

## Human Resources and Their Role in the Oil and Gas Industry in Iraq

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### Abstract:

The study aimed to how performance in Iraq's oil and gas industry is affected by HR (human resource management) methods. The analysis of confirmatory factors, or CFA, was used to identify HR practices. A questionnaire survey was conducted between January and march of 2024. A sample is Basra oil company. 150 surveys were sent to these businesses. All of surveys were obtained, indicating an 100% percent response rate. Employee from these companies were the respondents. . In all, 150 Employee from (Basra oil company) answered a self-reported questionnaire measuring five HR practices and subjective financial performance metrics. These habits have a positive and statistically significant correlation with performance, according to regression analysis. The study adds to the scant empirical data already available in the context of Iraq and gives managers insight into how to use these practices as a strategic tool for better performance. In an effort to boost the success rate of human resources, it is intended that this study will serve as a resource for academics and managers alike as they examine the systematic relationship between financial performance and HR practices.

**Keywords:** HR, human resource Performance, Oil and gas industry, Iraq.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Various changes in business environment namely the emergence of the knowledge economy has necessitated the ASSESSMENT of the human resources. As mentioned earlier, a lot of studies have been done in the recent past on the effects of HR practices to corporate performance. This research has found a positive relationship between HR actions and business success (Bilan, et al: 2020). Unfortunately, little research has been done in the Iraqi context to investigate the connection between HR action and organizational performance. It is stressed that HR has a clear strategic position defined. There is growing awareness on the importance of using HR practices as a strategic resource in Iraq and many progressive organizations are already positioning themselves to exploit aspects of this element to achieve competitive edge. Due to changing organizational values of knowledge workers, it becomes necessary that the concept of people management is in serious changes thereby shifting the paradigm for the sustainability of the organization as embraced by the practitioners of human resource management. This paradigm ought to be marked by enhancement of human capital and coming up with innovative ways of offering HR practices in order to develop human capital.

Even though the term HR or Human Resources has cropped up lately, for the past three decades it has been about compensation and benefits management. Human resource management comprises every management action and decision influencing people at work. They hope to use these activities to enhance performance, develop efficient organization management, and increase motivation (Elrayah, et al, 2023). It is unstable to conduct a venture in the current climate of the market. Adopting a measure of traditional competitiveness has been relatively less useful for firms in their competitive operations because of the challenges that accompany the complex market today. Possibly one of the greatest assets an organization can have is its continued effort to find a new approach to achieve a competitive edge.

The human resources needed to help companies overcome obstacles must be encouraged properly and appropriately for employment. For this reason, it is of utmost importance for a company to implement appropriate HR procedures that improve workers' efforts. The impact of practices on organizational performance has received more attention as a result of this trend (Saini, 2023). The most important element in the success of companies and organizations is human capital (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021). Human resources have been recognized over the past few decades as a key component of competitive advantage, capable of enhancing differentiation and improving the overall performance of a company (Alfawaire, et al: 2021).

## 1.2. Problem of research

When administrative problems in the organization are exacerbated, human resources play a major role in improving management systems in general. Since high-tech organizations - such as Basra Oil Company - need to constantly update their human resources practices due to the importance of these practices in achieving high levels of performance, and thus institutional excellence compared to competitors from companies operating in the same sector, these organizations must understand the nature of their human resources practices and how these practices can affect their ability to achieve institutional excellence.

## 1.3 Research question

The following are the main research questions of the study:

What has happened to human resource in oil and gas sector in Iraq?

How balanced is the performance and human resources aspects in the oil and sector in IRAQ?

## 1.4 The significance of research.

1. In view of this, the excellence attained by Basra Oil Company in human resources processes justifies the subject matter.
2. Consequently human resources procedures are central to the quest for organizational superior performance, higher levels of organizational outcomes such as effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness.
3. The findings of the research prove that data on human resources practices provide Basra Oil Company with insight into the factors of successful organization.
4. It is critical to make accurate performance measurements in order to strengthen the competitive innovations.
5. Adherence to the current innovative technology standards is crucial so as to remain competitive.

## 1.5. The research hypothesis

Following a thorough analysis of the literature, the following theories are emerging:

H1: There is a substantial correlation between organizational performance and Skill and capacities development

H2: there are significant correlation between organizational performance and succession planning

H 3: There is a substantial correlation between organizational performance health and safety

H 4: Rewards and compensation have a big impact on how well an organization performs.

H 5: There is a substantial correlation between employee relations and organizational performance.

### 1.6. Aim of the research

The main objective of this study is to determine how human resource variables affect performance in the Iraqi oil and gas sector (Basra Oil Company).

The following are the specific objectives of this research study:

- ✓ To ascertain the relationship between human resource factors and performance in the Iraqi oil and gas sector;
- ✓ To evaluate the elements that affect human resources in the industry.

**1.7. Research Duration:** This research was conducted during the period from(01/11/2023 to 01/05/2024).

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Review of the literature:

(Agustian, et al:Human resources in particular have risen to become the centerpiece for firms' sustainable competitive advantage. Research indicates that firms can sustain a competitive advantage in the long run standard by managing scarce and valuable resources, Baia, (2020). Human resource management means efficient or optimal use of resources and therefore this is the main aim of human resources. Efficiency and progress recorded in the recent past

Consistently (Santuryan, 2023) It takes time and effort for an organization to develop and build its human capital, which includes knowledge, motivation, interpersonal relationships, skills, talents, motivation, attitude, and interpersonal relationships, making it difficult for competitors to copy (Tmaja, et al:(As of the year 2022) It is relevant to point out that people in an organization have been significant in the success formula of the business for a long time. As a concept human resources management has been pointed out as a strategic asset in the new economy leading to organisational cost and profitability. With this vision, the responsibilities of an HR manager include the strategic contribution for the establishment and exercising of business strategy (as supported by

As Patanayak noted the use of the human resource (HR) management tools and systems, firms are positively on the hunt for ways, meaning that the identification of this business asset's value is now extending into further understanding the use of the notion of strategy and competitive advantage in the knowledge economy (Gupta, et al., 2020) workforce planning (Odom, et al.: (2022) Job analysis Training and development Recruitment and selection Compensation and reward (Gul, 2023); Performance appraisal Career management; Human resource information system (Marhill, 2023); Quality of work life, employee diversity, employee opinion surveys, which previous literatures normally define as strategic HRM practices. The focus of HR research has shifted from the effectiveness of particular HR practices for business outcomes to the effectiveness of the bundle of HR practices for organizational outcomes in the last few years. Different views have been given

by the researchers on this new paradigm. While some authors suggest a systemic view of HR is more appropriate, others argue that while it is possible to simply add, say, first-order and second-order sub-dimensions of HR together into a single measure it is also arbitrary. Some researchers identified that it generates dependency issues. Scholars defined organizational performance through a combination of financial and non-financial indicators. Companies Sales, market share, and profit are financial figures. Time to complete a task, number of defects per product, calls per hour, and engagement, turnover, and job satisfaction are some non-financial measurements.

Various view have been proposed on how to assess organizational performance relative to non-financial and financial performance. Huskisson and colleagues realized (Mohsen, 2021).

The main challenges have been said to be absence of market based financial reporting, poor legal requirement and implementation, low level of transparency in financial reporting, and provision of erroneous financial information to users (Mohsen et al., 2021). Managers can more easily take the organization's objectives into account when evaluating the organization's performance using a subjective measure. According to the researchers, the benefits of using a perceptual measure outweigh any potential drawbacks. Several scholars have raised "convincing doubts about the causal distance between human resource inputs and such an outcome," according to financial performance. In plain terms, this direct link seriously undermines confidence because companies are influenced by a wide range of other internal and external factors. External events and causes (Watch, 2022). In theory, it is easier to link closer measures that employees have influence over, according to researchers. These outcomes include the quality of goods and services (Masukela, et al: 2023). In addition, researchers have looked at how HR policies negatively impact employee stress levels (Tran, (2020);

(Koller, etc, 2023) Researchers have looked at how HR practices affect the success of organizations empirically (Aurellado, et al, (2023). The impact of HR practices on organizational performance is impressive, according to recent studies. Regarding the relationship between HR practices and business performance, researchers' opinions vary. They claim that there are similarities and contradictions between performance research and HR procedures (Eyoun, 2020). Variables influencing HR practices, such as recruitment, training, promotion, employee engagement, incentives, safety, and health, have a positive association with organizational performance, according to a study conducted (Iskandar, 2023)

In simple terms, as revealed by (MULU, 2023), the factors that influenced both the non-financial and financial measures of organizational performance include; workforce planning, recruitment, wages and incentives, teamwork, training, and all issues to do with employee security. All the hypothesized relationships were supported on the identified performance dimensions including: operational – production flexibility, product cost, product quality, and product delivery.

According to the findings of the Magnier-Watanabe (2020) opened that Japanese companies had relative productivity when comparing the two countries, as opposed to the United States.

In a recent study in New Zealand, Haar (2023) supported the hypothesis that the selection of appropriate HR practices affects both the tendency of employees to leave and business profitability. Anwar et al. in 2021 established knowledge about workforce planning, cooperation and training, staff remuneration, appraisals and tmplanning, and safety as the key HR components that determine the productivity of output, quality of products, and organizational performance. (Jashari, 2020) identified in a cross-sectional survey of Taiwanese firms a positive correlation between the HR practices and the organizational performance at the 0.05 level of significance. Another thing that was established by the study was the inverse relationship between employee turnover and workforce planning.

Best practices in HR management must include quality recruitment, development, and retention is said to enhance organizational

## 2.2. Human Resource (HR)

Both terms, people management and human resources (H.R.), refer to the official practices an organization employs with its workers. As firms strive to use their employees as one of their key resources, human resource has taken a very strategic theme in the recent past. It has been put that when an organization has, or creates, resources its rivals do not have, are hard for rivals to acquire, are important for rivals to have, and is well-organized, then it can attain a competitive advantage (Nikmah, 2021).

It refers to the policies and procedures that are used in the implementation of human resources in the managerial position including; job analysis, recruitment and selection, employee orientation, compensation, performance appraisal, training, and development, and labor relation are abbreviated as HR, as explained by. Human resources is a discipline that deals with the ideas, theories, plans, programs, strategies, tactics, rules, and laws that are applied in the recruitment and use of men in order to achieve the goals of the company (Holbeche, et al: 2022).

According to Mahapatro (2021), human resource management entails all the managerial activities that relates to acquisition, development, deployment and maintenance of human talent in order to enable the person to contribute towards realization of organizational goals. (Mahapatro, et al, 2021).

This adds support to the premise held by (Greer, 2021) that high level of HR enhances the capacity of an organization to acquire and retain employees who are spirited and well trained. For them, the advantages are getting higher profit margins and less turnover since the staff are motivated. Therefore, HR mainly consist of identifying good candidates for employment, ensuring the employees are productive through training, ensuring employees remain productive by providing incentives to keep them in the workplace through reward systems, appraisal, feedback and grievances systems. (Agustian, 2023).

## 2.3. HR Performance:

In the context of (Saddam, A.K. 2022), the basic tenet of working with people for any organization is the postulate that people are the key to the organizational performance and productivity. Consequently, human resource will determine the destiny of almost all businesses an aspect that will be discuss in the paper.

Nyathi (2023) elucidates that with regard to the hypothesis that links between HR and organizational performance exist there are two points. The first is that one of the most solid pillars of competitive advantage is the management of human resources. The second area of argumentation hypothesizes that HR depends on the specific combination of some methodologies or on strict HR standards. Again. The activities that constitute the HR practices are four as mentioned earlier and are like components of a process which interrelate to: Achieve operational efficiency, improve the quality, research for innovations and work more closely with customers which are the four cornerstones of the organization's competitive strategic plan. Consequently, there are several methodologies through which HR actions can be linked to organizational performance. First of all, it is now possible to research standalone Human Resource actions on the level of organizational performance particularly to the issues of recruiting and selecting people as well as training and developing them, evaluating their performance and rewarding them fairly. Also worthy of consideration is the relationship between HR policies and organizational performance.

## 2.4. oil and gas industry

Comprehensively knowing the creation and development processes of such an industry need a definition of the Iraqi oil and gas sector concept, as it will be explained by Genovese

in 2023. There has been a lot of discourses about the character of the Iraqi oil and gas industry. Understanding who are the political and social actors that engage in the processes which define the nature of the Iraqi oil and gas industry is critical to this study. Several agents contribute to effective production endeavors according to the principal agency theory, as well as the previously acknowledged stakeholder theory. From this it can be deduced that, accountability and responsibility are relevant based on internal guidelines and structure adopted by the firm. It would probably be reasonable to state that in the context of the Iraqi oil and gas industry the important players involved have not ensured that enough value was created to satisfy the many stakeholders involved (Bless, 2021). This approach also goes hand in hand with the argument that the owners of oil and gas sector should spread its incidences to other stakeholders and if it doesn't the whole concept of its formation is defeated. However, it is important to remark that the quest for equity in the relationship, about which the many interests have fought for years, seems to have been lost behind battles for supremacy. Interests and ties between a host community, a multinational corporation, and the state exemplify the conflict of societal interest. This situation shows that proper human resource management procedures and government regulations to manage internal affairs of the organizations involved in downstream petroleum activities are vital. This study argued that managing people as assets is essential to achieving competitive advantage for the organization, aligning human resource policies with business policies and corporate strategy, and developing close alignment between human resource policies, procedures, and systems can help achieve and sustain the essence of the oil and gas industry in Iraq, which is to maximize wealth for stakeholders (Mudhafar, 2022).

### CHAPTER 3

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

##### 3.1. Research Methodology:

This paper was administered between January and March of 2024 through a questionnaire survey. At the same time, the investigated country – Iraq – has fourteen firms, including Basra Oil Company; In the course of the investigation, the author collected primary data from one hundred and fifty employees of the Basra Oil Company in Iraq at random. The businesses were obtained from the list of businesses belonging to the Iraqi Ministry of Petroleum Government. From this, 150 completed surveys were collected implying a 100 percent respondents' rate. All the responders indicated that they served in the different management levels of these companies.

##### 3.2. Methods of Research

The author of the study employed the literature review, random sampling, method organizers, journals, and questionnaires in assessing data gathered by the researcher for the study. As a result.

It presents introduction to the discussion on the strategic roles of human resources in competitiveness and offer appropriate backing for the research argument. Most oil firms have recently made adaptations to increase their efficiency through finding new competitive strategies that are performance based. Besides, it discussed how to expand their diversified foreign investment and involved in the newly accessed, and how the new emerging roles, opportunities and challenges for oil companies in Iraq were unveiled. For this to generate incentives for competitive innovations it has to be backed by clear performance/measurements. J. It is crucial to activate human resources management in oil companies in Basra because many external factors have influences on the human resources system. This means that human resources are an organization's fluid area, and are not absolutely limited within a certain range. By means of this model, the correlation which has been developing between performance outcomes, on one side, and human resources, on the other side, can be identified. Human resources management executes the work force plans with the outcomes.

### 3.3. Theoretical Model:

The key areas for discussion under this approach of performance included performance as well as human resources. Human resources functions institute can be categorized into five main areas they are skill and capability development, succession planning, health of employees, remunerations and benefits, and employee relations. Measures based on tangible factors include product quality, production efficiency, perceived product performance in relation to other products in the industry. However, the theoretical framework is applied to establish relationships between variables as well. The theoretical model for the current study is presented in figure 3.

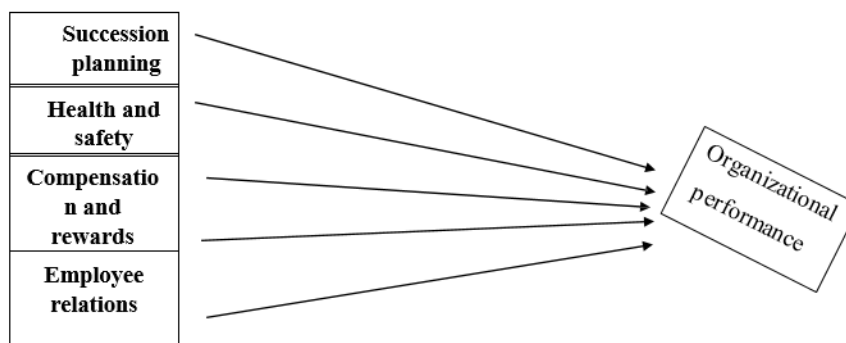


Figure 1. The Theoretical Model

### 3.4. Results and Analysis:

#### 3.4.1. Descriptive Statistics:

When analyzing the data, it was noted that most of the respondents supported the different HR practices. The highest mean value being 4.876 and the lowest being 4.123. The highest level of agreement was high, in the skill and capacities were (Mean = 4.876, Standard deviation = 0.715); The lowest level of agreement was high, in the succession planning, health and safety, compensation, reward, employee relation, and organizational performance (Mean= 4.431, Standard deviation = 0.829). If client's perception was to be based on the respondents' perception of the above-stated elements, then the following would occur. these HR practices' conformance and agreement with the model were expressed in the mean score and standard deviation.

#### 3.4.2. Reliability and Validity of Data:

The results showed that the Cronbach's alpha for the 150 -item survey was 0.933. The Cronbach's alpha values for employee relations (0.842), health and safety (0.827), succession planning (0.955), compensation and reward (0.976), skill and capacities development (0.822), and organizational performance (0.875) were all above the acceptable range. The outcomes are shown in Table 1.

Test of Normality of Data:

Variables	Cronbachs alpha
<b>Skill and capacities development</b>	<b>0.822</b>
<b>Succession planning</b>	<b>0.955</b>
<b>Health and safety</b>	<b>0.827</b>
<b>Compensation and Rewards</b>	<b>0.976</b>
<b>Employee Relations</b>	<b>0.842</b>
<b>Organizational Performance</b>	<b>0.875</b>
<b>Overall Alpha for the instrument</b>	<b>0.924</b>

Table 3.4-1 reliability analysis

The table 2 shows that the highest correlation is found between organizational performance and Skill and capacities development at correlation value of 0.381 and followed by Succession planning, Health and safety and compensation at correlations of 0.263, 0.208 and 0.187 respectively. The correlation coefficient matrix table above shows that there is a significant relationship between the HR practices and organizational performance.

**Table 3.4-2 correlation coefficient**

		Organizational performance
Skill and capacities development	Pearson correlation	.381**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	94
Succession planning	Pearson correlation	.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	94
Health and safety	Pearson Correlation	.208**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	94
Compensation and Rewards	Pearson correlation	.187**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	94

### 3.4.3. Regression Analysis:

Table 3 displays the findings of a regression analysis based on the independent variables of skill and capacities development, succession planning, health and safety, compensation and reward, and employee relation. The F statistics were used to determine the overall model fit for the regression equation. A positive and statistically significant link is indicated by the model ( $F = 10.639$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The dependent variable of organizational performance has a 42.4 percent ( $R^2 = 0.424$ ) variance explained by the independent variables. The most important HR practice is skill and capacities development, which has the highest beta coefficient (0.499). Other significant HR practices are employee relation (Beta = 0.322), Health and safety (Beta = 0.355), compensation and rewards (Beta = 0.343), and Succession planning (beta = 0.426).

**Table 3.4-3 Regression Analysis**

Items	Proposed effects	Path coefficient	Observed t-value	Significance level
Skill and capacities development	+	0.499	5.157	0
Succession planning	+	0.426	5.362	0
Health and safety	+	0.355	4.715	0
Compensation and rewards	+	0.343	3.986	0
Employees relation	+	0.322	3.822	0

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1. Conclusion:

In the light of the findings and discussions outlined hereinabove, it can be recommended that the management and executives of the oil and gas companies operating in Iraq need to



ensure effective delivery of human resource management practices in order to improve the organizational performance significantly. The study have revealed that the firms that practice human resource management with investment in its human resources and using tools like workforce planning and development, training and development and compensation and reward policies, pay off in terms of operational and financial performance.

With regard to the research hypothesis, the affiliation of this hypothesis to the findings obtained during the analysis has been proven; the identified research in this case has a solid positive influence of human resource management practices on company performance in the oil and gas industry. Therefore, it also highlights the need for proactive policies for companies to begin to work towards developing human resource management policies that improve organizational performance and effectiveness in this important sector so as to realize sustainable competitive advantages.

#### 4-2 Recommendation

1. Longitudinal studies should be carried out on the effects of adopting the HR practices on organizational performance in the oil and gas industry. It will also provide substantial viewpoints on the endurance of these methodologies and the changes on competitiveness over a long period of tracking.
2. Qualitative Research: For additional assessment, combined with quantitative methods mathematically, apply focus groups, interviews, and other no statistics methods. Such qualitative findings may help add more refined understanding of the fundamental processes through which the HR practices are linked to the organizational performance.
3. Examining Mediating Elements: Research on possible moderating variables that might moderate the relationship between human resource management practices and organizational performance. Some of the potential mediators include; company culture, leadership, and employee engagement.
4. Cross cultural analysis must be conducted to examine the impact of cultural contingencies on the effectiveness of HRM practices in different locations and countries of operation of the oil and gas industries. Cross cultural studies shall enable the fitting of HR tactics in some cultures more than others. Sustainability Principles: See how the segment of the oil and gas industry human resource management plans contain sustainability practices. Measures corresponding to the analysis of the eco-friendly HR procedures and the consequences for the firm's productivity and reputation may belong to this type.
5. Technology Integration: In this assignment, reflect on how technology potentially enhances the effectiveness of the processes inherent to the examination of the HR department in oil and gas companies. This is looking at how technology integration can improve the decision making process and also fasten the process in HR procedures.

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