

# Developmental Human Resource Management Practices: Literature Review and Prospect

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**Abstract.** As employees' employment motivation and work concept turn to development orientation and growth needs, development-oriented human resource management practices (DHRMPs) that focus on employee development needs and provide employees with development resources and fair opportunities have emerged. Literature review found that social exchange theory and resource conservation theory can provide theoretical support for DHRMPs. The implementation of DHRMPs in enterprises helps employees to form a benign interaction with enterprises, thus promoting organizational performance, employees' work engagement and reducing their turnover intention. In the future research, we can make a deeper discussion on the antecedent variables of DHRMPs, scale development and testing, and the diversification of research objects.

## 1 Introduction

Human Resource Management Practice (HRMP) is considered to be an effective tool to improve the ability of employees and promote the sustainable competitive advantage of the organization. By developing special and difficult to copy and imitate enterprise human resources, it can bring unique competitive advantages to the enterprise, and is regarded as an important means of strategic human resource management [1-2]. Traditional HRMP mostly focuses on the improvement of organizational performance, focusing on the 'instrumentality' of employees, ignoring the long-term development of employees and the internal mechanism of organizational performance improvement [3]. At the same time, with the rapid development of social economy and technology and the rejuvenation of the workplace structure, the employment motivation and work concept of employees have also changed from the traditional 'employment orientation' and 'material demand' to 'development orientation' and 'growth demand' [4]. Employees have the knowledge and skills that managers lack, and applying these knowledge and skills to their daily work is considered to be a key condition for organizational performance improvement. Edgar and Geare [5] pointed out that HRMP should not only be used as a means to improve productivity and employers' target profits, but also to meet the needs of employees and commit to employee commitment. Only by meeting the development needs of employees can we stimulate their autonomy and enhance their creativity, so as to achieve long-term and stable development of enterprises [6]. However, the traditional organizational performance-oriented HRMP method has been unable to meet the growth needs of employees. Therefore,

Developmental Human Resource Management Practices (DHRMPs), which is employee development-oriented and realizes the coordinated development of organizations and employees, has gradually attracted the attention of academia and the business community [6-8].

The concept of DHRMPs was put forward relatively late, and its research is still in the initial stage of exploration. The research direction is relatively single, lacking comprehensiveness and systematicness. Therefore, this paper systematically reviews and sorts out the literature of DHRMPs, and puts forward the prospect of future research, in order to have a certain grasp of the research in this field and provide some reference for the follow-up research.

## 2 Concept of DHRMPs

Influenced by Dyer's division of investment-based and inducement-based HRMPs, Kuvaas [7] first proposed the concept of DHRMPs on the basis of human resource management 'best practices', and defined it as 'the degree to which employees believe their development needs are supported by organizational human resource practices', focusing on the HRMP perceived by employees at the individual level. By supporting employees' development needs, DHRMPs improve employees' ability and motivation to give back to the organization, thereby improving organizational performance [7]. Tang et al. [6] defined DHRMPs as 'HRMPs focusing on employee potential development and future career development, and implementing HRMPs for the common development of organizations and employees' from the perspective of organizational-employee collaborative development. They regard employees as partners of the organization, with the

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ultimate goal of promoting long-term career development of employees and building sustainable competitiveness of the organization.

In summary, this paper believes that DHRMPs is a HRMP approach that is oriented to employee development needs and provides employees with development resources and fair opportunities to achieve organizational-employee collaborative development. DHRMPs are not a broad investment, but an investment in the development needs of employees, meeting the development needs of employees, enhancing the organizational commitment of employees, and enabling employees and organizations to develop together.

### **3 Theoretical basis of DHRMPs**

#### **3.1. Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory holds that all kinds of behaviors of individuals in social activities can be regarded as a type of exchange, and people exchange interests based on the resources they pay and the remuneration they receive. Social exchange theory has been widely applied to the study of organizational behavior. It is an effective framework for understanding the relationship between employees and organizations in the workplace. The principle of reciprocity is an important starting mechanism for bilateral relations [9]. Social exchange theory shows that effective social exchange helps to form a mutually supportive win-win situation between the organization and employees. Employees participate in social exchange and expect their efforts to be rewarded by the organization [10]. When employees feel that their employer is fulfilling their obligations, they are more likely to feel obligated to reciprocate, thereby increasing their sense of responsibility to the organization [11]. DHRMPs invest in employee development, creating a positive way of communication between employees and organizations, and encouraging employees to respond in a way that is conducive to the organization. When employees perceive the organization's investment in their long-term development, they will form a reciprocal motivation with the organization and enhance their relationship with each other, and employees will feel obliged to return to the organization through their own efforts [7,9].

#### **3.2 Conservation of Resources Theory**

The Conservation of Resources Theory believes that individuals have the tendency to strive to acquire, maintain, cultivate and protect the resources they cherish. When individuals have more resources, they tend to protect the resources they have and use the existing resources to obtain more resources. When individuals are

experiencing the loss of resources or unable to live the expected return, they will face the pressure of resource loss and take defensive measures to reduce resource consumption and investment [12]. Resource conservation theory reveals the individual's psychological motivation for the preservation, acquisition and utilization of resources from the perspective of resource acquisition and consumption, and provides a new theoretical perspective for predicting and explaining employees' behavioral motivation. HRMP can be regarded as one of the ways for employees to obtain resources from the organization, which can provide employees with opportunities, development motivation, etc., and help employees achieve broader goals [13]. DHRMPs can improve employees' work ability and promote their career development, which undoubtedly helps employees to obtain and accumulate personal resources. Employees who obtain rich resources are more inclined to protect or expand their valuable resources. When DHRMPs provide employees with work resources, employees will adopt behaviors that are strong for personal and organizational development (higher work enthusiasm, active behavior, etc.) to obtain more valuable resources.

### **4 Dimensions and measurements of DHRMPs**

Combined with the characteristics of human resource management 'best practices' and related HRMP models, Kuvaas [7] divided DHRMPs into three dimensions: career development, training opportunities and performance evaluation, and developed a DHRMPs scale with 21 items in three dimensions. Career development includes 6 items, training opportunities include 8 items, and performance evaluation includes 7 items [7].

Based on the research of Guest et al and Kuvaas et al., Bal et al. [14] divided DHRMPs into five dimensions: job development, internal promotion, job enrichment, horizontal job rotation or job rotation and second career retraining. In order to make the evaluation more objective, they did not use the conventional Likert scale, but used more objective dichotomy indicators. The specific approach is to describe the availability of DHRMPs implemented by the organization by employees answering 'no' (marked as 0), 'yes' (marked as 1) or not knowing [14].

On the basis of previous studies, Chinese scholar Tang et al. [6] explored the connotation and structure of DHRMPs from the perspective of organizational-employee collaborative development by using grounded theory. According to the research findings, they developed a scale with four dimensions (development assessment, multiple training, job design, communication feedback), a total of 18 items, and tested the reliability and validity of the developed scale. The test results met the criteria of the Likert scale [6].

## 5 Outcome variables of DHRMPs

Reviewing the relevant literature on DHRMPs, it is found that the outcome variables of DHRMPs mainly focus on organizational innovation, turnover intention, job performance, job engagement and organizational citizenship behavior. In terms of organizational innovation, based on social exchange theory, Huang et al. [15] found that developmental human resource management practice is regarded as a signal of the company 's support for employees ' ability, which enhances employees ' responsibility for change, thus promoting the management innovation of enterprises. In terms of turnover intention, Indian scholar Ramaprasad et al. [16] conducted a survey of 752 IT personnel from 17 companies in India, and found that DHRMPs can enhance employees ' emotional commitment to the organization and significantly reduce employees ' voluntary turnover intention. In terms of job performance, Kuvaas [7] found that in high-quality employee-organization relationships, DHRMPs will positively promote employee job performance. Marescaux et al. [17] found that under high-intensity developmental leadership behavior, DHRMPs can enhance employees ' emotional commitment, improve happiness, reduce emotional exhaustion, and thus improve employees ' task performance. In terms of work engagement, Bal et al. [14], based on psychological contract theory, found that DHRMPs reduce transactional psychological contracts and strengthen relational psychological contracts, thereby significantly improving employee engagement and emotional commitment. Ahmed et al. [18] believed that training opportunities and career development in developmental human resource management would enhance employee engagement and be regulated by performance appraisal perception. Polat et al. [8] found that DHRMPs enhance employees ' development environment perception and psychological contract, which positively affect employee engagement and organizational affective commitment. In terms of organizational citizenship behavior, Pohl et al. [11] and Liu et al. [9] found that the satisfaction of DHRMPs will positively affect employees ' organizational citizenship behavior.

## 6 Outcome variables of DHRMPs

Based on the above analysis, this paper gives some suggestions on the future research of DHRMPs.

### 6.1. To further explore the antecedent variables of DHRMPs.

The existing research mainly focuses on the outcome variables of DHRMPs, and there are few studies on its antecedent mechanism. The positive impact of DHRMPs

on employee behavior has been widely verified, but how to implement DHRMPs, what kind of organizational environment and organizational culture are suitable for implementing DHRMPs have not been widely studied. Leaders play a decisive role in HRMP. Different leadership styles and personal characteristics of leaders have different effects on HRMP and subordinate employees. Therefore, future research can further explore the impact of different organizational environments, organizational cultures, and specific leadership styles and leadership personal behaviours on DHRMPs.

### 6.2. Development and testing of DHRMPs related scales

Since kuvaas [7] proposed the concept of DHRMPs and developed the relevant scale, most scholars have continued to use this scale, but this scale is highly subjective. Chinese scholar Tang et al [6] developed a scale with 18 items in four dimensions from the perspective of organization and employees, but this scale needs to be tested by subsequent research. Therefore, future research can construct DHRMPs scales from different perspectives and situations. At the same time, it can also verify the adaptability of the existing scale in different situations.

### 6.3. Diversification of research objects

HRMP has unique applicability in different industries. Based on the data of banks, knowledge and technology enterprises and other industries, researchers have empirically studied the impact of DHRMPs on personal behavior and organizational performance [7, 13]. Future research can explore the impact of DHRMPs in different industries, verify previous studies or draw new conclusions.

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