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## **Do Human Resource Management Practices Really Matter in Augmenting Task, Contextual and Adaptive Performance of Employees? Evidence from the Banking Sector in Sri Lanka**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Although there is a plethora of studies examining the relationship between human resource management (HRM) practices and employee performance in developed countries, there is still a dearth of such studies in the context of developing countries. The thrust of the notion is that the findings of the studies that have been arrived from one context cannot be applied to another context owing to differences and variations on the use of HRM practices. Consequently, the study aimed at examining the influence of HRM practices on task, contextual and adaptive performance of employees working in the banking sector. Using a self-administered questionnaire, data were garnered from conveniently chosen 164 employees, and the formulated hypotheses were tested with Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings of the study revealed that HRM practices have a significant positive, but varying degree of influence on task, contextual and adaptive performance of employees. Laconically, the study has contributed to the existing stock of knowledge in the sphere of HRM. It behoves HR managers and practitioners to design well-thought-out HRM practices for augmenting employee performance.

**Keywords:** Adaptive performance, Banking sector, Contextual performance, HRM practices, Task performance

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## 1. Introduction

Globalization forces organisations to reshape their organisational strategies, structure, and methods to deal with business settings in the modern world. Human resource management is one of the specified strategic approaches to gain competitive advantage by effectively managing organisations' individuals. HRM practices are a concept that contains a set of policies and practices specially designed to confirm the organisation's workers contribute toward the attainment of organisational objectives (Delery & Doty, 1996). Organisations adopt various types of human resource management practices to manage, develop and inspire the employees in the organisation. Consistent with Opatha (2009), dimensions of human resource management practices embrace job design, job analysis, human resource planning, recruitment, selection, hiring and induction, performance evaluation, training and development, career management, pay management, welfare management, management of incentives, employee movements, health and safety management, discipline management, grievance handling, and labour relation.

The best use of HRM practices is the organisation's lifeblood contributing vastly to the success of the business. HRM department in an organisation becomes responsible for shaping employees' behaviour and attitudes. It pushes the organisation to satisfy the goal. As in today's trend, the foremost challenging job of the employer is to attract talented employees and to keep them longer in organisations. By and large, dissatisfied employees will not stay longer and perform well in their jobs (Akaegbu, 2014; Raigama, 2010). Employee performance has a knock-on effect on various outcomes of the organisations such as turnover, stress, promotion, job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, involvement, etc. As a result, the influence of human resource management practices on employee performance in developing countries has become an important area to explore.

Relatively there is little published research on HRM practices and multi-dimensional construct of employee performance. There is dog-eat-dog competition in the banking sector of late, and consequently, the success of the banks is dependent on their employees' performance. Therefore, there is a compelling need to understand the extent and nature of the relationship between HRM practices and employee performance. Designing and implementing effective human resource management and practices are extremely required to facilitate the development of an effective and high-performing workforce (Akaegbu, 2014; Becker & Gerhrat, 1996; Fahad, Nadeem & Samsaa, 2014). The majority of studies operationalised worker performance as a one-dimensional construct. Despite the arguments of earlier researchers (Borman & Motowildo, 1993; Campbell, 1990; Demortier et al., 2014; Fluegge, 2008; Koopmans et al., 2011; Murphy, 1989; Tsui et al., 1997), employee performance is a multi-dimensional construct. This indicated that studies that operationalised employee performance as a one-dimensional construct had not comprehensively captured the accurate measurement of employee performance. In this regard, Borman, Klimoski, and Ilgen (2003) argued that three aspects of employee performance (task, contextual and adaptive performance) provide a unique contribution to enhancing organisational effectiveness. The present study fills this gap by looking at the multi-dimensional construct of employee performance. Succinctly, the present study aims to determine

the influence of HRM practices on individual components (task, contextual and adaptive performance) of employee performance.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Primarily, all the functions of a business organisation depend upon financial, technological, and human resources. Despite the extent to which an organisation uses modern and up-to-date technology and significant financial resources, its ultimate success is down to the workers' efficiency, effectiveness, and enthusiasm (AlBastaki, Abu Keir, & Arbab, 2019). The efficient and effective management of workers is carried out through HRM practices. HRM practices complement each other and are more comprehensive and worthwhile when looking at them from an integrated view (Lepak, Bartol, & Erhardt, 2005). Notably, individual work performance is an issue that has not only grasped companies all over the world but also fuelled an incredible amount of research in the fields of management. The job performance of employees in an organisation can be maintained at an optimal level by paying a great deal of attention to and improving HRM practices regularly (Munjuri, 2011). The concept of employee performance has been operationalised as a one-dimensional concept by many scholars (Ahmad & Shahzad, 2011; Munjuri, 2011; Salihi & Umar, 2016).

Nonetheless, performance is later operationalised as a "multi-dimensional" concept. Taken together with previous studies, task performance is an essential dimension of individual work performance. Task performance can be defined as the proficiency with which one performs central job tasks. Anderson and Ostroff (1978) stated that a good match between the individual and the work environment is necessary to facilitate positive work-related attitudes and behaviours. Succinctly, fit between individual preferences and organisational culture is likely to influence positive work attitudes and behaviour such as performance. Blackburn and Rosen (2003) stated that members of work teams need strong skills regarding task performance. Most recently, Raveendran (2021) confirmed the positive relationship between transaction leadership and task and contextual performance with a sample of 378 development officers working in the District and Divisional Secretariats in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

Chandrakumara (2007) provides a theoretical foundation and empirical evidence on the impact of HRM fit on citizenship and task performance. The analysis is based on 433 survey responses from managers and employees of seven manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka. A hybrid type of research design was adopted to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings confirm that higher HRM fit results in higher task performance and that HRM fit is most important for task performance than citizenship behaviour. Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010) found that engagement mediated the relationship between value congruence, perceived organisational support, core self-evaluations, and task performance. A study based on a sample of 245 firefighters found that engagement mediates the relationship between HRM practices and task performance. Johnson (2011) evaluated the extent to which supervisors consider task and contextual performance to describe the relative weight of overall performance. Evidence supported that the adaptive performance dimension of handling work stress is an aspect of task conscientiousness. Keith, Matthew, and Peter (2014)

found that cognitive ability measures added incrementally to the prediction of absenteeism and citizenship performance. The organisation adopts a strategic mission that weighting contextual performance more than task performance experiences less adverse impact during the selection process. Lee, Sablynski, Burton, and Holtom (2018) found that positive psychology can directly affect job performance. Job embeddedness of employees would encourage their task performance. Thus, it can be hypothesized that

### **H1: HRM practices are positively related to task performance**

In recent years, contextual performance has emerged as an important aspect of overall job performance. Contextual performance can be defined as “individual behaviour that supports the organisational, psychological and social environment in which the technical core must function” (Borman, 1993). Dwayne and Dion (2010) tested the direct of organisational justices on contextual performance, counterproductive work behaviour, and task performance. Data were collected from 211 employees across nine organisations from the private and public sectors in a developing country. They found that organisational justice has a significant impact on counterproductive behaviour, task, and contextual performance. Omar, Naser, and Samir (2014) researched intending to identify the concept of excellence, its organisational requirements, and various model. The results showed that organisational excellence policies such as empowerment, training, and wages have a significant impact on contextual performance.

Fiona et al. (2015) conducted interesting research titled “mutual gains or conflicting outcomes? How HRM benefits professionals”. The primary aim of the study was to examine the direct importance of mutual employment relationships. The study used a sample of 215 New Zealand professionals to assess the relationship between commitment-oriented HRM practices, work satisfaction, work-life balance, and contextual performance. They found that commitment-oriented HRM practices enhance professional contextual performance. Amna, Huadong, and Karin (2015) examined the linkages between the employees’ intrinsic and extrinsic and their task and contextual performance in Pakistani health care hospitals. They found that intrinsic motivation is related to task performance, and extrinsic motivation is related to the task and contextual performance and such relationships mediated by affective organisational commitment. Taken together with earlier studies, it can be hypothesized that

### **H2: HRM practices are positively related to contextual performance**

The adaptive performance has been widely studied at different levels from individuals to broad cultures and entire nations. Individual adaptive performance can be defined as coping behaviour or adjusting behaviour to the changing demands of a fast-growing, rapidly changing environment (Pelin, Selahattin, & Mert, 2014). Moreover, individual adaptive performance is more critical for coping with the fast-changing world and gaining a competitive advantage (Stokes, Schneider, & Lyons, 2010). Previous studies undertaken by many scholars suggested that organisational factors like organisational policies and innovative climate, transformational leadership, learning, and organisational structures had a positive effect on adaptive performance (Garg & Krishnan, 2003; Han & Williams, 2008).

Tabiu, Pangil, and Othman (2018) researched the link between HRM practices and employees' performance in the Nigerian public sector. A total of 265 participants from local government areas were selected. The results indicated that HRM practices such as job autonomy, career planning, and job rotation significantly impacted adaption. Umar, Yammama, and Shaibu (2020) studied the implications of e-HRM practices on job performance. They employed a quantitative approach with the survey from 214 academic and non-academic staff in five higher institutions in the northern part of Nigeria. The results found that e-compensation and e-communication were positively related to adaptive performance; nonetheless, e-performance appraisal and adaptive performance were not significantly related. Therefore, considering the contradictory findings in the literature on the relationship between HRM practices and adaptive performance, it can be hypothesised that

### H3: HRM practices are positively related to adaptive performance

### 3. Methods

Data were collected from employees working in commercial banks in Sri Lanka. The study was carried out in a non-contrived or natural environment where events usually happen. The unit of analysis is an individual-level, and the data were collected at a cross-sectional time horizon. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and of which 169 questionnaires were returned. Out of those returned, 164 were found to be usable, yielding an active response rate of 82%. The most popular convenience sampling technique that was widely used in business management research was employed. Among the respondents, 91 were males representing 55.5%, and the remaining 73 were females representing 44.5%. The majority of the respondents were married, representing 56.7%, and the remaining 43.3% were unmarried. 20.1% of respondents fell between 19 to 25 years, 38.4% between 26 to 35 years, 25% between 36 to 45 years, 11.6% between 46 to 55 years, and just 4.9% of respondents were over 55 years. The detailed description of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Respondents' profile**

Profile	Category	n= 164	%
Gender	Male	91	55.5
	Female	73	44.5
Marital Status	Single	71	43.3
	Married	93	56.7
Age	19 to 25 years	33	20.1
	26 to 35 years	63	38.4
	36 to 45 years	41	25.0
	46 to 55 years	19	11.6
	56 and above	8	4.9

Name of the bank	BOC	51	31.1
	HNB	19	11.6
	People's Bank	38	23.2
	Commercial Bank	27	16.5
	Sampath Bank	11	6.6
	Seylan Bank	18	11.0
Position	Manager	10	6.1
	Assistant Manager	20	12.2
	Staff	134	81.7
Experience	Less than one year	14	8.5
	1 to 3 years	53	32.3
	4 to 7 years	51	31.2
	More than 7 years	46	28.0

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*n= Sample size*

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(Source: Survey Data)

### **Measures**

HRM practices were measured using a scale originally developed by Gould-Williams and Davies (2005). A sample item includes “a rigorous selection process is used to select new recruits”. As advised by Hair et al. (2016), items loaded less than 0.5 were discarded. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement on each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The present study confirmed its reliability ( $\alpha=.81$ ).

Employee performance was measured with a multi-dimensional performance scale developed by Koopmans et al. (2012). Sample items include “I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort” (task performance), “I took the initiative when there was a problem to be solved” (Contextual performance), and “I worked at keeping my job skills up-to-date”. The scale items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The scale shows high reliability on task ( $\alpha=.75$ ), contextual ( $\alpha=.77$ ), and adaptive performance ( $\alpha=.88$ ).

## **4. Results**

Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses with the help of SmartPLS version 3 software. The present study also met the criteria for the use of PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2016; Wong, 2013). Before testing hypotheses, the reliability and validity of the model were first examined. The reliability of the measure was tested using composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. Construct validity of the model was tested based on both convergent validity and discriminant validity.

**Table 2. Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and Average variance extracted**

	CR	CA	AVE	HRMPs	Task Performance	Contextual Performance	Adaptive Performance
HRM practices (HRMPs)	0.865	0.805	0.563	(0.750)			
Task performance	0.833	0.750	0.502	<b>0.780</b>	(0.709)		
Contextual performance	0.842	0.768	0.518	<b>0.686</b>	<b>0.477</b>	(0.720)	
Adaptive performance	0.905	0.875	0.615	<b>0.682</b>	<b>0.408</b>	<b>0.533</b>	(0.784)

*Composite Reliability (CR); Cronbach's Alpha (CA); Average Variance Extracted (AVE); The square root of average variance extracted(AVE) in parenthesis; Correlation between constructs in bold*

(Source: Survey Data)

Referring to Table 2, the convergent validity was confirmed based on both factor loadings and AVE (Average Variance Extracted): the factor loadings are roughly 0.7 and over, and AVE for all variables is well above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2016; Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). The discriminant validity was confirmed based on two approaches (outer loadings and the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations-HTMT). The results show that outer loadings onto relevant construct were greater than cross-loadings of the items with other constructs, and values of HTMT were less than 0.85. Thus, the study confirmed the discriminant validity of the instrument used. The study also assured the reliability of the measures (CRs are greater than 0.8 and Cronbach's Alpha values for all the variables are above 0.75).

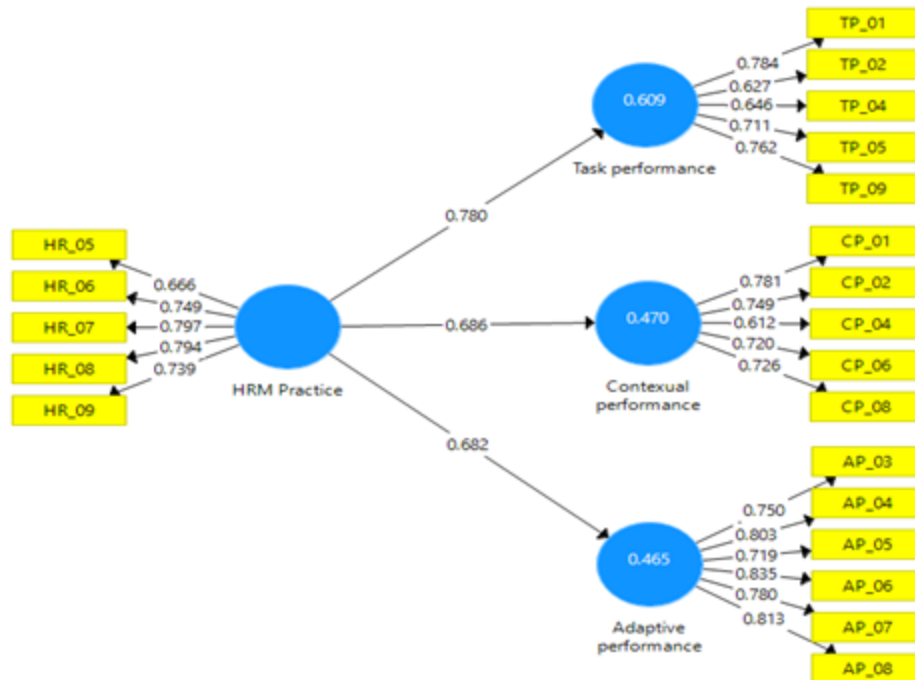
**Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis**

	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
HRM practices	4.0874	0.45134	-0.242	-0.182
Task performance	4.1213	0.45185	-0.545	0.031
Contextual performance	4.1669	0.43462	-0.662	0.560
Adaptive performance	3.9573	0.58392	-0.544	0.377

*Mean (M); Standard Deviation (SD)*

(Source: Survey Data)

As shown in Table 3, the mean value of HRM practices, task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance are 4.09 ( $SD=0.45$ ), 4.12 ( $SD=0.45$ ), 4.17 ( $SD=0.43$ ), and 3.96 ( $SD=0.58$ ) respectively indicating that on average respondents were on agreement with the statements. When considering the Skewness and Kurtosis, it could be concluded that data were distributed normally.



**Figure 1. Relationships among HRM practices, Task performance, Contextual performance, and Adaptive performance**

Referring to Figure 1, the path coefficient for each path was statistically significant ranging from 0.682 to 0.780. The path coefficient between HRM practices and task performance is statistically significant ( $\beta=0.78$ ,  $t=27.169$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). As shown in Table 4, the path coefficient had a large-size effect (1.556). Thus, the H1 predicted that HRM practices are positively related to task performance is supported.

The path coefficient of HRM practices and contextual performance is also significant and has a large-size effect (0.877- see Table 4). Thus, the H2 predicted that HRM practices are positively related to contextual performance is supported ( $\beta=0.69$ ,  $t=18.118$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). Similarly, the relationship between HRM practices and adaptive performance is significant and has a large-size effect (0.870- see Table 4). Thus, the H3 predicted that HRM practices are positively related to adaptive performance is supported ( $\beta=0.68$ ,  $t=16.615$ ,  $p<0.000$ ).

**Table 4. Effect Size**

	<i>F</i> <sup>2</sup>
HRMPs → TP	1.556
HRMPs → CP	0.887
HRMPs → AP	0.870
<i>Effect size (F<sup>2</sup>)</i>	

(Source: Survey Data)



As can be seen in Table 5,  $R^2$  for HRM practices on task performance is 0.606; on contextual performance is 0.467 and on adaptive performance is 0.462. On balance, HRM practices influence employee task, contextual and adaptive performance to a great extent (see Marko, Christian, & Joe, 2017).

## 5. Discussion

The present study established relationships among HRM practices, task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance based on the data gathered from 164 employees working in a Commercial bank, Sri Lanka. The study identified that HRM practices have a significant positive influence on task performance. Our model revealed that HRM practices influence 60.6% of task performance in the study context. The findings of this study are consistent with some earlier studies (e.g., Alfes, Amanda, & Catherine, 2012; Bilalal & Naintara, 2011; Chandrakumara, 2007; Keith, Matthew, & Peter, 2014; Lee, Sablynski, Burton, & Holtom, 2018; Tabiu, Pangil, & Othman, 2016; Williams & Fiona, 2005). Secondly, the study found that HRM practices affect contextual performance. The coefficient of determination for the effect of HRM practices on contextual performance was 0.467 explaining that HRM practices influence 46.7% of contextual performance. The finding of this study is also congruent with other scholars (e.g., Amna, Huadong, & Karin, 2015; Dwayne & Dion, 2010; Fiona, Alan, Jing, Zhang, Ian, & Andrew, 2015; Namrita & Bhawana, 2019; Umar, Yammama, & Shaibu, 2020; Van Scotter, Motowidlo, & Cross, 2000). Thirdly, there was incontrovertible evidence that HRM practices positively affect adaptive performance, indicating that 46.2 % of adaptive performance is influenced by HRM practices, consistent with earlier studies (e.g., Garg & Krishnan, 2003; Han & Williams, 2008; Pelin, Selahattin, & Mert, 2014; Tabiu, Pangil, & Othman, 2018). Although earlier studies identified the impact of HRM practices on contextual performance is greater than task and adaptive performance, the present study revealed that the impact of HRM practices on contextual performance is lower than task performance but greater than adaptive performance.

### Theoretical and practical implications

The findings of the present study divulged that the HRM practices act as major determinants of each component of employee performance (such as task, contextual and adaptive). In the context of Western countries, a considerable amount of studies focused on the effect of the bundle of HRM practices on individual components of employee performance (Alfes, Amanda, & Catherine, 2012). Nonetheless, in the context of developing countries, there is bereft of such studies. The current study confirms that the influence of HRM practices varies from country to country and sector to sector. Consequently, the study made substantial theoretical and geographical contributions. Empirically research studies are hitherto far less focused on the banking sector; banks are major contributors to Gross Domestic Product in Sri Lanka. Thus, the study made another significant contribution to the national economy. The study further contributes to future researchers by providing a concrete platform for further needful studies in different sectors with moderating and mediating effects of other notable factors. Other studies emphasise the importance of transactional and transformational leadership styles in enhancing employee performance (Raveendran and Gamage, 2018).

Besides the theoretical contribution, the current study has also made practical implications. Foremost, the findings of the study emphasize the importance of understanding the individual components of employee

performance. Therefore, organisations should avoid merely focusing on the employee's task performance. The findings of the study also provide a clear framework of the effect of the bundle of HRM practices on individual components of employee performance. Measuring the bundle of HRM practices and individual components of employee performance can be a fruitful measure because employee performance in the organisation is the emergence of combined HRM practices. Nowadays, organisations provide attractive training packages to employees to make them cope with changes in technology; it will lead to an increase in employee performance. Even though job rotation systems are in practice, the organisation should take necessary actions to improve in a job rotation system to eliminate the boredom of employees.

Further, there is no doubt that proper implementation and management of HRM practices lead to improved employee task, contextual and adaptive performance. Through enhanced employee performance, an organisation can achieve higher organisational performance as well as sustain longer in competitive businesses. Job security, training, career development practices should be updated from time-to-time following changes in the business world. On balance, the study urges that HR managers and practitioners should carefully focus on designing the best HRM practices to augment employee task, contextual, and adaptive performance.

Although the study has made several insightful contributions, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The findings of the study may not be generalized to all sectors; hence replicating the study by widening sectors will be worthwhile. Another important limitation was its design—cross-sectional research design. Making the casual relationship between variables may be dubious, and thus, longitudinal studies are warranted. The study applied the self-reported scale to measure HRM practices and employee performance, and consequently, there is a portent of self-perception bias. Future studies may consider the link between HRM practices and employee performance combined with mediating and moderating variables.

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