

Review of Human Resource Management in the Field of Public Management and Public Administration

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Abstract

This article is a review of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the context of Public Management and Public Administration. The research method used is the article review method, which is done by searching for articles based on keywords related to HRM, public sector, and public administration in the title, keywords, and abstract. A total of 78 articles were manually selected based on predetermined criteria and then analyzed using three main criteria: research characteristics, theories and models, and HRM themes. This review highlights research trends in HRM in the public sector, emphasizing the importance of HRM in improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of public institutions. The main findings of this article can provide useful insights for researchers and practitioners interested in HRM in the public sector and public administration.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Public Management, Public Administration

Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) is central to the complex field of public management and public administration (Manroop et al., 2024; Nguyen & Dao, 2023). Public organizations are often faced with unique challenges in managing their people, including changing public policies, diverse public demands, and budget and resource constraints (Nasi et al., 2023; Osborne, 2017). In this context, HRM is important as it plays a role in improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of public institutions (Casprini et al., 2024; Osborne, 2017). Consistent Osborne (2017) stated that good HR management and public institutions can optimize employee potential, provide appropriate training, implement fair reward and recognition systems, and ensure compliance with regulations and ethical standards. In addition, effective HR management also helps build an inclusive, innovative, and service-oriented organizational culture, which in turn improves the quality of services provided by public institutions to the public.

An introduction to human resource management (HRM) in the public context underscores the important role HR plays in public sector organizations. HRM plays a vital role in improving the performance of public organizations by ensuring efficient and effective management of human assets. Through the recruitment, training, development, and evaluation of employees, HR management helps to ensure that organizations have

qualified personnel that meet the needs of public services (Voigt & von der Oelsnitz, 2024). In addition, good HRM also enables organizations to deliver quality public services by maintaining employee motivation and job satisfaction and promoting a collaborative and service-oriented work culture. As such, HRM is not just about administratively managing human resources but is also key to achieving the development goals set by public organizations.

The large number of studies focusing on HRM in the context of the public sector and public administration can be explained by several factors. First, the need for quality and efficient public services drives research to understand how HRM can be managed effectively in the face of complex challenges. Next, changes in government regulations and political demands force public organizations to adjust their HR policies and practices, sparking increased interest in understanding their impact and implications. In addition, the complexity of tasks and challenges of public institutions is driving interest in research to develop effective and innovative HRM practices.

Recent research highlights the importance of investing in HR development to improve organizational performance and public service delivery (Mustari et al., 2024). Effective HRM practices, such as employee training and development, performance management, and workforce diversification, positively affect productivity, service quality, and employee satisfaction in the public sector (del-Castillo-Feito et al., 2022). Despite these advancements, there remains a pressing need to address the unique challenges public organizations face, such as evolving public policies, diverse citizen demands, and stringent budget constraints (Nasi et al., 2023; Osborne, 2017).

The urgency of this research is driven by the increasing complexity of public sector tasks and the necessity for innovative HRM practices that can adapt to changing environments and enhance public service delivery. This study's novelty lies in its empirical investigation of HRM within the public sector, viewed through the dual lenses of Public Administration (PA) and HRM disciplines. By examining the cross-fertilization between these fields, this research not only deepens our understanding of effective HRM practices in the public sector but also fosters greater integration and collaboration between PA and HRM. The findings are anticipated to make substantial contributions to both literature and serve as a foundational reference for future inquiries into HRM in public administration.

The purpose of this research is to empirically explore HRM in a public sector context, both from the perspective of the disciplines of Public Administration (PA) and Human Resource Management (HRM), as well as to gauge the level of cross-fertilization between the two disciplines. The central questions of this research include what can be empirically learned about HRM in the public sector context from the perspectives of both disciplines, as well as the extent to which there is interaction and exchange of ideas between the disciplines of Public Administration and HRM. As such, this research aims to enrich our understanding of HRM in the public sector while promoting integration and collaboration between the PA and HRM disciplines. The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the literature in both disciplines, as well as serve as

an important foothold for future research in this area.

Research Methods

This research uses a scientific article search method focusing on high-quality articles. The researcher limited the search to Human Resources Management and public sector articles that have been published in leading international journals, following the approach used by Nishii et al. (2018) and Boselie (2014). The object of this research is to articles discussing Human Resources Management and the public sector that appear in eight leading international journals.

The data source for this study is articles published in eight international journals with high impact scores, according to the Web of Science in 2017. These journals are also listed in the 2015 Association of Business Schools journal list. The study population included all relevant articles in eight selected journals. From the initial search, 150 article references were found. After going through a rigorous selection process based on four criteria, the final sample used in the analysis was 78 articles. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the topic of Human Resources Management and the public sector and met the criteria of publication year (2000–2019), the definition of Human Resources Management, and the use of meaningful public sector domain concepts.

The research technique used is to search for articles based on keywords such as Human Resources Management, public, public sector, and HR in the article's title, keywords, and abstract. The selection process is done manually by checking the full text of the article and using predetermined criteria to filter out relevant and high-quality articles. The analysis was carried out on 78 selected articles using three main criteria: research characteristics, theory and model, and the theme of Human Resources Management. Each article was analyzed to determine how each of these criteria was implemented in their research. By using this method, this study successfully obtained a representative and high-quality sample of articles for further analysis in the context of HRM in the public sector.

Results and Discussion

Research Characteristics

The characteristics of this research include an article review approach that blends quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive picture of HRM in the context of PM and PA. Using a keyword-based article search method, this research carefully selected 78 relevant and high-quality articles from various sources relating to HRM in the public sector. Each article was then analyzed in depth to identify the characteristics of the research, the theories and models used, and the themes explored. This approach allows this research to provide a comprehensive understanding of HRM-related trends, challenges, and innovations within the PM and PA domains.

The analysis presented in the table below indicates that a significant proportion, 68 percent, of the journal articles (N = 53) relied on quantitative data, primarily

sourced from surveys. Conversely, 23 percent of the articles (N = 18) were grounded in qualitative data, predominantly obtained through interviews. For instance, Srinivasan and Chandwani (2014) conducted interviews with top managers to delve into the HR challenges stemming from the privatization and corporatization of healthcare facilities in India, along with novel business models in healthcare delivery. Moreover, 9 percent of the articles (N = 7) adopted mixed methods, blending both quantitative and qualitative data. An example is the study by Kooij et al. (2014), which amalgamated various sources, including interviews, focus groups, policy documents, and surveys, to probe into the management of elderly workers within a Dutch Ministry. In totality, our review of articles encompassed a diverse array of research methods. Although less frequent, we also noted the utilization of alternative research methodologies such as archival data analysis.

Table 1. Details of studies included in the research review

Types of Research and Themes	HR M (N=5)	IJHR M (N=28)	HRM J (N=8)	JPAR T (N=2)	BY (N=4)	PA (N=3)	PRM (N=10)	RoPP A (N=18)	Total (N=78)
Type of Research									
Kuantitatif	4	15	3	2	4	3	9	13	53
Kualitatif	1	8	3	-	-	-	1	5	18
Quantitatif and Qualitative Combination	-	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	7
Theme									
Human Resources Added Value	5	20	5	1	4	2	9	11	57
Human Resources Management Development	-	8	3	1	-	1	1	7	21

Among the quantitative research articles, 68 percent align with the increasing quantification in the fields of Human Resources, Public Management, and Public

Administration. This trend is also evident in the rise of studies on Public Administration behavior and the growing focus on laboratory experiments closely linked to applied psychology (Budd, 2020; Pham et al., 2024). Additionally, it is noteworthy that, except for two recent studies, all studies are cross-sectional (García-Cruz et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024).

Most of the studies came from Europe, namely 27 studies with details of 16 studies in the UK, six studies in the Netherlands, and five studies in Belgium. Furthermore, there were 20 studies from North America, with details of the United States, 17 studies, and Canada, 3three studies. Meanwhile, Asian countries, namely 31 studies, were represented by several countries such as Japan, Jordan, Korea, Malaysia, Oman, China, India, and Vietnam.

The data from the 78 articles encompass a variety of organization types, with health service organizations (N = 30), local governments (N = 19), central governments (N = 13), educational institutions (N = 8), and provincial/state governments (N = 8) being the most frequently analyzed in the context of EMD data in the public sector. Human Resources Management research has particularly focused on healthcare organizations, such as hospitals and nursing homes, due to significant reforms and challenges related to the workforce, including aging populations and aging healthcare workers. For instance, West et al. (2002) conducted a study on Human Resources Management and hospital mortality, while Mostafa (2016) investigated high-performance HR practices, work stress, and quit intentions in the public health sector.

Theory and Models

This review article takes into account classic and contemporary theories such as performance management theory, human resource theory, organizational behavior theory, and a systems approach. In addition, several conceptual models, such as the organizational commitment and diversity management models, are also explored in the context of HRM in the public sector. The use of these diverse theories and models provides a solid foundation for analyzing the role and impact of HRM in Public Management and Public Administration. It enables a deeper understanding of effective practices in managing HRM in these contexts.

The examination of the 78 articles encompassed a wide array of theories and models. The first category comprised conventional Human Resources Management (HRM) theories, encompassing system strength, HR attribution theory, human capital theory, social capital theory, and resource-based views. A total of 34 articles were rooted in HRM theory, exploring various aspects of HRM practices and their implications. The second category pertained to Organizational Behavior (OB) theories, which predominantly delve into psychological theories concerning employee attitudes and behaviors within organizational contexts. These theories, such as social identity theory, social exchange theory, motivation theory, and leadership theory, were evident in the analysis of the articles, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of individual behavior and its impact on organizational performance and effectiveness.

Human Resources Theme

We have classified articles into two main Human Resources Management themes: the Human Resources Management Added Value theme and the Human Resources Management Formation theme.

Theme 1: Added Value of Human Resources

In this research, 'added value' is defined as the additional benefits generated by specific HRM practices, which not only include aspects of productivity and efficiency but also involve elements such as employee loyalty, job satisfaction, engagement, and organizational commitment. Analysis of the article reveals that the 'Added Value of Human Resources' theme is becoming popular in HRM literature in the public sector, illustrating an increased interest in understanding the relationship between HRM practices and achieving organizational goals. With a focus on the increased added value generated by HRM practices, this research provides valuable insights for public managers and HRM practitioners in improving organizational performance and public service effectiveness (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2024).

The initial category of Human Resource Management (HRM) we identify is termed 'value-added' HRM, marking research that emerged in the mid-1990s with a primary focus on outcomes (Desarno et al., 2021). A total of 57 articles are categorized under this theme, as outlined in Table 1. Upon closer examination, most of these studies delve into the correlation between 'perceived HRM' and its outcomes. Among the variables scrutinized, job satisfaction, commitment, and various health-related indicators such as stress, burnout, and fairness are recurrently explored. Notably, out of the 57 articles on value-added HRM, only eight address subjective or objective organizational performance metrics, such as client satisfaction with work (or patient mortality rates) (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2024).

The remaining 49 articles center on the impact of HR 'mini-bundles,' denoting sets of coordinated HR practices aimed at specific objectives, such as employee development. These mini-bundles target diverse goals, including diversity management, performance management, and talent management (Al-Swidi et al., 2021; Breuillot et al., 2024; Hamza-Orlinska et al., 2024; Kaliannan et al., 2023). For instance, al-Swidi et al. (2021) illustrate that consistently implemented performance management systems aligned with strategic objectives diminish employee turnover intentions. These findings align with the systems approach to HRM, which posits that the alignment of HR practices both horizontally and vertically results in favorable outcomes.

Theme 2: Human Resources Development

The second theme we identified was labeled 'Human Resources Development.' This theme focuses on the impact of contextual factors on human resources. This study's 21 articles (see Table 1) are relevant to this theme. Most of the articles aim to understand the content of Human Resources Management and how it is formed and implemented in government and public service organizations. Many authors conclude that institutional

pressure greatly impacts the development of Human Resources Management.

Human Resources Development (HRD) is important in strengthening individual and organizational capabilities and competencies. In the context of this research, Human Resources Development (HRD) encompasses a range of practices and programs designed to improve the capabilities, knowledge, and skills of human resources in the public sector. HRD includes approaches such as training and development, career coaching, leadership development, and performance management. Analysis of the article shows that HRD is becoming a major focus in the public sector of HRM literature, signaling an awareness of the importance of investing in HRD to improve organizational performance and achieve development goals. By strengthening HR skills and competencies, HRD supports not only individual growth but also generates long-term benefits for the organization, fostering innovation, resilience, and adaptability in the face of a changing environment and increasingly complex societal demands.

We observed several commonalities among the broad contextual factors in our dataset. Firstly, certain authors identify state policy agendas and political perspectives as primary drivers for Human Resources Management (HRM) reform. For instance, Stahl et al. (2020) discovered that cost constraints prompted downsizing and deferred public sector organizations in the UK, leading to heightened job demands for public managers with reduced job security and limited hierarchical career prospects. Paraschi et al. (2022) concluded that the evolution of HRM can be comprehensively understood within the framework of evolving social values, highlighting political neutrality, accountability, and efficiency as significant political values influencing HRM development in US government entities. Additionally, some authors attribute the prevalence of work-life balance initiatives and employee engagement in public organizations, as opposed to the private sector, to pressures or public sentiments (Anand et al., 2023).

Moreover, regulations concerning the fair and equitable treatment of civil servants have been identified as exerting a substantial influence on human resources development. For instance, Noordt et al. (2022) discovered that regulatory pressures dictate mine recruitment practices within the Belgian civil service. Additionally, a country's administrative system and traditions are found to be significant factors. HR decisions are deeply rooted in administrative traditions, as demonstrated by Cooke et al. (2020) in a comparative study of HR practices in Europe. They found, among other insights, that Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian traditions allowed for more contractualism, managerialism, and decentralization, thereby explaining the higher degree of HR decentralization.

Conclusion

This research underscores the growing emphasis on human resource management (HRM) within public sector studies, echoing Osborne's (2017) findings. Predominantly quantitative research, particularly in PM/PA journals, highlights HRM's influence on performance, a theme adapted from private sector practices. A thematic analysis of 78 articles reveals a focus on HRM's value-added in performance and the impact of

institutional pressures on HRM development. Comparative HRM studies highlight institutional differences across countries using Cranet data. However, the study found limited cross-fertilization between HRM and PM/PA theories, with HRM informing PM/PA more than vice versa. The research faced limitations by focusing on peer-reviewed journals, excluding books, dissertations, conference papers, and research reports. Further research is needed on the HR department's role, HR competencies, and the practical relevance of academic findings in public sector organizations.

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