

The Mediating Effect of Career Success on HRM Practices and University Performance: A Study from Public Sector Universities of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The main aspiration of the current study is to explore the determinants of university performance. The study also explored the mediating effect of career success between human resource management practices and university performance. Data were collected from 265 faculty members working in public sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan; by online survey, using Google docs through random sampling. The results demonstrate the partial mediation of career success between human resource management practices and university performance. Structural equation modelling - Partial least square (SEM-PLS) technique has been applied to acquire the results. The results will be helpful for policy makers in devising policies for universities and monitor the university performance. The results will also be helpful for faculty members working in public sector universities of Pakistan to know about their career success. Perceived university performance and human resource management practices have been found associated positively with university performance and individuals' career success. In the study both motivation and skill enhancing practices are included to acquire accurate results.

KEYWORDS: Career Success, Human Resource Management Practices, University Performance, Public Sector Universities.

1 INTRODUCTION

The performance of university has always remained important for students, researchers, faculty members and administration [1]. As students assess the general reputation and ranking of the university prior to acquire admission in their desired universities. Whilst, it is deemed necessary in getting jobs and placement after graduating from their universities [2]–[4]. Although, the performance of the university is also necessary to be assessed for administration to implement the policies and monitor the results of educational strategies. However, the faculty members are concerned with university performance, as it increases the chances of their growth and professional satisfaction. However, in recent studies career success can easily be seen getting attraction of the academic researchers and professionals [5]. The current study intends to contribute in the field of career success; through its mediating effect between human resource management (HRM) practices and university performance. In Pakistan there are currently 173 universities; from which 100 are under public sector (HEC, 2015). In Pakistan the performance of the public sector institutions is frail and the output from the institutions under governmental control cannot be claimed as significant and potential for the society [6], [7].

In a recently published international universities ranking, only one university (Quaid Azam University, Islamabad) of Pakistan remained successful to make place in top 500 best universities of the world [8]. There were five Indian universities and many universities from Iran and China made the place in top five hundred best universities of the world [9]. In this recent current ranking, main focus was the research productivity and overall performance of the universities towards delivering potential graduates in the society and international collaborations [10].

In Pakistan, universities are deemed as degree mills because the employability of the fresh graduates is trifling and miserable [11]–[13]. A lot of measures are being taken by the Government of Pakistan to improve the performance of the higher educational institutions but the significant results has not been seen [14], [15]. There can be a lot of reasons i.e. lack of training, overloading of work, less teaching exposure, strict evaluation, lack of communication, class room discipline, problems in assessing students' work, miss behaviour, students counselling problems, deficiency of materials and supplies that are supportive in teaching and least expectations of career in teaching are being deemed the deterrents in the way of higher performance of public sector universities of Pakistan [16].

Table: 1.1 Universities under public and private sector of Pakistan.

Punjab		Sindh		Khyber PK		Balouchistan		Kashmir & GB		Federal	
Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.	Public	Pvt.
26	24	19	29	19	10	07	01	05	02	24	07

Source: Higher Education of Pakistan (2015).

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There are five provinces in Pakistan along with one federal territory, in accordance to the provincial autonomy the chartered are granted to the universities in public and private sector. There are 50 universities chartered by the Government of Punjab, 48 chartered by Government of Sindh, 29 chartered by Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 17 chartered by the Government of Balouchistan, 7 chartered by the Government of Azad & Jamu Kashmir and Gilgit Baldistan, While, 31 are chartered by the Federal Government of Pakistan. Nevertheless, having 173 universities in Pakistan while the performance is not satisfactory and up to the international standards. Universities are the main sources for trembling down the unemployment in the society by enhancing employability skills in their graduates [17]–[19]. However, in accordance to [20], there were 397 million people living extremely below poverty line and 472 million people can hardly able to afford the basic necessities of life. However, globally there is 6% unemployment rate, while in Pakistan the trend is slightly lower, it is 5% but higher than neighbouring countries like China and India 4.6 and 3.6 percent respectively. It has been observed that there are 139 million people are unemployed, from which the young people are 73.8% in the overall unemployment around the sphere. They had not been betrayed in any sort of education, training and employment internationally. It can be inferred that the universities might have to improve their productivity to generate the employability in the professional studies, degree itself is nothing until and unless have the ability to provide proper employment for the graduates [21].

According to [11], public sector universities of Pakistan are not performing well as compared to the international standards, because the faculty members working in such institutions are not performing well or efficiently. There might be a lot of reasons behind this such as weaker performance and lower contribution from faculty members towards the overall university performance. The service structure is hardly visible for the faculty members working in public sector universities of Pakistan [16], [22], [23]. Upon analysing the trends of faculty members' education and research publications that are shown in table: 1.2 below. It can be easily seen from the available data that there are currently 9253 faculty members having PhD degrees and 25191 faculty members have not doctoral degree in the year 2013; and could hardly published only 6507 research articles.

Table: 1.2 Facts and Figures about Faculty Members in Universities of Pakistan.

Description	2010	2011	2012	2013
Higher Educational Institutions	132	138	146	153
Research Output (Journal Articles)	4963	6200	6400	6507
Faculty (PhD Qualified)	6315	6529	7625	9253
Faculty (Without PhD Qualification)	No Record	23141	24715	25191

Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, (2015).

According to the above mentioned table only 27% faculty members have PhD degrees to teach. While, 73% faculty members require to improve their qualification. So, in nutshell there are 25191 faculty members who are required to improve their qualification for their own growth and survival in the same field [14], [24]–[26]. As in the contemporary situations in Pakistan survival in the profession is not easy, it has now become highly competitive, complicated and complex.

2 Review of Literature and development of Hypothesis

University performance has been seen the most neglected area in the literature, especially in the context of Pakistan [1], [27], [28]. There is a strong dearth of assessing the potential predictor of university performance in Pakistan. As the societies cannot grow and progress without focusing on the educational system, research and innovation [29], [30]. Previous studies have found the significant effect of HRM practices and job satisfaction on university performance [1], [2], [31]–[33]. According to [34], [35] the organizations internal human resource management practices are being affected from the national culture. As Pakistan is a developing country and the HRM practices are different from the western countries [33], [36]. In Asian context, the Western concept of HR management practices are being criticized because of difference among the cultures of the nation's [36]. However, HR management practices can be vary ominously from nation to nation because of cultural differences meanwhile the set of specific practices might be beneficial for a nation and similar practices might be ineffective for the nations of another cultures [37].

The enforcement and impact of HRM practices upon the individuals to exert higher performance at work and organizational performance is vital while, the importance has been recognised in previous studies (Amin, Ismail, Rasid, & Selemani, 2014; Raihan, 2012; Tan, 2010). The positive perceptions of HRM practices, enables and enforces the employees to realise the relationship of social exchange among the individuals and organizations (Watty-Benjamin & Udechukwu, 2014). The negligible attention was given to the area of psychological processes. Whereas, HRM practices have the potential to determine the attitude and behaviour of the employees' working in the organization [36], [40]. Globally the organizations have been found in the strict competitive environment. The opportunities for the work or employment are scarce as well, but for high performing worker the opportunities are abundant and countless to mention [8]. HRM practices in organizations are the most important competitive weapon or tool for progress of the organizations. Nevertheless, the HRM practices must be in order to accommodate and facilitate the employees at work as well as for driving motivation to work and satisfaction from

work; to facilitate and boost organizational functioning in the dynamically competitive and complex environment (Iqbal et al., 2011). According to Meyer and Smith, (2000), HRM practices are getting increased influence in the academia, due to the ability of managing the employees' attitude at work or behaviour at work. Existing literature provided the guidance about the perceptions of HRM practices which are considered more important in enhancing organizational performance and retain the quality work force to produce better productivity (Arif & Ameer, 2013; Rhee, Zhao, & Kim, 2014).

How these HRM practices can impact positively towards the individual's perspectives and how they respond to these practice (Tessema & Soeters, 2006; Xing, Liu, Tarba, & Cooper). According to Tan (2010), some HRM practices in the context of individuals' particularly training and development is highly significant with the organizational context as individuals' career success contributes better and enhances organizational performance [46]. Therefore, it is necessarily required to evaluate the areas of human aspects, that are helpful in enhancing performance at work, that enable the individuals to work for their own success, which ultimately contribute towards the organizational performance (Stumpf, 2014). According to Delery and Doty (1996), Huselid (1995), and Allen et al. (2003) HRM practices have been divided into two groups mainly. First group consists of such activities that enhance the motivation of the individuals at work, for instance job security, fairness in rewards, job autonomy and compensation. Whilst, the second group consists on skill-enhancing practices such as training and development, performance appraisal, supervisory support and promotion opportunities). However, the strong relationship has been observed between organizational performance and HRM practices, the higher degree of involvement towards human resources management or Personnel management in designing the set of HRM practices, proper implementation leads towards the higher performance (Huselid, 1995; Batt, 2002). Whilst, it might be deduced from the above discussion that personnel management might be effective if designed properly in accordance with the organizational vision [48], [49].

In the literature the negligible focus have been found regarding the nature of the HRM practices in the developing countries such as Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Malaysia [22], [50]. However, it is not easy to generalize HRM practices in the context of western countries in Asian context due to cultural differences and working environment. Although the universities under public sector are different from the corporate sector. The HRM practices in universities can be different from other organizations; as the motive of the public sector universities is to serve the society rather than earn profit.

For this study both set of motivation and skill enhancing practice are included to examine the impact HRM practices on university performance. These following hypothesis are being tested in the study.

- H1: HRM practices have positive association with career success**
- H2: Career success has positive significant association with university performance**
- H3: HRM practices have positive relationship with university performance**
- H4: Career success mediates between HRM practices and university performance**

3 Methodology and Measurement

The nature of HRM practices that are being applied in the public sector universities of Pakistan are quite different from the other industrial sectors including banking, marketing, manufacturing, health, and insurance etc. The study evaluates seven HRM practices that are commonly practiced in Pakistan's public sector universities; such as (i) job security, (ii) job autonomy, (iii) working conditions, (iv) promotion opportunities, (v) compensation, (vi) training & development and (vii) performance appraisal. After reviewing previous studies, it has been observed that there are some suitable instruments that can be utilized directly to measure the perceptions of the faculty members working in public sector universities of Pakistan. HRM practices including job autonomy, job security, compensation, work conditions, promotion opportunities, training & development and performance appraisal. Thus, questions that intend to measure the dimensions as mentioned above are being adapted from [36]. The measurements used in this study comprised of 28 items that constitutes seven dimensions of HRM practices. These 28 items are assumed to determine the respondents' perceptions about the HRM practices that are being practiced in public sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan. Punjab is highly populated and the people from all other provinces can be found here. The other reason of focusing the Punjab is the constitution that is being practiced in all 100 universities of public sector is the same. All the public sector universities are governed by higher education commission (HEC) of Pakistan. Hence, the rules, regulations and all legislation in all public sector universities are same. However, the results can be generalized. The questions are intended to be measured from a range of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not agree nor disagree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The operational definitions are confirmed here as below:

HR Practices:	The set of activities carried out by Government Universities to facilitate and manage faculty members' progress and potential contribution in the universities' progress (Schuler & Jackson, 1987).
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Career success as intervening variable, is still in infancy stage very limited studies related to mediating influence of career success have been seen [51], [52]. Career Success has been evaluated by using the 5-item scale. Career Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Greenhaus *et al.* (1990). All the responses are assumed to be made on a 5-point Likert-scale that ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

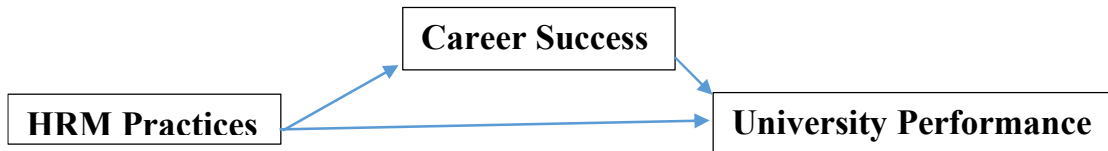
Career Success:	The satisfaction acquired by an individual through accumulating psychologically positive experiences during the life span including pay, advancement, and developmental opportunities (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990).
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Whereas [24], enlightened that the balanced score card (BSC) or KPIs technique has been found being practiced in industries (Khan, 2010). Due to dearth of literature and availability of considerable support of literature about the application of BSC or KPIs in the institutions of higher learning especially public sector universities, as explained by [38], the measurement cannot be potentially utilized successfully in the study. Although the efforts have been made by previous researchers in developing attention to measure and formulate organizational performance. However, there are still some untouched areas that need to be explored, and the most controversial one refers to the measurement instrument. Whilst, this study intends to adopt the same measurement to measure university performance that has been used by [24]. The measurement consisting on 11 items, already has been tested in educational sector of Pakistan by [1], having better reliability in the Pakistan’s context. Cronbach’s alpha has been reported 0.922, which explains the higher acceptability and can be used for the study. This instrument measures the perceptions of the faculty members about the university performance. The perceptions of the faculty members are being ignored by different studies relevant to university performance, mostly the studies measure the university performance through Servqual originally developed by [53], [54] or HEdPERF developed by [55]. In these both scales the perceptions of the faculty members has been found missing, which has been deemed as the potential research gap for this study. The other reason of choosing this particular measurement scale for the current study is the uniqueness and comprehensiveness as compared to other measurements. This measurement has been designed in alliance and accordance with the international university ranking criteria, and as well as the higher education commission of Pakistan’s rating criteria.

University Performance:	Faculty members’ intrinsic perception towards quality teaching, research & publication to build greater image of the university nationally and internationally towards overall university performance through the optimized habituation of available sources.
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The research framework has been presented here below to understand the concept conveniently. HRM practices (Independent Variable), career success (mediating variable) and university performance has been taken as dependent variable for this study.

3.1 Research Framework:



4 Results and Findings:

In this section all the basic and advanced tests has been applied to find the exact results of this study. Table 4.1 examines the reliability and validity of the construct in the particular context of Pakistan. Table 4.2 evaluates the multi-collinearity before the hypothesis testing.

Table: 4.1 Reliability & Validity of the variables

Sr.	Particulars	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	Composite Reliability
1	University Performance	0.929	0.589	0.940
2	Career Success	0.877	0.702	0.911
3	HRM Practices	0.934	0.672	0.942

Source: The Authors

Table: 4.2: Multi-Collinearity

Sr.	Particulars	Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Career Success	0.857	1.167
2	HRM Practices	0.319	3.135

* University Performance used as DV. Threshold value <10, while <03 is ideal.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing:

H1: HRM Practices → Career Success: IV to Mediator (Path “A”)

Career Success	Beta Value	Std. Error	T-Statistics	P-Value
	0.4687	0.722	6.4935	0.0000

Level of significance is *P < 0.10.

H2: Career success → University performance: Direct Effect of Mediator on DV (Path “B”)

Career Success	Beta Value	Std. Error	T-Statistics	P-Value
	0.987	0.0555	1.7796	0.0763

Level of significance is *P < 0.10.

H3: HRM practices → University performance: Total Effect of IV on DV (Path “C”)

HRMP Practices	Beta Value	Std. Error	T-Statistics	P-Value
	0.8461	0.0652	12.9784	0.0000

Level of significance is *P < 0.10.

H4: HRM practices → Career Success → Uni. Perf.: Direct Effect of IV on DV (Path “C-Prime”)

HRM Practices	Beta Value	Std. Error	T-Statistics	P-Value
	0.7998	0.699	11.4365	0.0000

Level of Significance is *p<0.10.

Model Summary for DV Model

R-Sq	Adj. R-Sq	F Change	df1	df2	P-Value
0.3977	0.3931	86.4966	2.0000	262.0000	0.0000

Level of Significance is *p<0.10.

Normal Theory Tests for indirect effects

Indirect effect of IV on DV through proposed mediators (“AB” Path)

	Effect	SE	Z-Statistics	P-Value
TOTAL	0.0463	0.0269	1.7226	0.0850
Career Success	0.0463	0.0269	1.7226	0.0850

Level of Significance is *p<0.10.

5 Discussion:

As suggested by [56], the t-value > 1.645 illustrate that the relationship is significant and the hypothesis can be accepted. The study further used one-tailed test to confirm the earlier stated hypothesis and evaluate relationship among variables using t-value estimation for significant level as suggested by previous literature, where t-value is greater than 1.645 it means the hypothesis might be accepted and hence significant relationship is established. H₁, H₃ and H₄ has been found significant and t-value remained above 1.96, but only for H₂ the t-value has been found 1.7796, still acceptable as suggested. The mediated effect of career success has been found partially between HRM practices and University performance. As the results show the direct relationship (C- path) among HRM practices and university performance is significantly positive, that determines the partial or full mediation. The total effect C-Prime (c') has also remained positively significant. Here all the four hypothesis are accepted. The results are in line with previous relevant studies on HRM practices and organizational performance. The mediating influence of career success is infancy but the results are also in line with the mediating effect of job satisfaction in relevant context of the study such as [57].

6 Conclusion:

The current study full filled all basic assumptions as hypothesised in section 2. All the hypothesis are being accepted on the basis of t-statics and P-Values. The measurement scale confirmed the strong reliability. Hence, the instrument can be further tested in similar studies. Cronbach alpha (α) of university performance remained 0.292, for career success 0.877 and HRM practices 0.934. The results are in line with the previous studies in this context [1], [24]. In the study multi-collinearity has not been found over and above the threshold value. This study is an exploratory study consequently that’s the reason we use p-value <10%. The study has a lot of constraints such as time and scarce financial sources. The current study has also some limitations, such as limited respondents, which are 265, valid for analysis. The sample size for analysis can be in between 30 to 500 to generalize the results [58], [59]. For the motive of generalizing the results respondents might be increased. As the r² for the model remained 0.397, that means there are about 60% other variables that explain university performance. The results are acceptable and can be generalized as all the public sector universities follow the same pattern.

7 Future Recommendations:

There might be a need to include some moderating variable and other predictors to generalize the results in Pakistan’s context; such as organizational justice, environmental turbulence, personality traits and culture etc.

These variables have not been tested in previous studies. The future researchers are advised to explore new variable for enhancing the reliability and generalizability of results. As the r^2 remained 0.3978 and adjusted r^2 has been found 0.39831 still acceptable but shows the weaker relationship. This study focused only the Public sector organization in Punjab. Future researchers may conduct the study in other provinces of Pakistan.

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