



Human Resource Management and Labour Productivity of Employees in the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC)

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Abstract

This research paper examines the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and labour productivity among employees of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). Given KSRTC's pivotal role in providing public transportation in Karnataka, enhancing labour productivity is crucial for its operational success. The study evaluates existing HRM practices, analyzes their impact on employee performance, and proposes strategies for improvement. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative data from employee surveys with qualitative insights from interviews with HR managers and executives. The findings highlight key areas where HRM interventions can significantly boost productivity, offering actionable recommendations for KSRTC to enhance its service efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Keywords: Human Resource Management (HRM), Labour Productivity, Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Public Transportation.

1. Introduction

Road transport is indispensable for the development of a country's economy, providing essential mobility for people and transport of goods due to its utility, efficiency, and unparalleled flexibility, enhanced by seamless connections to other transport modes. Within this framework, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) plays a crucial role in facilitating short and medium-distance passenger travel in Karnataka. As a primary mode of transport capable of linking remote villages to urban centers, KSRTC ensures connectivity and mobility, which are vital for the region's economic and social development.

In India, road transport stands out as the only mode capable of connecting rural areas to mainstream economic activities, bridging regional disparities. The responsibility of providing public passenger road transportation is shared between public and private sectors, with State Transport Undertakings (STUs) like KSRTC operating within the public sector. KSRTC, as part of the nation's transport infrastructure, caters predominantly to the public, offering essential urban, rural, and inter-state services. It plays a significant role in serving the mobility needs of poor and middle-income groups, thereby supporting the socio-economic fabric of the state.

The continuous expansion of the road network and the integration of more villages with urban centers have led to an increased demand for public passenger transport services. KSRTC, being a major STU, bears a substantial portion of this demand. By providing reliable transportation services, KSRTC enhances accessibility, reduces regional imbalances, and contributes to the overall socio-economic development of Karnataka. The organization's ability to meet these demands efficiently depends largely on the productivity of its workforce, making effective Human Resource Management (HRM) practices critical.

This research paper delves into the role of HRM in enhancing labour productivity among KSRTC employees. Given the increasing pressure on KSRTC to deliver efficient and reliable transport services, optimizing HRM practices is essential. The study examines existing HRM strategies within KSRTC, assesses their impact on employee performance and productivity, and proposes improvements. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative data from employee surveys with qualitative insights from interviews with HR managers and executives. The findings aim to offer actionable recommendations to enhance HRM practices, ultimately leading to improved productivity and service quality in KSRTC.

2. Importance of Road Transport in Economic Development

Road transport plays a crucial role in the economic development of a country by providing efficient and flexible means of moving goods and people. Its significance lies in its ability to connect different regions, facilitate trade, and promote accessibility to markets, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Unlike other modes of transport, road transport offers unparalleled convenience and adaptability, allowing for door-to-door delivery of goods and services. This capability is essential for integrating remote and rural areas into the broader economic framework, thereby promoting inclusive growth and reducing regional disparities. As economies evolve, the demand for road transport continues to grow, underpinning its role in sustaining economic activities and supporting the expansion of industries and commerce.

Furthermore, road transport contributes to the economic development by fostering socio-economic interactions and enhancing productivity. It supports the logistics and supply chain sectors, which are vital for industrial operations and the distribution of consumer goods. By ensuring the timely delivery of raw materials and finished products, road transport helps maintain the smooth functioning of businesses and industries. Additionally, the development of road infrastructure stimulates investments and creates job opportunities in construction, maintenance, and related services. The accessibility provided by road networks also encourages tourism and facilitates the growth of the hospitality industry, further diversifying economic activities and driving regional development.

3. Role of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) in Facilitating Mobility

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) plays an instrumental role in facilitating mobility across Karnataka, thereby contributing to the state's economic and social development. As a state-run public transport entity, KSRTC provides extensive bus services that connect urban centers with rural and remote areas, ensuring that residents across the state have access to essential services and opportunities. By offering reliable and affordable transportation, KSRTC supports the daily commute of millions of passengers, including students, workers, and tourists. This connectivity is crucial for the economic integration of diverse regions within Karnataka, promoting balanced regional development and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens.

In addition to serving local mobility needs, KSRTC also plays a significant role in interstate transport, linking Karnataka with neighboring states and facilitating the movement of goods and passengers across broader regions. The corporation's services are essential for reducing traffic congestion, minimizing travel time, and promoting sustainable transportation solutions. By investing in modernizing its fleet, improving service quality, and expanding its network, KSRTC not only boosts the efficiency of public transportation but also supports environmental sustainability by reducing the reliance on private vehicles. Overall, KSRTC's contribution to enhancing mobility directly impacts the economic vitality of Karnataka, making it a cornerstone of the state's transport infrastructure.

4. Review of Literature

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices have long

been identified as pivotal in enhancing organizational performance and labour productivity. The existing body of literature provides a comprehensive understanding of how effective HRM strategies can significantly impact workforce efficiency and overall organizational success.

The foundation of HRM practices lies in their ability to enhance organizational performance through the strategic management of human resources. Huselid (1995) ^[6] demonstrated a strong positive correlation between effective HRM practices and improved organizational performance. This study emphasized that investments in HRM, such as employee training and development, performance appraisal systems, and competitive compensation, are crucial for achieving higher productivity levels. Effective recruitment and selection processes are essential for attracting and retaining individuals with the necessary skills and competencies. Dessler (2013) ^[4] highlighted that well-structured recruitment strategies minimize employee turnover and enhance organizational stability. This is particularly relevant for organizations like KSRTC, where the selection of skilled bus drivers is critical for operational efficiency and safety. Training and development programs are fundamental for equipping employees with the skills required to perform their duties efficiently. Noe (2017) ^[9] and Tharenou *et al.* (2007) ^[12] found that continuous training and professional development are key drivers of employee productivity. For KSRTC, providing comprehensive training to bus drivers ensures not only the improvement of their driving skills but also adherence to safety and regulatory standards, which is vital for service reliability and customer satisfaction. Performance appraisal systems play a vital role in monitoring and evaluating employee performance. Armstrong (2006) ^[2] suggested that effective performance appraisals can motivate employees and enhance productivity. Regular performance evaluations of bus drivers in KSRTC can help maintain high standards of service and operational efficiency by identifying areas for improvement and recognizing high performers. Competitive compensation and benefits are crucial for motivating and retaining employees. Milkovich and Newman (2008) ^[8] argued that an equitable compensation system significantly impacts employee productivity and organizational commitment. Offering attractive compensation packages can help KSRTC retain skilled drivers and reduce turnover rates, thereby ensuring a stable and experienced workforce. Employee engagement and participation in decision-making processes are critical for fostering a productive work environment. Kahn (1990) ^[7] and Saks (2006) ^[11] emphasized the importance of employee engagement in driving productivity and organizational success. Engaging bus drivers in KSRTC's operational decisions can lead to increased job satisfaction and productivity, ultimately contributing to better service delivery and customer satisfaction. Public sector organizations face unique challenges in implementing HRM practices compared to the private sector. Boyne *et al.* (1999) ^[3] and Rainey (2009) ^[10] highlighted the constraints faced by public sector entities, such as bureaucratic rigidity and limited resources. Despite these challenges, effective HRM practices are essential for enhancing productivity in public sector organizations like KSRTC. The study by Gangadharswamy and Mahesha (2024) ^[5] specifically examines the impact of HRM planning on labour productivity among bus drivers in KSRTC. Utilizing ANOVA and Chi-square tests, the study revealed a significant relationship between HRM practices and employee productivity. These findings align with the existing literature,

reinforcing the importance of tailored HRM practices in enhancing productivity. The study suggests that KSRTC management should recalibrate their HRM practices to better align with organizational objectives and improve the communication and implementation of HR policies.

5. Research Gap

Despite the extensive research highlighting the importance of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in enhancing organizational performance and labour productivity, there remains a gap in understanding how these practices specifically impact the productivity of bus drivers in public sector organizations like Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). While existing literature provides insights into the effectiveness of HRM strategies such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, compensation, and employee engagement, there is limited research focusing on their application and impact within the context of bus drivers in public transportation entities. Additionally, there is a lack of studies examining the unique challenges and constraints faced by public sector organizations like KSRTC in implementing HRM practices and the specific strategies required to address them. Thus, there is a need for further empirical research to bridge this gap and provide actionable recommendations for optimizing HRM practices to enhance the productivity and performance of bus drivers in public transportation organizations.

6. Objectives

- To evaluate the existing Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in KSRTC and their effectiveness in enhancing employee productivity.
- To propose actionable HRM strategies to improve labour productivity and overall service efficiency within KSRTC.

7. Hypotheses

H1: Effective HRM practices positively influence the labour productivity of KSRTC employees.

H2: Employee engagement and participation in decision-making processes enhance job satisfaction and productivity in KSRTC.

8. Research Methodology

To achieve the research objectives and test the hypotheses, a mixed-methods approach will be employed, targeting a sample size of 100 KSRTC employees. This methodology integrates both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of HRM practices on labour productivity. For quantitative data collection, a structured questionnaire will be meticulously designed to gather detailed information on various HRM practices within KSRTC, such as recruitment processes, training and development opportunities, performance appraisal systems, compensation and benefits, and employee engagement initiatives. A random sampling technique will select 100 respondents from different departments and operational levels within KSRTC, ensuring a representative sample. To maximize the response rate, the survey will be administered both online and in paper format, providing flexibility for respondents.

Complementing the quantitative data, in-depth interviews will be conducted with HR managers and senior executives at KSRTC to gain qualitative insights into the effectiveness of

current HRM strategies and practices. A semi-structured interview guide will be utilized, focusing on key themes such as challenges in implementing HRM practices, potential areas for improvement, and the overall impact of these strategies on employee productivity. The semi-structured format allows for consistency in the questions asked and the flexibility to explore topics in greater depth based on the responses. The analysis will be bifurcated into quantitative and qualitative processes. For the quantitative data, statistical software such as SPSS will conduct descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, identifying patterns and correlations between HRM practices and labour productivity. On the qualitative side, thematic analysis will be applied to the interview data, involving coding to identify recurring themes and insights. By integrating these methods, the research will triangulate the findings to ensure robustness and validity, offering actionable recommendations for improving HRM practices and enhancing labour productivity within KSRTC, ultimately contributing to better service efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	55	55%
Female	45	45%
Age Group		
20-30	25	25%
31-40	35	35%
41-50	20	20%
51-60	15	15%
Over 60	5	5%

Source: Primary Data

The demographic profile provides insights into the composition of the sample population. The majority of respondents are male (55%), with females accounting for 45% of the sample. The age distribution indicates that the highest percentage of respondents fall within the age groups of 31-40 (35%) and 20-30 (25%). This distribution ensures a diverse representation of age and gender within the sample, enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Table 2: Evaluation of HRM Practices

HRM Practice	Average Rating (1-5)
Recruitment Processes	4.2
Training and Development	4.5
Performance Appraisal Systems	3.8
Compensation and Benefits	4
Employee Engagement Initiatives	4.3

Source: Primary Data

The evaluation of HRM practices reveals relatively high average ratings across all dimensions. Training and development received the highest average rating of 4.5, indicating that employees perceive these initiatives positively. This suggests that KSRTC has effective HRM practices in place, particularly in recruitment, training, and employee engagement, which are essential for enhancing labour productivity.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis between HRM Practices and Labour Productivity

HRM Practice	Correlation with Labour Productivity
Recruitment Processes	0.65
Training and Development	0.72
Performance Appraisals	0.58
Compensation and Benefits	0.61
Employee Engagement	0.68

Source: Primary Data

The correlation analysis demonstrates significant positive correlations between HRM practices and labour productivity. Training and development exhibit the highest correlation coefficient (0.72), followed by employee engagement (0.68), indicating a strong relationship between these practices and labour productivity. This supports hypothesis H1, suggesting that effective HRM practices positively influence labour productivity in KSRTC.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Predicting Labour Productivity

HRM Practice	Coefficient	p-value
Recruitment Processes	0.42	<0.01
Training and Development	0.55	<0.001
Performance Appraisals	0.38	0.015
Compensation and Benefits	0.46	<0.01
Employee Engagement	0.5	<0.001

Source: Primary Data

The regression analysis further validates the positive impact of HRM practices on labour productivity. All HRM practices, including recruitment processes, training and development, performance appraisals, compensation and benefits, and employee engagement, have significant coefficients and p-values, indicating their contribution to labour productivity. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is accepted, confirming that effective HRM practices positively influence labour productivity in KSRTC.

Table 5: Qualitative Insights from Interviews

Key Themes	Insights
Challenges in Implementing HRM Practices	Lack of resources for comprehensive training programs; resistance to change among employees
Potential Areas for Improvement	Strengthening performance appraisal systems; enhancing communication channels
Impact of HRM Strategies on Employee Productivity	Positive correlation between employee engagement and productivity; recognition of high performers

Source: Primary Data

Qualitative insights from interviews provide additional context and depth to the quantitative findings. Challenges in implementing HRM practices, such as resource constraints and resistance to change, highlight areas for improvement. The identification of potential areas for improvement, such as strengthening performance appraisal systems and enhancing communication channels, aligns with the quantitative results. Moreover, the positive correlation between employee engagement and productivity reinforces the importance of employee involvement in decision-making processes. Overall, the qualitative insights support the quantitative findings and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing HRM practices in KSRTC.

9. Conclusion

The findings of this research shed light on the critical role of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in enhancing labour productivity within the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). Through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of HRM practices and qualitative insights from interviews, a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between HRM strategies and labour productivity was attained. The evaluation of HRM practices revealed a generally positive perception among employees, particularly in recruitment, training, and employee engagement initiatives. Correlation and regression analyses further confirmed a significant positive association between effective HRM practices and labour productivity, providing empirical support for hypothesis H1. Moreover, qualitative insights highlighted challenges in HRM implementation and identified potential areas for improvement, emphasizing the importance of strengthening performance appraisal systems and enhancing communication channels. Overall, these findings underscore the need for tailored HRM strategies to optimize employee productivity and service efficiency within KSRTC.

Moving forward, the actionable recommendations derived from this study can serve as a roadmap for KSRTC management to refine their HRM practices and drive sustainable improvements in labour productivity. By addressing challenges, enhancing existing practices, and fostering greater employee engagement, KSRTC can create a conducive work environment that promotes job satisfaction and empowers employees to contribute effectively to the organization's objectives. Moreover, the insights gained from this research underscore the significance of ongoing evaluation and adaptation of HRM strategies to meet evolving organizational needs and ensure continued success in delivering efficient public transportation services. Ultimately, by prioritizing effective HRM practices, KSRTC can not only enhance labour productivity but also contribute to the overall socio-economic development of Karnataka through improved service efficiency and employee satisfaction.

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