



# Human Resources Management in the Finnish Educational Sector: Challenges, Strategies, and Best Practices

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## Abstract

This paper provides a consideration of the roles of human resources management (HRM) in the Finnish educational sector. It bothers itself with such crucial HRM matters as teachers' attraction, development and staff-care policies, with a focus on staff retention and educational quality. Some of the issues are; teacher supply in remote areas, and moving from one environment of learning to another. At the same time, the paper is devoted to the positive practices in the Finnish model of HRM, such as, professional learning, work engagement and job satisfaction of teachers, support for education enhancing the context of the learning system in Finland.

*Keywords: Current Practice, Finland, HR Management, Management*

*JEL classification: I20, I21*

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## 1. Introduction

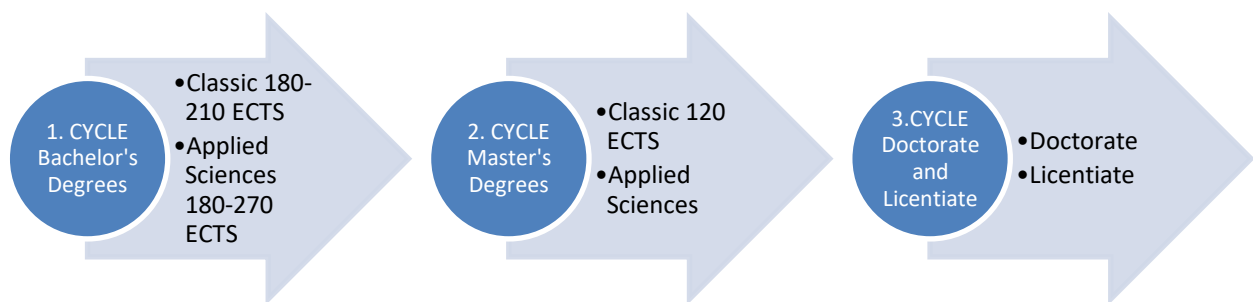
It is very crucial for schools because it is the arm that undertakes the recruitment, training and development of the staff to enable the institution to achieve its goals. HRM in education is not only about acquiring the capable resources but also about creating the environment in which the employees of educational institution would be effective (Mesha, 2023).

This in turn has an impact on the quality of education that is offered in the learning institutions to the students. Such concerns have raised the need for the HRM in education to find out how; it will address staff motivation, staff training and evaluation of the staff in order to retain quality teaching.

Education in Finland is very well developed and schools of this country are quite famous all over the world. The following graph shows how well Finland has done in the international comparison having a policy in place which focuses on equity and student learning. It values cooperation better than competition; it ensures that all the citizens receive education in all levels of learning right from the pre-primary level to university level.

Finnish teachers have a lot of independence and prospective teachers are expected to undergo tough training so that only the best get to be teachers. Individual analysis of the strategic approach of HRM in the context of education sector of Finland is to ensure that teachers are motivated and update with the current and increasing demand of education. This system of human resources management serves to the general development of Finland's education system. Satisfaction in Higher Education is often overlooked issue and is necessary to focus on this matter from the point of view of research as explained by Vrba, Bhaumik, and Duraipandi (2024).

Following figure shows higher education system in Finland divided into three cycles. First cycle is University Bachelor's Degree Studies followed by Master's Degree Studies (second cycle) and topped up by third cycle which consists of Doctorate Degree and Licentiate Degree.



**Figure 1: Higher Education Scheme in Finland.**

Source: Author, based on Norric (2024).

## 2. HRM Practices in Finnish Education

Recruitment and hiring of teachers and other educational staff in Finland remains a competitive affair and at the same time very rigorous. Teacher candidates are required to complete a master's degree that requires a general understanding of theory and practice in Education. This high standard of qualification makes a point that only the best people are accorded the privilege of teaching.

The recruiting is not based on the academic background of the candidates but how they propose to motivate the students. Thus, the Finnish education system can be treated as rather de-centralized and, as a result, schools have a rather large amount of freedom in questions concerning personnel selection and hiring: that is, schools can select the persons which would be the most appropriate for the certain school environment.

Training and development programs are also identified as the essential element of the HRM system in the case of the Finnish education. Of course, professional development is a continuous process: this happens by teachers attending workshops, conferences and advanced courses, they are always in the process of becoming.

The government has a very good policy of professional development, which sees to it that educators are supported in terms of funds so that they can practice what is current in education. It also fulfills the continuing professional development to guarantee that the teachers maintain high standards and are well capable to adopt new methods of teaching (Mihaela-Viorica Rusitoru, 2020).

In this way, Finland employs these HRM practices to ensure that educators are ready to deliver quality education to students in a conditions that are ever evolving.

### **3. Teachers' Welfare and Retention**

Teacher welfare is a well-highlighted aspect in Finland where there are several structures in place to cater for the physical, social and emotional aspects of the teachers. Teachers seem to have relatively lighter working conditions than many Countries and this makes them in a position to plan for their lessons, mark their students' work, and tend to their own needs. It also helps to avoid situations when the teacher becomes bored and unmotivated in performing his/her duties, which this approach does well.

Any health care is also provided with the availability of counselors and other professional to help the teachers who may be stressed or facing some challenges. Such systems create a good learning environment and help teachers work in that area for many years (Eksymä, Pekka Eemeli, 2022).

Hence, the retention strategies in Finland are based on the salaries, satisfaction and the prospect. It is also clear that teachers in Finland enjoy a good salary and as such teachers are highly respected in the country. Beside the monetary incentives, teachers appreciate the autonomy that they are allowed in the classroom, and the organizational culture in schools which is more of collaboration and not competition.

Other incentives like; the prospects of having a job and other things like; obtaining other certifications and promotion to other jobs also assists in retaining the employees. Altogether, these aspects combined make teaching in Finland to be a desirable as well as a sustainable career path. Because Finland has managed to provide both personal and professional requirements of the educators, the country has been able to retain the right talent in the teaching fraternity.

### **4. Performance Evaluation**

In Finland the performance of the teacher is assessed through peer review as well as through student's feedback. Peer reviews assist in the growth of teamwork among teachers; they are organized in such a way that they watch each other, and at the same time they are watched and criticized.

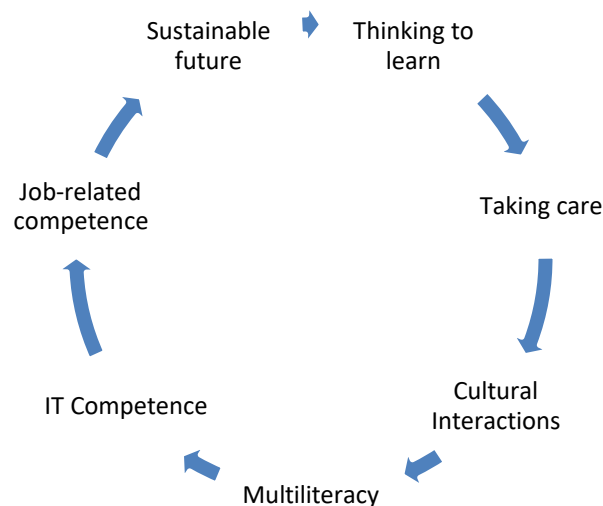
This method is quite effective as it creates a right environment even for the teachers to build on their practices. Students also have their opinion which is very vital because it assists in finding how effective a particular teacher is in engaging and facilitating students (Pan, 2020). However, these are not very rigorous or even penalty-like in a way, these are the ways the organization can assess its performance.

However, they are aimed at improvement and training of the teachers towards the efficiency of their delivery to the learner and learning process which is a continuous process.

## 5. Key Components of Finnish Higher Education Success

Seven key components of Higher Education Success in Finland stems from scheme of developing as human being and as a good citizen. Such as scheme consists of following key components (Scandinavian Scholastic Center, 2024):

1. Thinking to learn,
2. Taking care of oneself and other peers; managing daily activities in a safety manner,
3. Cultural interactions, competence, learning to understand cultural differences,
4. Multiliteracy in all subjects including IT,
5. IT Competence,
6. Job-related competence, learning how to survive in work after finishing the degree,
7. Participation in building sustainable future and influencing for sustainable future.



**Figure 2: Key Components of Finnish Higher Education**

Source: Author, based on Scandinavian Scholastic Center (2024).

## 6. Challenges in HRM in Education

Some of the challenges that various human resource managers in Finnish education deal with include shortage of teachers particularly in the rural regions. However, in the case of Finland, they have a good reputation regarding the teacher education as well as quality of education and still the shortage of teachers in rural area as compared to the urban area is one of the main issues. Teachers also prefer to teach in large central area where everything is easily accessible, improved teaching tools are likely to be offered and developed (Sladakovic, 2021).

Thus, rural school finds themselves in a dilemma of being able to offer competitive remunerations that will help in attracting and retaining competent staff while at the same time offering poor quality education as compared to other regions. That is why to address this issue there must be steps made towards making the occupation of a teacher in rural schools more appealing, for example by offering privileges or better living conditions.

The fourth key issue is emerging in the fact that HR policies should reflect the trends in the education sphere (Bodson, 2021). Technological advancements, the shift in paradigm in learning and teaching methodologies, the shift in learners' expectations and the global changes also imply that conventional HR practices may not suffice in the existing world. The schools are compelled to adapt to these changes and, therefore, transform their policies that give teachers Harter training on new technologies and pedagogy (Keipi, Pauli Markus, 2022).

In addition, schools need to foster flexibility and innovation in their employees; therefore, teachers are to experiment with various tools and methods in education. Another issue is that as a result of diversification of students, teachers have to be culturally sensitive and apply the policies of Equal Employment Opportunity. In order to answer to these demands, it is crucial to focus the strategies of the HRM on these aspects that determines the quality of the Finnish education system.

## 7. Conclusion

The following are the conclusions about the Finnish human resource management in education that can be made to explain the country's success in the delivery of quality education.

The Finnish system also takes several activities to ensure that its tutors are well equipped in recruitment, professional development and welfare of teachers. However, there are still some concerns such as the issue of getting teachers to teach in remote areas schools and the dynamism of the education needs of the population, Finland has demonstrated that it is in the process of improving its HR practice.

They also facilitate the constant production of a well-qualified teaching staff and support the vision of Finland as a world leading country in education.



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