The Need of Strategic Human Resource Management for the Development of Information Technology in Libraries

Dr. Humera Mah Jabeen

Chief Librarian, Govt. Post Graduate College for Women, Satellite Town, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Abstract. Human Resource management contributes to mission accomplishment. Integration of human resource management into the library planning process increases HR's ability to anticipate its readers' needs. The management of library human resources is an essential part of how a library is going to attain its targets. The alignment of human resources management implies to integrate decisions about workforce with decision about the outcomes an organization is trying to achieve. Diversity, staffing, retention, personnel development, and workers quality are the key areas to focus. When these areas are well planned and successfully implemented, they lead towards the accomplishment of library's mission with the help of right people with right skills and in the right positions. The main objectives of the research was to appraise the prevailing status of Human Resource Management in Pakistan's libraries, its affects on the process of strategic management, Development of IT projects and library services. To pursue these objectives, the researcher deployed the case study method. Only those Libraries were included in the sample which were rich in resources, have at least 0.1 million bound volumes, providing access to HEC digital Databases, had at least four professional librarians at the time of data collection. Selected libraries were either going through the strategic planning process or about to start on it. This study was a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods. Self administered questionnaire surveys and semi-structured in-depth interviews were selected for data gathering instruments. The results show a strong relationship between human resource management and development of strategic management in libraries. Staff development, employee motivation, job satisfaction are the areas which are badly neglected.

Key words: Strategic management, information technology, library services, Human resource Management

---

1. Introduction

In a fast paced, globally competitive environment, efforts to boost production and quality never end. To make libraries more responsive to the demands of the users, new library forms are appearing such as virtual libraries, electronic libraries, and digital libraries. The new forms imply the participation of workers at all levels and appreciate team work. These changes are necessary for competitive library environment and are characterized by human resource development in a high tech work place which believed on motivation and reinforce ever-increasing skills. According to David (2010) "The process of empowering managers and employees has almost limitless benefits...It represents a logical, systematic, and objective approach for determining an enterprise's future direction" (p.26). Workers who have been scared of the unpleasant side effects of downsizing and increasing global competition are in almost every sector of the library.

The term Strategic HRM is used to refer the wisest possible use of people with respect to the strategic needs of organization. It needs an integrative framework that systematically links HR activities with strategic library needs. The goal of this approach is to develop a map and a timeline to ensure alignment between HR strategy and general library strategy which results in the form of long and short term plans. HRM involves five major areas; staffing; retention; development; adjustment and managing change. Giving his views on the impact of human resource management on the development of strategic management Alkhafaji, Abbass F (2003) said

> *Human resource systems provide support to top management for implementing the organizational strategy by providing the people, skills, and systems to facilitate and reinforce the behavior required. Matching the organization's human assets with its strategy can require changing the individuals assigned to a job or changing the behavior of the individuals in their positions. It is the task of human resource management to provide the means to do either. This is done through systems for planning, staffing, appraisal, compensation, and rewards. (p.137)*

Development of human resources lies at the core of the knowledge-productive organizations, like libraries and universities. This process includes the participation of employees at all in levels. Noe, Hollenbeck & Gerhart (Eds) (2009) consider that:

> *HRM can help organizations find and keep the best possible fit between their social system and technical system. Organizations need employees with broad skills and strong motivation. Recruiting and selection decisions are especially important for organizations that rely on knowledge workers. Job design and appropriate systems for assessment and rewards have a central*

> *role in supporting employee empowerment and teamwork. (p. 59-60)*

Strategic HRM means getting everybody from the top of the organization to the bottom doing things to implement the strategy of libraries effectively. According to Morgan (2001) Library staff should embrace the incessant change by getting more involved in strategic issues or at least be strategically aware. Strategy can be discussed in terms that are relevant to the staff-concerned-jargon-free and making relevant connections without being patronizing. Rumei, G. (2004) said that "Building a modern library needs a rational and well equipped workforce with a high level of professionalism."

Mah Jabeen (2004), Ramzan (2009) and Mirza (2014) identified a number of challenges faced by Pakistan's libraries in application of information technology. The most important librarians lack of knowledge of IT potentials, lack of proper IT training, inadequate budget, lack of standard library software, fears of technology, and librarians' ineffective role in IT decision-making. Anwar and Warriach (2013) stated "New forms of information, diversified needs of users and the growing alternatives to get the information are the major challenges faced by the information professionals. Information professionals are required to learn the new technologies and the associated skills to cope with these developments, particularly those professionals who did not get any training regarding the new technology during their professional degree". Mirza and Mahmood (2009) said that "web-based services in GULs of Pakistan are in their infancy." They recommended that the successful implementation of web-based services in university libraries of Pakistan can be possible only in the presence of strategic human resource management. Hussain et al. (2008) mentioned that all LIS professionals consider unavailability of Strategic Human Resource management the major challenge for effective use of digital libraries in Pakistan. Kanwal and Gorman (2009) had the view that only trained information professionals can efficiently provide services for better use of the HEC databases. Warriach and Ameen (2010) stressed on the need of Human Resource Management to promote the use of valuable HEC databases in Pakistan

Library management needs to concentrate on a wide variety of strategies or techniques to face the challenges caused by changing technology. The management and development of library human resources is imperative. THEJA & WRG (2007) explored that establishing a shared motivating vision, open communication, participative management; appropriate staffing and training are important strategies to practice human resource management in libraries to provide efficient and effective services in the new technological environment. Librarians have no powers to take decisions regarding the strategic management of library. Libraries are affected by the management styles of parent organization Awan (2003) says that

> *Libraries of Pakistan have been under continuous change. The managers of the libraries need to be skillful and innovative in*

order to benefit from change in this era of information flood and knowledge explosion. Contrary to the past, the libraries of today are no more traditional organizations. The stirring demands from society, to keep pace with change, and to adopt innovation in management styles, operations, service processes and procedures are a resultant of the internal factors. And decrease in funds, increasing expectations of library users, diverse sources of information, socio-economic and political as well as technological, forces are externally compelling libraries to redefine their role. University libraries of Pakistan must change with the broadening horizon and ever-shifting milieu. These are neither an awe-inspiring place nor sheltered shrine of reading materials but, are living organisms (PLA News).

By discussing the organizational culture in Pakistan Awan (2009) reveals that

The cultural atmosphere, attitudes of library personnel, vision of library managers and realization of university authorities, still need to be improved. In a developing country with limited resources, optimal utilization of available resources, and the delivery of effective and efficient services is a contemporary challenge. But the irony of fate is that in most cases the library authorities and personnel lack pragmatic planning, required motivation, requisite initiative, and desired devotion. There is hardly a concept of applying management techniques to enhance the ability of resource utilization, to manage operations and to extend services.

To get maximum benefit from our library resources, we must concentrate on strategic Human Resource Development. The field is generally characterized as vulnerable with respect to the strategic human resource management. The importance of technology to the information professions is undeniable. We can get benefit from technology only if it is properly planned and managed. Library and information technology development projects must incorporate strategic human resource management to attain success.

2. Methodology

This study was designed to describe the relationship between the Strategic Human Resource management, the effect of Human Resource Management on organizational culture and services and how it affects the information technology development plans in libraries. The researcher established the focus of the study by forming hypothesis about strategic human resource management, information technology and library services.

3. Hypothesis

i. There is a significant relationship between Strategic human resource management and information technology development in libraries.

ii. Human resource management affects the library Services.

The researcher deployed the case study method to investigate the above said relationship. Multiple real life cases were selected by the researcher to examine the in depth state of affairs. Convenient sampling was used for data collection. Selected libraries were rich in resources, have at least 0.1 million bound volumes, providing access to HEC digital Databases, had at least four professional librarians at the time of data collection.

Study was conducted in three phases. In the first phase of research, a comprehensive review of literature was carried out. In the second phase, case study research was conducted. Fifteen libraries from different cities of Pakistan were selected for this purpose. Only those libraries were selected which either were going through the strategic planning process or about to start on it. Self-administered questionnaire surveys were selected for data gathering instruments. The researcher developed two questionnaires for this purpose, one for librarians and other for library users. Likert Scale of five options was used for taking the concern of respondents:

1. Strongly disagree   (SDA)
2. Disagree   (DA)
3. Undecided   (UD)
4. Agree   (A)
5. Strongly Agree   (SA)

First type of the questionnaire was for the professional librarians. It was comprised of statements based on strategic management model and human resource management, 16 statements related to IT development in Pakistan's libraries. Second was for library users to apprehend the real situation. General information regarding IT development in library operations was also collected. On some occasions non-participant observation, although occasional, casual and informal, and some organizational habits were noted.

Reliability Test: Chronbach's Alpha
After careful revision of questionnaires items and replacement of weak items, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability of variables was measured by using SPSS 16.0.

Table 1 Chronbach's Alpha value of four variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
Strategic Management	0.809	25	Human Resources	0.830	16
Information Technology Development	0.853	20	Library Services	0.759	30

Table 1 indicates the Chronbach's alpha value of the subscales. The Chronbach's Alpha value of the strategic management variable was 0.809, human resources valued 0.830, information technology development valued 0.853 and the Chronbach's Alpha reliability of library services valued 0.759. Andy Field (2005) said that "Reliability analysis can be used to measure the consistency of a questionnaire…..Chronbach's Alpha indicates the overall reliability of a questionnaire and values around 0.8 are good" (p.676). The reliability of the questionnaires shows that scale items were reliable, consistent and valid to measure the opinion of respondents.

4. Data Analysis

Case study results are directly related to the common reader's everyday experience and facilitated an understanding of the need of strategic human resource management in libraries. It unveils the relationship between strategic human resource management and development of information technology in Pakistan's libraries. It also discovers the association between strategic human resource management and library services provided in Pakistan's environment. By including both quantitative and qualitative data, case study helps to explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis, 1997 as cited by Zainal, 2007).

SPSS 16.0 (statistical package for social sciences) and Microsoft excel was used for performing statistical analysis. General information about libraries operations was given in the form of a graph.

The analysis of the variables relating to the status of computerized library operations shows that fourteen(93.33%) of the respondents libraries had computerized their library catalogues, ten (66.67%) had computerized their acquisition routines, eleven (73.33%) had automated the serial section, eight(53.33%) had computrized the circulation, seven(46.67%) library administration, four(26.67%) management information system, and three (20%) accounting system of the libraries included in the sample were computerized.

In this study inferential analysis is based on hypothesis testing. Hypothesis is a supposition about a population. Cresswell and Clark (2007) said that "analyzing the data consists of examining the database to address the research hypothesis (p.131). Hypothesis testing is the more popular method reported in the research literature (Wiersma, 2000, p.345)
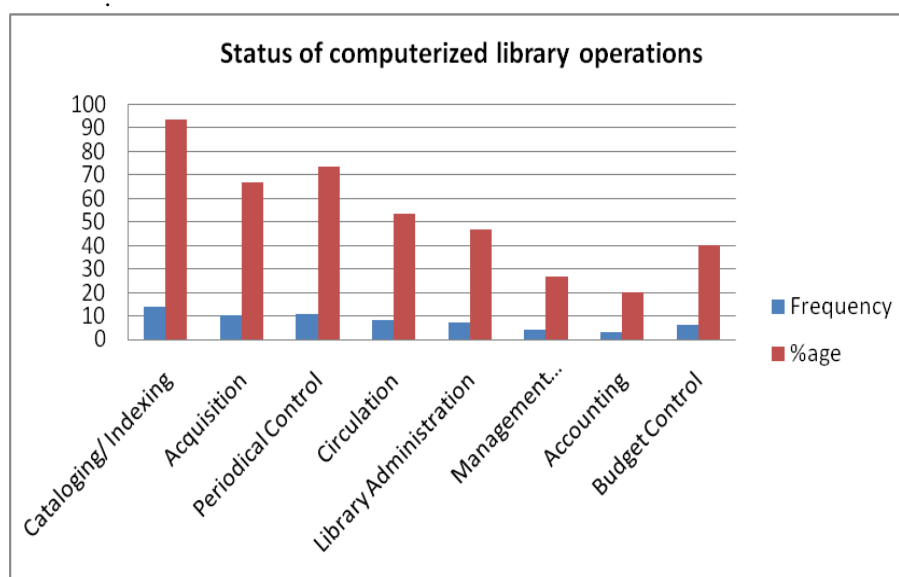
Hypothesis I
Strategic Human Resource management affects the Information Technology development plans in libraries
As the type of data was ordinal, therefore non parametric tests were applied. The correlation among variables was measured through Spearman correlation as Andy field (2005) said that when the type of data is ordinal "they are said to be non-parametric and Pearson's correlation is not appropriate. Therefore, Spearman's correlation coefficient is used." (p.129).

*Table 2 Strategic Human Resource Management * Information Technology Development*

Correlations			Strategic HRM	IT Development in libraries
Spearman's rho	Human Resource	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.528
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000

		N	85.000	85.000
	Information Technology Development in libraries	Correlation Coefficient	0.528	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	85.000	85.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows the output for a spearman correlation on the variables strategic human resource management and information technology. Underneath each correlation coefficient both the significance value of the correlation and the sample size (*N*) on which it is based, are displayed. Each variable is perfectly correlated with itself and so r=1 along the diagonal of the table. The results show that information technology has relationship with strategic human resource management variable with correlation coefficient (r= 0.528**) and significance value $p<.001$. It indicates the strong relationship between human resource management and information technology variable. Strategic human resource management in libraries makes IT projects successful. Due to absence of strategic human resource management in Pakistan's libraries, Information technology projects are shoddily affected.

Hypothesis II
Strategic human resource management affects the library Services.

In order to test the second hypothesis, chi-square test was applied to check the association among variables. Strategic human resource management is a predictor variable and library services is dependent variable in this hypothesis.

Table 3 Strategic Human Resource Management * Library Services
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.650[a]	4	**.005**
Likelihood Ratio	7.302	4	**.121**
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.883	1	**.009**
N of Valid Cases	85		

a. 6 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

Table 3 indicates that the Chi-Square test statistics is 14.65 and p-value comes out to be 0.005which is less than 5% stating that there is significant association

between strategic human resource management and library services. With the improvement in level of strategic human resource management the level of library services will also improve. More efficient the librarian in availing the opportunities and facing the challenges of current global environment, more satisfied the user would be.

5.   Conclusion

i.   The challenge of creating and sustaining 'smart' libraries with 'smart' people at all levels is probably greater now than it has ever been. Libraries are facing tough challenges. They require quite different set of attributes and skills than the current workforce and their organizational culture.

ii.   Pakistani librarians are not clear about the strategic management in libraries. There is a gap between librarians' knowledge of information sources and services and ongoing development in information world.

iii.   Without the development of human resources, the implementation of strategic management in libraries is not possible. The field is generally characterized as vulnerable with respect to the strategic management training. Not even a single course of strategic management is introduced at Master, M.Phil or Ph.D level.

iv.   Library schools in Pakistan lack expertise and facilities needed to teach students strategic management techniques and the latest technological developments. Refresher courses for library staff are not conducted on regular basis.

v.   Librarians are not upgraded and motivated in line with policies applied in developed countries. Lack of job satisfaction and commitment make it difficult to plan and implement strategies successfully.

vi.   No research literature is available on strategic Human Resource management in Pakistan's libraries. Syllabi of Pakistani library schools are obsolete and not updated with the frequent changes in management techniques and technologies.

6.   Recommendations

1.   To get maximum benefits, information technology projects in libraries should be developed strategically and workforce of the libraries should be equipped with strategic management techniques and latest technologies which ensure the development of library services that concretize the benefits of the information society to the grassroots of communities.

2.   Library administrators and boards should strive to avoid the social and financial exploitation of the library professionals. Process of promotion must be speedy and regular. Librarians must be upgraded and motivated in line with policies applied in developed countries.

3.   Professional body or bodies chartered or recognized by law and authorized to promote professionalism and standards should play their role.

4. To successfully meet the challenges of internal and external environment, librarians must be authorized to take strategic decisions, make long and short term plans, implement, evaluate and control them.
5. Professional education and accreditation system that ensures dynamic human resources development in this area is direly needed. Strategic management course should also be included in library science syllabi.
6. Appraisal and reward system should be introduced in libraries. The criteria used to appraise the performance should be well defined and reflect strategic goals and plans.
7. Libraries should give high priority to the continuing education and training of staff in order to raise staff competency and quality. Recruitment, induction and training of appropriate staff should be done.

References

Alkhafaji, A.F. (2003). *Strategic Management: Formulation, Implementation, and Control in a* Dynamic *Environment*. New York: Haworth Press, Inc.

Anwar, U., & Warraich, N.F. (2013). Status of Digital Novice Academic Librarians' Continuing Professional Development: A Case of University of the Punjab. *Pakistan Journal of Library and Information Science, 14*, 33-37

Awan, M. R. (2003). Implementing quality management systems in university libraries. *Pak*-LISNews, July, 3, (5). Retrieved from: http://www.paklag.org/news/newsarchive/news0307.htm#ed

Awan, M. R. (2009). Relationship among Leadership style, Organizational Culture and Job Commitment of University Librarians. Unpublished M.Phil thesis, University of the Punjab Lahore, Pakistan.

Creswell, J. W. & Clark, V. L. P. (2007). Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research. Sage Publications Ltd, USA.

David, F. R. (2009). Strategic Management: Concept and Cases, 12th ed, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Hussain, A., Mahmood, K. and Shafique, F. (2008), "Perceptions of LIS professionals about digital libraries in Pakistan: the Pakistani perspective", Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship, Vol. 9 No. 1, Spring, available at: http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v09n01/hussain_a01.html.

Kanwal, A. & Gorman, G.E. (2009). Information and digital literacy: a stumbling-block to development? A Pakistan perspective. *Library Management, 30(1/2)*, 99-112

Mah Jabeen, H. (2004). Strengthening Information Technology in Pakistani Libraries. Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, Lahore: University of the Punjab.

Mirza, M.S. & Mahmood, K. (2009). Web-based Services in University Libraries: A Pakistani Perspective. *Library philosophy and practice*

Mirza, M.S. (2014). Library Services at International Islamic University Islamabad: Academic Excellence in 21st Century. *Pakistan Journal of Library & Information Science, 45(4)*, 2-14

Morgan, S., (2001) Change in university libraries: Don't forget people. *Library Management,* 22, l-2

Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., & Gerhart, B. (Eds). (2009). *Fundamentals of human resource management*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.

Rafique, M., & Ameen, K. (2013). Digiization in university libraries of Pakistan. *OCLC Systems & Services:* International *digital library perspectives, 29(1)*, 37-46

Ramzan, M. & Singh, D. (2009). Status of information technology applications in Pakistani libraries. *The Electronic Library.27 (4),* 573-587

Rumei, Guo (2004). Constructing library networks with Chinese characteristics: bringing about society-wide sharing of information resources. *The International Information & Library Review,* 36, 283–29 www.elsevier.com/locate/iilr

Saddique, A. (2006), "Status of the services of the information resource centre, University of the Punjab: an appraisal", unpublished Master's thesis, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Theja, K. A. & Wrg, D. S. (2007). Library automation: strategies for library human resource management. *Journal of the University Librarians.*Vol.11, 98-110

Warriach, N. F. & Ameen, K. (2010). Perceptions of LIS professionals regarding use of Pakistan National Digital Library databases. *Electronic Library. 28(1),* 108-121

Wiersma, W. (2000). Research Methods in Education: An Introduction. USA: Allyn and Bacon.