

Learn and Study, the Critiques of Human Resource Management (HRM)!

Human resource management has become so well established that if you talk about personnel management it seems old fashioned. **The Critiques of HRM! PDF, PDF Reader, and Free Download.** Yet, there are limitations, which have also triggered questions as to whether the whole debate is not more of an academic pastime rather than utility in practice. **Also learned, [Philosophies and Objectives, The Critiques of Human Resource Management \(HRM\)!](#)**

Some of the criticisms are presented below.

Ensuring strategic fit:

Knowledge and skills of linking human resource strategy with business strategy are taken for granted. This task is housed in the human resource department whose staff is not necessarily trained in strategic business management. This casts doubts on the ability to establish that link.

Human resource managers may not be perceived as business partners:

The doctrine that human resource managers should be seen by fellow managers as partners in business may be wishful thinking rather than what actually happens in practice. According to Schuler (2000), in reality, human resource managers are treated by other managers as a 'second class citizen', whose role is more of a supplier of personnel.

Conflict of roles:

The assumption that a human resource manager takes the role of a partner in business implies that he/she should be on the side of the management and hence employees should represent themselves. This scenario increases employees' feeling of isolation and neglect, which can give rise to conflicts and disputes.

Role ambiguity:

The assumption that the human resource manager should be a generalist and at the same time be able to handle specific human resource functions, leaves much to be desired with regards to the type of training suitable and efficient in human resource functions.

Subjectivity:

The use of other strategies like teamwork, 360 degrees appraisal, and performance based pay increase the use of subjective value judgement about individuals which may de-motivate some employees and trigger counter disruptive behaviours including rent seeking or 'just please the boss' attitude.

Eight years earlier, Legge (1992) had gone further in criticising the relevance of human resource management theories to the level of almost throwing the whole philosophy out of the window. To him, human resource management poses ambiguities and contradictions such that it does not offer much which is new to academia and practicing managers. It is regarded as similar to personnel management, or a different way of referring to an advanced form of personnel management, a change of emphasis on key employee management issues and others. Table 1 presents a few of the areas of scepticism, hence making personnel management (PM) seem similar to human resource management (HRM).

Table 1 Similarities personnel management (PM) and human resource management (HRM)

Item	PM	HRM
Integration of PM/HRM policies with organisational goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Line management involvement in employee management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee motivation and commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adding value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: Legge (1992).

Legge's criticisms may contribute to the understanding of where personnel and human resource management meet and therefore help us to understand why some writers in human resource management use the concepts of personnel and human resources management interchangeably. In trying to differentiate personnel management and human resource management, and indeed, based on a critical review of key chapters in Storey's book and other contributors to the development of human resource management in the 1980s, Armstrong (1995) has summarised the comparison between PM and HRM as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Differences personnel management (PM) and human resource management (HRM)

Item	Personnel management	Human resource management
Goals and values	Incremental interventions in attracting, retaining, motivating workers	Strategic focus. competitiveness, profitability, survival, competitive advantage and workforce flexibility
Professionalism	Personnel managers are accountable for employees' matters (for which they are trained)	Line managers are accountable for their staff (they are multi-skilled)
Relations	Limited trust, conflict and differentiation, control oriented	Harmony, mutuality of interests, active employee involvement
Employee management	Narrow in focus, individualised	Broad and team focused
Information and communication	Control information and communication, bureaucratic, secretive	Transparency, objectivity, honesty, trust and commitment

Source: Armstrong (1995).
