

Impact of organizational structure on human resource policies and practices

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 03 May 2020
Accepted: 27 October 2020

Keywords

Organization, Simple Structure, Machine Bureaucracy, Professional Bureaucracy, Adhocracy, Human Resource Policies and Practices

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ABSTRACT

Organizations are created to achieve the desired goals through a network of connections between management and organizational structures. Five types of organizational structures are identified by Mintzberg which include but to limited simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisional form, and adhocracy. The human resource management policies and practices could be defined as workforce planning, staffing, recruitment and selection, training and development, career management, reward management, compensation, performance appraisal, employee safety and relation, exit management and HR research. This paper seeks to examine the selected organization's policies and practices. In addition, it also tries to find out the relationship between the organizational structure and HR policies and practices. Both secondary and primary data where 100 persons from different strata were interviewed are used in this study. After analyzing the data of five purposively selected organizations, the study demonstrates that positive relationship exists between organizational structure and human resources management policies and practices.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational Structure (OS) is considered as one of the crucial elements of an organizational success (Carvalho and Cardoso, 2008; Guest and Woodrow, 2012 and Daft, 2010). OS is defined as the hierarchical reporting system and decision making process within the organization (Cohen, March, and Olsen, 1972; Tushman and Nadler, 1978). OS influences employee behavior, reporting pattern or hierarchy, work specification or departmentalization, quality of product or standardization, and power within the organization (Mintzberg, 1979; 1980 and Lunenburg, 2012). In addition, OS helps to design the main HR functions such as workforce planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management and reward management (Mamman and Zakaria, 2016).

Organizational structure, another influencing factor of organizational performance, refers to "the

hierarchical arrangements of various functional elements, the authority framework and the pattern of interrelations of an organization" (Snow et al., 2003).

Evidence suggests that having a clear OS facilitates explicit responsibility, vigorous communication and effective co-ordination; hence improves employee commitment, satisfaction and better organizational performance (Guest and Woodrow, 2012; Yeung and Berman, 1997; Woodward, 1965; Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood, 1980; Walsh and Fahey, 1986 and Pfeffer, 1994). In contrast, an unclear or poor OS leads to chaos, conflict, confusion, complexity, ambiguity, redundancy within the organization (Corkindale, 2011; Barnard and Rodgers, 2000).

Quantitative studies have shown that human resource management (HRM) activities may have direct or indirect impacts on organizational performance (Rose and Kumar, 2006). Moreover,

it leads to miscommunication between employees, poor motivation, unfair appraisal and disappointed performance further produces 'dysfunctional structure' (Milgrom and Robert, 1995). In the light of the above, Alishova, Mamman and Alharbi (2016:82) have 'emphasized the integration of strategic business planning with human resource management (HRM) practices to enhance organizational performance'. But for organizations to be successful, both OS and HR practices are equally important (Schuler, 1992).

Objectives

The prime objective of the study was "Examining the impact of organizational structure on human resources policies and practices". Along with the primary objective, there were some secondary objectives- "Identifying the dominant organizational structures" and "Analyzing the common human resource policies and practices".

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is widely argued that institutions and organizations are the building blocks of modern

societies" (Mamman and Zakaria, 2016: 261). Broadly, an organization can be defined as a network of connections between management and organizational structures in order to achieve the desired goals (Bittner, 1965). Precisely, 'structure' can be seen as a network of complex parts such as divisions or departments in order to control the system (Miller, 1986). So, OS is a system of formal distribution, control and co-ordination of tasks and behaviors. A number of factors have therefore determine OS including; size of the organization, environment, technology, culture, aims, strategies, technical system and power (Aycan et al, 2005: Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood, 1980: Tayeb, 1998; Daft, 2010 and Mintzberg, 1980) in the organization. Besides these factors, role of HR practitioners' (Mamman and Somantri, 2014), trust (Vanhala and Graham, 2015) and market imperfection (Jorgensem, Hafsi and Kiggundu, 1986) also impact the design of the OS. However, in discussing the elements of the OS, Mintzberg (1980) identified five basic parts of an organization, namely: strategic apex, middle line, operating core, techno-structure and support staff. In fact, he called it the 'design parameters', and this is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Fundamental elements of an organization

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Apex: The top management of the organization. For example, Chairman or General Manager (GM). 2. Middle Line: Employees who supervise, check and control, as well as maintain the flow of supply to the operating core. A typical example is the Assistant General manager (AGM). 3. Operating Core: Employees mainly working to produce primary goods and services. Assemblers and sales representatives are good examples. 4. Techno-structure: Experts and analysts who are not included within the formal hierarchy, but who are mainly responsible for administrative tasks; examples are trainers and accountants. 5. Support Staff: Clerical, maintenance or internal support service providers. Examples include the clerks and public relation officers (PROs). 	
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Source: Adopted from Mintzberg, 1979; 1980; 1981; Lunenburg, 2012; Daft, 2010

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the mixed method of social research. Content analysis method encompasses studying scholarly articles and books, reports

produced by the organizations. Case study method applied to analyze the organizations. The organizations included Mena Market, Bangladesh Civil Service, University of Manchester, Hollywood, and Starbucks.

After the bibliographical and documentary research, we conducted interviews with research subjects that were intentionally defined considering the objective of the research. The perspective of the formal ruling coalition was understood from the interviews.

A structured questionnaire survey on 100 employees of selected organizations was conducted by email and in-person. A 5-point Likert was used to understand their opinion. Classifications of employees are mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2: Classification of employees in each organization

Position of the employees	Number
Top level employees	4
Mid-level employees	4
Operating level employees	4
Techno Structured employees	4
Supporting Staffs	4

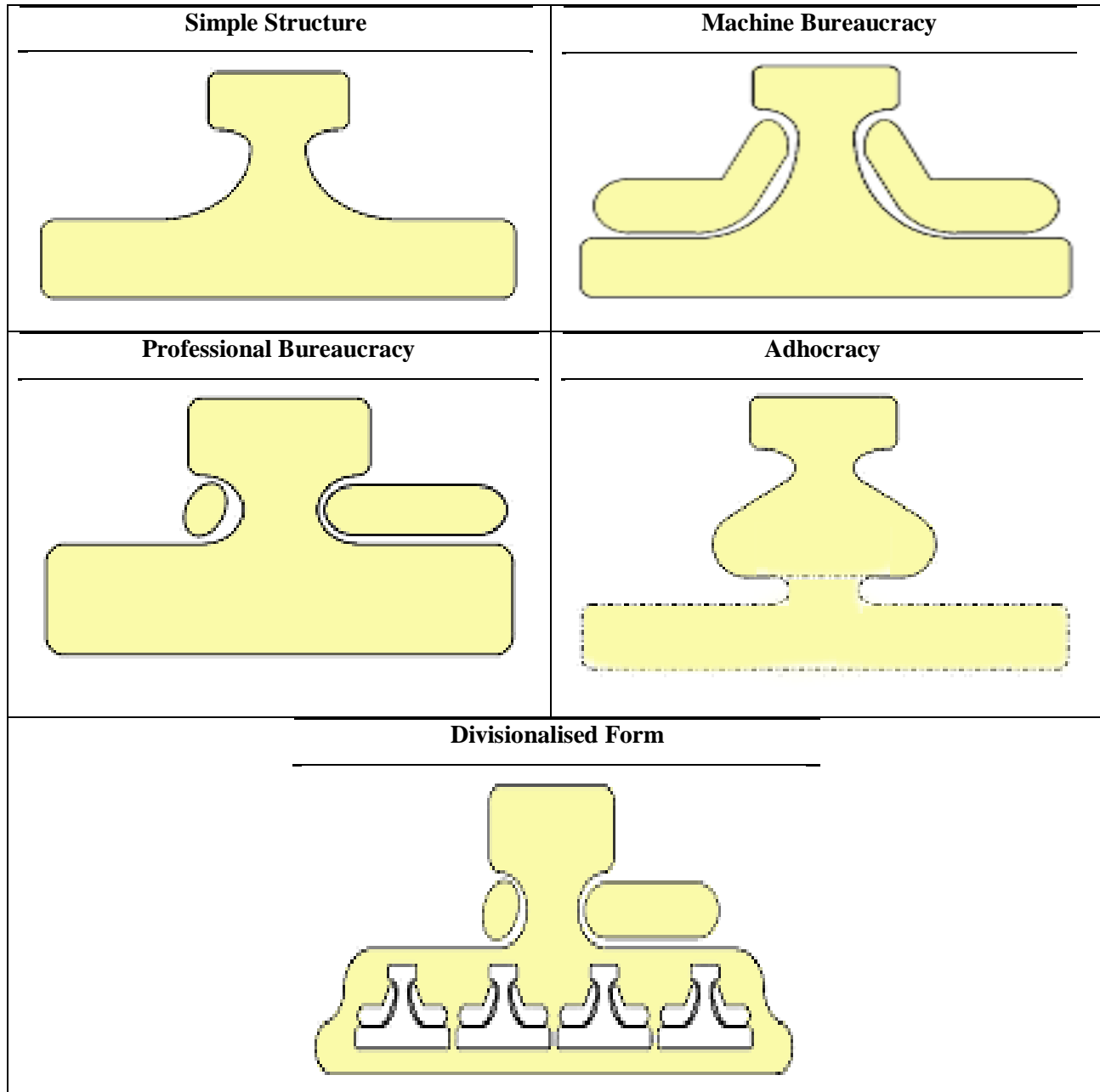
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The typology of the OS has been described variedly. Earlier, Mintzberg classified OS into five types. These are simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisional form and adhocracy (Mintzberg, 1979 & Daft, 1986) (Figure 1). Later on, a number of scholars (Hitt and Ireland, 1986; Lunenburg 2012, Leifer, 1988; Jorgensen, Hafsi and Kiggundu, 1986 and Begin, 1991) analyzed OS on the basis of Mintzberg's (1979) classification with either the same or different typology. For example, Hitt and Ireland (1986) discussed a divisionalized form in the name of 'functionalized structure', whereas Jorgensen, Hafsi and Kiggundu (1986) renamed the simple structure as the 'octopus structure'. In addition, a new form of structure named missionary forms was also added in literature by Begin (1991). Recently, Parikh (2016: 1048) revealed two new types of OS as 'network structure' and 'political and charismatic structure'.

Similarly, another classification was given by Weir (1995) within the context of UK firm. To him, there are six types of OS namely; Unitary (U), Holding (H), Multidivisional (M), Transitional Multi-divisions' (M^T), Corrupted Multi-divisional (M^C), and mixed (X). However, the most widely accepted and discussed classification is Mintzberg's (1979) classification.

HR POLICIES AND PRACTICES

We live in two 'different worlds'-the world of theory and the world of practice" (Mamman, 2009:22). Theoretically, HRM policies are viewed as a crucial asset for any organization (Mamman and Rees, 2004). The principal aim of HRM is to make the workplace a place where people are motivated to accomplish their duties, and eventually prosper, either as an individual or the organization as a whole (Mamman, 1990). This is achieved through deploying HR policies into practice (Legge, 1995). In practice, the HR practices include workforce planning, staffing, recruitment and selection, training and development, career management, reward management, compensation, performance appraisal, employee safety and relation, exit management and HR research (Mamman and Zakaria, 2016; Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna, 1984; Mondy and Noe, 1993; Yeganeh and Su, 2008; Mamman and Rees, 2004; Carvalho and Cardoso, 2008 & Rees, Mamman and Braik, 2007). Similarly, Barnard and Rodgers (2000: 1017) also identified three dimensions of HR practices as "internal staffing, employee development and employment stability". However, HR practices differ from one organization to another, from one society to another and from a local to a global operation (Melahi, 2007; Gooderham et al, 1999; Rosenzweig and Nohria, 1994 & Mamman and Kulaiby, 2014). In a nutshell, in spite of differences, HR policies and practices have a huge influence in determining organizational performance.



(Sources: Mintzberg, 1979; 1980 & Bolman and Terrence, 2003)

Figure 1: Image view of organizational structures

FINDINGS

"A work system cannot deliver the goods when it is in conflict with current culture, system and resources" (Mamman, 1998:88). At one side, OS influences employee's behavior and organizational activities which significantly determine organizational success (Covin and Slevin, 1988). On the other hand, organizational success is also

largely dependent HR practices (Schuler, 1992). So, both concepts (OS and HR Practices) are mutually interdependent, interconnected and influence one another. Woodward (1965) opined that clear OS leads to organizational profit and unclear OS leads to organizational problems. Similarly, clear HR policies and successful implementation of policies into practices yields better organizational performance (Wood, 1999).

More recently, Alexandros et al (2016) study on 168 SME managers in Eastern European Countries revealed that the OS has positive effects on HRM practices.

For a better understanding, the impact of OS in designing HR policies and practices is further explored in the subsequent paragraphs using Mintzberg's (1979) classification with pragmatic and hypothetical examples.

Impact of Simple Structure: The case of Mena market

'Mena Market' a department store located in a small city of 'X' country, mainly sells groceries i.e. rice, meat, fish, bread, oil and other daily necessities and also runs a small restaurant. The owner is a local businessman, apart from his active involvement, he has 20 employees. Linked to simple OS, the Mena Market owner (strategic apex) recruited and selected employees informally, without screening, test or examination. He only posted an advert saying "workers wanted" at the entrance of his shop and in the local newspaper. Similarly, no screening, test or examination was conducted before selecting his employees. In most cases, no formal training was required, as the store used simple technology. Generally, the performance of the employees is evaluated individually by the strategic apex (the owner), who also doubles as the supervisor. However, pay, benefits, remuneration and rewards are fixed informally. Surprisingly, there is no concern for employee safety, reward or pension benefits. 'Mena Market' agrees with Mintzberg's description that with simple OS a "little of its behaviour is formalized"(Mintzberg, 1979: 307).

Impact of Machine Bureaucracy: The case of the Bangladesh civil service

The Bangladesh civil service is an old, large and traditional bureaucratic organization, where the responsibilities of the main HR activities lie on the Ministry of Establishment (MoE) and Bangladesh Public Service Commission (Siddiquee, 2003). In terms of recruitment, the BPSC formally advertise vacancies through the daily and national newspapers. The selection process involves formal screening of the applications, competitive

examination, physical testing and an interview. Prior training is not required, however on-the-job training is mandatory. This is intended to familiarize new entrants to the standard operating procedures, formalization of behavior and rules and regulations within the service. In the same line, standardized and formal performance appraisal is conducted annually by the senior officials. In addition, the government has clear, open, inflexible and standard pay, reward and remuneration policy for all civil servants.

Impact of Professional Bureaucracy: The case of the University of Manchester

The University of Manchester, a proud and distinctive academic institution in the UK, aims to attract renowned and distinguished scholars in different disciplines (Pullan and Abendstern, 2004). Over the last ten years, the university has been ranked among the top 50 Universities in the world (University of Manchester, 2016). The university has more than 38,000 students and 12,000 staff and is ranked as the largest employer in Greater Manchester, UK (Ibid, 2016). As a professional bureaucratic OS, recruitment is based on advertisement at both national and international levels, including national and international newspapers and the university's website. This is because the university needs multi-dimensional skilled teachers, researchers and staff. As the University recruits highly skilled, trained and professional academics and staff, minimal on-the-job training may be expected occasionally. However, performance is evaluated not annually, but as and when the issue of reappointment occurs. The pay and reward policy is different and flexible and is fixed on the basis of skills, knowledge and discipline, but is usually very high. The most important element of reward in a professional bureaucracy is 'autonomy' (Mamman and Rees, 2004).

Impact of Adhocracy: The case of Hollywood

Hollywood is a film industry, where human capitals are independent, creative, innovative and professional (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1998). Considering the nature of the environment, the industry selects innovative, flexible, open minded, creative and adaptable employees who can

contribute their ideas and concepts to the industry. As the technology used is sophisticated, prior training, experience and skills are a prerequisite for selection. However, on-the-job rigorous training is also pivotal in keeping employees updated on the ever changing environment. Performance appraisal is neither standardized nor formalized, but based on the individual's contribution and decision making ability in a complex situation. Pay and reward are linked to individual performance and are usually very high.

Impact of the Divisional Structure: The Starbucks - a coffee chain shop case

Starbucks is an international chain coffee shop founded in 1971 from Seattle, USA (Tu, Wang

and Chang, 2012). This coffee shop operates in more than 70 counties with 24000 branches (Starbucks, 2016). Over the years, it has developed a standardized menu, food quality standards and uniform for employees. In terms of recruitment, the branches follow the broad organizational guidelines. Employee training and indoctrination is pivotal as it enables them to adapt to the international working environment. In terms of performance appraisal, divisional heads (middle line) enjoy little freedom in evaluating employee performance on the basis of 'standardized behavior' determined by the Headquarters (HQ). In addition, payment and reward are also standardized and regulated by the HQ.

Table 3: Organizational structures and its influences on HR activities

Organizational Structures	Recruitment and Selection	Training and Development	Pay and Reward	Performance Appraisal
Simple Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal recruitment; • Subjective selection, usually on a temporary basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prior training required • Short term indoctrination to familiar work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed informally • Low pay • Usually no reward and benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal and individually based on close supervision by apex leader.
Machine Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal advertisement; • Formal examination and screening for selection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the job training is pivotal in order to familiarize with standard and formal behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, formal, extensive and standardized pay including reward policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal through prescribed form and appraised by immediate supervisor.
Professional Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement-nationally and internationally; • Diversified knowledge and expertise based selection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum training is required as employees are highly skilled and professional in their roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-formalized pay and reward policy based on the worth of professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not highly formalized; completed by a small group of senior professionals.
Adhocracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified, flexible, experienced, highly skilled and more focused selection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous, systematic and rigorous life-time training is required to adopt to rapid and complex change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to the high level of skills required, so salary is high, attractive and motivated but not standardized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluated on the basis of decision making ability in a complex and changing environment.
Divisionalized Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment based on standardized policy and guidelines formulated by HQ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term training located at the divisions or HQ in order to familiarize with standardized work processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, formal and standardized pay and reward system, under the broad guidelines of HQ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually done by division but final and ultimate approval authority retain in the HQ.

(Sources: Adopted from Begin, 1991 & Mintzberg, 1980; 1979)

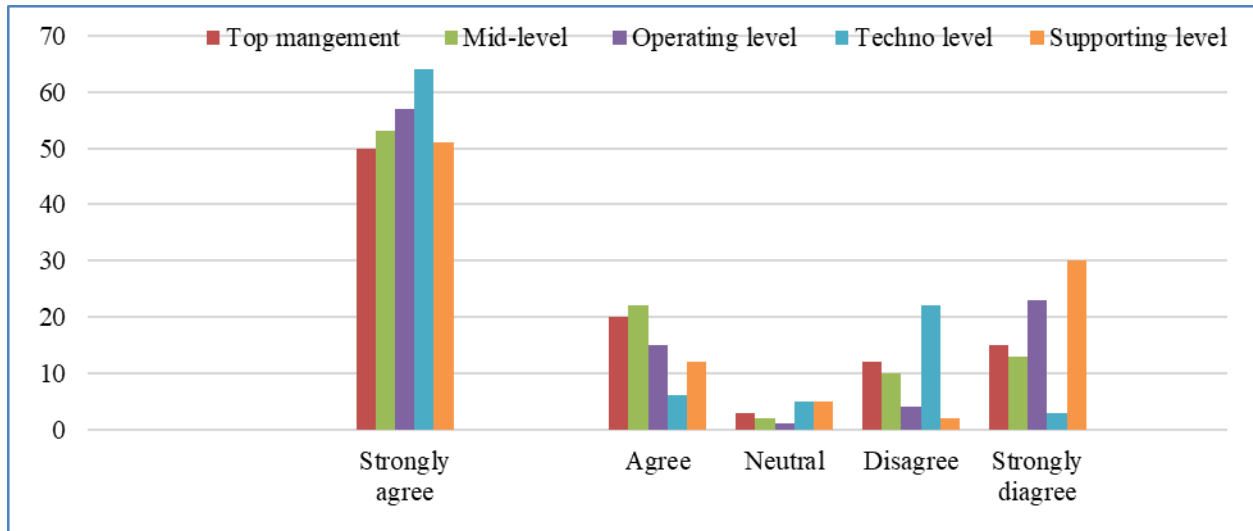


Figure 2: The opinion of different level employees about the impact of organizational structure on Human Resource policies and practices.

The structured questionnaire survey on 100 employees has provided more insightful picture in this study. The survey inclined to the impact of the organizational structure on human resource management policies and practices. The study found that 50%, 53%, 57%, 64% & 51% employees of selected level are strongly agreed that organizational structure has impact on the human resource management policies and practices (Figure 2).

On the other hand, highest 32 per cent supporting level staffs are strongly disagreed. Likewise, 23 per cent operating level managers have the same view. However, only 3 per cent techno level employees are strongly disagreed. Similarly, the apex percentage of disagree is 23 which is among techno level employees.

Overall, it can be said from the graph that employees have a strong agreement on the impact of organizational structure on human resource policies and practices.

DISCUSSION

Given the altruistic analysis, it is clear that organizational structure has a great influence in designing HR policies and practices (Table 2). Despite this widely held view, there are other

overlooked factors that heavily impact on organizations' HR policies and practices. These include government policy and intervention, globalization and role of HR managers. Firstly, government legislations (Gooderham, et al, 1999) and/or interventions (Mamman and Nankervis, 2002) have obvious impact on capital structure, ownership structure and competition of organizations. For instance, the Omanization, Soudization and Emiratization (Rees, Mamman and Braik, 2007) are national programmes aimed to recruit more native employees in public and private sector organizations instead of foreign employees. Secondly, globalization can also influence organizational design and change the OS (Samle, 2008) this subsequently impacts on HR functions (including policies and practices). Mamman et al (2013:119) study revealed that globalization has improved the management and business practices of Malaysian organizations. Finally, HRM professionals was seen as the 'drivers' to design, modify and terminate HR policies and practices (Yeganeh and SU, 2008). Additionally, it also found from the survey that employees of all strata in selected organizations are mostly agreed about the impact of organizational structure on human resource policies and practices.

As expected, this paper may fail to address the issues pragmatically and methodologically. Despite these limitations, reviewing a vast body of literature and exploring concise, proper, relevant hypothetical and practical examples may construct the opportunities for researchers to conduct longitudinal studies to observe the impact of OS in designing HR policies and practices in the future.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, whatever the OS is, the ultimate object of HRM policies and practices is to achieve the desired environment where both employees and employers would interchange their outward value and views. There is therefore the need for organization congruence (Mamman, 1992). Finally, the vivid relationship between OS and HR activities can be comprehended in the concept of 'Ubuntu philosophy-a belief system'(Mamman and Zakaria, 2016), where the populace belief that HR policies and practices heavily depends on the OS as "brotherhood" and "sisterhood" (ibid, 247).

After analyzing the data which was collected through structured questionnaire interview from 100 respondents, it was found that organizational structure has a profound impact on the human resource management policies and practices. Even though the different organizational structures have diverse impact on human resource policies and practices. Additionally, another important finding of the study that human resource management and organizational structure have significant impact on organizational performance. Therefore, it could be concluded that the proper management of human resources, as the study suggested, through sound and effective HR practices, policies and programmes can positively improve organizational performance.

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