

Consequences of the hrm approach to people management management essay

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Human resource management also known as HRM is defined by John Storey as a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques' (Storey, 1995: 5 in Storey, 2007). It can also be seen as the strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets which is the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of a business. HRM has a variety of definitions but it is general accepted that it has a closer fit with business strategy than previous models, specifically people management. Arguably, it has become the dominant approach to people management in most countries. But this is not surprising, knowing its long history of attempts to achieve an understanding of human behaviour in the workplace. Throughout the 20th century and earlier, practitioners and academics have developed theories and practices to explain and influence human behaviour at work (Alan Price 2007). HRM has absorbed ideas and techniques from a wide range of these theories and practical tools. In effect, it is a synthesis of themes and concepts drawn from a long history of work, more recent management theories and social science research (Alan Price 2007). Human Resource Management (HRM) is seen as a more innovative view of workplace management than other models of people management. Its techniques allows the managers of different enterprises to express their goals distinctively so that they can be understood and undertaken by the workforce, and also to provide the resources needed for them to successfully accomplish their assignments. The Human Resources Management (HRM)

function includes a variety of activities, and key among them is deciding what staffing needs you have and whether to use independent contractors or hire employees to fill these needs, recruiting and training the best employees, ensuring they are high performers, dealing with performance issues, and ensuring your personnel and management practices conform to various regulations (by Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD)HRM has been very popular the past couple of years within organisation managers. This model of people management has been proven successful in most occasions, but yet has significantly caused some controversial development e. g. the introduction of fordism. This involved the introduction of a production line and mass production techniques into manufacturing and production of cars. This radically increased workers productivity, as a result, volume of cars that could be produced per hour increased dramatically, and coupled with economies of scale and tight control of the unit cost of production. Some criticized this system which they considered de-skilled and alienated workers. This also occurred when taylorism was introduced during the industrial revolution. Taylorism is an organisation of work system in manufacturing industry in which workers jobs are broken down into simple, repetitive tasks, with managers taking primary responsibilities for making decisions and controlling the flow of work, and in which it was believed that the primary motivation of workers was to earn money. There have been a number of debates over the nature and consequence of human resources management approach to people management. Some of these debates are:

Organisation rise during the industrial revolution: Advancement in technology provided the opportunity for an increase in productivity. This

technology also required the employment of a great number of people with low wages within a single enterprise which resulted into an increase in establishment numbers and the need to coordinate their work effectively. In the 18th century, organisation with larger amount of employees required substantial inputs in an attempt to improve coordination of effort. Initially, this increase in scale was affecting the growth of management negatively until firms moved towards rationalizing their activities. During this period, unemployment increased in the small business sector. This was as a result of a move from agricultural industry as the former primary employer to manufacturing industry as the new primary employer. For the first time, people no longer solely depended on the agricultural sector for job opportunities. (Nelarine Cornelius, 2001)

The human relations school: human relation first pioneered by Elton Mayo and theoretically developed during the Hawthorne studies of the 30s, is an approach to management based on the idea that employees are motivated not only by financial reward but also by a range of social factors (achievement, pride etc). Some of Hawthorne studies explained that workers are not simply motivated by economic self-interest but have complex motives and values. " They are driven by feelings and sentiments as much as by facts and interests, and also act as members of social groups (Scott p. 57). Many attacked the techniques created and developed by the human relations school as just a more indirect and covert attempt at manipulation and exploitation. According to some critics, employee's legitimate economic interests were being subverted and deemphasized, conflict were denied and managed, and the new manager roles were just another form of elitism (Scott p. 61). People like Landsberger

(1958) and Braverman (1974) noted that the human relations school was actually another methodology to increase worker productivity, not to actually improve worker relations. This basically explains the reaction to the failed part of scientific management. Workers alienation and a sense that workers were merely part of the system rather than social beings in their own right.

(Nelarine Cornelius, 2001)Scientific management: This managerial model was developed by F. W Taylor and depicts the importance and major role played by the manager in an organisation. This system broke down jobs into simple and repetitive task, which were developed and implemented under the supervision of the managers. the work performance of employees were optimized through the practise of a careful work study that simplified complex jobs into simple repetitive task whose completion times were calculated and strictly enforced. Workers were viewed as mere economic vessels that needed to be controlled and dictated. (Nelarine Cornelius,

2001)Rise of bureaucracy: A bureaucracy is the combined organizational structure, procedures, protocols, and set of regulations in place to manage activity, usually in large organizations. It is also a legal rational form of organisation, which has specific characteristics that includes job specialization, authority hierarchy, formal rules and regulations etc. The strength of the bureaucracy is standardization. Constant repetition of administration and decision making are a key to success in this situation.

Organisations have a strategic point and many layers of hierarchy. This model is still very common amongst large organisations today. (Nelarine

Cornelius, 2001)Mass production: This is the production of large amounts of standardized products, including and especially on assembly lines. This

technique was first developed by Henry ford along with Taylor during the 1920s. In this system, the fast performance of the work was determined by the speed at which the assembly line flowed. Not the individual who operated the electric motors. (Nelarine Cornelius, 2001)Increasing importance of the role of the manager in organisations: A manager is an individual in an organisation with recognized formal authority, who plans, coordinates and implements the existing directions of the organisation (Koontz et al, 1986). In the late nineteenth century, the UK, USA and Germany were in an intense economic competition between each other. For this countries, the effective management of capital was seen as a priority, as well as securing reliability of production. This was in order to ensure a steady supply of goods to increasing numbers of consumers in their different territories. In the UK in particular, there was a perception that increases in organisation size was a problem, although eventually organisation did rationalize their operations. However, concerns remained about the UK less enthusiastic competitiveness against the might of the Germans and the American economies. In part, it was believed that UK companies needed to promote their goods more effectively, which fuelled a rising interest and eventually, participation and expertise in the coordination of sales and promotional activities. However there still remained a concerned that activities in organisation were not being coordinated effectively, and interest grew in approaches that could be introduced to improve supervisory and managerial activities (Nelarine Cornelius, 2001)In conclusion, after intense study of HRM and its relationship with people management, i am bold to say that I agree with every single bit of the above statement. This is because

although HRM has definitely been controversial the past couple of year, its radical approach to managing and organisation makes it stand out from all other models of employee relations e. g. increase in communication helps a business to be much more successful and diversified. HRM has no restrictions on communication between an employees and his manager. Communication is dealt with directly and not indirectly unlike other models where communication is indirect and restricted to a point. Also in a strategic aspect, HRM decision making is faster than other models, plans are centralised. Also in the managerial role, key managers and management skills are line managers and facilitated. Unlike other models who verge on negotiation.