

Human Resource Management in Pakistan's Context

Authors: Jibran Bashir and Sara Afzal

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Muhammad Usman Aleem
musmanaleem@live.com

This book published in 2012 bridges the dearth of professional books by Pakistani authors. Jibran Bashir and Sara Afzal have authored a book on human resource management who are both practicing HR professionals in the area of training. This pioneering effort is noteworthy and HR professionals and academicians should examine its value viz a viz books by foreign writers popularly used in training institutions.

The authors have highlighted strategic and functional HRM with a new perspective and critically examined its application in Pakistani firms. They have highlighted the imperatives of integrating operational functions with strategic management, OD concepts, adult learning and emerging concepts of HRM in Pakistan. The writers also gathered some data and provided indigenous examples within the text on HR practices in Pakistani organizations. However, it does not include any cases how theoretical concepts are applied in Pakistani firms. Probably it reflects the existing gap between academicians and practitioners in the country or the resistance on part

of firms to share their internal information with trainers. The reviewer is unable to recommend the utility or value of this book for HR professionals or students and would only go as far as leaving it to readers to decide for themselves.

The traditional HR text is planned into 12 different chapters. All chapters are consistent in format and are in functional sequence of the subject. The first chapter of the Book describes the outline how HRM process was evolved over a period of time and linking it to Pakistani context; where it is still in infancy. The inclusion of structures and tools for selection and career path for HR professionals in Pakistan is a new addition. The next chapter describes the overall HR role as related to different structures to allow the reader to comprehend the tasks of HR personnel. It would have been ideal if the authors had brought out the differences in HR practices due to these structures. Thereafter each function of human resource management is dealt as separate chapter.

The chapter on job analysis deliberates on the

need of analyzing task contents and the prevalent tools for job analysis. Various formats for job descriptions in organizations are also shown as exhibits, are of value to the reader since the books authored by foreign writers mostly show their own formats. HR planning has been addressed next, this chapter though given a cursory treatment, but does suggest a sequential process while explaining this function. A few examples of Pakistani firms have been added to the chapter. The book further tackles the process of hiring. The authors have intelligently added some tips for employers like, "how to create an advertisement for hiring". Other Aspects covered in detail are; how to review applications, characteristics of tests, conducting an interview and criterion for final selection. Samples of different forms have been added, including a format of an appointment letter. This is valuable to employers and entrepreneurs who have scanty knowledge of HR and legal aspects of hiring. Similarly, training & development chapter covers the essentials like methods, process and measuring the training outcomes of employees. While the performance appraisal chapter describes the key concepts, KPIS and various methods but does not delve into details, so important for HR professionals or students. The book further describes the compensation topic but many aspects like methods, equity and factors affecting compensation have not been covered in detail especially overtime formula. Other chapters like employee relationships, HR policies and Employees record keeping have been adequately covered.

For readers who are novices in business, various forms, samples of appointment letter, evaluation forms, ethical guidelines and performance appraisal forms would be useful. However, if the authors had expressed their point of view on variations on different topics of leading HR authors would have added more value to the

book. The authors tries to bridge the gap involving books providing only theoretical aspects and books providing aspects of managerial skills i.e. the prescriptive approach. The authors provided both prescriptive and theoretical approach on each of the functions of human resource management.

The Pakistani context is not in much detail, which was expected by the reader, to learn how a particular function is being addressed in Pakistan. However, an array of forms in each chapter does suggest a structural approach to HRM rather than based on whims and ad hoc basis. Since most concepts on HRM have emerged from the developed countries and well documented in their textbooks, it should have been so cited instead of a generalized "end notes" at the conclusion of each chapter. The authors have well documented each of the function especially the sequence of activities to help readers follow a rational approach to a function rather than go by trial and error.

An inclusion of glossary, key terms and review questions could have transformed the text into a useful textbook for HRM subject for business schools. While a standardized index and content page could have aided the readers to search for related and appropriate information. I am confident that the amalgamation of new material and academic features will help in contributing to the field of HRM in Pakistan context.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, professional book writing is marred by lack of assistance from organizations who do not divulge indigenous practices for one reason or the other to academicians who may have the ability to contribute towards knowledge. This is a major de-motivation to undertake book writing in professional areas.

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College of Management Sciences
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