michigan model (Legge, 1995; Storey, 1993). The underlying assumption of this softer HRM is focus on human relations to increase the employee commitment (Becker & Gerhart, 1996). The Harvard model stresses the evolution of strategy with the involvement of human resources in the organization (Blyton & Turnbull,

1992). These models are further supported by other models e.g. Schuler (1992) 5p model which stressed the importance of HRM's policies, process, programmes, practices and philosophies. Further the contextual model of (c.f. Brewster, 2007; Khilji, 2003; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005; Sparrow, et al., 1994) which extended the debate by stressing the importance of context and its impact on HRM.

From this discourse it is of little doubt that the management of employee relationship has very strong roots in the organizations. The employees from human relation movement to SHRM are the most important resources and ensure the performance of organization.

The “Black box” of Employee Relationship:

Since the emergence of HRM in 1970 as a dominant field of employee relationship, it has been tried to explore the link of human resource practices that are directly linked to better performance of organization. Till to date there is a very little empirical evidence supporting the individual or bundle of HR practices that can enhance performance (Fey, Morgulis-Yakushev, Park, & Björkman, 2008). The scholars (c.f. Brewster, 2007; P. Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Fey, et al., 2008; Paauwe, 2009; Sparrow, et al., 1994) claim that as HRM is American by its nature and the link of performance varies according to context of organization and country. This argument is further supported by the contextual HRM that practices of HRM vary according to context and it is difficult to establish a set of practices that will link the performance with the human resources (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1992; Huselid, 1995). This missing link of HRM and performance has made HRM and SHRM as a black box of employee relationship (Fey, et al., 2008). But still it is of little doubt that humans are the most expensive and also most productive organizational resources. The effective and efficient management of human resources can ensure the better performance of organization (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Huselid, 1995).

Employee relationship in organizations in Asia

With the increase in globalization and more attention towards Asian markets as an opportunity to expand the business, Asian countries received the introduction of western model of employee relationship (Meyer, 2006). As a result the organizations in Asian countries adopted model of employee relation in the tradition of their western counterparts (P. Budhwar & Debrah, 2009). The debate in Asian countries is whether to adopt the western model of HRM or come up with context specific HRM model (c.f. Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Miah & Bird, 2007). This is in line with the argument opined by Mayer (2006) that Asian countries by vary cultural roots and social make up needs critical evaluation of western theories. In this line we argue that Asian countries pose different kind of challenges to employee relationship. The same argument was opined by Brewster (2007) that employee relationship management or in other words HRM varies from countries to countries.

The model of employee relationship or HRM as applied in USA is quite individualistic and is in accordance to the individualistic society if USA (Brewster, 2007). The most of the Asian countries have the collective societies and an individualistic type of HRM and its application in such societies is questionable (Debrah & Budhwar, 2004; Hofstede, 2007; Meyer, 2006; Wright, Snell, & Dyer, 2005). In this line on one hand Asian countries question the universal acceptance of western HRM and on the other hand give new dimensions to culture and country specific nature of HRM (Brewster, 2007; Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Khilji, 2003; Tayeb, 1995, 2001). In this line we here claim that there is an increasing tendency of attention towards management of employee relationship or HRM in Asian countries but it is not on the same pattern as practiced in other parts of world (c.f. Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Budhwar & Debrah, 2001; Khilji, 2001; Miah & Bird, 2007)

Management of Employee relationship in Pakistan

Introduction to Pakistan

Pakistan with an annual growth rate of 2.05 in population is the world's sixth most populous country (Government of Pakistan, 2009). It means in Pakistan there is an excessive supply of labor force (skilled and unskilled). With this supply of labor it is of little doubt that organizations in Pakistan need a comprehensive plan or model of employee relationship (Khiljii, 1999). The total employed force in Pakistan is 50.79 million while because of struggling economy unemployed labor force is estimated 2.39 million (Labor Force Survey, 2009-10, CIA, 2009). By the size of labor Pakistan is the 10th largest country in the world (Government of Pakistan; 2009; CIA, 2009; Labor Force Survey, 2010).

The economy of Pakistan is agricultural and almost 50 percent of employed labor is working in agricultural sector (Khilji, 2001). The other major contributor to economic growth is textile industry (Khiljii, 2001; Government of Pakistan, 1999).

The HRM in Pakistan:

According to Khiljii (2001) HRM in Pakistan started as reform measure of Public sector and with the foreign investments in various sectors e.g. fertilizers, telecommunication, oil etc. In this line DO followed the tradition of public sector and foreign companies (Khiljii, 2001; Sadiiqui, 1997). This led to introduction of HRM department in organizations of Pakistan. But still there is a very little evidence that DO have adopted a full working HRM model for employee relationship (Khilji, 2001, 2003).

Towards a Conceptual Model of Employee Relationship:

Pakistan by its geographical boundaries, national, social and cultural values is a complex country (Rafi, Khan, & Irshad, 2000). The national, cultural and social values are inspired from various sources. These values are on the one hand influenced by long dynasties of Muslim rulers in the

area, and on the other hand by British rule (Jaffrelot, 2004). The long standing relationship with other religions before the time of independence in 1947, the national and social make up of Pakistan has various roots to other cultures (Khilji, 1999, 2003, 2004). Among this Indian cultural influence, British rule and post independence American influence are most important (Jaffrelot, 2004; Khan, 1985; S. Khilji, 1999; Rafi, et al., 2000). It is agreed by the researchers that socio cultural environment guides the organizational environment (Hofstede, 2007; Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Khan, 2010; Khilji, 2001; Paauwe, 2009). In this line we argue that HRM which is for management of employee relationship and employees come from their own social makeup and incorporates social and cultural values in the organization is also influenced by socio cultural and national make up of country (c.f. Brewster, 2007; Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Meyer, 2006; Miah & Bird, 2007). So employee relationship model in DO of Pakistan is in line with the socio cultural and national influences. Further this is also in line with the Budhwar and Debrah (2009) that HRM or employee relationship model is influenced by national culture, business, industrial sectors and institutional factors. In a comprehensive study of multinational organization in Pakistan Khilji (2003), she also comes to the findings that HRM model in Pakistan is influenced by national and cultural factors.

For the purpose of this paper we are taking Budhwar and Debrah (2009) basis of HRM model in Asian countries. Further Institutional theory will serve as the underlying base of our model by supporting our argument that organizations work in social setup and get influenced by forces outside the organizations (Scott, 1987).

According to Budhwar and Debrah (2009) there are several context specific factors that influence the HRM in organizations. Among these factors most prominent are, National, Business environment, Industry and Institutional factors. Khilji (2003) identified most prominent national, business, industry and institutional factors. We are here using Khilji (2003) findings for our model.

National Culture in Pakistan is rooted in collective social makeup. The people are power conscious and like authority. As a result power distance is very high with low trust among people towards organizational management. The voice of elites is final voice which leads to non meritocratic and referral based recruitment and compensation. The national culture in Pakistan is also influenced by Americans and British. The British ruled the country and today American are aiding the country. These two factors further influence the national culture and ultimately the organizations (Gilmartin, 1998; Waseem, 2004). As a result American and British graduates and people who have connections to these powers are easily recruited and promoted further.

Business environment in Pakistan is effected by destabilized economy and high rate of unemployment. The business environment is further effected by political powers. The elites are in power and effect the business environment through political influences (Waseem, 2004). The competitive environment in Pakistan is open where private sector also has the opportunity to invest in various sectors. The business environment also enjoys the use of information technology as a result of GOVT. policy of early 1990s to promote information technology.

Industrial sectors in Pakistan have little intervention from unions. Most of the industries are owned by those people who are in power either in the form of politics or finance (Waseem, 2004). The industries mostly follow the pattern of multinationals for their management employee relationship.

Institutions in Pakistan are quite weak in power as elites for their own rights modify the laws of labor (Siddiqi ,2007). But the organizations incorporate symbolic representation of legislation in their activities. The other institutional power which derives its roots from the society is Religion (Tayeb, 1997). Almost 95% of Pakistani population is Muslim; this makes Islam the majority religion in Pakistan (Gilmartin, 1998; Jalal, 1995; Waseem, 2004). As a result elites who have the authority in DO either use religion (Islam) for their own interests or to retain benefits from society and state (Alavi, 1988; Jalal, 1995). This is also in line with institutional theory that

organizations in order to become legitimate and isomorphic incorporate social and cultural values (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). There are three forces mimetic, coercive and normative forces in the environment that affect the activities of organizations and force them to adopt social and cultural values (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Perrow, 1986; Scott, 1987; Selznick, 1996). By this organizations become legitimate and look alike.

According to Rousseau (2001) recruitment and selection is the first stage of employee relationship (Rousseau, 2001). It is further supported by learning and development (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009). The third stage in employee relationship is performance management linked with rewards (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009; Rousseau, 2001). As discussed previously in the literature the whole model of employee relationship in DO of Pakistan is affected by non formal and non meritocratic features.

On the basis of above discussion we propose a conceptual model of employee relationship in domestic organizations of Pakistan.

Explanation of Model

The institutional factors that are rooted in society affect the national culture, business environment, industry sector and institutions. These then influence the culture of DO in Pakistan. The employee relationship management in DO is influenced by non meritocratic, referral based, bribes, unemployment, preference to British and American graduate's selection and recruitment. The employee relationship management after this first stage is then effected by non formal training and development. The third stage of performance management is affected by favoritism.

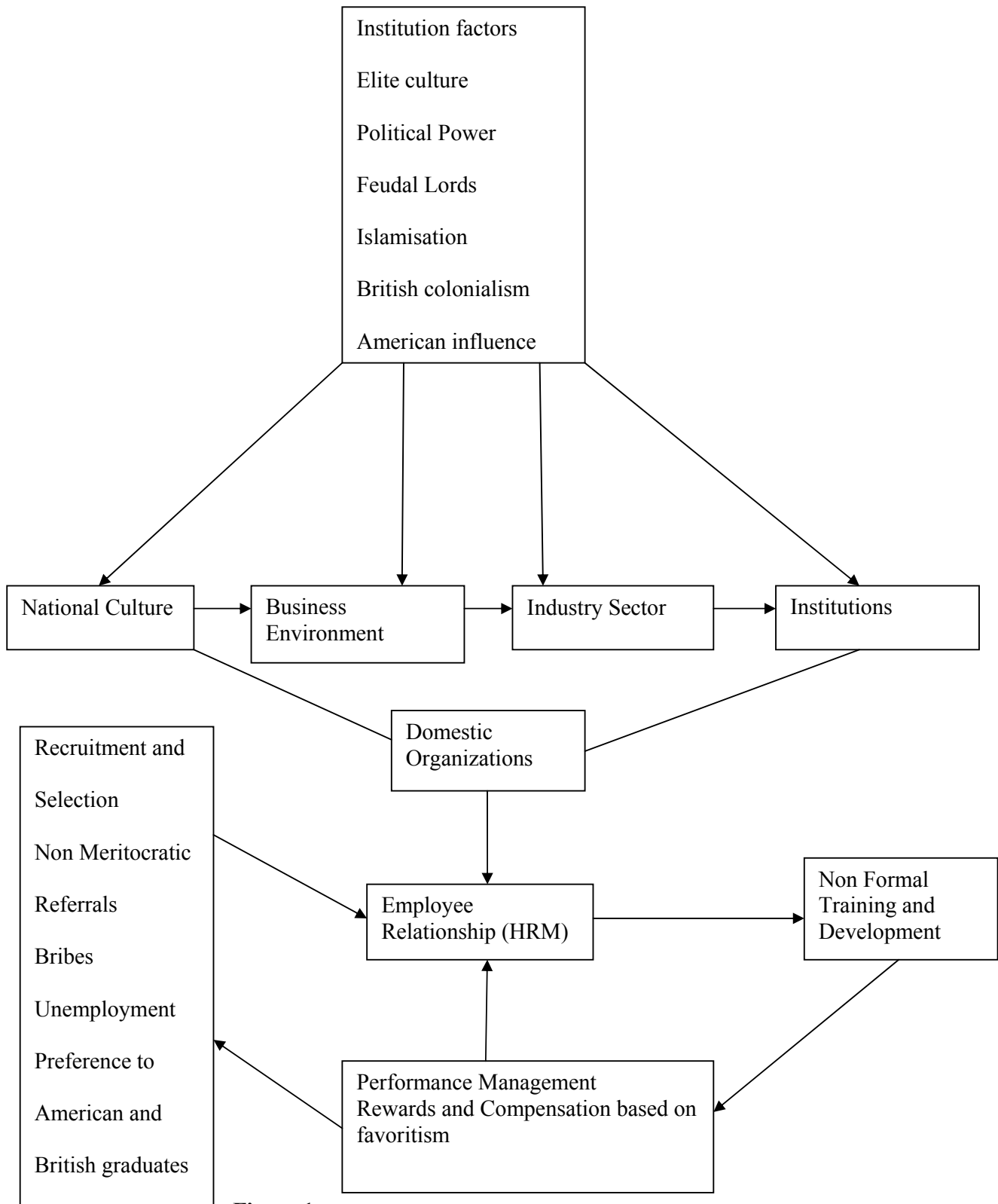


Figure 1

Conclusion:

HRM is a prescription for employee relationship and it ensures the better performance of organization. Since the start of this field it has been popular all around the globe. The management of employee relationship in Pakistan under the domain of HRM is getting lot of attention. But it is still in its early stages and HRM in DO of Pakistan is affected by non formal measures. In order to become a well established tool for employee relationship's management in Pakistan there is a need for eradication of favoritism and non meritocratic culture in the organizations.

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