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Research paper

Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on Human Resources Management Practices and School Teachers' Operational Performance

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Abstract

The objectives of this paper are to predict the operational performance of secondary school teachers' based on Human Resources Management (HRM) practices and to find out the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between HRM practices and operational performance effort. Cross-sectional survey research design has been used and a structured self-administered survey questionnaire used to collect from 140 teachers at 14 high schools located in Bangladesh. Different statistical measures such as descriptive statistics, Karl Pearson's correlation, Ordinary Least Square (OLS) multiple regression analysis were used to explore research observations and statistical verification of findings. Apart from these statistical measures, a single mediation model has been tested to know the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between HRM practices and operational performance effort. Consistent with hypotheses, empirical findings revealed that HRM practices significantly predicted high school teachers' performance effort. Training & development, discipline and compensation are significantly related to operational performance and they have both direct and indirect effects (through the mediator) on operational performance effort. Implications for institutions and practitioners practicing HRM policies and future research have also discussed.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management Practices (HRM), Operational Performance, Job Satisfaction, Training & Development, Discipline and Compensation.*

1. Introduction

Teaching is one of the most prestigious and well-respected professions in the entire world. Teachers are the thinkers and developers of a nation (Rahman & Chowdhury, 2012). Availability of professional teachers and their devotion are essential in building a strong educational base among students who in turn will contribute to the nation in many ways. Teaching is a devoted profession encompasses many duties within the classroom teaching and the larger school community. Therefore, teaching as a profession that does not automatically make a teacher professional, rather it requires continuous counseling, training, learning, motivation and many others. In Bangladesh, as a third world country, secondary school teachers are performing their teachings with many limitations and the professionalism in teaching yet not get the desired environment to flourish in its own rhythm. Unfortunately, there are some factors relating to HRM such as lack of professional development and career development opportunity, inadequate salary &benefits, bureaucracy in administrative department and so on, causing dissatisfaction and turnover among teachers (Zakir et al., 2010). Timely HRM policies and practices can be helpful in bringing job satisfaction and boosting operational performance among secondary school teachers. HRM as a philosophy is very recent development has begun science 1980s (Dessler, G. 2014). Teaching is that profession where the entire performance depends on satisfaction derived from the job, job facets and internal work environment (Newstrom & Davis, 2012). Employees' operational/academic performance, on the other hand, has no universal definition (Andersen, 2010). Employees' performance can be defined as the accomplishment of an employee's assigned duties and the outcomes generated by a specified job function or activity within a specified time period (Nadarajah, et al., 2012). Several research in the HRM literature has investigated the impact of HRM practices on employees' performance and job satisfaction (Khera, 2010, Choi, & Lee, 2013). But all those research studies were done either HRM practices and job satisfaction or HRM practices and employee performance. In this study, the researchers tried to integrate both the topics in a single edge. The further initiative has taken to explore any mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between HRM practices and perceived operational performance. However, the researchers finally considered the following specific objectives.

1. To find out the best HRM practices that have a significant impact on secondary school teachers' operational performance effort.
2. To identify the mediating effects of job satisfaction on the relationship between best HRM practices and secondary school teachers' operational performance effort.

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2. Literature Review

Human Resources Management (HRM) practices can be defined from numerous perspectives. Nadarajah, et al. (2012) defined HRM practices as organizational activities that are coordinated at dealing with the pool of human resources and ensuring that resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals. Dittmer (2002) cited in Nadarajah et al. (2012) viewed HRM practices as strategies, plans and programs used to attract, motivate, develop, reward and retain the best people to meet organizational goals (Al-Shuaib, Subramaniam & Shamsudin, 2014). Wright and Kehoe (2008) identified three purposes of HRM practices: (1) to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees (2) to provide opportunities to participate in substantive decision-making regarding work and organizational outcomes (3) to motivate an employee for getting the worthy behavior. On the other hand, employees' performance is one of the most important work outcomes and extremely an imperative criterion that determines organization's destination (Ojokuku, 2013). Campbell (1990) cited by Ojokuku (2013) defined performance as a behavior which consists of directly observable actions of a worker, and also mental involvement such as answers or decisions, which result in organizational outcomes in the form of attainment of set goals. Sturo (2007) described performance effort as the extent of completion of the assign tasks that make up an individual's job. The relationship between HRM practices and operational performance can be explained from three basic underlying perspectives: (a) configurationally perspective, (b) contingent perspective and (c) universalistic perspective. This study has focused on the underlying assumptions of universalistic approach (Choi & Lee, 2013) to find out the best practices that significantly predict secondary school teachers' operational performance effort. However, most of the past research focused on general employee' relating to companies, organizations, financial sectors. Few studies have been conducted relating to HRM practices and teachers' performance in Pakistan Shadzad et al. (2008) and Bangladesh (Rahman & Chowdhury, 2012). But, most of their researches were based on University teachers' perspective focusing on either HRM practices and job satisfaction or HRM practices and employees' operational performance. Here, the researchers have identified a research gap. In this study, the researchers try to integrate both the topics in a single edge and focus on secondary school teachers' operational performance. The additional initiative has taken to explore any mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between HRM practices and perceived the operational performance of secondary school teachers'.

3. Research Hypothesis

3.1. HRM practices and operational performance

HRM practices have increasingly been studied in connection with different organizational outcomes like employee job satisfaction, organizational performance, employee performance and employee commitment (Teseema & Soeters, 2006; Rahman, Uddin & Miah, 2013; Nadarajah et al., 2012). Shadzad et al. (2008) have also found a positive relationship between HRM practices and perceived employee performance while performance evaluation was not positively correlated with perceived employees' performance. Batt (2002) posited that employee behavior in the workplace has important implications for performance effort and existing HRM practices influence individual employee behaviors. So, based on aforementioned discussion, the following hypothesis is predicted

Hypothesis 1Ha = Institutional HRM practices (six practices) have a significant impact on secondary school teachers' perceived operational performance effort.

3.2. Job satisfaction and operational performance

Past research established the fact that job satisfaction generates better operational performance (Batt, 2002; Newstrom & Davis, 2012). Judge & Bono (2001) in their meta-analysis of job satisfaction and job performance, got a moderate degree of positive correlation (30%) between job satisfaction and job performance. This relationship was much stronger than the previous meta-analysis (17%) by Iaffaldano and Muchinsky (1985). Robbins et al. (2014) have found a moderate to strong positive correlation between operational performance and job satisfaction. These points of view support the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2Ha =Increased job satisfaction is related to the greater level of secondary school teachers' operational performance effort.

3.3. Mediating effect of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction as a generative mechanism because research have shown that HRM practices are associated with job satisfaction (e.g., Absar et al., 2010; Goyal & Shrivastava, 2012; Hunjra, et al., 2010; Javed, Rafiq, Ahmed & Khan, 2012; Petrescu & Simmons, 2008) and subsequently job satisfaction has been shown to be related to increased employee productivity and performance (e.g., Judge & Bono, 2001; Nadarajah et al., 2012). By incorporating these two streams of research in a single study, it is possible to postulate the mediating link of job satisfaction on the relationship between HRM practices and performance effort. Past research has shown that job satisfaction act as a mediating variable on the relationship between HRM practices and performance (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). So, the researchers develop a hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3Ha = Job satisfaction mediates (partial or full mediation) the relationship between HRM practices and secondary school teachers' operational performance effort.

4. Methods

4.1. Procedure

Initially, researchers met with the headmaster of concerned institutions and explained the purpose and the requirements of the study, then requested to allow the faculty members for participation in the study. The survey was carried in 14 secondary schools including four government and ten private schools located in Sylhet city, Bangladesh during the month of September-October, 2015. In this research,

Government and private secondary schools were relevant because internal climate and practices are almost similar in those institutions. A structured questionnaire was developed with questions based on teachers' perceived perception towards institutional existing HRM practices in relation with performance effort, job satisfaction, quality of work life satisfaction and overall satisfaction of internal prevailing HRM system.

4.2. Participants

The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 168 respondents of 14 schools and 140 completed questionnaires were received. 110 questionnaires were personally administered and received; the remaining ones were collected in scheduled time later. A convenient sampling technique was used. In some cases, questionnaires were vested to head of the institution who later distributed among their concerned faculty members. The respondents were made up of headmasters, assistant headmasters, senior faculties and junior faculties. However, 140 questionnaires showed a response rate of 87.5%. The sample consisted of 67 male and 73 female teachers; 106 married and 34 unmarrieds; the age range was 25-56, and the majority of teachers having experience of either 1-5 years or 15+ years. Teachers came from eight different educational disciplines as well.

4.3. Measures

This study has used six independent variables (Training & development, Discipline, Reward systems, Compensation and benefits, Institutional relations, and Work environment); one mediating variable (Job Satisfaction) and one dependent variable (Operational Performance). All variables were rated on 5-point Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Details of the survey instrument measures are discussed below:
Perceived Performance effort: The operational performance effort was measured by the 8-item scale. Sample items are "You are happy to give more time to your job" and "You can perform all what the authority instructs you to do". The scale reliability was 0.83. Overall Job Satisfaction measured by 3 items, e.g., "You are satisfied with your work environment" "You are happy to work here and satisfied with the job" and "You are satisfied with existing HR policies and practices". Scale reliability was 0.84. HR Plan by 7 items scale, e.g., "The institution has a good recruitment and selection plan" and alpha was 0.85. Training and development system by 4 items scale "The institution arranges training to the teachers", and coefficient alpha was 0.72. Performance evaluation and reward system by 3-item scale, e.g., "The institution has a sound performance appraisal system", the Cronbach alpha for the scale was 0.65. Discipline and disciplinary measures by 4-item scale, e.g., "Disciplinary procedures of the institution are satisfactory" and alpha was 0.86. Supportive work environment by 5-item scale, e.g., "The teachers are provided with comfortable sitting arrangements." Reliability of the scale was 0.69. Compensation and benefits by 6-item scale, e.g., "The salary structure of the institution is satisfactory" and alpha coefficient was 0.88. And Industrial relations: Industrial relations and employee participation were measured by the 5-item scale. A sample item is "There is a satisfactory teachers' association in the institution" The Cronbach alpha for the scale was 0.83.

5. Results

Table no.1 shows the means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients and correlations among the major study variables. The correlations between the study variables were in the expected direction (positive correlation) and statistically significant.

Table No. 01 : Karl Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

Variables of Interest	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Operational Performance	4.11	0.56	1	(0.83)						
2. Job Satisfaction	3.69	1.05	.464**	1	(0.84)					
3. Training & Development	3.74	0.73	.486**	.468**	1	(0.72)				
4. Discipline	3.74	0.78	.515**	.494**	.693**	1	(0.86)			
5. Reward Systems	3.51	0.76	.430**	.574**	.688**	.696**	1	(0.65)		
6. Compensation and Benefits	3.29	0.93	.356**	.681**	.523**	.645**	.623**	1	(0.88)	
7. Industrial Relations	3.38	0.80	.394**	.583**	.473**	.546**	.625**	.628**	1	(0.83)
8. Work Environment	3.49	0.77	.447**	.725**	.572**	.562**	.655**	.675**	.748**	(0.69)

Note: Items in upper diagonal are Cronbach's reliability alpha (α) of dependent, mediating and independent variables. Correlation coefficients are significant at *p < .01; and **p < .001.

On an average, high school teachers exert their maximum level effort. All measures of criterion variable reported by respondents were more than the arbitrary scale mid-point. This means that the authority of high secondary schools in Bangladesh more or less executes HRM practices in their institutions.

Table No. 02 : Operational Performance Regressed on HRM Practices and Job Satisfaction

Independent Variables	Operational Performance			
	β	t-test	Sig.	VIF
Training & Development (T&D)	0.199*	1.857	.066	2.38
Discipline	0.342***	3.003	.003	2.68
Reward	-0.065	-.551	.582	2.84
Compensation and Benefits	-0.219*	-1.933	.055	2.67
Institutional Relations	0.07	.626	.533	2.57
Work Environment	0.057	.436	.663	3.55
Job Satisfaction (Z-score: JS)	0.307***	2.797	.006	2.48
R2	.362***		.000	
Adjusted R2	.328			
F	10.690			

Values significant at *p < .10 ; **p < .05; and ***p < .001

Source: Survey data

Table no.2 presents the results of regression analysis of criterion and predicted variables. Training & development (β= 0.199, p<.10), discipline (β= 0.342, p<.00), compensation & benefits (β= -0.219, p<.10) and job satisfaction (β= 0.307, p<.00) were found as significant predictors of performance effort. From the regression table, out of six HRM practices only three practices were found as the best practices as they are significantly predicted and related to performance effort. Further, increased job satisfaction is also related to greater employees' operational performance effort. So, the first hypothesis (Hypothesis 1Ha) is partially accepted because out of six institutional HRM practices, training & development, discipline and compensation & benefits have a significant effect on secondary school teachers' perceived operational performance effort. But, the second hypothesis (Hypothesis 2Ha) has got full support and accepted as the increased job satisfaction is related to the greater level of operational performance effort.

5.1. Testing single mediation model

Mediation analysis in the study was carried out to assess the indirect effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between HRM practices and operational performance effort. To test the mediation, the procedure suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004) was adopted and the procedural steps given below:

1. The independent and dependent variable must be significantly related (1st equation model).

2. The independent and mediating variable must be significantly related (2nd equation model).

3. The mediator and dependent variable must be significantly related (3rd equation model), and

4. The independent variable must have no effect on the dependent variable when the mediator is held constant i.e., full mediation or the effect will significant but smaller i.e., partial mediation (Preacher and Hayes, 2004; Mackinnon, 2008; Sobel, 1982) (4th equation model).

Accordingly, the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationships between HR practices and school teachers' operational performance effort is presented in table no.3.

Table No.3: Mediating Effects of Employee Job Satisfaction

Dependent Variable = Operational Performance effort, Mediating Variable = Job Satisfaction												
Independent Variable	Training & Development (T&D)				Discipline				Compensation &Benefits			
Meditation Steps	Step-1	Step-2	Step-3	Step-4	Step-1	Step-2	Step-3	Step-4	Step-1	Step-2	Step-3	Step-4
Beta (β)	0.393	0.785	0.197	0.241	0.419	0.764	0.216	0.248	0.235	0.690	0.221	0.045
t-value	4.7	6.41	3.53	3.63	5.468	6.73	3.03	3.98	3.617	7.247	4	0.72
P-value (Sig.)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	0.47
Direct Effect		0.241				0.248				0.045		
indirect Effect		0.152				0.171				0.19		
Total Effect		0.393				0.419				0.235		
Z Score (Sobel Test)		3.02				3.02				3.74		
P-value (Sig.)		.000				.000				.000		
Mediation Type	Partial Mediation				Partial Mediation				Complete Mediation			

Source: Authors' own

Mediation model (see Table no.4) indicates all three independent variables (best three HRM practices) are positively and significantly related to both operational performance effort [T&D (β= 0.393, p < 0.00)], [Discipline (β= 0.419, p < 0.00)] and [compensation & benefit (β= 0.235, p < 0.00)] and job satisfaction [T&D (β= 0.785, p < 0.00)], [Discipline (β= 0.764, p < 0.00)] and [compensation & benefit (β= 0.690, p < 0.00)]. Job satisfaction is positively and significantly related to the operational performance effort in three regression equations (β= 0.197/0.216/0.221, p < 0.00). Thus, the steps one, two, three of the mediation analysis are supported. Furthermore, results show that the job satisfaction while taken into consideration, the beta weight for independent variables has dropped from the initial level of 0.393 to 0.241 about T&D and 0.419 to 0.248 regarding Discipline even after that these effects were still significant. It indicates that the job satisfaction in the mediation model partially mediates the relationship between T&D and operational performance, discipline and operational performance. Once again, to assess the significance of these mediation effects, a Sobel test to both situations (z = 3.02, p < 0.00) were obtained. Thus, our proposition (Hypothesis 3Ha) for training & development and discipline are partially supported. Likewise, in the case of compensation and benefit initial beta value dropped from 0.235 to 0.045, whereas the later effect was insignificant. Accordingly, job satisfaction completely mediated the relationship between compensation & benefit and operational performance effort. Sobel test was calculated again to test the significance of indirect effect and found significant (z = 3.74, p < 0.00). So, our third proposition (Hypothesis 3Ha) is also true for compensation and benefit. Finally, it can be opined that Job satisfaction mediated (partial or full mediation) the relationship between HRM practices and secondary school teachers' operational performance effort.

5.2. Derived mediation model



Figure-1: Mediation model

6. Discussion and Implications of the Study

The study makes a major contribution in establishing the relationship between HRM practices, job satisfaction and operational performance effort. Although previous research have shown a positive relationship between HRM practices and operational performance (Batt, 2002; Choi & Lee, 2013; Nadarajah et. al., 2012), job satisfaction and operational performance (Batt, 2002; Judge & Bono, 2001; Newstrom & Davis, 2012); and HRM practices and job satisfaction (Freeman et al., 2000; Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Pauwe, 2009). However, the relationship between these three variables taken together was not tested empirically earlier in the event of secondary high school teachers'. The study empirically evaluated six HRM practices and their likely impact on teachers' desired intention to exert the best performance effort. The statistically significant practices in this study considered as best practices (universalistic perspective) for bringing better performance. Out of six studied HRM practice three practices, such as training & development, discipline and compensation system were found best practices as they predict performance effort significantly. Compensation system needs to be upgraded by our educational organizations because respondents reported mean score of compensation least in comparison to other practices. Further, teachers' are less satisfied with present salary and other benefits. Even though teachers in Bangladesh choose teaching not just as a simple profession rather as a decent one. Mediation regression results showed that job satisfaction has both partial and complete effects on the relation between HRM practices and operational performance effort. Training & development and discipline were mediated partially and compensation mediated completely by job satisfaction. The mediating effect of job satisfaction indicates that training & development, discipline and compensation system influence the job satisfaction, which in turn influences the performance effort. Thus, job satisfaction serves as an intervening tool to clarify the relationship of training & development, discipline and compensation system with operational performance effort. The finding revealed that the effect of compensation system on high school teachers' performance effort is spurious if uphold the effect of job satisfaction.

7. Contribution to Practitioners and Policy Makers

The results of the study revealed a significant effect of HRM practices and job satisfaction on secondary school teachers' operational performance effort. The outcomes of the research study will help the policy maker and the managing committee of higher secondary schools to shape their HRM policies to deal with secondary school teachers' for better performance and organizational success. Further, job satisfaction as a mediator showed both direct and indirect effects on the relation between HRM practices and teachers' operational performance. So, the higher authority of secondary school teachers' must ensure job satisfaction for secondary school teachers'.

8. Limitations and Future Research

A common threat to the validity of our findings is the distribution of the number of schools in the sample. The study includes only 14 schools out of 54 which represent only 25 % of total schools located in Sylhet division, Bangladesh. It would be better to include more institutions to generalize the findings. Another important concern is the subjectivity of the performance measure. The researchers have used perceptual measures to construct employee performance effort. The use of objective measure for performance determination is generally preferred and more prevalent in the literature. Future studies can use objective performance measure at the institute level to check the robustness of model and findings.

9. Conclusion

The current study seeks to establish a causal relationship between HRM practices and secondary school teachers' operational performance in the presence of job satisfaction. All HRM practices are associated with one another. Training and development, discipline and compensation system were significant predictors of secondary school teachers' performance. Job satisfaction played as a mediator on the relation between HRM practice and operational performance. Training & development, discipline and compensation were related to teachers' performance effort through job satisfaction. The association between compensation and performance is spurious in absence of job satisfaction. Again, job satisfaction is not only predicted performance but also mediated the relationship between HR practices and operational performance.

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