

And, as Armstrong (2000) pointed out:

HRM cannot be blamed or given credit for changes that were taking place anyway. For example, it is often alleged to have inspired a move from pluralism to unitarism in industrial relations. But newspaper production was moved from Fleet Street to Wapping by Murdoch, not because he had read a book about HRM but as a means of breaking the print unions' control.

Contradictions in the reservations about HRM

Guest (1999) has suggested that there are two contradictory concerns about HRM. The first as formulated by Legge (1995, 1998) is that while management rhetoric may express concern for workers, the reality is harsher. And Keenoy (1997) complains that: 'The real puzzle about HRMism is how, in the face of such apparently overwhelming critical "refutation", it has secured such influence and institutional presence.' Other writers, however, simply claim that HRM does not work. Scott (1994), for example, finds that both management and workers are captives of their history and find it very difficult to let go of their traditional adversarial orientations.

But these contentions are contradictory. Guest (1999) remarks that 'it is difficult to treat HRM as a major threat (though what it is a threat to is not always made explicit) deserving of serious critical analysis while at the same time claiming that it is not practiced or is ineffective'.

HRM AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

A debate about the differences, if any, between HRM and personnel management went on for some time. It has died down now, especially as the terms HRM and HR are now in general use both in their own right and as synonyms for personnel management, but understanding of the concept of HRM is enhanced by analysing what the differences are and how traditional approaches to personnel management have evolved to become the present-day practices of HRM.

Some commentators (Legge, 1989, 1995; Keenoy, 1990b; Sisson, 1990; Storey, 1993; Hope-Hailey *et al*, 1998) have highlighted the revolutionary nature of HRM. Others have denied that there is any significant difference in the concepts of personnel management and HRM. Torrington (1989) suggested that: 'Personnel management has grown through assimilating a number of additional emphases to produce an even richer combination of experience... HRM is no revolution but a further dimension to a multi-faceted role.'

The conclusion based on interviews with HR and personnel directors reached by Gennard and Kelly (1994) on this issue was that 'it is six of one and half a dozen of the other and it is a sterile debate'. An earlier answer to this question was made by Armstrong (1987):

HRM is regarded by some personnel managers as just a set of initials or old wine in new bottles. It could indeed be no more and no less than another name for personnel management, but as usually perceived, at least it has the virtue of emphasizing the virtue of treating people as a key resource, the management of which is the direct concern of top management as part of the strategic planning processes of the enterprise. Although there is nothing new in the idea, insufficient attention has been paid to it in many organizations.

The similarities and differences between HRM and personnel management are summarized in Table 1.1.

The differences between personnel management and human resource management appear to be substantial but they can be seen as a matter of emphasis and approach rather than one of substance. Or, as Hendry and Pettigrew (1990) put it, HRM can be perceived as a 'perspective on personnel management and not personnel management itself'.

Table 1.1 Similarities and differences between HRM and personnel management

<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>
1. Personnel management strategies, like HRM strategies, flow from the business strategy.	1. HRM places more emphasis on strategic fit and integration.
2. Personnel management, like HRM, recognizes that line managers are responsible for managing people. The personnel function provides the necessary advice and support services to enable managers to carry out their responsibilities.	2. HRM is based on a management- and business-orientated philosophy.
3. The values of personnel management and at least the 'soft' version of HRM are identical with regard to 'respect for the individual', balancing organizational and individual needs, and developing people to achieve their maximum level of competence both for their own satisfaction and to facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives.	3. HRM attaches more importance to the management of culture and the achievement of commitment (mutuality).
4. Both personnel management and HRM recognize that one of their most essential functions is that of matching people to ever-changing organizational requirements – placing and developing the right people in and for the right jobs.	4. HRM places greater emphasis on the role of line managers as the implementers of HR policies.
5. The same range of selection, competence analysis, performance management, training, management development and reward management techniques are used both in HRM and in personnel management.	5. HRM is a holistic approach concerned with the total interests of the business – the interests of the members of the organization are recognized but subordinated to those of the enterprise.
6. Personnel management, like the 'soft' version of HRM, attaches importance to the processes of communication and participation within an employee relations system.	6. HR specialists are expected to be business partners rather than personnel administrators.