



## Human resource management efficiency and Shahnamah (based) on a comprehensive model of management factors effecting the productivity of manpower of doctor Mehdi Alvani

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**Abstract.** Today, human resources and management knowledge are considered as important and competitive organizational assets. Human resource managers who are aware of the importance of human resources will be able to create competitive advantages for organization's future. On the other hand, literature world includes a vast scope of sensory experiences based on objective facts which should not be ignored. Firdausi's Shahname has outlined various events given its infinite time and place. Regarding this variety of events, different individuals play roles with different human actions and reactions; therefore, Shahname is an appropriate field for researchers who are interested in interdisciplinary research such as literature and management, particularly human resources. From this perspective, the researcher aimed to match the "comprehensive pattern of management of influencing factors on human productivity" by Dr. Seyed Mahdi Alvani and Parviz Ahmadi with Shahname management practices in the present study. Although it may be a little effort, it is hoped to take a small step for the recognition of indigenous management. It is hoped that such studies can provide practical samples for management students through emphasis on unique richness of Persian culture and literature.

**Keywords:** management, human resources productivity, Firdausi's Shahname

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Human resources management appeared in 1980s and evolved as a new branch in management of human force. Today, there is an agreement that human resources management is not a substitute for personnel management, but it looks at processes of personnel management from a different perspective. Moreover, its principal philosophies are significantly different from traditional concepts of personnel management. However, some special approaches of personnel management and personnel relationships can be described under the title of human resources management approaches, because they are along with substantial philosophy of human resources management (Armstrong, 1993, 33).

Since human resources management was proposed as a professional expertise, big companies and different governmental offices established agencies and organizations under the title. Efforts made by university professors and communication with executive managers through useful articles which identified the importance of human resources management and its techniques, introduced this expertise as a profession and led to expansion of activities related to human resources management (Mirsepari, 1389:7; Bamberger and Mashulam, 1383: 20).

Along with fast advancements of technology, human capital is recognized as an important organizational asset. Human capital is a set of individual skills, knowledge, and general

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characteristics in the organization and can represent the capacity of today tasks and the potential for future works (Tunke Nejad, 1388: 51).

This study aims to represent indigenous management background based on literary masterpieces. Since America is birthplace of scientific management and management academic knowledge, a large volume of management research is done in this country and in American firms' atmosphere. Therefore, many management theories stem in American culture and are affected by this country's national factors. The use of these theories by managers in other countries and teaching them in management schools of these countries is based on the premise of management universalism, while this issue has been questioned by some management scholars such as Chow, Lawrence, Atiyyah, Hickson, Pugh, Adler, Barthomolmew, Joint, and Warner (Lawrence, 1994:pp543-561; Chow, 1992:pp53-67; Atiyyah, 1992:pp123-130; Adler, 1992: pp52-65; Hickson, 1995: p7).

In the absence of management universalism premise, management theories need to be tested and confirmed in each country. These studies and investigations constitute indigenous management of every country. The researcher believes that a principal and fundamental indigenous study in Iran should consider the nature of managers' work and provide achievements and results of successful indigenous management to students of this field. Regarding this perspective, the pattern proposed by "Dr. Seyed Mahdi Alvani and Parviz Ahmadi" (Alvani, Ahmadi, 1380: 1019) is matched with management practices of Shahname in order to take a small step toward recognition of indigenous management of Iran.

After selecting Shahname as the basic text, the researcher has tried to answer the following questions in line with hypotheses:

How much has Firdausi paid attention to modern practices of management?

How many issues of human resources management are considered in Shahname?

What are influencing factors on promotion of human resources productivity from Firdausi's perspective?

Research hypotheses include:

1. Given that Shahname is Iranians' political-social life story, many different management issues are being considered in it.
2. Today's civil society has kept some past rituals and customs.
3. Firdausi's patterns can be used in today's modern society.

## **2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

Given investigations done by scholars and through research in doctoral theses by "Marziye Khafi" (1391) and "Zahra Seyed Yazdi" (1387) in Firdausi University of Mashhad in which literature related to Firdausi's Shahname up to 1380 was reviewed, it was concluded that the issue could be a new research topic.

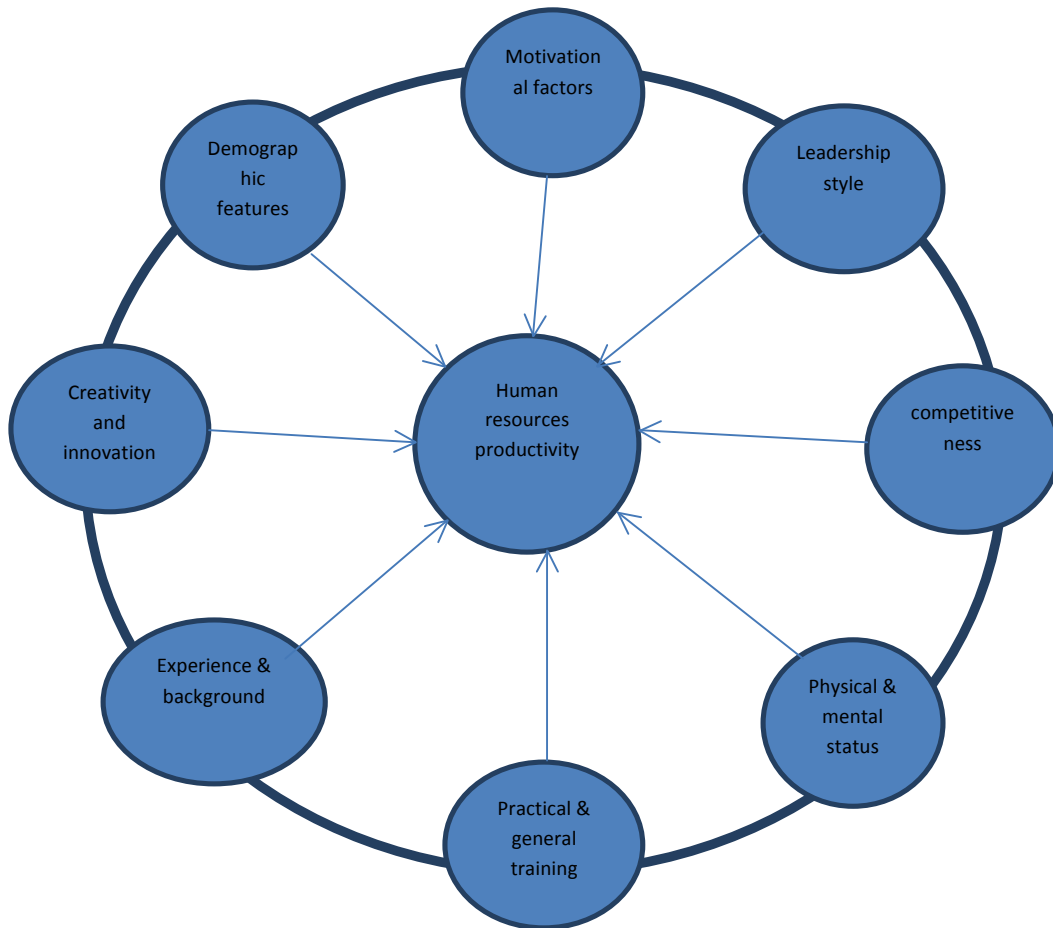
**3. METHODOLOGY**

In this article different references were used through library research, investigation in management books related to human resources management and different reliable sites such as Sid and so on.

It is hoped that such studies can provide practical samples for management students through emphasis on unique richness of Persian culture and literature.

**3.1. Comprehensive model of management of influencing factors on human productivity**

This model is proposed after considering various models and approaches for improvement of human resources productivity such as Goodwin model, Harshaw and Rush, Kuantan and Veton as well as providers' management experiences. The model can be represented as follows:



**Figure 1.** Comprehensive model of management of human resources productivity

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#### **4. DISCUSSION**

##### **4.1. Motivational factors**

*The image of fair wages and benefits:*

Following this principle will strengthen governmental foundations. It gives solidity to regulations and makes citizens submit. This word has its roots in ancient Iran. According to inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings, Iranians respected "justice" seriously and this honor was transferred to their next generations as an important heritage (Ehtesham, 1355:6).

Firdausi as a knowledgeable person in the field of human resources has been aware of the effects of organizational justice on personnel performance and as a result has proposed justice as one of the principles of kings' reign in Shahname. From his perspective, the throne of Iran is the place of justice (243/6) and governors outdo one another in having a land attired with justice. "Bahram Gur" is one of these governors:

I'll surpass my ancestors in justice

Leading you to religion in practice (ibid: 419:6)

Kings' organizational justice does not belong to a special class, so that "Alexander" wants social well-being for all his territory and the public:

All subordinates should come to me

From summits, deserts, cities, and sea (ibid, 11/6)

"Ardeshir" also looks at all people equally:

My court being open to everyone

Sinister and benevolent to be one (ibid: 194/6)

##### **4.2. Make amenities available to employees**

One of issues raised in scientific management is managers' attention to needs hierarchy; this is what American psychologist, Abraham Maslow proposed first in 1960. According to this theory, biological needs are at the top of the hierarchy and they will have the most influence on individual's behavior unless they are satisfied. Biological needs are those required for human's survival such as food, clothing, and housing. If these basic needs are not satisfied sufficiently, most individual activities will probably remain at this level and other needs will bring about less motivation.

Firdausi refers to this need in most of his stories; for example, regarding troops he believes that a hungry army will never support the government. Therefore, governments try to finance their troops as much as they can so that at wartime they protect the country. During the battle with Bahman, Ardeshir behaves with his troops as:

He gave his troops Drams to rejoice

And praised his benefaction Lord (ibid: 473/7)

Troops' wages and pensions were paid from treasury on time. This issue was so important that if they were faced with lack of budget, they would prepare loans and divide between people. During the battle with The Romans the treasury was empty. Annoushiravan ordered his minister:

He told him to go from there so quickly,  
Select a famous champion among all.  
From merchants as well as peasants,  
Everyone who has a name or fame.  
Ask all to give loans for the troops,  
The king will pay it back from his treasury (ibid: 435/7)

Formation of advocated court to address financial needs of peasantry can be the strongest evidence for attention to this category of human needs by Shahname kings. Granting gifts and presents can be counted as some otherevidence with so many examples that cannot be considered here. This kind of perspective shows a successful management where others are motivated to perform important tasks and represent commitment and enthusiasm (Iran Nejad Parizi, 1385:230).

Firdausi tries to complete his work through paying attention to peasantry's security need. This is the need to get rid of fear, safeguarding, and not to be deprived of basic needs; in other words, it includes the need to be protected now and in future. Having mental health, calmness, and comfort is a gift granted by Shahname kings to their people. The last thing Rostam wanted from Sohrab represents this perspective:

Now that my life is coming to the end,  
The situation of Turks will change at once.  
Show your kindness to me with a favor,  
Dissuade the king from battle with my people.  
They shouldn't suffer pains in their way,  
Don't treat them except kindness and beneficence (ibid: 188/2 and 189).

Anoushiravan's supportive order regarding survivors of the war will worth attention here:

Everyone who was killed in the battle,  
From whom small children were left.  
His name being read by the secretary,  
To take Drams to the child by duty.  
This will be repeated four times a year,  
Not to be degraded with such a work (ibid, 618:8).

This secure atmosphere is not just special for Iranians. Battle with Rome has finished. Anoushiravan establishes a town for them and orders about women and children:

In the events he said of whomever small,  
should not be counted slaves at all.

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Send them back to their mothers' hands,

With so happy hearts with no demands (ibid: 617/8).

#### **4.3. Payment commensurate with performance and experience**

At the ends of the wars, troops received reward based on their competence. Kay Kavus when released from the grip of white demon appreciated his troops as:

He said everyone deserved a treasure,

the more whose pain had no measure (ibid:61/2).

King Ardeshir represents a similar behavior. He grants everyone based on dedications in the battlefield. This effective and constructive reward is communicated to everyone in order to motivate them:

Everyone who came frail to the war,

Those appeared unhealthy in the battlefield.

The king was informed through letters,

On both artless and those warriors.

He embellished the artists with precious robes,

And made them rich by all treasures (ibid: 215/6).

#### **4.4. Appreciation from employees**

It can be confidently said that "reward" is an important tool to create incentives toward goal (Mourhed, 1385:231) subsequently improve human resources productivity. Firdausi also believes in this principle. Rostam receives an appropriate reward after Mazandaran war (Firdausi, 63/2). In Firdausi's thought, even an enemy who has done a valuable service should not be deprived of such a reward, so that the charter of Mazandaran government is given to "Oulad" with mediation of Rostam (ibid: 62/2).

Shahname kings know well that if the organization appreciates individuals for their time, efforts, knowledge, and skill devoted to the organization, they will work along with organizational goals. In other words, reward is a tool by which organizations appreciate their employees for their competencies in order to motivate and encourage them to continue their work (Saadat, 1390:257).

#### **4.5. Employees' satisfaction from organizational membership**

An organization is successful when its members believe in themselves and have self-esteem, so that financial benefits don't satisfy them. Such people even sacrifice their lives for correct thoughts which benefit the system. This is true in systems whose members are completely satisfied. Shahname kings behave so that these kinds of people are nurtured by government; for example, "Siavash" didn't break his pact with Afrasiab despite all pressures by Kay Kavus and preferred to go to Turan rather than stay in Iran and face possible intrigues (Firdausi" 269/2). "Aqrirath" loses his life to release Iranian captives, because his work benefits his country's future (ibid: 319/1). "Piran Vise" requests marriage with Farangis to strengthen the connection between Iran and Turan and to keep Siavash in Turan which will benefit his people, although his daughter, Jarire, is married to Siavash (ibid:299/2). He sends an appropriate present to

Farangis (ibid: 302/2) and at the end of story, when Afrasiab troubles her brutally he welcomes her with affection (ibid: 364/2). These people can realize facts. Their judgments are objective and fair while in their perspective, problems are challenges which need solutions. They are not affected by social pressures while they show social sympathy, kindness, and humanitarian properties. It can be said confidently that an organization whose members have come to this stage of growth will never experience depression; as Iran was at the height of pride before the attack of Arabs.

#### **4.6. Members' participation in decision-making**

People have more incentives in a system which is managed cooperatively. They show higher commitment to the organization and their productivity and satisfaction will increase (Robins, 1386:103). The relationship of such organizations with members is mutual connection and belonging which enables people to show their competencies (Feizi, 1384:19).

Consultation is an important principle in Shahname. From Firdausi's perspective, the party consulted with should be endowed with wisdom:

I'll make decisions with those who are resourceful,

With counsel I will win over my passion.

I will ask my minister in the affairs,

This way, I'll start new affairs (ibid: 406/6)

This management principle has a high frequency in Shahname which can provide a good research topic for future.

### **5. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

#### **5.1. Accurate determination of duties**

This work requires awareness of opportunities as well as future threats and prediction of the ways to deal with them. Planning is defined in management principles book as goal setting, finding the way to achieve it, making decisions on what should be done, visualization and design of optimal conditions in future, finding the ways and tools to achieve it, and design of operations which can change something based on predetermined strategies (Rezaian, 1390: 92). Creative division of labor leads to higher proficiency (Robins, 1386: 859).

Different professions such as astronomer (Firdausi: 62/1), Zoroastrian priest (ibid: 60/1), chef (ibid: 56/1), guard (ibid: 62/1), detective (ibid: 111/1) and so on have led to formation of different offices for petition, advocating, mission, and supervision with subsequent professional subdivisions in Shahname. Feridun defeats Zahhak in a hard battle with great chaos. He calls his people to be calm and asks them to follow their careers:

Troops and craftsmen should not be the same,

Not seeking an art which is alike.

One is apprentice, the other man of war,

Everyone deserves a special trade.

When you seek others' position, they yours,

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Turbulence will spread throughout the earth (ibid: 83/1).

Iraj visits his brothers. Questions asked by Selm and Tur represent a kind of professional system in Feridun's court:

They tried to find every kind of knowledge,

On the crown and king's throne as well.

On king Feridun and his troops,

On militant groups and his country.

Who are grandees and who is minister?

How much do they have and who is their treasures?

How big is his army and who is commander?

Who are his intrepid and courageous warriors?

## **5.2. Issuing instructions to the staff along with necessary justification**

In this regard, Firdausi acts very powerfully and plans delicately. When a king sits on the throne in Shahname, his first official duty is state his plans in presence of a committee of court grandees and notables and demonstrate objectives toward which he will do his best efforts (Yarshater, 1380: 247/1).

## **5.3. Emphasis on instructions**

In order to ensure compliance of performed activities and developed plans, there is a need for supervision. In fact, control means comparison of what is done with what was going to be done after which corrective actions are taken (Jazani, 1380:25).

"Khosro AnuShiravan" invites his agents to kindness and attention to subordinates and determines the amount of taxes carefully. He says firmly: whoever violates this boundary should be accountable to him:

Everyone who dares to exceed this amount,

Or even think a moment of cruelty.

I swear the Lord, who gave me power and crown,

I will punish him myself the hardest I can (ibid: 98/7).

He doesn't suffice written and oral warns:

There are detectives all over my dominion,

Neither good nor bad can be hidden from them (ibid: 95/7).

Such supervision will lead to social security, so that at the time of Khosro Anushiravan:

Young and older sleep with a peaceful mind,

Even wolves and sheep shall be together kind (ibid: 95/7).



#### **5.4. Creativity and innovation**

*Providing new ideas and strategies:*

Readers of Shahname witness social development from the first. Kumars changes his people's clothing and place of residence in order to provide them a better life (ibid: 22/1). Hushang explores iron and makes tools. Development of agriculture, watering, animal husbandry, and leather industry are other achievements of his government (ibid: 29-31/1). Jamshid has the most creative government. He declares construction of war tools, clothing, social classification, mine extraction, medical development, and Founding Nouruz ceremony as his 50-year planning. He is such a hardworking king who never rests for a moment. The result is that:

People listen to his commands by heart,

The world is full of happy songs with his art (ibid: 44/1).

#### **5.5. Welcoming new ideas**

Everyone is asked to help for evolution, even demons:

He ordered the foul demon,

To mix water and soil together (ibid: 95/7).

Whoever makes a difference will receive a reward. "Tahmureth" declares the conditions of demons' freedom as teaching writing to human beings (ibid: 37/1).

#### **5.6. General and practical training**

Maybe there are no seminars or meetings in Shahname in today's concept, but the presence of general and technical training cannot be denied.

The first formal education at the time of Tahmureth is provided by demons:

They taught the lord how to write,

Knowledge made his heart bright as the sun.

Not only one, but almost thirty,

From Roman, to Arabic, and Persian.

And also Sogdian, Chinese, and Pahlavi,

All the writings being heard of around (ibid: 37/1).

Even kings taught their subordinates:

He taught them how to spin and twist,

How to weave the wrap and woof.

When woven, how to wash and sew,

They learned from him whatever to do (ibid: 42/1).

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Technical training can be performed among classes that are allowed to be educated. In addition to physical training (such as wicket, hunting, and martial arts), kings undergo thought education as well. Siavash is nursed by Rostam:

Riding, archery, and lasso,

Bridle, pedal, the way to do what.

How to sit in an assembly, how to drink,

The same eagle with the game of query.

Justice, injustice, throne, and crown,

Speaking at the time of war, guiding troops.

Taught him all the arts equally,

Endured great suffering to conclude.

Siavash was trained so that in the world,

No one could excel him from superiors (ibid: 207-208/2).

In addition to these arts, Rostam tried his best to grow Siavash in scientific fields, so that when he came to Kavus court everyone praised his knowledge, overcoming language, and wisdom. He asked the king companionship of priests and wise men instead of going to bedchamber:

I'd like companionship with priests and the wise,

The great people who are experienced enough.

Teach me kingship throne and court rituals,

Rather to feast, serve wine or wine-drinkers (ibid: 213/2).

This is the main training. Kings respected the growth of wisdom and thought while they knew ignorance the most harmful in the world:

An ignorant man is more inferior to mire,

Such a man doesn't deserve any attire (ibid: 550/6).

## **5.7. Competitiveness**

*Flexibility toward success in competition:*

Undoubtedly, every organization is affected by its environment and influences it as well. These effects are dependent on organizational culture and members (Amiri Kermanshahi: 1992, 79-80). In other words, organizational culture is an environmental variable which affects all organizational members differently. Therefore, a good understanding of organizational structure and being equipped with required capabilities to change and transform organizational culture will change the thoughts and feelings of members to a big part (Lawson, Zing Chen, 1381, 62).

Different organizational cultures in Shahname demonstrate that every change toward organization's interest and along with government progress will be accepted without any resistance (ref. Shahname and contingency management).

### **5.8. Relationship with internal and external environment**

Iranian kings have strong relationships with internal brokers. Sometimes governors interfere directly and physically to solve some problems. Bahram Gur is a king who goes to his peasants' houses anonymously and knows about their circumstances. After a while, the result is to grant the wealth of "Jewish Ibrahim" to "Lanbak" (Firdausi: 424/6).

Regarding external environment, the reader observes travels of kings and top heroes to Turan, India, and Rome.

### **5.9. Evaluation of competitors' performance**

An obvious example of this evaluation is done by Bahram Gur. He dresses in messengers' clothes and risks his life to give a letter to Chengel, Indian king.

I'll see his army alone,

His kingship and his throne.

I'll go to him like messengers,

I won't tell anyone from Iran (ibid:541/7)

### **5.10. Demographic features**

*Age:*

Commanders are divided into five main categories: vanguard, the right of the army, the left of the army, center, and stem (Fakhr Modaber, 1346: 324) and each category has a special responsibility. In Shahname, candidates are selected according to age, experience, and expertise:

They wrote the names of twelve thousands,

Among armored and experienced horsemen.

They wrote the names of forty-year men,

Exceptions were those who lacked the above (Firdausi: 502/7).

### **5.11. Background and experience**

This issue is very important for Shahname kings. At the time of admission this principle is represented in a particular way. In admission rituals, having the rank to sit, stand, or having a chair at the right or left of the king showed the importance of this principle for Iranian kings.

When Esfandiar invites Rostam and gives him a seat at the left side, Rostam shows his anger outright.

Don't I deserve to be in your place?

I am who owns victory, intelligence, and wisdom (ibid: 343/5).

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Obviously, if Esfandiar had behaved another way in the ceremony, the war would have a different fate. This boundary is considered so important that when Rostam brings Sudabe out of Kavus palace to punish for her lying, no one dares to stop him.

He took her hair and dragged her out of the chamber,

Dragged her down imperial glory.

He punished her in the middle of the way,

No reaction was seen from Kavus Shah (ibid: 383/2).

### **5.12. Physical health**

Shahname kings should have physical health, dignity, and fitness in addition to other advantages, because defect is against kingship (Rashed Mohassel, 1387:92).

Bahram Gur's description of himself matches Fayol's definition of a manager. In his opinion, physical energy, a proper appearance, understanding the issues, identification of factors, and the ability to measure are important factors (Abbas Zadegan: 538, 1373).

I possess the art, wisdom and dignity as well,

I know riding; I am a man with so much power.

I despise others, who cannot come to my power,

In battles, in feasts and every other works (Firdausi: 403/6).

When the king's physical health is so important, its serious nature is recognized. Firdausi believes that protection of labor is necessary for human resources management. Regarding human resources health, he means understanding all dimensions of human being including though, physical, spiritual, and mental well-being.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In this article the category of human resources productivity is investigated with the assumption that human and his thoughts play an important role in productivity. The proposed model by an Iranian scholar in management field was compared to Shahname which is an Iranian national literary work. It was concluded that in order to have a successful system, enough attention should be paid to motivational factors, leadership style or management practices, innovation and creativity, competitiveness, sociological features, experience, and mental as well as physical health of employees. All of these factors will facilitate and enhance organizational movement toward progress.

The research shows that indigenous studies are needed in the field of management based on Iranian culture and proposed theories and models have to be tested in Iranian organizations so that indigenous management patterns are found for our country.

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