The impact of demographical variables on HRM practices in Saudi Telecom Company: An empirical exploration

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C H R O N I C L E	A B S T R A C T
	Fair HRM practices are indispensable for the success of any company, especially the growing companies. The aim of this exploration is to understand the impact of certain personal characteristics of the employees of Telecommunication Company on HRM practices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A booklet consisted of HRM practices questionnaires along with personal characteristics blank sheet were used to gather the information of the respondents. A total of 210 sample collected from public and private sector Telecommunication Company existing in the Kingdom. The collected data was analyzed by inferential and descriptive statistics and the results were analyzed. The results revealed that married & unmarried, public & private sector, younger & older, high & low income and high & low experienced group of employees differ but in a varied degree on HRM practices in terms of performance appraisal, training and development, security and health, recruitment and selection, intention to stay in the company communication, working conditions, compensation and benefits, job analysis and co-worker relationships. The findings' significances and implications were also elaborated at length and few suggestions were provided that could enhance the fair HRM practices in the telecommunication company in the Kingdom.

1. Introduction

There is no second deliberation that present era is termed as technological, stressful, self-center and competitive. In such era, Saudi Arabian telecom companies also need to address themselves to come up with the boundaries of the country as well as the outside to maintain the integrity of HRM practices for the effectiveness. Extant investigations have been conducted on the globe but very few in the context of Saudi Arabia to identify the challenges tackling that how fair HRM practices should be used to manage the workforce diversity in the telecommunication company. Indeed, it is necessary to deal the situation in a cordial manner to make their human resources more enthusiastic and develop highest potential in order to accomplish the goals of the organization by using HRM practices in a fair manner. The brand or image and holistic effectiveness of the company depends on how the HRM practices are

applied in their organization. The success and failure always depends on the development of the human resource and understanding aesthetic of different cultural backgrounds, ways of thinking, knowledge, experience, origins, gender equality, nationalities, mindsets, etc. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is considered as "under-researched" in the exploration of fair or unfair HRM practices (Al Kahtani et al., 2016). However, various definitions were given by the management experts. One of the researchers, Minbaeva (20005) conceptualized the term HRM practices as "a set of practices used by organization to manage human resource through facilitating the development of competencies that are firm specific, produce complex social relation and generate organizational knowledge to sustain competitive advantages". On the other hand Boxall and Purcell (2011) defined HRM practices as "a set of activities that intend to add value to an organization by managing people related aspects". It is observed from the both definitions that HRM contributes to attract, retain, motivate and develop the employees in order to perform well in the organization through existing fair practices, philosophies and standardize policies.

2. Review of literature

The present study tries to review the available literature through papers, theses, books and dissertations pertaining to HRM practices to gain insight about the knowledge and provide ample information to the audiences. The study made an attempt to review the latest studies to show the significance of them in this particular filed on the globe.

Syed and Yan (2012) jointly investigated in their research that job rotation, performance based pay, empowerment, employee participation, grievances handling procedures, merit based promotion and employee participation had positive relationships with job satisfaction. However, most of the studies related to job satisfaction also revealed the relationship with HRM practices such as promotion, advancement training etc. through job satisfaction scale (Allam, 2013; Al Kahtani & Allam, 2014; Allam, & Harish, 2010; Ali et al., 2004; Allam & Reddy, 2007; Al Kahtani & Allam, 2013). Moreover, HRM practices that help to achieve the performance of organization are recruitment, motivation, compensation, reward system, performance management and appraisal and reward (Islam, 2013).

Hassan (2016) initiated a study among Textile Companies in Pakistan and random sampling technique was used to gather the necessary data. He opined in his research paper that HRM practices pertaining to employee involvement, training, performance appraisal, career planning and compensation had positive influence on the performance of the employees. Razzaq et al. (2017) conducted a study among the employees working in telecom sector in Pakistan and identified the impact of HRM practices on employee commitment. They revealed that HRM practices such as career practice planning and compensation practice had significantly positive impact on employee commitment.

3. Objectives of the investigation

On the globe numerous investigations have been carried out by the researchers but there are few investigations conducted on HRM practices in the Kingdom. Hence, the current investigator was taken to explore the understanding of HRM practices existing in telecom companies in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, we aim to explore the impact of certain biographical variables on HRM practices in telecom companies.

3.1 Hypotheses

On the basis of the above objectives formulated by the researcher and based on the past review of literature, the following null hypotheses are stated:

HO$_1$: There is not any significant difference between married and unmarried telecom employees according to various aspects of HRM practices.

HO$_2$: Public and private telecom sector employees are not different based on the various facets of HRM practices.

HO$_3$: Younger and older in age group of telecom employees are not different significantly according to various aspects of HRM practices.

HO$_4$: There is not any meaningful difference between low and high experienced telecom employees pertaining according to the dimensions of HRM practices.

HO$_5$: Low and high income group of telecom sector employees are not different based on the various dimensions of HRM practices.

3.2 Research Methodology

Sample: The present study consists of 210 randomly selected employees of the public and the private sectors of the telecommunication firms working in the Kingdom who are aged differently and with various job experiences. In the current study all participants were male.

Instrument Used: A booklet consists of HRM practices survey and the demographical blank sheet was used to gather the information from the respondents. HRM practices instruments included ten dimensions where each dimension is rated on the continuum of five-point rating scale with response categories of strongly disagree to strongly agree with a weighted score of 1-5. Moreover, a demographical blank sheet was used to collect the personal characteristics of the employees such as gender, marital status, age, etc.

Data Analysis: Keeping the realm of the objectives of the current investigation, both inferential and descriptive statistics techniques have been used to analyze the data and make the results in a scholastic manner which can add certain values to the HR practitioners.

Procedure and Ethics: The instruments selected for this particular investigation was in English and has been translated to Arabic with the help of expert to maintain the essence of the items of the survey. The purpose to translate the questionnaire was to make it convenient for the respondents to understand it better. The official permission has been taken before the collection of the data. The respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study and informed them to read the instructions very carefully before furnishing the questionnaire. The subjects were assured that their responses will be not disclosed to any higher officials and will be used for academic purposes only.

Table 1

Mean, SD and t-value of social status group of telecom employees on different HRM practices

HRM Practices	Compared Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Job Analysis	Married	141	3.65	.575	2.579**
	Unmarried	69	3.43	.557	
Recruitment and Selection	Married	141	3.56	.785	.322
	Unmarried	69	3.53	.584	
Training & Development	Married	141	3.52	.621	3.069**
	Unmarried	69	3.26	.504	
Performance Appraisal	Married	141	3.33	.775	.293
	Unmarried	69	3.30	.672	
Compensation & Benefits	Married	141	3.62	.754	3.026**
	Unmarried	69	3.28	.797	
Working Condition	Married	141	3.76	.622	3.051**
	Unmarried	69	3.50	.443	
Security and Health	Married	141	3.53	.809	3.704**
	Unmarried	69	3.11	.676	
Communication	Married	141	3.49	.911	.255
	Unmarried	69	3.46	.799	
Co-worker Relation	Married	141	3.76	.892	.718
	Unmarried	69	3.67	.658	
Intention to stay	Married	141	3.26	.517	.671
	Unmarried	69	3.30	.456	

Significant at **P> .01

It is observed from the results of Table 1 that the mean scores of the married and unmarried categories of employees working in the telecom companies on different aspects of HRM practices i.e. job analysis (3.65 & 3.43), training & development (3.52 & 3.26), compensation and benefits (3.62 & 3.28), working conditions (3.76 & 3.50) and security & health (3.53 & 3.11) were found different with the discrepancies in the scores of standard deviation. The t-values were found as (2.579, P>.01) for the job analysis, (3.069, P>.01) for the training & development, (3.026, P>.01) for the compensation and benefits, (3.051, P>.01) for the working condition, and (3.704, P>.01) for the security & health but the rest of the other aspects were not significant at any level and thereby, the proposed null hypothesis (HO₁) was not rejected. It is also observed from the table that mean scores of the married employees were higher in all aspects of HRM practices which were also found to be significantly different and this might be because of the maturity, higher level of understanding about the job specifications, job descriptions, value of training & development, working conditions, etc.

Table 2
Mean, SD and t-value of public and private sector telecom employees on different HRM practices

HRM Practices	Compared Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Job Analysis	Public Sector	90	3.504	.577	1.63
	Private Sector	120	3.635	.571	
Recruitment and Selection	Public Sector	90	3.423	.604	2.225*
	Private Sector	120	3.646	.791	
Training & Development	Public Sector	90	3.433	.513	.100
	Private Sector	120	3.441	.655	
Performance Appraisal	Public Sector	90	3.086	.781	4.043**
	Private Sector	120	3.490	.661	
Compensation & Benefits	Public Sector	90	3.359	.765	2.356**
	Private Sector	120	3.613	.782	
Working Condition	Public Sector	90	3.700	.507	.616
	Private Sector	120	3.650	.631	
Security and Health	Public Sector	90	3.283	.780	1.689
	Private Sector	120	3.468	.792	
Communication	Public Sector	90	3.383	1.002	1.370
	Private Sector	120	3.550	.759	
Co-worker Relation	Public Sector	90	3.775	.700	6.54
	Private Sector	120	3.7000	.903	
Intention to stay	Public Sector	90	3.180	.400	2.333*
	Private Sector	120	3.340	.550	

Significant at **P< .01
Significant at *P< .05

The results of Table 2 indicate that the two groups of employees were working in different sectors on various facets of HRM practices. The results also indicate significant differences on the recruitment & selection (t=2.225, P>.05), the performance appraisal (t=4.043, P>.01), the compensation and benefits (t=2.356, P>.01) and the intention to stay (t=2.333, P>.05). However, the two groups were not differ significantly on other facets of HRM practices, hence, the proposed null hypothesis (HO₂) was not rejected. It can be said that private sectors had fair practices in the selection & recruitment, the performance appraisal and the compensation & benefits as compared to public sector's employees and thereby, the majority of the employees from private sectors were having intention to continue with the ongoing job.

As we can observe from the results of Table 3, no significant difference was found between the younger and the older in age group of employees according to different HRM practices except on the recruitment & selection (t=2.853, P>.01), the training & development (t=2.205, P>.05), and the intention to stay (t=2.251, P>.05) but majority of other practices were not significant at any level and thereby, the proposed null hypothesis (HO3) was not rejected. The result can be explained that younger group of

employees believe that the practices were fair in the recruitment & selection and the training & development practices. The mean score showed higher among older employees for the case of intention to stay practice indicates older employees intended to continue with the present job due to loyalty and satisfactions (Allam & Harish, 2010; Al Kahtani et al., 2016; Allam & Habtemariam, 2009; Al Kahtani & Allam, 2014).

Table 3
Mean, SD and t-value of younger and older age groups of telecom employees for HRM practices

HRM Practices	Compared Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Job Analysis	Younger in age	186	3.552	.582	1.871
	Older in age	24	3.785	.489	
Recruitment and Selection	Younger in age	186	3.601	.683	2.853**
	Older in age	24	3.160	.912	
Training & Development	Younger in age	186	3.470	.547	2.205*
	Older in age	24	3.187	.869	
Performance Appraisal	Younger in age	186	3.348	.667	1.708
	Older in age	24	3.075	1.159	
Compensation & Benefits	Younger in age	186	3.487	.722	.891
	Older in age	24	3.638	1.165	
Working Condition	Younger in age	186	3.658	.459	.891
	Older in age	24	3.770	1.163	
Security and Health	Younger in age	186	3.399	.699	.504
	Older in age	24	3.312	1.319	
Communication	Younger in age	186	3.484	.825	.244
	Older in age	24	3.438	1.209	
Co-worker Relation	Younger in age	186	3.741	.743	.480
	Older in age	24	3.656	1.295	
Intention to stay	Younger in age	186	3.245	.464	2.151*
	Older in age	24	3.475	.677	

Significant at **$P < .01$
Significant at *$P < .05$

Table 4
Mean, SD and t-value of low and high experienced groups of telecom employees on HRM practices

HRM Practices	Compared Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Job Analysis	Low experienced	87	3.492	.577	1.848
	High experienced	123	3.641	.5703	
Recruitment and Selection	Low experienced	87	3.581	.536	.508
	High experienced	123	3.529	.833	
Training & Development	Low experienced	87	3.333	.530	2.157*
	High experienced	123	3.512	.632	
Performance Appraisal	Low experienced	87	3.386	.624	1.136
	High experienced	123	3.268	.812	
Compensation & Benefits	Low experienced	87	3.409	.802	1.479
	High experienced	123	3.571	.766	
Working Condition	Low experienced	87	3.580	.458	1.921*
	High experienced	123	3.735	.647	
Security and Health	Low experienced	87	3.224	.671	2.579**
	High experienced	123	3.506	.848	
Communication	Low experienced	87	3.517	.808	.538
	High experienced	123	3.451	.919	
Co-worker Relation	Low experienced	87	3.681	.656	.757
	High experienced	123	3.768	.9217	
Intention to stay	Low experienced	87	3.344	.525	1.810
	High experienced	123	3.219	.471	

Significant at **$P < .01$
Significant at *$P < .05$

It is observed from Table 4 that the two groups of employees pertaining to experiences in terms of high and low found to be different significantly based on the three facets of HRM practices. The results also revealed that the mean scores on these facets i.e. the training and development (3.333 &3.512), the working condition (3.580 & 3.735) and the security and health (3.224 & 3.506). The t-values appeared on Table 4 are (t=2.157, P>.05) for the training and development, (1.921, P>.05) for the working condition and (2.579, P>.01) for the security & health. Moreover, the low & high experienced groups were not showing significant differences on other facets of HRM practices, therefore, the proposed null hypothesis (HO₄) was not rejected. This is because the high experience groups were having higher mean scores on these three facets because of having more knowledge, ability to synthesize the things, etc. compared with the low experience group of telecom sector employees.

Table 5
Mean, SD and t-value of low and high income groups of telecom employees on HRM practices

HRM Practices	Compared Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Job Analysis	Low income	93	3.433	.637	3.359**
	High income	117	3.695	.496	
Recruitment and Selection	Low income	93	3.419	.592	2.375**
	High income	117	3.655	.800	
Training & Development	Low income	93	3.295	.531	3.146**
	High income	117	3.551	.624	
Performance Appraisal	Low income	93	3.270	.628	.804
	High income	117	3.353	.820	
Compensation & Benefits	Low income	93	3.358	.786	2.442**
	High income	117	3.621	.764	
Working Condition	Low income	93	3.543	.475	2.907**
	High income	117	3.773	.635	
Security and Health	Low income	93	3.137	.698	4.288**
	High income	117	3.589	.805	
Communication	Low income	93	3.419	.838	.875
	High income	117	3.526	.902	
Co-worker Relation	Low income	93	3.588	.783	2.278*
	High income	117	3.846	.836	
Intention to stay	Low income	93	3.367	.531	2.536**
	High income	117	3.194	.455	

Significant at **P< .01
Significant at *P< .05

It is evident from the Table 5 that the two groups of employees having low and high income were different significantly on almost all HRM practices except (performance appraisal & communication). Furthermore, the results also indicate that the mean scores of high income group were observed higher than their counterparts on all practices of HRM. The tabulated t-values were observed significantly different on job analysis (t=3.359, P>.01), recruitment & selection (t=2.375, P>.01), training and development (t=3.146, P>.05), compensation & benefits (t=2.442, P>.01), working condition (t=2.907,P>.01), security and health (t=4.288, P>.01), co-worker relation(t=2.278, P>.05) and intention to stay (t=2.536, P>.01), respectively. Therefore, the planned hypothesis (H0₅) was partially rejected. The result might be highlighted that two groups believed that practices were slightly different due to variations in the mean scores which indicate that income plays pivotal role in understanding the practices prevailing in the telecom company.

4. Conclusion

The current investigation has revealed that the differences were in place between various groups such as age, marital status, income, experience and types of sector of employees who were working in Telecom Company according to various dimensions of HRM practices. Based on findings, the following conclusions have been drawn as:

- ❖ The group of married employees showed significantly higher degree of HRM practices on the job analysis, the training & development, the compensation and benefits, the working conditions and the security & health than their counterparts.
- ❖ The employees of the private sector telecom company perceived significantly more HRM scores on the recruitment & selection, the performance appraisal, the compensation and the benefits and intention to stay than the employees of the public sector did.
- ❖ A significant differences were observed between the younger and older group of the employees on the basis of HRM practices with regard to the recruitment & selection, the training & development and the intention to stay practices.
- ❖ The high experienced group of employees showed higher degree of mean scores on the training and development, the working condition and the security and health.
- ❖ It was observed that the mean scores of the high income group were higher than their counterparts on all HRM practices in the present investigation.

5. Suggestions and Limitations

It is observed from the findings that HRM practices existed in the telecom sector of the Kingdom, but found marginally different between various biographical variables, so there is a need to implement fair HRM practices by the management to enhance the performance of the employees. Unfair HRM practice is corrosive and requires timely corrective measures by the higher officials to make the organization more viable and successful. As noted by the various researchers, satisfaction, timely training & feedback, financial & non-financial incentives and other management practices play pivotal role in enriching the commitment and involvement of the employees to perform well (Allam, 2007, 2017). The empathy and sympathy both should go in side by side way so that employees could feel some sense of belongingness and contribute major role in decision making process to build the organization success but HRM practices should be fair.

This particular research initiated only on one type of the employees i.e. telecom company, thereby it is necessary to conduct similar studies in future with more different organizations to have authentic and significant findings. As far as sample is concerned, more sample should be taken in future research with diversified groups. In glimpse, HRM practices are plenty and need to add more practices which can contributes in the process of enhancement of the employees' performance in a planned study.

Acknowledgement

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