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Effect Of HR Practices On Employee Productivity And Organizational Outcome

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Abstract

In the context of increasing globalization and competitive pressures, organizations are increasingly reliant on effective human resource management (HRM) practices to enhance organizational performance. This study examines the relationship between selected HRM practices—employee incentives, training, selective hiring, job security, and decentralization—and organizational performance, drawing on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV). Data were collected from 430 respondents and analyzed using reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques. Reliability results confirmed acceptable to good internal consistency for all constructs. Correlation analysis revealed that all HRM practices were positively and significantly associated with organizational performance. However, multiple regression results indicated that only decentralization and self-managed teams had a significant positive effect on organizational performance when controlling for other HRM practices. Incentives, training, job security, and selective hiring did not show significant positive effects in the multivariate model, with selective hiring exhibiting a significant but negative relationship. The findings underscore the importance of empowerment-oriented HRM practices and suggest that decentralization plays a critical role in enhancing organizational performance.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Strategic HRM, Organizational Performance, Decentralization, Employee Empowerment.

Introduction

In recent years, globalization has intensified, leading to greater economic integration among countries as foreign trade expands through advancements in technology and connectivity (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). This trend has heightened competition in both domestic and international markets, prompting organizations to focus more on attracting and retaining highly skilled employees. Many firms rely heavily on their workforce to achieve a competitive advantage, making organizational success closely tied to the effectiveness of human resources and human resource management practices (Collins, 2021). Human resource management (HRM) encompasses activities such as workforce planning, recruitment, training and development, compensation management, performance management, employee relations, workplace health and safety, employee well-being, and the delivery of employee services. These policies and practices are designed to enhance organizational performance, employee engagement, and overall quality of work (Khan & Abdullah, 2019).

Strategic human resource management focuses on attracting, developing, rewarding, and retaining employees for the benefit of both the individuals and the organization. The best result from strategic human resource practices occurs when an organization's HR department works closely with other departments. This collaboration helps HR understand their goals and create strategies that support those objectives, as well as the organization’s overall aims. Consequently, clear positive changes can be seen while staying aligned with the organization’s goals.

Today, human resource management is essential within organizations. It sets important policies and practices. Significant changes in global trends pose challenges for HR management, which must effectively handle a diverse workforce. Strategic human resource management is a key part of HR practices that helps implement HR policies to achieve organizational goals (Mathis and Jackson, 2008).

Over the past decades, many studies have examined the impact of strategic HRM practices on organizational performance. Previous research shows that effective HR practices improve company performance by boosting employee productivity, reducing turnover rates, and increasing sales and profits (Huselid, 1995; Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Delery and Doty, 1996). When discussing HRM and Strategic HRM, it's clear that Strategic HRM focuses on implementing strategic changes and developing the organization’s skills to ensure it can compete effectively in the future (Holbeche, 2004). SHRM supports the development of human capital to meet the needs of business strategy, ensuring that organizational goals and missions are achieved (Guest, 1987).

Human Resource Management (HRM) is grounded in the view that employees represent the most critical asset of an organization and that organizational success is largely determined by how effectively this asset is utilized. For HRM to contribute meaningfully to organizational performance, human resource frameworks, policies, and operational processes must be systematically formulated and consistently applied.

HRM encompasses a broad range of practices aimed at overseeing employees across all stages of their employment journey, beginning with recruitment and concluding with separation from the organization. These practices include, but are not limited to, strategic human resource management, knowledge and talent management, organizational development, workforce resourcing, performance appraisal systems, employee learning and skill development, reward and compensation structures, and the management of employee relations (Phiri, 2022).

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) focuses on aligning human resource policies and practices with long-term organizational objectives by deliberately shaping employee competencies, attitudes, and behaviours. In contrast to traditional HR approaches that concentrate primarily on administrative responsibilities, SHRM adopts a proactive and integrative role that positions human resources as a strategic partner in organizational planning. Consequently, SHRM serves as a vital mechanism for enhancing both employee effectiveness and organizational competitiveness (Orji, 2022).

Literature review

1. Theoretical Foundations of HR Practices and Organizational Outcomes

The link between human resource management (HRM) practices and organizational outcomes has been extensively discussed in management literature. Strategic HRM theory suggests that employees constitute a critical source of competitive advantage and that organizational effectiveness depends largely on how human resources are managed and aligned with business strategy (Delery & Doty, 1996). HR practices are designed to develop employee skills, motivation, and commitment, thereby enhancing productivity and performance.

Pfeffer (1998) argued that organizations adopting high-performance HR practices—such as selective hiring, extensive training, and performance-based rewards—achieve superior organizational outcomes. Similarly, Snell and Dean (1992) emphasized that integrated HR systems enhance workforce competence and encourage behaviours that support organizational goals.

2. HR Practices and Employee Productivity

A substantial body of empirical research confirms that effective HR practices positively influence employee productivity. Huselid (1995) demonstrated that structured HR practices significantly reduce employee turnover while improving productivity and corporate financial performance. Training and development programs enhance employees' skills and efficiency, while performance appraisal systems provide clarity of expectations and motivation for higher output (Delaney & Huselid, 1996).

Compensation and reward systems are also strongly associated with employee productivity, as they motivate employees to exert greater effort and align individual performance with organizational objectives (Becker &

Gerhart, 1996). Additionally, performance management practices promote accountability and continuous improvement, which directly contribute to improved employee output.

3. HR Practices and Organizational Outcomes

Beyond individual productivity, HR practices have been found to influence broader organizational outcomes such as profitability, service quality, and market performance. Becker and Huselid (1998) reported that firms with well-designed HR systems achieve higher levels of operational efficiency and financial performance. HR practices foster a positive organizational climate that enhances employee engagement and collective performance, leading to improved organizational outcomes.

Research also suggests that strategic alignment of HR practices with organizational objectives strengthens long-term competitiveness (Wright & McMahan, 1992). Organizations that invest in human capital development are better positioned to adapt to changing market conditions and sustain superior performance.

4. Mediating and Moderating Factors

Several studies highlight the importance of mediating and moderating variables in the HR practices–performance relationship. Employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and engagement often mediate the impact of HR practices on performance outcomes (Guest, 1997). When employees perceive HR practices as fair and supportive, they are more likely to exhibit discretionary behaviours that enhance productivity.

Organizational context and leadership support also moderate the effectiveness of HR practices. Delery and Doty (1996) noted that the success of HR practices depends on contextual factors such as organizational strategy and industry characteristics.

5. Strategic Human Resource Management Perspective

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) focuses on aligning HR policies with long-term organizational strategies. According to Guest (1987), SHRM emphasizes the development of human capital to achieve organizational goals and competitive advantage. Unlike traditional HRM, which is often operational, SHRM adopts a proactive approach by integrating HR decisions into strategic planning processes.

Holbeche (2004) further argued that SHRM enables organizations to build future capabilities by investing in employee development and organizational learning, ensuring sustained performance and adaptability.

Conceptual Framework Discussion

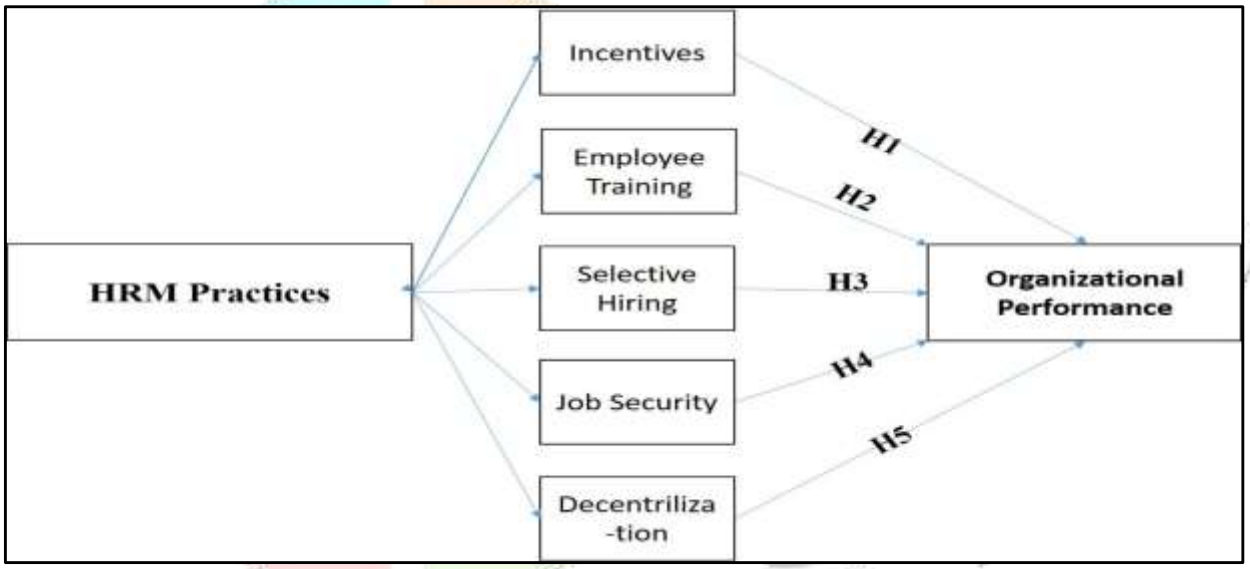
The conceptual framework of the present study examines the effect of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on organizational performance, drawing on the principles of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm. The framework proposes that HRM practices

function as strategic mechanisms through which organizations develop and leverage human capital to achieve superior performance outcomes (Wright & McMahan, 1992; Barney, 1991).

HRM practices are treated as the independent variable, operationalized through five key dimensions: incentives, employee training, selective hiring, job security, and decentralization. Organizational performance is positioned as the dependent variable, reflecting the outcomes generated through the effective management of human resources.

The framework suggests that each HRM practice exerts a direct and positive influence on organizational performance. This assumption aligns with prior research demonstrating that well-designed HR systems enhance employee motivation, skills, commitment, and discretionary effort, which ultimately improve organizational efficiency and competitiveness (Huselid, 1995; Becker & Huselid, 1998).

HRM Practices and Organizational Performance



Incentives and Organizational Performance

Incentives refer to both financial and non-financial rewards provided to employees based on their performance. According to expectancy theory, rewards motivate employees to exert higher effort when they perceive a clear link between performance and outcomes (Vroom, 1964). Empirical studies have consistently shown that incentive-based compensation systems enhance employee productivity and organizational performance by aligning individual goals with organizational objectives (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1992; Becker & Gerhart, 1996).

Employee Training and Organizational Performance

Employee training focuses on developing employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform their roles effectively. Human capital theory posits that investments in employee development increase workforce productivity and organizational value (Becker, 1964). Empirical evidence supports this view, indicating that

training programs improve employee performance, innovation, and adaptability, thereby contributing positively to organizational outcomes (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Tharenou et al., 2007).

Selective Hiring and Organizational Performance

Selective hiring involves attracting and selecting individuals with the appropriate skills, attitudes, and cultural fit. The Resource-Based View emphasizes that acquiring high-quality human capital creates a sustainable competitive advantage because such resources are valuable and difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991). Research shows that organizations with rigorous recruitment and selection practices experience lower turnover and higher performance levels (Huselid, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998).

Job Security and Organizational Performance

Job security reflects employees' perceptions of stability and long-term employment prospects. Social exchange theory suggests that when employees perceive organizational support through job security, they reciprocate with higher commitment and performance (Blau, 1964). Empirical studies demonstrate that job security enhances employee loyalty, engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviors, which positively affect organizational performance (Kalleberg et al., 2006; Guest, 1997).

Decentralization and Organizational Performance

Decentralization refers to the delegation of decision-making authority to lower levels of the organization. From an empowerment perspective, decentralization increases employees' sense of autonomy and responsibility, leading to improved motivation and performance (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Empirical research indicates that decentralized structures foster innovation, faster decision-making, and improved organizational effectiveness (Delery & Doty, 1996; Lawler, 2005).

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance represents the extent to which an organization achieves its strategic objectives and may be measured using both financial and non-financial indicators, including productivity, profitability, service quality, employee retention, and overall efficiency (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). The framework assumes that HRM practices influence organizational performance by shaping employee attitudes and behaviors that drive organizational success.

Hypotheses Development

Based on the conceptual framework and the supporting literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Incentives have a significant positive effect on organizational performance.

H2: Employee training has a significant positive effect on organizational performance.

H3: Selective hiring has a significant positive effect on organizational performance.

H4: Job security has a significant positive effect on organizational performance.

H5: Decentralization has a significant positive effect on organizational performance.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to examine the internal consistency of the measurement scales used in the study. Internal consistency reliability assesses the extent to which items within a construct are interrelated and consistently measure the same underlying concept. In social science research, Cronbach's alpha (α) is the most commonly employed reliability coefficient and is considered appropriate for multi-item Likert-type scales (Cronbach, 1951; Hair et al., 2019).

According to established methodological guidelines, a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable, values exceeding 0.80 indicate good reliability, and values above 0.90 represent excellent internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Reliability coefficients below 0.70 may suggest measurement error or poorly aligned items and are generally discouraged for hypothesis testing.

Table 1 presents the reliability results for all constructs included in the study, based on data collected from 430 respondents.

Table 1- Reliability analysis

Items	Crohnbach's alpha (study N=430)	Number of items
Employee incentives	0.73	5
Employee Training	0.80	5
Selective Hiring (Recruitment)	0.75	5
Job Security	0.77	5
Decentralization & Self-managed teams	0.81	6
Organizational Performance	0.79	7

Discussion of Reliability Results

The Employee Incentives construct, measured using five items, yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.73, indicating acceptable internal consistency. This result suggests that the items included in this scale consistently capture various dimensions of employee incentives, such as rewards, recognition, and performance-based compensation. Although the reliability coefficient is modest, it exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold, confirming that the scale is suitable for further empirical analysis.

The Employee Training scale demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.80 across five items, reflecting good reliability. This indicates a strong degree of inter-item correlation and suggests that the items effectively measure training-related practices, including skill development, learning opportunities, and employee capacity

building. The high reliability of this construct strengthens its role as a key human resource management (HRM) practice in explaining organizational outcomes.

Similarly, the Selective Hiring (Recruitment) construct reported a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.75, based on five items. This value signifies satisfactory internal consistency and indicates that the scale reliably measures recruitment practices such as merit-based selection, competency assessment, and fairness in hiring. The result aligns with previous HRM studies that emphasize the importance of reliable recruitment measures in organizational research (Delery & Doty, 1996).

The Job Security construct yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.77, indicating acceptable to good reliability. This suggests that the five items used to measure job security consistently reflect employees' perceptions of employment stability, long-term career prospects, and organizational commitment to workforce retention. The reliability coefficient supports the inclusion of job security as a significant HRM dimension influencing employee attitudes and performance.

The construct Decentralization and Self-managed Teams, measured using six items, recorded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.81, representing good internal consistency. This result implies that the items coherently capture aspects of decentralized decision-making, employee autonomy, participative management, and team-based work structures. The relatively high alpha value indicates that respondents have a clear and consistent understanding of decentralization practices within their organizations.

Finally, Organizational Performance, measured through seven items, achieved a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.79, reflecting satisfactory reliability. This indicates that the scale consistently measures multiple facets of organizational performance, such as productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, and overall organizational success. Given that organizational performance serves as a key outcome variable in the study, its acceptable reliability enhances the credibility of subsequent inferential analyses.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

HRM practices		Organizational Performance
Employee incentives	Pearson Correlation	.413**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Employee Training	Pearson Correlation	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Selective Hiring (Recruitment)	Pearson Correlation	.442**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Job Security	Pearson Correlation	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Decentralization & Selfmanaged teams	Pearson Correlation	.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

To examine the relationships between human resource management (HRM) practices and organizational performance, a Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was conducted. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) is an appropriate statistical technique for assessing the strength and direction of linear relationships between continuous variables measured at the interval or ratio level (Field, 2018). The coefficient ranges from −1 to +1, where positive values indicate a positive relationship and values closer to ±1 reflect stronger associations. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), indicating a stringent criterion for hypothesis testing and minimizing the likelihood of Type I error. Following Cohen's (1988) guidelines, correlation coefficients around 0.10 are considered small, 0.30 moderate, and 0.50 or above strong. Table X presents the correlation coefficients between individual HRM practices and organizational performance based on data obtained from 430 respondents.

Discussion of Correlation Results

The results reveal that all HRM practices exhibit positive and statistically significant relationships with organizational performance, providing strong empirical support for strategic HRM theory.

Employee Incentives and Organizational Performance

Employee incentives show a moderate positive correlation with organizational performance ($r = .413$, $p < .01$). This finding indicates that organizations offering effective incentive mechanisms—such as performance-based pay, bonuses, and recognition programs—are more likely to achieve higher levels of performance. The result supports motivation-based perspectives, which posit that incentives enhance employee effort, engagement, and productivity, thereby improving organizational outcomes (Pfeffer, 1998; Delery & Doty, 1996).

Employee Training and Organizational Performance

Employee training demonstrates a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship with organizational performance ($r = .390$, $p < .01$). This suggests that investments in employee skill development and learning opportunities contribute positively to organizational effectiveness. Training improves human capital, enhances adaptability, and fosters innovation, which are critical for sustained performance in dynamic environments (Becker, 1993; Huselid, 1995).

Selective Hiring (Recruitment) and Organizational Performance

Selective hiring exhibits a moderately strong positive correlation with organizational performance ($r = .442$, $p < .01$). This finding underscores the importance of rigorous recruitment and selection processes in acquiring high-quality human capital. Organizations that emphasize merit-based selection and person–job fit are more likely to experience improved productivity and reduced turnover. This result is consistent with strategic HRM literature highlighting selective hiring as a core element of high-performance work systems (Wright & McMahan, 1992; Huselid, 1995).

Job Security and Organizational Performance

Job security is also positively and significantly related to organizational performance ($r = .390$, $p < .01$). This moderate association suggests that employees who perceive their jobs as stable are more likely to demonstrate commitment, loyalty, and discretionary effort, which positively influence organizational outcomes. The finding aligns with social exchange theory, which proposes that employees reciprocate organizational support—such as employment stability—with enhanced performance behaviors (Blau, 1964).

Decentralization and Self-managed Teams and Organizational Performance

Among all HRM practices examined, decentralization and self-managed teams show the strongest positive correlation with organizational performance ($r = .552$, $p < .01$). This strong relationship indicates that empowering employees through decentralized decision-making and team autonomy significantly enhances organizational effectiveness. Decentralization promotes innovation, faster decision-making, and greater employee involvement, all of which contribute to superior performance outcomes (Lawler, 1992; Pfeffer, 1998).

Overall Interpretation

Overall, the correlation coefficients range from .390 to .552, indicating moderate to strong positive associations between HRM practices and organizational performance. The consistent statistical significance at the 0.01 level provides robust evidence that effective HRM practices are closely associated with improved organizational outcomes. While correlation analysis does not imply causality, the findings provide a strong empirical basis for conducting further multivariate analyses, such as regression or structural equation modeling, to examine causal relationships and mediating mechanisms.

These results support the core proposition of strategic HRM theory that organizational performance is enhanced when firms adopt integrated HRM practices that improve employee skills, motivation, and involvement.

Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which selected human resource management (HRM) practices predict organizational performance. Organizational performance was specified as the dependent variable, while employee incentives, employee training, selective hiring, job security, and decentralization were entered simultaneously as independent variables. Multiple regression is appropriate when assessing the unique contribution of each predictor while controlling for the effects of other variables in the model (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2 reports the unstandardized regression coefficients (B), standard errors, standardized coefficients (β), t-values, and significance levels (p-values).

Table 3:

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.587	0.231		2.544	0.012
Employee incentives	- 0.085	- 0.056	0.099	1.516	0.131
Employee Training	- 0.025	- 0.062	0.028	0.611	0.688
Selective Hiring (Recruitment)	- 0.29	0.064	- 0.264	6.551	0
Job Security	- 0.061	- 0.049	0.073	2.201	0.212
Decentralization & Selfmanaged teams	0.324	0.048	0.401	5.381	0
a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance					

Interpretation of Regression Results and Hypothesis Testing

Intercept (Constant)

The intercept term was statistically significant (B = 0.587, t = 2.544, p = .012), indicating a positive baseline level of organizational performance when all predictor variables are held constant. Although the intercept itself is not central to hypothesis testing, its significance suggests the regression model is appropriately specified.

H1: Incentive is positively associated with organizational performance

Employee incentives exhibited a negative and statistically non-significant relationship with organizational performance (B = −0.085, β = 0.099, t = 1.516, p = .131). The standardized coefficient indicates a very weak effect, and the p-value exceeds the conventional .05 threshold.

Hypothesis decision: *H1 is rejected.*

This finding suggests that incentive systems do not exert a significant direct effect on organizational performance when other HRM practices are considered simultaneously. One possible explanation is that incentives may influence performance indirectly through mediators such as motivation, engagement, or job satisfaction rather than directly impacting organizational outcomes. Prior research has reported similarly mixed findings regarding the direct effectiveness of incentive-based systems (Gerhart & Fang, 2015; Pfeffer, 1998).

H2: Employee Training is positively associated with organizational performance

Employee training showed a negative but statistically non-significant effect on organizational performance ($B = -0.025$, $\beta = 0.028$, $t = 0.611$, $p = .688$). The magnitude of the effect is minimal, and the relationship lacks statistical significance.

Hypothesis decision: *H2 is rejected.*

Although training is theoretically linked to improved performance through human capital development, the results indicate that training alone does not significantly predict organizational performance in the multivariate model. This may imply that training outcomes require alignment with job design, empowerment, and performance management systems to translate into tangible organizational gains (Becker, 1993; Huselid, 1995).

H3: Selective hiring is positively associated with organizational performance

Selective hiring (recruitment) demonstrated a statistically significant but negative relationship with organizational performance ($B = -0.290$, $\beta = -0.264$, $t = 6.551$, $p < .001$). While the effect is strong and significant, the negative direction contradicts the hypothesized positive association.

Hypothesis decision: *H3 is rejected.*

This counterintuitive finding suggests that selective hiring practices, as implemented in the studied organizations, may not be aligned with performance requirements or may introduce inefficiencies, such as longer hiring cycles or mismatches between employee skills and job demands. Strategic HRM literature emphasizes that recruitment effectiveness depends heavily on contextual alignment rather than selectivity alone (Wright & McMahan, 1992).

H4: Job security is positively associated with organizational performance

Job security showed a negative and statistically non-significant relationship with organizational performance ($B = -0.061$, $\beta = 0.073$, $t = 2.201$, $p = .212$).

Hypothesis decision: *H4 is rejected.*

Although job security is often associated with employee commitment and reduced turnover, the findings indicate that it does not independently predict organizational performance. This supports the argument that job security may enhance performance only when coupled with accountability, performance expectations, and participative practices (Blau, 1964; Pfeffer, 1998).

H5: Decentralization is positively associated with organizational performance

Decentralization and self-managed teams emerged as the strongest and most significant predictor of organizational performance ($B = 0.324$, $\beta = 0.401$, $t = 5.381$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis decision: *H5 is accepted.*

The positive and statistically significant coefficient indicates that decentralization substantially enhances organizational performance. The standardized beta value is the highest among all predictors, suggesting that decentralization contributes the greatest unique explanatory power. This result aligns with empowerment theory and high-involvement work systems, which posit that employee autonomy and participative decision-making improve responsiveness, innovation, and productivity (Lawler, 1992; Pfeffer, 1998).

Overall Model Interpretation

The regression results demonstrate that although several HRM practices show positive bivariate associations with organizational performance, only decentralization retains a significant positive effect in the multivariate model. This finding highlights the importance of empowerment-oriented HRM systems over traditional control-based practices. It also underscores the need to view HRM practices as an integrated system rather than isolated mechanisms.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationship between human resource management practices and organizational performance. While prior research has consistently suggested that HRM practices positively influence organizational outcomes, the present study demonstrates that not all practices exert a direct and independent effect when examined within a comprehensive multivariate framework. Although incentives, training, selective hiring, and job security were positively correlated with organizational performance, their effects were not significant in the regression analysis, indicating that these practices may operate through indirect mechanisms or require complementary organizational conditions to be effective.

Decentralization and self-managed teams emerged as the most influential HRM practice, significantly enhancing organizational performance. This highlights the critical role of employee empowerment, participative decision-making, and autonomy in improving organizational effectiveness. The results support SHRM and empowerment theories, suggesting that organizations seeking sustainable performance advantages should move beyond traditional, control-oriented HR practices and adopt integrated, high-involvement work systems.

In conclusion, the study reinforces the view that HRM practices should be implemented as a coherent and strategically aligned system rather than as isolated interventions. By prioritizing decentralization and employee involvement, organizations can better leverage their human capital to achieve superior and sustainable performance outcomes.

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