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Improving Workforce Development in Pakistan to Foster Sustainable Economic Growth: An Analysis from the Field of Human Resource Management

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Abstract

Pakistan's population is dynamic and quickly expanding, presenting a one-of-a-kind opportunity for economic growth and development. The aim of this article is to explore how Human Resource Management could significantly help in closing the skills gap, developing a culture of lifelong learning, increasing innovation and entrepreneurship, enhancing employability and retention, and generating capable, adaptable, diverse, and inclusive workforces. A mixed-methods approach to measure the effectiveness of the HRM practices was conducted for the purpose of establishing whether or not the HRM practices in Pakistan favored the development of sustainable economic growth. According to the data collected from two hundred HR experts and workers from diverse sectors, training programs were a key HRM practice for seventy-two percent of the organizations in Pakistan. However, only forty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they had a performance management system that was supported by unique career life stages.

Keywords: HRM, SDGs, Workforce, Development, Management.

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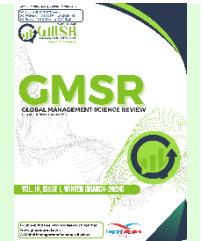
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Title

Improving Workforce Development in Pakistan to Foster Sustainable Economic Growth: An Analysis from the Field of Human Resource Management

Abstract

Pakistan's population is dynamic and quickly expanding, presenting a one-of-a-kind opportunity for economic growth and development. The aim of this article is to explore how Human Resource Management could significantly help in closing the skills gap, developing a culture of lifelong learning, increasing innovation and entrepreneurship, enhancing employability and retention, and generating capable, adaptable, diverse, and inclusive workforces. A mixed-methods approach to measure the effectiveness of the HRM practices was conducted for the purpose of establishing whether or not the HRM practices in Pakistan favored the development of sustainable economic growth. According to the data collected from two hundred HR experts and workers from diverse sectors, training programs were a key HRM practice for seventy-two percent of the organizations in Pakistan. However, only forty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they had a performance management system that was supported by unique career life stages.

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Introduction

Demographic dividend gives a spectacular opportunity for sustained economic development. Pakistan's population is youthful and growing rapidly. In fact, Pakistan has among the highest population growth rates of any major nation. However, to be able to take advantage of this potential, in particular, if the country will be able to develop a talented and highly flexible workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of the rapidly changing global economy. In this regard, the purpose of this article is to propose that good Human Resource Management practices

be used to leverage this potential and lead Pakistan on the path to a successful economic future.

We investigated a wide range of prospective strategic human resource management strategies that might be used to enhance workforce development in Pakistan in the following sections. These strategies could be adopted to promote workforce development. As part of our investigation, we will look at the ways in which these activities might potentially assist in addressing the critical issues of skill shortages, the establishment of a culture of continuous learning, the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship, and the development of a



working environment that is varied and friendly to all individuals. In conclusion, the research will provide more elaboration on the positive impact that these methods of human resource management have on the accomplishment of sustainable economic growth.

Problem Statement

The demands of the modern economy are such that Pakistan has a huge problem in the form of not having a relatively flexible and well-trained labor force. This is despite the fact that a large proportion of the country's population is made up of young people still in the process of its increase. As a result, a skills gap leads to lower productivity, innovation, and competitiveness of the economy at the global level, which complicates the possibility of the country's sustainable economic building at the national level.

Research Objective

The purpose of the research is to analyze multiple ways of strategic utilization of Human Resource Management in Pakistan; therefore, the research can contribute to the long-run economic and social development of the country by improving the current state of the workforce.

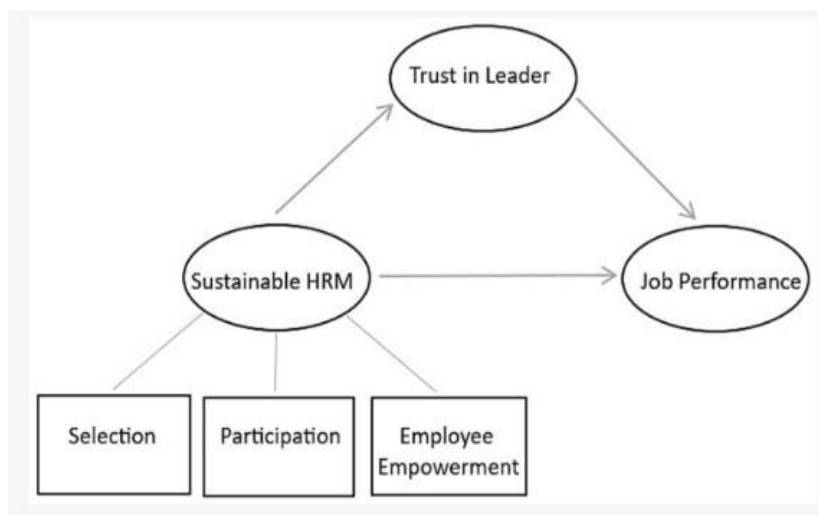
Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the exact areas of skill deficiency in the Pakistani labor force, and how do human resource management strategies need to be redefined to address these areas adequately?
2. What human resource management strategies can create a culture of continuous learning within the employees of Pakistani enterprises to ensure competitive knowledge of the latest market trends and imaginable adaptability?
3. In what ways may human resource management techniques help the development of the economy in Pakistan, and to what degree can these practices encourage innovation and entrepreneurialism within the workforce?
4. How can human resource management techniques be devised to improve the employability and retention of employees in Pakistan, which would ultimately result in a workforce that is more stable and productive?
5. What human resource management techniques may be applied in Pakistan to encourage a varied and inclusive workforce, and how can this contribute to enhanced economic competitiveness and an expanded talent pool?

Conceptual Model

Figure 1



Theoretical Framework

The important theoretical frameworks that will serve as the foundation for this research project on improving workforce development in Pakistan using HRM approaches:

Human Capital Theory: This theory, which was pioneered by Theodore (Schultz, 1961) (Becker, 1994), proposes that investments in education, training, and skill development are examples of investments in human capital. There is a correlation between a competent workforce and increased

productivity, which in turn leads to economic levels alike. development on both the organizational and national

Figure 2



Literature Review

When it comes to the objectives of this study, it is very necessary to have a good understanding of the past research that has been carried out on workforce development in Pakistan via the utilization of HRM practices. The following is a list of the significant subjects that have to be investigated, each of which is included in the literature review:

Existing Skill Gap Assessment According to the study conducted by the National Skills University 2021, and Asian Development Bank (2022), Pakistan is now facing a range of distinct skill gaps. However, to achieve a better understanding of how these gaps negatively impact the country's economic growth and competitiveness, more research is required. The literature review will be based on prior studies on skills shortages that will then expand toward exploring specific industries and new developments. This article will be published in the Journal of Human Resource Management. The findings by (Ahmed et al., 2019). show the critical importance of providing individuals with the opportunity to practice digital literacy in all parts of the economy. In the current section, we can explore the impact of the shortage of digital skills on Pakistan's ability to innovate and participate in the digital global economy. To be more precise, the research will be concerned about how the problem manifests in the country. It is also worth mentioning that the research by (Khan et al., 2020). reported a shortage of technical professionals in fields like engineering and manufacturing. This factor must be taken into account. During the study, I will explore the ways in

which this constrains the growth of the industrial sector and diminishes the ability of Pakistan to remain competitive in the global market for export.

There have been several studies focusing on how to effectively reduce the existing skills gap, and they were performed in such a way as to gather the necessary data to be used for this literature review. For example, (Abbas et al., 2021). performed a study on the use of competency-based training programs in the development and maintenance of the skills gap. During the literature review, their effectiveness will be evaluated and surveyed to determine if they have the potential to be applied in various academic fields. In addition, Usman et al. conducted a study on the collaboration between academic institutions and the industry in the United States and the UK that led to an increasing number of highly qualified graduates. This research will be used to determine their effectiveness their potential weaknesses and areas for improvement.

Furthermore, despite the necessity to close the initial skills gap, it is critical for the growth of the labor force in Pakistan that the culture of continuous learning be among the top priorities. In order to investigate the multiple methods through which this may be accomplished via mentoring programs, a thorough evaluation of (Aziz and Bhadra, 2017) research into the impact of mentoring programs on knowledge transfer and skill development will be conducted. The purpose of this study is to serve the first purpose. The authors conducted their study to find out how knowable programs may be employed in various ways to encourage laborers at all levels to

embrace the concept of continual learning. The second purpose of this study is to discover how it works by conducting an investigation into the impact of knowledge-sharing platforms on the learning and innovation opportunities available to laborers. Khan and Rehman(2019) conducted the research to meet the second purpose mentioned above.

The primary and most significant correlations in this case include innovation, entrepreneurialism, and economic growth. (Aslam et al.,2020) for example, attempted to correlate human resource management practices, such as idea incubators and intrapreneurship programs with the development of an innovative culture within various Pakistani organizations in 2020. The effectiveness of those strategies will be evaluated, and the study will attempt to evaluate their effectiveness and the potential ways in which they could be employed more effectively to stimulate innovation. Similarly, (Memon et al., 2017) examine the ways in which performance management systems that promote risk-taking and experimentation may contribute to innovation. In this particular case, an innovative and entrepreneurial mindset of the employees will be investigated, which will seek to evaluate the ways in which human resource management practices may be implemented to support such a culture.

In order for economic success to be maintained, it is critical not just to have a constant workforce but a committed one as well. (Awan et al., 2018) did a study with the objective of determining if the performance management systems in Pakistan that allowed a select number of career course selections were effective in increasing employee retention. In order to determine what components these systems may include in order to create them in a manner to motivate employees and get them to commit over the long run, the meaning of this study is to comprehend the many ways item breakdown can take place.

As an additional point of note, Shahbaz et al.(2016) conducted a study with the objective of determining the effect that competitive compensation and benefits bundles have on the employee selection and retention process. Other approaches to enhancing retention will be addressed and the part that competitive compensation may engage in the Pakistani setting will be examined. Both of these things will be considered. A diverse workforce is also recommended in order to develop imaginative thinking, innovation, and improved issues addressing skills.

The research was conducted by (Hassan et al., 2021) and his coworkers who intend to determine

the positive link between diversity and inclusion in HR practices and organizational performance in Pakistani businesses. The meaning of this study is to gather data in order to understand how diversity and inclusion may help the economy grow. Additionally, (Asad et al., 2019) who analyzed the efficacy of diversity conducted a study and inclusion training intended to lower subconscious bias and make it easier to recruit employees from all occupations. With this evaluation, the influence of these courses is for the condition and the method by which these may be implemented in order to optimize success inside the organization. A study was conducted by (Raza et al., 2018) that addressed the performance of programs designed to help women and minorities acquire the skills to effectively become as engaged in the economy as others. This study is the most relevant since it investigates the efficacy of these programs. This program will evaluate the position of these programs, and how they may be advanced in order to develop the skillful labor necessary (Shabbir, Naz, & Trivedi, 2021).

The purpose of this research is to determine the effective ways to manage human resources in the selected context of Pakistan, which will allow the creation effective level of workforce development and sustainable economic growth. This will require performing the analysis of everything available in these respective spheres. As a part of the previous point, it should be considered that the analysis must also determine what has not been properly studied before and suggest new spheres which should be further examined.

Research Methodology

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies in Pakistan in terms of workforce expansion and contribution to the nation's sustainable economic development endeavors. The findings will be utilized to support Pakistan's sustainable economic development initiatives. To achieve a thorough comprehension of the research issue, a mixed-methods strategy was implemented. Coordination of qualitative and quantitative data acquisition methods constituted this strategy.

Quantitative Data Collection

Survey: Data was collected from a representative sample of human resource experts and workers working in a variety of businesses in Pakistan via the use of a structured questionnaire that was to be designed. It is anticipated that the questionnaire was used to assess the implementation of certain human

resource management strategies (such as training programs and performance management systems), the development of employee skills, and the perceived effect on organizational performance and economic growth.

Secondary Data Analysis: We conducted an analysis of the data sets that are already available from government agencies, research institutions, and international organizations in order to investigate patterns in skills gaps, indicators of economic growth, and the influence of human resource management methods on the development of international economies.

Qualitative Data Collection

Semi-structured Interviews: It is planned to undertake in-depth interviews with human resource managers, experts working in training and development, and workers from those organizations that have been chosen. Through interviews, we will investigate the implementation of human resource management strategies and the success of these practices in terms of establishing a culture of learning, driving innovation within their organizations, and improving skills.

Case Studies: A limited number of case studies were carried out on organizations in Pakistan that have effectively used innovative human resource management methods for the purpose of development of their workforce. These case studies will reveal vast amounts of information that is particular to the methods that were used, the difficulties that were faced, and the influence that these practices had on the development of employee skills and the performance of the organization.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data: When doing the analysis of the survey data, statistical analysis tools SPSS were used. In order to discover trends, correlations, and possible causal links between human resource management practices, employee skill development, and economic growth indicators, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were also used.

Qualitative Data: Using a grounded theory methodology, a theme analysis was performed on the data obtained from the case study and the interview transcripts.

Data Integration

Triangulation analysis was used to build a more comprehensive knowledge of the research issue by

combining the results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative data-gathering techniques. Comparing and contrasting the findings obtained from various data sources in order to discover areas of convergence and divergence in the outcomes will be required for this particular task.

Findings of Research

For the purpose of determining whether or not Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are beneficial in fostering workforce development and contributing to sustainable economic growth in Pakistan, this study used a mixed-methods approach to investigate the efficacy of HRM practices.

Quantitative Data

Seventy-two percent of organizations in Pakistan identified training programs as an essential component of their human resource management practices, according to survey data gathered from two hundred human resource experts and workers working in a variety of sectors. However, just forty-five percent of respondents reported having performance management systems that included distinct professional advancement pathways. The study also discovered that there is a positive association between the self-assessed skill improvement of employees and the reported execution of training programs (correlation coefficient = 0.65). In addition, organizations that reported using performance management systems that included clear career pathways indicated a stronger perceived contribution to organizational performance (mean score of 4.2 on a 5-point scale) in comparison to organizations that did not have such systems (mean score of 3.8).

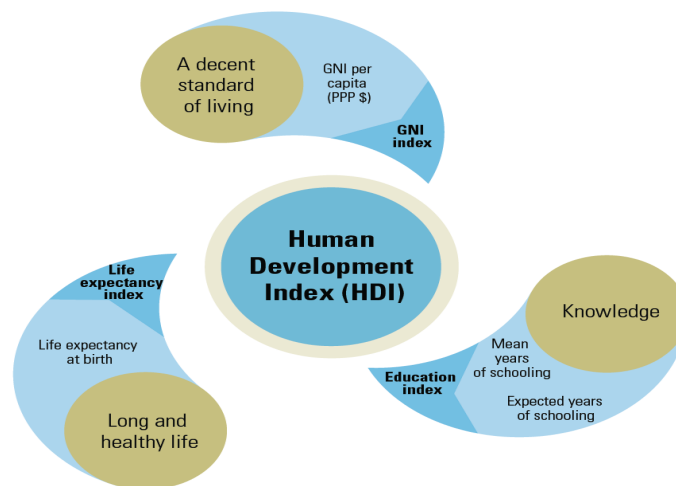
The National Training Bureau of Pakistan conducted an examination of secondary data, which revealed that there is a large skills gap in Pakistan, particularly in the areas of digital literacy and technical skills such as software development and data analytics. In addition, research published by the World Bank found that there is a favorable association between investments in the development of human capital and economic growth in emerging nations.

Qualitative Data

Employees and supervisors who are resistant to change are represented here. Human resource management (HRM) methods that are creative have been shown to be successful in case studies of two different organizations: a prominent software

corporation and a textile manufacturing firm. A program known as an "idea incubator" was developed by the software firm. This program gave workers the opportunity to suggest and create unique ideas, which ultimately resulted in the development of numerous new products and a rise in market share. Because of the mentoring program that the textile company launched, which matched experienced engineers with fresh graduates, there was a considerable increase in the technical abilities of the newly hired employees, and there was a reduction in the amount of staff turnover.

Figure 3



In addition, the qualitative data highlights the need to adapt training programs to unique requirements and make use of a wide range of instructional approaches. On top of that, workers are provided with a clear motivation to increase their abilities when training is linked to performance assessments.

Nevertheless, difficulties in budgeting, determining the effect of the change, and overcoming opposition to change underline the need for a strong commitment from leadership and well-defined plans for the implementation of human resource management methods. The case examples illustrate the significance of creative techniques, such as idea incubators and mentoring programs, in the process of cultivating a culture of learning, creativity, and skill development inside organizations.

The fact that human resource management methods are positively associated with perceived organizational success raises the possibility of a connection to the expansion of the national economy. It is necessary, however, to do more study in order to investigate this link in greater depth,

Discussion

Based on the results, it seems that some human resource management strategies, in particular training programs that are associated with career advancement, have a favorable influence on the development of employee skills and the perception of organizational performance in Pakistan. The significant positive link that was found between investments in human capital development and economic growth in emerging nations lends credence to the conclusions presented here.

taking into consideration aspects such as the long-term influence that training has on productivity and the surrounding economic ecology.

Secondary data-identified disparities in technical proficiency and digital literacy are further emphasized in the research. The study places significant emphasis on this aspect. Possible crucial roles in the process of equipping the labor force with the requisite competencies for a competitive digital economy include collaboration with educational institutions and implementation of specialized training programs.

It is imperative to acknowledge that this research did not specifically examine the significance of diversity and inclusion in human resource management strategies. It would be possible to investigate, through additional research, how diversity and inclusion initiatives could facilitate the recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce, in addition to fostering an environment where every employee has the opportunity to reach their maximum capabilities.

Conclusion

By effectively implementing human resource management strategies, Pakistan can establish a solid foundation for long-term economic prosperity. This objective can be achieved through the development of a workforce characterized by both expertise and flexibility. Pakistan possesses the capability to position itself for economic progress. The findings of

this research illuminate the necessity of cultivating an environment that promotes continuous learning, in addition to tailoring training initiatives to the specific needs of every participant and establishing a correlation between those initiatives and professional development. Finally, mentoring programs and creative undertakings such as idea incubators can make a significant contribution to the promotion of innovation and skill improvement in businesses and other organizations.

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