

Book review: Nick Wilton, an introduction to human resource management fifth edition

An Introduction to Human Resource Management

by *Nick Wilton*

5th Edition

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Human resources are most important organizational asset (Armstrong, 2014). Its significance and practicality (i.e. they supply, knowledge, skills, capability and talents) are undeniable because of its substantial contribution in realization of organizational goals and country socio economic (Talpoş, Pop, Văduva, & Kovács, 2017). The other resource becomes useful because of the input by the human resource. It is, therefore, well known that every organization comprising individuals, obtaining their services, enhancing their skills, inspiring them to achieve high levels of performance and ensuring their sustained commitment to the organization are crucial elements in attaining organizational objectives. Given its significance, diverse stakeholders, including governments, scholars, researchers and investors, are working toward establishing a conducive environment that fosters support and ensure effective management of human resources (Hermans & Avendaño, 2021). Therefore, possessing literature that establishes the fundamental principles of management of people in an organization is incredibly crucial. Considering these foundations, the book by Nick Wilton offers introductory as well as critical perspectives focuses on the study and practice of HRM to offer readers global perspectives. The aim is to enhance understanding not only of HRM's potential to contribute to improved organizational performance and individual well-being in the workplace but also to explore the reasons why organizations may fail to achieve these positive outcomes. This may be adopted to strengthen human resource management practices in nations undergoing development, such as Tanzania.

The book is structured into three main sections comprising fifteen chapters. It contributes significantly to the field of human resource management by serving as an excellent resource for students, lecturers, researchers, consultants, entrepreneurs and policymakers. Readers are provided with comprehensive insights into HRM in context, HRM in practice and contemporary issues in HRM. The first part is divided into five chapters. The initial chapter serves to introduce HRM, presenting it both as an organizational function and an academic discipline. It also outlines several important themes and concepts that will be explored throughout the book (pp. 2–26). In Chapter 2, the focus shifts to the connection between HRM



and individual workers, delving into the dynamics of the employment relationship and how HRM can effectively manage its various components (pp. 29–52). The consequent three chapters each argue on levels of the context of HRM: the organizational and strategic milieu (pp. 58–79); the labor market framework (pp. 89–113) and the broader national and international context (pp. 120–144).

This book's second part is on HRM in practice, this part presents five fundamental areas of HRM and is alienated into five chapters (6–10). Chapter 6 is about people resourcing, among matters offered includes human resource planning, turnover and retention, recruitment and selection and terminating the employment contract (pp. 153–179). Establishing performance objectives, assessing performance and conducting performance and development reviews, reward and performance and dealing with poor performance include some of the issues presented on chapter 7 performance management (pp. 185–208); managing reward is presented on chapter 8 (pp. 215–240) interesting themes in this chapter among other includes compensation and the management of the employment relationship encompassing reward structures, the context of rewards, reward systems, basic pay and incremental pay schemes and non-financial rewards. Chapter 9 provides critical and thorough analysis of learning and development (pp. 245–258). Critical issues presented herein comprise of why invest in HRD, business strategy and HRD, HRD in practice and the systematic training model. Finally, Chapter 10 presents employment relation; some of the issues discussed in this chapter include regulation of control, power and authority within the employment relationship, the intersection of HRM and employment relations, notable trends in British employment relations, employee voice as well as employee involvement and participation (pp. 276–295). Each of the chapter presented seeks to offer captious standpoint on the modern practice in the exact functional areas of HRM which are discussed in each chapter. While each chapter focuses on a specific area of HRM, a recurring theme emphasizes the importance of considering their inter-relationships when making decisions about organizational policy and practices.

The third part comprises five chapters (11–15) focusing on contemporary issues in HRM. Chapter 11 explores HRM, equality and diversity (pp. 308–326), Chapter 12 delves into career and talent management (pp. 338–361), Chapter 13 details the management of workplace conflict (pp. 368–392), Chapter 14 addresses HRM, work and well-being (pp. 397–418), and finally, Chapter 15 discusses contemporary changes and HRM (pp. 425–442). While the topics covered in these chapters, such as equality and diversity, career development, workplace conflict and employee well-being, are not entirely new concerns, they represent areas where contemporary trends in practice or context have set new standards for management or highlight significant areas of both innovative and suboptimal practices. The concluding chapter revisits several critical issues in the practice and context of HRM, including the use of new technology, knowledge management, and the impact of labor market changes, warranting further discussion as they present both significant challenges and opportunities for HRM. Each chapter typically concludes with summary points, self-test questions, case studies and recommended readings.

The book significantly contributes to the body of knowledge in human resource management, encompassing literature and practical realism. It provides crucial guidance for students, lecturers, researchers, consultants, policymakers and managers. Specifically designed as a standalone resource, the book serves as an introduction to human resource management. While it is UK-specific, the principles, concepts and practices discussed have universal applicability worldwide, with the understanding that specific countries may need to contextualize the content to fit their unique circumstances. Notably, Nick has enriched the book by incorporating examples and cases from India, other Asian countries, Africa, Australia, Europe, South America and the USA, offering a deliberately diverse perspective to help readers relate to familiar contexts.

This edition introduces new features, including summary points in each chapter to aid in grasping key issues, thoughtfully revised self-test questions to encourage critical thinking and the application of chapter concepts. Additionally, the inclusion of case studies and

recommended readings aims to enhance readers' diagnostic skills for solving HRM problems. The book's comprehensive approach makes it a valuable resource for anyone seeking to understand and navigate the dynamic field of human resource management and refer students to extant studies so that they can clarify and confirm issues respectively. Generally, these features designed to enable readers contemplate, absorb and comprehend HRM skills.

Although commendable work has been done by the author, there are few limitations of this book. In the first part, it would have been ideal if author could present organizational context of human resource management including why organization exist and continue to be important (Daft, 2000). The author ought to introduce theories guiding development and management of human resource such as organizational life cycle, resource dependency, institutional, competitive advantage as well as human capital theory (Schuler, 2000). Moreover, it would also being ideal if author could present the evolution and development of human resource management this is necessary to provide a picture of chronology of the evolution and development of human resource management. Finally, while component of individual work performance have been very well elaborated it would have been ideal if leadership is added. This is so because, while ability, motivation and opportunity matter without appropriate leadership it is difficult for individual (human resource) to perform.

In the second part the author had presented well human resource planning process however, it is necessary to start with analysis of goals and plans of organization as the first step and ends up with audit and adjustment as last step. This is necessary because information on goals and plans of organization provide data which human resource plans and projections can be made (Hitka *et al.*, 2019). Audit and adjustment provide basis for control, as progress must be assessed against plan and it is a basis for taking corrective action (Pamela, Umoh, & Worlu, 2017; Miah, Sarah, & Takahash, 2022). In addition, the author was expected in this part to show the link between human resource plan and business plan (Bagheri, 2016). This is necessary because human resource plans translate business plan in terms of people requirement. On managing performance, a section on standards and competencies for performance management is missing this section is necessary as it let the supervisor compare the employee's performance with mutually understood expectations and minimize ambiguity in providing feedback (Kumar, 2019). Finally in this part the author was expected to present job evaluation especially during managing reward this is necessary because it is necessary to establish relative worth of jobs in order to determine equitable pay differentials (El Balshy & Ismael, 2021).

The third part of the book effectively addresses contemporary issues in human resources management. However, the addition of a chapter on green human resource management and human resource policy would have been a valuable contribution. In the current landscape, with increasing environmental concerns and the growing emphasis on sustainability, organizations are called upon to adopt practices that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. This is particularly crucial for organizations operating in highly competitive and regulated environments. Green human resource management is recognized as a key approach to achieving the triple bottom line – economic, social and environmental performance (Malik, Ali, Kausar, & Chaudhry, 2021; Khan, Khan, Jalaly, Shams, & Shah, 2022). Additionally, formal organizations cannot thrive without well-defined “rules of engagement” in managing people. These rules, essentially human resource policies, serve as universal guidelines that articulate how management intends to handle people and outline the expectations for employees in the workplace (Armstrong, 2014). Human resource policies play a vital role in ensuring that people management aligns with corporate values. Achieving employee commitment to the organization becomes challenging if the principles outlined in the corporate vision, mission and values are not effectively communicated and implemented, leading both managers and employees to believe that the organization is not just paying lip service to its stated values. The inclusion of such topics would enhance the book's relevance in addressing contemporary challenges in human resources management.

It is commendable to hear that “An Introduction to Human Resource Management, 5th Edition” is regarded as one of the best books in the discipline. The fact that it is still considered valid and a valuable textbook for managers, students and lecturers speaks to its enduring relevance. The positive recommendation, highlighting the book’s comprehensive coverage of all aspects of human resource management, underscores the strong academic and practical competence of the author. This endorsement reinforces the book’s standing as a reliable resource in the field and is likely to continue benefiting individuals at various levels within the realm of human resource management.

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