The role of economics and industrial relations in the development of the field of personnel/human resource management

Bruce E. Kaufman (W.T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations, Department of Economics, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA)

Management Decision
ISSN: 0025-1747
Publication date: 1 December 2002

Abstract
This paper surveys the contribution of economics and industrial relations (E/IR) to the development of the field of personnel/human resource management (P/HRM). A brief review of existing accounts of the evolution of the field reveals that they give little mention to the role of E/IR. A re-examination of the early years of P/HRM suggests, however, that this is a serious omission. It is demonstrated, for example, that E/IR was in fact the principal disciplinary base for research and teaching in P/HRM in US universities into the 1940s and that for the first two decades of the field’s existence the most influential and authoritative academic-based writers came from the ranks of economists and economics-trained IR scholars. After describing the reasons for this close relationship, the centrifugal forces that caused a gradual split between E/IR and P/HRM are described. This split had roots in the 1920s, became increasingly visible in the 1950s and beyond, and by the late 1980s had reached a point where the two subject areas had little intellectual or organizational interaction. The paper ends with a brief review of recent developments that herald a modest rapprochement between E/IR and P/HRM.

Keywords
Economics  Employee relations  Human resource management

Citation

Download as .RIS

Publisher: MCB UP Ltd
Copyright © 2002, MCB UP Limited

To read the full version of this content please select one of the options below

You may be able to access this content by logging in via Shibboleth, Open Athens or with your Emerald Account.

To rent this content from Deepdyve, please click the button.

If you think you should have access to this content, click the button to contact our support team.
Human Resources Management plays a critical role in an organisation. It plays a crucial role in the process of converting inputs into outputs, product design, quality maintenance, rendering services and many other functions depend largely on the human efficiency. Human resource management (HRM) is the strategic and coherent approach to managing employment relations which emphasizes that leveraging people's capabilities is critical to achieving sustainable competitive advantage, this being achieved through a distinctive set of integrated employment policies, programmes, and practices. The terms “human resource management” and “human resources” (HR) have largely replaced the term “personnel management” as a description of the processes involved in managing people in organizations. In the present day turbulent reality, there is a need to develop industry-specific human resource management policy and practices to remain competitive and to develop committed workforce.