



HR POLICIES APPRAISAL FOR THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY OF PAKISTAN USING A MIXED-METHOD APPROACH

Kausar Parveen¹, Waqar Akbar^{2*}, Kanwal Hanif²

¹ Department of Management Science, Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, PAKISTAN.

² Department of Management Science, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science & Technology, PAKISTAN.

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ABSTRACT

The study examines HR policies using an HR Audit approach to improve the employee's productivity in the airline industry of Pakistan. HR Audit implies an in-depth analysis of the HR functions to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current policies and procedures to bring overall improvement in the productivity of the organization's HR. The study follows a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) research approach, including in-depth interviews with three representatives of HR departments and a survey of 255 employees working in the airline industry of Pakistan. The results find inadequate HR policies in the airline industry. nepotism and favoritism in selection procedures is a gray area where leadership consideration is required. The results also provide guidelines for HR policymakers by identifying the avenue for improvement in the HR system, which may reduce the risk at the initial stage before it emerges as a significant threat in the future.

Disciplinary: Human Resource Management (HRM in the Aviation Industry).

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1 INTRODUCTION

Organizational and business successes depend upon the best possible utilization of all resources, such as (financial, material resources, and the most critical human resources (HR)). If HR Department properly performs its role and tasks as per the policy procedure and under legal compliance, the organization will be able to complete/achieve its objectives/goals. Hence, there is a need for evaluation of the HR system, and HR Audit may help it. HR Audit is used and implemented as a tool to investigate the functioning of the HR Department as per set guidelines. (Gupta & Pathak, 2016). The Audit aims to improve the current system and procedures for further enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization (Armstrong, 2006). Similarly, Saleem and Akbar (2015) also state that HR Audit helps the organization attaining the business goals and objectives as well as

measuring organizational effectiveness under legal compliance.

In this fast-moving competitive environment, HR Audit significance cannot be compromised because Human Resource Management (HRM) is considered the backbone of the organization. HR Audit is a process for continuous improvement and very useful when applied to the whole organization. Further, Camilleri (2018) also discusses that the HR Audit helps in achieving organizational goals/objectives. The job of HR Audit is to boost profitability improving the nature of work and creating value of the organization, and improving its effectiveness (Noe et al., 2017). Palar (2014) explained that the satisfaction of employees regarding the HR policies and practices in any organization is considered a primary quantifiable deliverable of HR Audit. It is not only minimizing the regulatory fines and lawsuits but also ensuring an increase in efficiency and effectiveness. It also gives employees a clear understanding of HR functions, procedures, high retention of best employees, and low turnover rate. The HR Audit covers issues of employees staffing, Training and Development (T&D) of employees, compensation in case of an accident or eventuality, communication between all cadres for sound understanding, HR research, leadership; record maintenance, health and safety, industrial relations, and compliance of all the rules and regulations in real spirit.

In the Pakistani Airline industry, there are issues including over employment/staffing, lack of training, low salary proportions, lack of equipment maintenance, high turnover rate, and the pressurized influence by the local trade unions, envisage the need for audit practice to ensure smooth and greater transparency. Also, right people are not at the right place, even well-educated and qualified people are working at a low pay scale, and vis-à-vis less educated people are working on a high pay scale (Adams & Jacobsen, 1964). The significant reasons for this study are declining the overall industry performance and the ineffectiveness of organizations in the Airline industry due to traditional and outdated HR practices. There is a need for an HR Audit to improve HR and organizational effectiveness. In this study, the researcher examines whether the role of HR Audit has any significant effect on organizational performance, or it is useless to conduct HR Audit.

Thus, this matter needs to be cross-examined that how an effective and well-projected HR Audit system can prove itself to be beneficial for the effective working of an organization. This study has three main questions, including (i) How does HR Department perceive HR Audit in the Airline sector of Pakistan? (ii) How do employees perceive HR Audit in the Airline sector of Pakistan?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Chiu et al. (2018) expounded that there are two types of Audit conducted in organizations i.e. Internal or External. The discussion in the ensuing paragraphs will cover both internal and external Auditors, along with the benefits drawn by using both types of Audits. Internal Auditors have an excellent opportunity to Audit the effectiveness of human resources or to check the internal self-evaluation of the personnel department but may not have enough experience in the performance Audit and/or Audit of human resources. Internal Auditors often have a better comprehension of the organization. They will often be advantageous in comparison with the external Auditors. In contrast, external Auditors provide greater independence and may have had a more significant potential impact on a comprehensive series of business practices. HR Audit should focus on the organization of personnel functions, review corporate strategies, policies, and compliance management procedures

and their impact on employees, communities, and the environment.

Adams et al. (2017) referred to the HRM Action Framework (2011) that defined HRM systems as policies and practices for recruitment, compensation management, deployment, and Training/Career development. Kargar and Farajpour (2009) identify the variables that directly affect the overall performance and conduct of the workforces due to business organization starts to decline, and indicators start showing a loss to the organization especially in the business of airline industry.

2.1 HR AUDIT VARIABLES

2.1.1 POLICIES AND PROCEDURE

Awathappa (2006) illustrates that managerial consistency of techniques, personnel policies, and lawful arrangements can be uncovered through the Audit and Audit also indicate that how well instructions, rules, and regulations are implemented and if not then corrective measures can be initiated to resolve the problems and timely address the weak areas.

2.1.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Zhou (2006) HR Audit is to assure the management and other significant stakeholders that the processes for recruitment and selection for the period have been soundly and correctly followed. Assurance for the recruitment and selection processes used were transparent, relevant, and fair and that necessary approvals and authorizations were granted at the appropriate levels, and it demonstrates fairness, openness, and accountability within our legal requirements. According to Noe et al. (2017), recruitment and selection (R&S) is an integral part of the strategic management of organizations' human resources, which has a series of interconnected elements designed to ensure sustainable long-term success.

2.1.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (T&D)

T&D not only is beneficial for the organization but also for the employees. Falola et al. (2014) debated the importance of the T&D of employees. They emphasized that organizations must invest in their employees and this investment must not be taken as a burden or affliction on the overall budget of the organization because a trained and skilled workforce gives excellent performance and output to accomplish ultimate objectives. It is not wrong to say that organization's success fundamentally relies on excellent employee performance and their outcome.

2.1.4 COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT

Falola et al. (2014) debated the importance of the career development of the employees that organizations must invest in their employees, and this investment must not be taken as a burden or affliction on the overall budget of the organization because a trained and skilled workforce gives excellent performance and output to accomplish end goals of the organization. It is not wrong to say that achievement of any organization mainly dependent on the maleficent of the employee's performance. This excellent performance can only be achieved through a series of training and various level courses, including professional, diploma, and degree courses. On the contrary, It is also observed that those organization who do not invest in their human resource, they always receive a heavy loss and failed to achieve end goals of the organization mainly due to ignorance and bad performance by the employees.

2.1.5 HR PLANNING (HRP)

HRP is an essential process that helps in providing accurate and timely information about recruitment (Aslam et al., 2013). It helps and provides the time frame when hiring the employees, and this timely process saves the extra cost of the organization. Human Resource Planning (HRP) helps in achieving future organizational objectives. Speamerfam (2011) opined that the HR Department is solely responsible for employing the best talent for the organization. For each function of the HR Department, planning is equally essential and required.

2.1.6 HUMAN RESOURCE CLIMATE

Taye (2016) elaborated that the HRM climate has a direct effect on the motivation of employees, or it is said that it has an impact on employee's motivation, morale, and job satisfaction. The quality of this climate can be measured by examining employee turnover, absenteeism, safety records, and attitude surveys. Further, more general training on climate management will prepare the manager to allocate the attention (Desgagne, 2019) more equally.

2.1.7 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Wright et al. (2005) elaborated that the primary aim of HR-performance management is developing the potential capabilities of HR. However, to achieve this, performance management must be by the company's long haul approaches (Kandula, 2006). As Panda and Reddy (2016) explained Performance Management System (PMS) uncover that PMS is significant for evaluating and building up employees as well as in improving organizations outcome as far as profitability, lowering employee turnover, and in satisfying the desires of various partners.

2.1.8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Siddique (2004), the practice of proactive job analysis was firmly identified with the organization's performance. Job analysis is an orderly investigation of a job to figure out what exercises and obligations are incorporated, their associations with different job roles, the individual capabilities essential for the execution of the job, and the conditions under which work is performed. Job analysis typically brings about an expected set of responsibilities in the face of the job description, just as hiring plans. Agunis (2009) said that an establishment of requisite data concerning employees and jobs that human resource experts used to develop such significant reports, for example, job description (JD), is accomplished through Job investigation, work determinations, and performance appraisals.

3 METHODOLOGY

The best source for gathering HR practices information is from the HR managers and senior executives. Thus, this work collects the data comprise of interviews of three HR managers having 40 open-ended questions to allow the respondent to give detailed answers and a sample size of 255 general employees working in the Airline industry of Pakistan at different positions. The questionnaires comprise of 40 different closed-ended questions for the employees. These questions on a 5-point Likert Scale, for statistical analysis using SPSS@22. Each construct has five questions, based on the Likert Scale, to evaluate and weigh the responses of the Respondents given in the scales. The reliability test based on Cronbach's alpha has been considered as a standard data analysis instrument to discover the relation factor between variables. Correlation is utilized to measure the

existence of a notable relationship between variables. Variables in our research questionnaire are embrace from the study of Saleem & Akbar (2015).

4 DATA ANALYSIS

The study follows a mixed-method approach. The qualitative part is comprised of interviews, whereas the quantitative part incorporates statistical analysis. This section also includes the result of the qualitative analysis derived from the interview.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF HR MANAGER INTERVIEWS

4.1.1 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The improvement of HRM should take the perspective of improving social success, making HR approaches and practices that are essential to different stakeholder’s points of view. From Table 1, HR Audit must be conducted periodically so that weak areas are identified remedial measures are suggested keeping in view the prevailing environment, and accordingly, decisions are taken to amend the policies and procedures. Similarly, policies and procedures are made to follow the business according to rules and regulations, and if they are relaxed to give favor to relatives and friends, then ultimately, the business will suffer a loss. Also, nepotism must be discouraged, may it be in any form for the successful, versatile business of the Airline Industry.

Table 1: Policy & Procedure

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
Implementation of policies and procedures?	Fairly satisfied	fairly satisfied	satisfied
regular review of HR Policies and Procedures	No regular Review	Yes periodically reviewed	Reviewed time to time
degree of granting relaxation to the existing policies and procedures	Certain exceptions are given	Yes, relaxations are given.	Avoid granting relaxation
Level of nepotism and favoritism	Encourage reference	Favoritism and nepotism is usually considered	Avoid nepotism and favoritism.

4.1.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

From Table 2, it can be seen that the procedures of “Recruitment & Selection” are available and somewhat followed in almost all the organizations including the Airline Industry. At the same time, it is also observed when merit is not followed, and the candidate is selected based on nepotism and political influence, etc. then it can only be identified through HR Audit that how much loss in all fields the organization is bearing just because of bypassing the criteria of merit.

4.1.3 HR PLANNING

Although in Airline Industry, the turnover is not considered an alarming but natural process in “HR Planning” but it is the HR Audit that can identify the reasons that why the trained human resource moving from one Airline to the other. It may be due to policies or salaries or training or benefits. Table 3, reasons are identified and remedial measures are suggested through HR Audit then it is possible to retain trained human resource, which will be better than new induction or raw human resource and ultimately the organization would be benefitted and will be able to do good business and maintain its reputation in the market.

Table 2: Recruitment & Selection

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
procedure of hiring	Done based on HR planning	After getting approval from the competent authority the position is advertised.	The process includes no of steps from advertising to selection
Recruitment resources	Own database, print media as well.	Newspaper	Web Portal/Print media
Interview process	Through panel that comprises of HR line manager and third party	Through a panel of an expert of HR, recruitment, and technical Dept. head.	By the panel which comprises of HR and concerned department
Final authority to hire?	Authority shared between HR or line Manager	Authority does not lie with particular persons	CEO, Managing Director
criteria to choose the right candidate for a company	Job description	Through different attributes and qualification	Whoever holds an experience of Airline

Table 3: HR Planning

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
Manpower requirement forecast	we get an HR plan from the line manager at the start of the year	ample arrangements to cater for the manpower	Forecast the manpower requirement.
system of internship to meet the emergent manpower requirement	Yes we offer internship	We always have a qualified pool available with us.	Yes, we do have for certain departments
Comments regarding turnover and measures to control?	Turnover is not that much high	Well, turnovers are there	We do track turnover.
perform Gap Analysis	No gap analysis is in practice	Yes, we have an organized system	current performance with desired performance is evaluated
Do you track your staff turnover?	Through the exit interviews process	No tracking	No, we do not.

4.1.4 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training, development, evaluation, and effectiveness are very vital aspects of any profitable business by any organization in the world. Table 4, airline industry lacks a formal training program to a large extent. Further training development strategy is not found in airline No 1.

Table 4: Training & Development

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
Who is responsible for new employee orientation'?	HR Dept., recruitment department	Department Head in consultation with HR	Department and HR Department
Is there a formal training program for employees and managers?	Not formal	To some extent	Yes for certain Dept., where we require certain technical skills
Does the company have clear training in a development strategy?	No strategy.	Yes, they have.	Yes, they have training and development strategies.

4.1.5 COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT

From Table 5, Policies on compensation management are implemented in all three airlines, and these policies are also communicated to all the employees. They are well conversant too, but a periodic review of this policy is not carried out. The only way to identify the weak areas or what better is another Airline is doing in a competitive environment is achieved through HR Audit because

along with the identification of weak areas the remedial actions are also suggested to the policymakers or decision-makers to remain abreast with other airlines in a competitive environment.

Table 5: Compensation Management.

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
What is the current compensation system in your organization?	We set our compensation rates.	DGM takes care of all compensation matters,	Financial monitories are being rewarded to employees.
Has the compensation plan been communicated to all employees?	Yes, policies are communicated.	Yes, the staff is very much communicated.	Yes, we do
Do you compare the company's compensation programs with the market rates?	Salaries of other functionaries are known	The compensation plan is the best and highest paid in the market.	Yes we do

4.1.6 JOB ANALYSIS

Every employee of the organization needs to know the role and responsibilities. Table 6, through the job description and only by following the implemented policies and procedures, an airline in a competitive environment can achieve the set goals of the organization and make the business more successful and profitable.

Table 6: Job Analysis

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
Do you carry out a periodic review of Job descriptions of the staff desk?	There is no system of periodic review.	OD Section caters to staff development.	Yes we do
Are the staffs well conversant with their work requirements?	Yes, JD is very helpful	They know their job description very well.	They are well aware that's why they are working
Do you plan and provide training to staff for job output as per Job description?	It is conducted on a need basis if the line manager feels the need.	Yes, a proper and comprehensive training program is organizes	Yes we do
Does the Job Description relate to the organizational goal?	JDs are always on line basis of roles and responsibilities.	Yes, one has to be very clear on this aspect.	Yes they are

4.1.7 HR CLIMATE

Table 7, Airline engage employees in their organizational goals and provide adequate communication to all employee for the changes in the workplace. In today's fast transforming environment, especially in the field of IT, It is very vital to identify the latest advancement through HR Audit and implement than for a successful business in a competitive environment.

Table 7: HR Climate

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
Are your staffs well integrated to meet organizational goals?	Yes, people know where the company is heading to.	Motivation plays a very vital role in cordial relationships among employees.	Yes they are
Are your offices provided adequate communication facilities?	Yes	requisite equipment is sufficient	Yes, definitely
Are IT Facilities adequate to meet office working requirements?	yes we provide updated Software, networking system, and all IT facilities	Yes almost	Yes definitely

4.1.8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

To accomplish the organization’s desired objectives, Performance management of the employees is very vital as it directly influences the overall performance. Through HR Audit Table 8, the employees are performing according to the JDs, or the performance is going down. It is also identified that the motivation level of the employees is high, and if not then what are the reasons meaning by demonization is due to personal reason or due to working environment, and then it is addressed timely and accordingly so that overall efficiency and performance of the organization should not suffer.

Table 8: Performance Management

Interview Questions	Airline No 1	Airline No 2	Airline No 3
What types of Performance management system do you use?	Graphical rating scale method.	Through performance appraisals reports.	Through EPAs
Do you give constructive feedback to increase employee’s performance?	Performance app forms contain employee signature as well.	Employees are given feedback.	Yes we do
What is the role of supervisor/managers in performance appraisal?	One to one appraisal of the employee is conducted	The manager not only carries out the performance appraisal but also trains the employees to cover the noted weakness.	Very important role
How would you motivate an employee whose performance and moral are going down?	Through counseling or training accordingly.	To remain abreast of all employees and timely resolve the issue.	we motivate them to upgrade their performance
How would you resolve any complaint or dissatisfaction of any employee?	Through counseling.	We use different measures to resolve the problem.	The complaint is always taken care of and resolved
What are the methods or possible ways to review the performance of the employee?	It can be customized according to the job and situation.	Through monitoring on a day to day task or monthly basis	Performance Review should be conducted regularly

4.2 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The ratio of gender is 69% represents males, and 31 % represents female employees who filled the questionnaire of this study. The age group is distributed in 4 brackets where the first bracket 18-25 represents 22.4 %, and the second bracket i.e. 26-35 shows 43.9%, which is the highest among all brackets, whereas, third and fourth bracket demonstrate the percentage of 25.1% and 8.6% respectively. The highest qualification observed in our study was the Masters that represent 50.6% population of the study, whereas intermediate, graduate, and above masters shows 1.6%, 45.1%, and 2.7% percentage, respectively. The data of our study on experience category in the Airline sector indicates that more than 50 % of the employees in the Airline sector possess 5-10 years’ experience, and almost 20% of the sample possesses 15-20 or above 20 years of experience.

4.2.2 RELIABILITY TEST

The reliability of the variables have been calculated separately for each variable; the same is in

Table 9. Values ranging from 0.70-0.89 and 0.55-0.69 show internal consistency as Good and Average, respectively. As we can see, all the variables are acceptable based on a good scale.

Table 9: Reliability Statistics

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Policy & Procedure	0.771	5
HR Planning	.758	5
Job Analysis	.818	5
Recruitment & Selection	.726	5
Compensation Management	.785	5
HR Climate	.837	5
Training & Development	.837	5
Performance Management	0.792	5

4.2.3 ONE SAMPLE T TEST

One sample t-test was employed to find how 255 employees perceived HR audits in their organization. The results in Table 10 all values include policy and procedure (PP), HR planning (HRP), job analysis (JA), recruitment and selection (R&S), compensation management (CM), performance management (PM) and training and development (T&D) values are higher than as specified in the thumb rule. We have tested our data on test value 3 at a 95% confidence interval and two-tale is statistically significant.

Table10: One-Sample T-Test Statistics

Constructs	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Policy and procedure (PP)	14.708	<0.001	0.629
HR planning (HRP)	9.173	<0.001	0.365
Job analysis (JA)	11.825	<0.001	0.520
Recruitment and selection (R&S)	10.193	<0.001	0.426
Compensation management (CM)	9.706	<0.001	0.463
Performance management (PM)	5.233	<0.001	0.232
Training and development (T&D)	6.113	<0.001	0.270
HR Climate (HRC)	8.887	<0.001	0.402
Test value = 3			

5 DISCUSSION

Dehaghani & Samea (2014) expounded that HR review yields positive results in terms of productivity. The research sample includes a significant number of employees. Employees chosen for the study are working employees in 03 different Airlines. After an in-depth analysis of HR practices, it has been observed that the Airline industry of Pakistan is overstaffed, and the organizations, for the most part, want to complete internal HR review over external. A few organizations likewise lean toward the two structures, the outside, and the inside HR Audit.

The Recruitment and Selection (R&S) Audit is the principal variable of the examination, and it endeavors to find the effect of R&S Audit on organizational productivity. The R&S Audit can be a convincing instrument to take an organization towards progress whenever applied accurately and Saleem & Akbar (2015) suggest variables having a significant impact on HR effectiveness. These outcomes are in consent to the literature review. On the HR planning Audit, Yadav and Dhabade (2014) explained that HR planning Audit includes functions of HR yields successful outcomes.

Further, this research exhibit that the Training and Development (T&D) Audit has a critical connection with the efficiency of the organizations in the Airline business as the Airline industry includes costly gear and apparatus.

Lee and Bruvold (2003) found creating aptitudes of the employees ensures excellent execution, and in this way, there is an expansion in the efficiency. The discovering is in agreement with the writing assessed. The other variable, Performance Appraisal Audit, is used to measure the overall performance of the employees concerning organizational productivity. The findings propose that it is also directly related to organizational productivity. The same has also been explained by many researchers in past researches. Iraldo (2009) defined performance Audit effects in terms of general condition and results. It raises the performance in general as well as join the employee's goals with organizational targets in achieving organizational productivity. Berber et al (2012) stated that the Audit of compensation and benefits helps management in retaining the employees, it lessens the turnover rates, and it directly influences the performance of the employees' productivity leading to organizational effectiveness. The same has also been tested in our research findings

HR effectiveness relies on the continuous monitoring revising the policy and procedure. Solaja et al (2016) explained that HR department effectiveness broadly relies on constant reviews of the policy and procedures. Gemar et al. (2019), the absence of an efficient assessment of the human resource management, limit the efforts of better outcomes in the personnel performance, which directly affects the satisfaction of customers and, consequently, the quality of the service.

6 CONCLUSION

Based on the outcome of data analysis, this research conforms to the previous research. The organization followed the criteria of HR Audit has a much better business as compared to one where HR Audit procedures are relatively less followed. It is also quite evident by the data collected that HR Audits practically help the airline in recognizing the grey area and recommending the remedial measures to the leaders so that they can amend the procedures and policies to give better business in the future. HR Audit deviates the risk before it occurs as a danger to the organization at a later stage by being a risk-averse element. It is also evident from the collected data where ever and any field the policies are amended through HR Audit the Airlines perform much better and remain competitive with other Airlines. It is evident from the study that the HR Audit contributes as a significant character in the overall productivity of the organization. This research shows that the execution of regular and strategic HR Audits plays a fundamental contributing part in the Airline industry.

7 AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

The corresponding author will be liable to provide information regarding this paper.

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Kausar Perveen completed her Master's degree in Management Science from MAJU University Pakistan. She is associated with the aviation industry. Her interest includes Recruitment, HR Policy development, workforce planning strategies, talent, performance and Personnel Management.



Dr. Waqar Akbar is an Assistant Professor at SZABIST, PAKISTAN. He got a PhD in Workforce Environment from Universiti Malaya. His research includes Workplace Psychology, Workplace Sustainability, Human Resource Management and Human Behavior.



Kanwal Hanif got a Master of Business Administration, Management Science from SZABIST PAKISTAN. She is associated with the banking industry. She is interested in HRM and Development.

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