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BARRIERS TO STRATEGIC HRM INTERVENTIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM RECRUITMENT, TRAINING CURRICULUM, AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES IN PUNJAB POLICE

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Abstract

The paper has examined the major issues and obstacles involved in the application of the HRM intervention-based policies and analyzed the strategic HRM interventions that can be applied in order to increase employee performance and organizational performance in the Punjab Police. The research took the form of a qualitative study because it concentrated on three fundamental areas of HRM that include recruitment and selection, training curriculum and pedagogy, and work-life balance practices. Semi-structured interviews with 18 key informants purposely selected were used to gather the data, whose roles in the study included senior police officers, HR officials, training instructors, psychologists, welfare officers, as well as policy experts of the Bahawalpur region. Thematic analysis was utilized with the assistance of methodological triangulation to determine recurrent institutional, structural, and operational problems that impacted the implementation of HRM policy.

The results to the first research question showed that the old and rigorous recruitment standards, post-selection psychological testing, low intake of recruits into the unit, and rigidity in the bureaucracy, training curricula that was traditional and relatively drill-based, poor experiential learning, heavy load, inconsistent duty hours, poor enforcement of welfare policies, and low mental support were significant obstacles to effective HRM interventions. All these issues led to burnout, skills gap, lack of motivation, operational exhaustion, and poor organizational performance. To answer the second research question, the study developed a group of context-specific strategic HRM strategies in accordance with the modern requirements of policing and the international benchmarks. These had a competency-based and merit-oriented recruitment process with pre-induction psychological evaluation, modernization of training programs by integrating cybercrime, community policing, and learning scenarios, ongoing professional development systems, work and shift scheduling, institutionalized work-life balance programs, and integrated psychological and welfare support. They highlighted that working to harmonize HRM reforms with international standards of policing and contextualizing them to local institutional realities might be of great help to

increase workforce capacity, involvement, and professional strength.
The credibility and validity of the findings were enhanced due to the triangulation of the multi-stakeholder perspectives with the current scholarly and policy literature. In general, the research finds that to address the issues of structural and implementation-level barriers, consistent strategic HRM reforms will be necessary to enhance the performance of both employees and the organization, its efficiency, and effectiveness to foster long-term organizational modernization and better service delivery to the population.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Police organizations are extremely human-intensive state institutions, the performance of which depends, to a significant extent, on the quality, capabilities, and well-being of human resources. The growing complexity of operations, the growing level of public accountability, and the development of security issues are the hallmarks of modern policing that have strengthened the necessity of strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) interventions that ensure sustainable improvement of the performance of the employees(Garengo et al., 2022). Available literature has underscored the fact that administrative supervision is not the sole factor that can affect the performance of employees working in public sector organizations: HRM practices, such as recruitment and selection, professional training, and work-life balance (WLB) policies, are all factors that together determine competence, motivation, and organizational commitment (Grandi, 2021).

The HRM intervention in policing organizations is recruiting and selection (Nirmala & Kumar, 2023). Poor planning of recruitment, old, outdated selection systems, and a lack of psychologically and competency-based screening tests led to a lack of fit between the needs of the organization and the abilities of the personnel, compromising efficiency and service delivery. Recruitment and selection systems should be developed to address performance goals and operational conditions, and in contemporary policing, these demands double the needs of cognitive, emotional, and technological skills, which are becoming a staple of policing (Iulia, 2023). The second HRM intervention, which is critical, is the training curriculums which converts human capital potential into operational effectiveness. Contemporary police training focuses on community policing, conflict management, cybercrime investigation, counterterrorism awareness, ethical choice, and psychological strength in addition to the basic law enforcement training. Empirical research emphasizes that the training initiatives that are not combined with theoretical training and field-based practical training limit the transference of skills, decrease flexibility, and affect the performance outcomes of individuals and organizations negatively (Ronzon et al., 2025).

Work-life balance practices constitute a third strategic area of HRM that has not been fully applied in most policing situations (Hadi, 2025). Police workers are often exposed to long hours of duty, irregular working schedules, deployment in high-pressure situations, and existing occupational stress that negatively impact motivation, engagement, and performance. There is evidence that properly designed WLB interventions, such as controlled duty schedules, leave management, and psychological support, improve well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational efficiency. These HRM interventions should be critically reviewed outside the policy in the Punjab Police. The recruitment criteria, which are restricted to secondary-level education (Grade 10) as well as post-selection psychological testing, limit the ability to identify candidates with the necessary cognitive, emotional, and behavioral abilities. Curriculum training programs are still underperforming in meeting new demands like digital policing, cybercrime, and community interactions, and WLB practices, despite their official codification, are not consistently being implemented, and thus, sabotaging the

performance of officers and institutional performance (Ummah, 2019).

The organizational performance is dependent on the central resource, human capital, and HRM interventions play a critical role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of employees that can be converted into the desirable outcomes of the institution (Mirza et al., 2024). The performance of police is many-dimensional, and it includes such dimensions as crime prevention, public safety, maintenance of law and order, as well as protection of citizens, which are evaluated by both outcome-related (e.g., crime rates, clearance rates) and process-related (e.g., ethical compliance, quality of the interaction with the public) measures. Evidence shows that fragmentation of HRM practices, lack of effective recruitment, current training, and poor welfare policies are some of the issues contributing to operational inefficiencies and undermining of the public trust (Adeyinka et al., 2023). HRM interventions, which can be viewed as strategic practices aimed at acquiring, developing, motivating, and retaining human capital, are most effective when combined in the realm of recruitment, training, and WLB domains, and used to maintain each other to enhance ability, motivation, and opportunity to perform. The empirical research shows that the ability-strengthening interventions such as rigorous selection, systematic training, and successful support of WLB are associated with increased employee involvement, efficiency in the operation, and the outcomes of public services(Dunn et al., 2016). Despite many years of service and service delivery, the Punjab Police have structural and managerial issues that limit its performance. The recruitment process is still not aligned with the population growth as well as the complexity of operations, training programs are not updated enough, and WLB practices are not intensively implemented (Fârte & Obadă, 2021). Psychological tests are administered after the selection, and such tests are not as effective in the selection of candidates with the necessary emotional strength and ethical sense. All these restrictions lead to lower preparedness of officers, their involvement, and ultimately, institutional performance (Njonge, 2023).

This paper dwells on three crucial areas of HRM, including Recruitment & Selection, Training Curriculum, and Work-Life Balance Practices, and explores the hurdles to their successful practice in the Punjab Police. Through the evaluation of structural shortcomings, operational gaps, and contextual limitations, the research offers empirically based knowledge on how strategic HRM interventions can be streamlined and aligned with the global best practices in an effort to improve employee performance, organizational effectiveness, and public trust in the policing institution.

2.1 Literature Review

Police institutions are extremely human-intensive, in which quality, capability, and the well-being of staff significantly influence the performance of organizations (Iasi, 2022). The growing complexity of operations, demands of public accountability, and the rise of security issues in modern policing have led to an increase in the importance of strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) interventions in the effort to improve the performance of employees in a sustainable manner (Tahir, Parveen, et al., 2023). The literary sources underline that the administrative oversight is not the only factor that defines employee performance in the public sector organizations, but coherent recruitment and selection systems, professional training, and work-life balance practices as well are influential determinants of competence, motivation, and organizational commitment (Anjum, 2021). The recruitment and selection are the initial phase of human capital formation within the policing organizations (Ali et al., 2023). The empirical evidence indicates that the lack of alignment between organizational needs and staff capabilities was caused by the presence of old-fashioned selection systems, the absence of psychological and competency-based tests, and the restriction of education eligibility to limit operational effectiveness and quality of service. Specifically, the inefficiency in dealing with the psychological test after selection, instead of

considering it as an element of the pre-selection screening instrument, is a method to diminish the benefits of enforcing psychological, emotional, and behavioral competencies in the police force needed in contemporary policing (Feser et al., 2023).

The second important HRM intervention is the training curriculum, which is the transfer of human capital potential to operational effectiveness (Ahmed & Faruk, 2023). Contemporary policing requires more than mere law enforcement skills, including community policing, skills in investigating cybercrimes, conflict management, counterterrorism awareness, ethical decision making, and psychological resilience. Nevertheless, literature shows that training programs in most policing institutions, such as the Punjab Police, have not changed with time, and there is a low incorporation of theory and field-based learning. Weak structures, ineffective time span, poor infrastructure, and unqualified trainers also restrict skills transfer and officer flexibility in complex operations, which eventually impacts personal and organizational performance (Chikwem, 2020).

Another area of HRM that is under-utilized in policing settings and yet enshrined in law is the practice of work-life balance (WLB) practices (Garengo et al., 2022). Police officers have high work hours, unpredictable duty schedules, emergency duties, and constant exposure to occupational stress, all of which have adverse effects on motivation, engagement, and performance. The lack of a well-developed schedule of duties, low use of leaves, and insufficient psychological assistance negatively affect the well-being of the employees and precondition the development of burnout, absenteeism, and low professional effectiveness. Moreover, as long as a hierarchical policing system with cultural and operational opposition to the policies of WLB exists, meaningful implementation would be impaired, restricting the intended performance-enhancing outcomes (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), 2016).

These HRM interventions are structurally and procedurally inhibited in the Punjab Police. The recruitment practices have not been in line with the demographic and operational needs since minimum educational qualification and post-selection psychological testing minimize the efficiency of the personnel selection process. The training programs, especially those of the constables, do not keep up with current issues like cybercrime, electronic policing, and community involvement. On the same note, the WLB policies are ineffective at the official level as they are poorly enforced, inconsistently monitored, and lack a support system, which affects the well-being of the officers, their motivation, and the overall performance of the organization (Ummah, 2019). All these gaps indicate incomplete and inadequately integrated HRM interventions that, regardless of the formal policies in place, are not doing the best in terms of employee competence, engagement, and operational effectiveness.

The literature on strategic HRM stresses that HRM interventions are most effective when combined in various spheres, which reinforces the abilities of employees, motivation, as well as chances to work (Gupta et al., 2024). Empirically, ability-enhancing interventions, including rigorous recruitment and selection practices, structured and field-integrated training programs, and supportive WLB practices, have been associated with increased operational efficiency, greater engagement, and improved outcomes in public service (Subroto et al., 2025). Through an analytical and evidence-based approach, the paper will critically analyze the obstacles to effective HRM interventions in the Punjab Police and explore how structural, procedural, and cultural misfits in the police affect the performance and organizational performance of the police. In this perspective, the study aims to bring evidence-based information and situation-based arguments to offer professionally relevant information and recommendations that align HRM intervention with international best practices that promote performance sustainability, motivation, and workforce in the policing environments.

3.1 Problem Statement

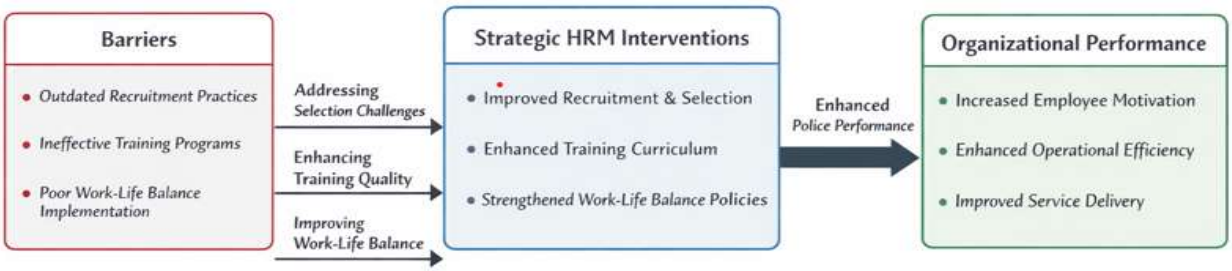
The strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) gaps, in the Pakistani context, are quite significant in the Punjab Police, the largest provincial law enforcement agency in Pakistan. As the most densely populated province with over 120 million people, Punjab has a police force of around 218913 officers, including over 170000 constables and head constables, to maintain law and order, safety, and rule of law of their people (Report, 2018). Nevertheless, its size does not ensure an adequate police to population ratio, as there is about one officer to almost 660 citizens, which results in overworking, operational exhaustion, and limited capacity to engage with the community, especially among junior subordinate officers that form the core of daily activities (Sager et al., 2025). Despite the number of administrative changes implemented, human resource practices of recruitment and selection are mostly archaic and ill-fitted to the expanding demographics and the modern security requirements. Educational eligibility is still set at the secondary level (Grade 10), which limits the influx of applicants with advanced analytical, communication, and technological skills that are required in contemporary policing. Besides, psychological evaluation is sometimes a post-selection process and not an integral pre-selection process, which restricts the recognition of recruits with the right emotional stability, ethical orientation, and stress management abilities (Sager et al., 2025). This lack of fit increases institutional failures, subverting professional readiness and work predictability.

On the same note, the lower rank officers' training curriculum is still poorly matched to the modern-day policing challenges. Training programs still focus more on traditional drill-based training of police with little curricular attention to intelligence-based policing, cybercrime investigation, crisis negotiation, digital forensics, mob psychology, and community engagement, which restricts the experiential learning and resulting flexibility in the complex operational setting. This has resulted in recruited officers, who are new in the field, reporting to duty without much preparation, making them less accountable and less effective in their duties. The practices of work-life balance in the Punjab Police are also characterized by poor implementation, although there are formal welfare policies. Frontline staff often have to deal with long working hours, irregular shifts, emergency assignments, and scarce leave. Lack of institutionalized mental health care, counseling centers, as well as family support systems, enhances occupational stress and leads to chronic fatigue, burnout, lack of motivation, impaired judgment, and turnover intentions. The findings of studies conducted in the policing setting all over the world make it clear that irregular schedules, compulsory overtime, and work-family conflict are closely linked to burnout, stress, and suicidal ideas among officers, and that low work life balance is extremely essential in terms of psychological wellness (Humayon et al., 2018).

Unfortunately, they have been caught up in a tragic turn of events, as seen in several reported cases of the actual impact of these structural strains in the Punjab Police. Recent media coverage of a series of suicides of serving constables (such as a 25-year-old Punjab police constable who took his own life in Ferozewala and another in Faisalabad, where high-level administrative attention was also attracted by a reported suicide in the service), is raising concern about the occurrence of suicides among serving constables. The cases are indicative of a widespread trend of work-related stress that can be utterly disastrous, and the need to care about the health and mental well-being of police officers cannot be overestimated. Theoretically, the prevailing HRM models that largely emerged in the context of the private sector, including the theory of transformational leadership and the job demands resources models, have not been properly fit to the policing context that is specially conditioned by operational risks, political pressure, public scrutiny, and moral dilemmas (Adeyinka et al., 2023). The existence of archaic HRM procedures and low levels of adoption of the contemporary psychological support systems are cues to the existence of critical gaps both in policy formulation and execution. As a result, the urgent need is to

critically analyze the structural, procedural, and cultural impediments to recruitment and selection, training curriculum, and work-life balance practices in the Punjab Police, and to learn how the impediments deter performance of the employees, resilience of the institution, and trust.

1.1 The conceptual framework of the Barriers to Strategic HRM Interventions is depicted below.



A conceptual framework of this research paper depicts the connection between the obstacles to strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) interventions and how they impact organizational performance in the context of the Punjab Police, particularly on the areas of recruitment and selection, training curriculum, and work-life balance (WLB). The framework assumes that structural, procedural, and institutional obstacles, including old-fashioned recruitment practices, poorly designed training programs, and ineffective implementation of WLB policies, have a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of the HRM interventions (Tahir, Education, et al., 2023). These impediments restrict the ability of HRM practices to grow, inspire, and maintain human capital, which eventually impedes the motivation of employees, efficiency of operations, and service delivery (Muin et al., 2025). The framework also shows that the following issues can be alleviated through the development of HRM intervention: the modernization of recruitment and selection processes including the use of competency-based and mental screening, the optimization of training programs including the integration of learning to the field, and the tightening of the WLB policies can have a positive effect on the performance of employees and the outcomes of the institution as a whole(Yuan and Suryani, 2025). It is based on the AMO model of HRM (Ability, Motivation, Opportunity) according to which the better performance of employees, the higher the level of HRM systems in increasing the abilities, motivation, and opportunities of employees to act (Kellner et al., 2023). Overall, the framework offers a theoretically based and empirically supported model of comprehending and dealing with the operational issues of the Punjab Police by implementing strategic HRM interventions.

5.1 Research Questions

What are the key challenges and barriers in implementing HRM intervention-based policies for selection, training, and work-life balance within the Punjab Police, and how does this affect employee performance?

What Strategic HRM interventions and policy reforms can be introduced to enhance selection, training curriculum & teaching methodology, and work-life balance policies, and how can Punjab Police integrate global best practices for a more efficient and motivated workforce?

6.1 Research Objectives

- To identify the key challenges and barriers in implementing HRM-based policies for recruitment, training curricula & teaching methodology, and work-life balance within

Punjab Police, and assess their impact on organizational performance.

- To propose strategic HRM interventions and policy reforms for enhancing recruitment, training curricula & teaching methodology, and work-life balance policies, and explore how Punjab Police can integrate global best practices to create a more efficient and motivated workforce.

7.1 Significance of the Study

The importance of the research is the fact that it has contributed to the theory and practice of human resource management (HRM) in the Punjab Police. Through investigating recruitment and selection, training curricula, and work-life balance (WLB) practices, the research takes part in the determination of the barriers to a successful HRM intervention and the identification of the possible ways to improve the performance of the police, their motivation, and well-being (Garengo et al., 2022). The results of empirical research can be used to give evidence-based recommendations regarding the modernization of the recruitment processes, the combination of the competency-based and psychological tests, the changes in the training programs to teach people how to cope with the challenges of today, including cybercrime, terrorism, and community policing, and use structured patterns of WLB to minimize burnout and improve job satisfaction (Findlay-williams and Saraya, 2025).

The study has a theoretical gap as it places the HRM frameworks, such as transformational leadership, job demand-resource, and competency-based frameworks, in the context of policing, where the same adaptation has been minimal. In practice, it would provide policy makers and law enforcement agencies with practical guidance to structure strategic HRM intervention based on international best practices, but taking into consideration the Pakistani socio-political environment, and eventually create a capable, responsible, and citizen-oriented police force.

8.1Research Methodology

A qualitative approach to study utilizes in the research assists in developing a more accurate image of the phenomenon (Ho et al., 2021). This study adopted the qualitative research approach because it aims at gaining a detailed and contextual perspective of HRM interventions and their impact on police performance in the Punjab Police. As one of the qualitative methods, the researcher investigated the institutional realities, administrative practices, and operational problems related to recruitment and selection, training curriculum and teaching methodology, and work-life balance practices. Semi-structured interviews and official talks with the major stakeholders, such as senior police officers, training experts, and administrative staff, helped the researcher to receive rich insights into experiences that could not be measured quantitatively. This qualitative stage was part of the answers to the questions regarding the fundamental challenges and obstacles to the implementation of HRM intervention-based policies in the areas of selection, training, and work-life balance, and the impacts of the institutional impediments on employee performance. Moreover, it also assisted in determining the strategic HRM interventions and policy changes that are needed to enhance recruitment systems, modernize training curriculums and practices used in the instruction of training programs, and reinforce policies on the work-life balance, as well as exploring the possibility of integrating the global best practices to enhance efficiency, motivation, and overall workforce performance in the Punjab Police.

8.1.1 Population and Sampling of the Study

To access the qualitative aspect of the current study, the purposive sampling method (Svend Brinkmann; Steinar Kvale, 2004) was used to gain insight into in-depth and contextual information about HRM interventions in the Punjab Police. Purposive sampling is held to be suitable in cases where the researcher is keen.

Given the rigor and probability of the research goals, the qualitative sample was selected based on major stakeholders related to the

administration of the police force, educational institutions that offer such training, and the institution of government. The chosen categories were senior police officers (SP level), the Police Training Institutions officers, the positions of the HR/Establishment Branch officials, psychologists or trainers (where it was possible), and the policy stakeholders concerning the police reforms and welfare. This heterogeneous sample guaranteed a multidimensional approach to HRM practices in institutions, structural limitations, training deficiencies, and implementation issues of work-life balance policies in the Punjab Police. The researcher identified 18 important key informants and used a systematic and criterion-based method to make sure that the qualitative data on HRM intervention practices in the Punjab Police were rich, credible, and saturated.

To be authentic and reliable, the researcher used a structured selection of respondents by creating a subject-relevant official listing using official directories, professional and institutional affiliations within the police and administrative system of the Bahawalpur Region. The criteria of the selected professionals were the professional rank, experience in recruitment or training administration, experience in welfare or personnel management, and understanding of HRM policy implementation in the Punjab Police. Such a selection process was calculated and strategic to improve the strength of the qualitative results and to allow the researcher to critically analyze the institutional gaps, policy loopholes, and HRM solutions through reforms by informed stakeholders.

Table No. 8.1.1

#	Institutional Formation	Nature of Institution	No. of Respondents	Justification in HRM Intervention Context
	District Police Office Bahawalpur.	Field Operational Command	04	Direct insights on recruitment shortages, workload, and WLB challenges at the district level
	District Police Office Bahawalnagar	Field Operational Command	03	Operational supervision and implementation of HRM practices in semi-urban policing
	District Police Office Rahim Yar Khan	Field Operational Command	03	Ground realities of training utilization and constable-level performance issues
	Central Police Office (CPO), Punjab (Lahore)	Central HR & Policy Headquarters	03	Policy formulation related to recruitment criteria, training reforms, and welfare policies
	Police Training College, Multan	Regional Training Institution	03	Curriculum structure, training duration, and pedagogical limitations in constable training
otal	Institutional Representation	-	18	Comprehensive coverage of policy, training, and operational HRM structures of the Punjab Police

This institutional distribution table strengthens the methodological rigor of the qualitative phase by ensuring representation from operational districts, central policy headquarters (CPO), and major police training institutions.

8.1.2 Qualitative Data Analysis and Validation

The thematic analysis was used to carry out qualitative data analysis in this study, encompassing six steps that are systematically conducted, including familiarization with the data, generating primary codes, searching themes, revising and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and generating the final analytical report (Sandhiya and Bhuvaneswari, 2024; McLeod, 2024). This method helped to establish recurring patterns, perceptions, and implicit barriers as far as the practices of recruitment, training, and work-life balance were concerned in the Punjab Police. The third step involved triangulating the emerging themes with various stakeholders to make them more credible and rigorous and validate them against the existing literature, thus being consistent, reliable, and in line with the available scholarly evidence.

8.1.3 Qualitative Data Thematic Analysis

8.1.3.1 Key Challenges in Implementing HRM Intervention

The thematic analysis was used to carry out qualitative data analysis in this study, encompassing six steps that are systematically conducted, including familiarization with the data, generating primary codes, searching themes, revising and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and generating the final analytical report (Sandhiya and Bhuvaneswari, 2024; McLeod, 2024). This method helped to establish recurring patterns, perceptions, and implicit barriers as far as the practices of recruitment, training, and work-life balance were concerned in the Punjab Police. The third step involved triangulating the emerging themes with various stakeholders to make them more credible and rigorous and validate them against the existing literature, thus being consistent, reliable, and in line with the available scholarly evidence.

Variable	Theme Code	Theme	Sub-Theme / Challenge	Number of Respondents Supporting (n=18)	Consolidated Respondent Views	Impact on Employee Performance	Triangulation with Existing Knowledge (with Citations)
Recruitment & Selection	T1	Outdated Recruitment Practices	Minimum qualification limits (Grade 10)	12	Senior officers and HR officials emphasized that low entry criteria produce less competent and less adaptive recruits.	Recruits lack analytical, technological, and decision-making skills, reducing operational readiness and accountability.	Competency-based recruitment is essential for performance in public organizations (Armstrong, 2016)
	T2	Outdated Recruitment Practices	Weak psychological screening before	10	Psychologists and trainers reported the	Entry of psychologically unfit personnel increases	Psychological assessment improves policing effectiveness and

			induction		absence of a structured psychological assessment.	misconduct risk, stress vulnerability, and operational inefficiency.	ethical conduct (Goldstein, 2018; Tahir et al., 2023).
	T3	Low Recruitment Numbers & Transfers	Fresh recruits transferred to PERA and other sub-units	9	District leadership highlighted manpower shortages due to inter-unit transfers of fresh force.	Workforce shortages increase workload, fatigue, and response delays in operational policing units.	Workforce imbalance and deployment issues negatively affect service delivery (Armstrong, 2016)
	T4	Political & Bureaucratic Influence	External pressure and limited district autonomy	8	Policy experts noted political and bureaucratic interference in recruitment decisions.	Meritocracy is compromised, leading to demotivation, inequity, and reduced institutional professionalism.	Politicization of HRM in the public sector undermines performance and governance efficiency (Tahir et al., 2023)
	T5	Limited Assessment Tools	Overreliance on physical and written testing	11	Training officials stated that behavioral and cognitive competencies are rarely assessed.	Reduced adaptability and problem-solving ability in complex policing environments.	Modern HRM advocates multidimensional competency assessment in recruitment (Nirmala & Kumar, 2023).
Training Curriculum & Methodology	T6	Outdated Training Modules	Traditional drill-based curriculum	14	Training instructors reported curriculum was not aligned with	Officers remain underprepared for contemporary crimes, reducing	Police training reforms globally emphasize modernized and technology-oriented curricula(Barnw

					cybercrime and modern policing needs.	operational efficiency and innovation capacity.	ell, 2023)
	T7	Gap Between Theory and Field Reality	Lack of experiential and scenario-based learning	13	Field officers indicated a disconnect between academy training and real operational challenges.	Low confidence, weak decision-making, and limited situational adaptability in field operations.	Experiential learning enhances skill transfer and field competence (Jackson, 2000)
	T8	Resource & Infrastructure Constraints	Limited duration, facilities, and qualified trainers	10	HR and training staff highlighted inadequate infrastructure and short training cycles.	Incomplete skill development and reduced professional competence among police personnel.	HRD literature stresses infrastructure and trainer quality for effective training outcomes(Rajyalaxmi, 2023)
Work Life Balance	T9	Excessive Workload & Stress	Long duty hours, irregular shifts, emergency deployments	16	Almost all respondents agreed that excessive workload is a chronic structural issue.	Burnout, absenteeism, impaired judgment, and declining job performance.	Job Demand–Resource model links workload stress with reduced employee performance(Ed D, 2021)
	T10	Weak Policy Implementation	WLB policies exist, but are poorly enforced	15	Welfare officers noted policies are formal but rarely implemented in	Reduced morale, disengagement, and low institutional commitment among officers.	Implementation gaps in public HRM policies are common in developing governance systems (Rehman et al.,

					practice.		2021).
	T11	Insufficient Psychological & Welfare Support	Lack of mental health services and counseling	13	Psychologists and welfare officials emphasized absence of structured counseling systems.	Increased anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and reduced productivity and ethical performance.	Mental health support is critical for police effectiveness and resilience (Kurtz, 2020; Stinchcomb, 2021).
	T12	Cultural Resistance	Stigma in using leave, counseling, and support mechanisms	12	Senior officers observed a cultural norm discouraging officers from seeking psychological help.	Sustained stress levels, reduced motivation, and long-term efficiency decline.	Organizational culture significantly shapes WLB utilization in disciplined forces (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), 2016)
	T13	Family & Social Support Deficit	Lack of family-friendly and childcare support programs	9	Respondents reported absence of institutional family welfare initiatives.	Lower job satisfaction, retention issues, and reduced engagement, especially among married officers.	Work–family balance strongly influences employee engagement and retention (Ghalib, 2021)
	T14	Inadequate Leave Management	Delays or denial of leave and rest periods	11	Officers consistently reported difficulty in availing leave due to operational pressure.	Fatigue, operational errors, stress accumulation, and declining long-term performance.	Leave management and recovery time are vital for performance in high-risk professions (Itam & Bagali, 2018)

The thematic inferences in the table show that the barriers to HRM intervention-based policies in the Punjab Police are multidimensional and structurally embedded in the recruitment and

selection, training curriculum and methodology, and work-life balance practices, which ultimately impact employee performance. On the recruitment and selection dimension (T1-T5), most of the respondents mentioned old-fashioned recruitment procedures, low minimum qualification standards, ineffective psychological screening during pre-induction, and assignment of freshly recruited staff to specialized units like PERA, ARM Unit, and other sub-units, which makes the operational power of the district policing unit weak. The feeling of political and bureaucratic influence and dependence on time-tested physical and written testing is condensed by the respondents, especially the higher-ranking officers and HR representatives, who restrain merit-based hiring and inhibit the process of finding cognitively and emotionally strong candidates. Such problems were always associated with a decrease in operational preparedness, an imbalance in the effectiveness of the workforce, and decreasing professional responsibility.

Equally, the topics of training curriculum and methodology (T62 T8) revealed that training modules are still rather conventional, drill-based, and fail to meet the modern requirements of policing like cybercrime, policing based on intelligence, crisis management, and community involvement. There were reports by training instructors and field officers on the discrepancy between theory and actual field realities, and poor infrastructure, short training time and the lack of qualified trainers. This detachment constraints experiential learning, reduces the adaptability, and reduces the confidence of officers to operate successfully in complex operational environments, thus impacting negatively on operational efficiency and professional performance.

The strongest challenges were observed in the work-life balance practices (T9-T14), with most of the respondents reporting that they faced excessive workload, long working shifts, irregular work shifts, emergency deployments, poor management of leaves, and poor enforcement of welfare policies. The lack of institutionalized mental health services, counseling mechanisms, and family support programs, especially the lack of such services, was highlighted especially by welfare officers and psychologists, and cultural stigma surrounding the need to seek psychological support only enhances stress. These structural shortcomings are the cause of chronic fatigue, burnout, emotional exhaustion, impaired decision-making, and a lack of job satisfaction, which ultimately decrease employee engagement and organizational commitment. These results were also confirmed by the triangulation theme (T15) by cross-checking the views of officers, HR officials, trainers, psychologists, and policy experts with the already available scholarly literature and policy evidence. Such methodological triangulation enhanced the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, thereby confirming that the systemic HRM obstacles are significant barriers to employee motivation, operational effectiveness, and organizational performance in the Punjab Police.

8.1.3.2 Strategic HRM Interventions and Policy Reforms

Continuing on the barriers to recruitment, training, and work-life balance practices identified during the analysis, the second stage of the analysis involved the analysis of the strategic HRM interventions that were required to alleviate these structural and operational deficiencies in the Punjab Police. Based on thematic analysis of the answers of 18 key informants, senior officers, HR officers, training teachers, welfare officers, and policy analysts, the section will identify future-focused, evidence-based HR practices that can support the modern policing requirements. These interventions would streamline the management of the workforce, improve the performance of the employees, and enhance institutional capacity in line with the emerging security challenges.

Variable	Strategy Code	Strategic HRM Intervention	Key Action Areas	Respondents Supporting (n=18)	Respondent Consolidated Views	Expected Performance Outcomes	Alignment with Contemporary Policing (Triangulation with Citations)
Recruitment & Selection	S1	Competency-Based Recruitment Framework	Behavioral, cognitive, and digital competency testing	15	Officers and HR officials emphasized that current recruitment focuses mainly on physical fitness and written exams rather than competencies required for modern policing.	Improved analytical skills, decision-making, and operational readiness	Competency-based HRM enhances police effectiveness and adaptability in complex security environments (Tedeholm & Bäckström, 2025).
	S2	Pre-Induction Psychological Screening	Institutionalized psychological and resilience assessment before final selection	14	Psychologists and senior officers highlighted that post-selection screening fails to filter high-stress-intolerance candidates.	Recruitment of emotionally stable and ethically resilient personnel	Early psychological screening is globally recommended to reduce misconduct, stress, and performance failures in policing (Ecker et al., 2022).
	S3	Education Criteria	Raising the minimum	12	Policy experts	Better communic	Higher education levels

		Enhancement	qualification to intermediate/graduate level		and trainers noted that Grade-10 eligibility limits the cognitive and technological capacity of recruits.	ation, ethical judgment, and technological competence	improve professional judgment and accountability in law enforcement(Ullah & Mashadi, 2018)
	S4	Transparent & Digitized Recruitment System	E-recruitment and reduced political interference	11	Respondents stressed the lack of transparency and bureaucratic influence in recruitment processes.	Merit-based hiring and institutional trust	Transparent HR systems strengthen governance and organizational legitimacy in public institutions(Aldhuhoori et al., 2022)
	S5	Strategic Workforce Planning & Controlled Transfers	Regulation of fresh recruit transfers to specialized units (e.g., Pera, sub-units)	13	District officers reported manpower shortages due to low recruitment and early transfers of fresh force to other units.	Balanced manpower distribution and reduced workload fatigue	Workforce planning is essential for sustainable policing capacity and service delivery(Kunwar & Thesis, 2019)
Training Curriculum & Methodo	S6	Curriculum Modernization	Integration of cybercrime, AI policing, community	16	Trainers and officers emphasiz	Enhanced operational adaptability and	Modern police training must include digital policing,

logy			policing, and human rights		ed that outdated drill-based training is not aligned with emerging crime trends.	professional competence	resilience, and community engagement (Gottlieb & Robinson, 2006)
	S7	Experiential & Scenario-Based Training	Simulation exercises, field-based learning, case studies	15	Respondents highlighted the gap between academy training and field realities.	Improved practical skills, confidence, and situational judgment	Experiential learning improves skill transfer and operational performance in policing(Fasihuddin, 2012)
	S8	Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	Mandatory refresher and specialized in-service courses	14	HR officials and policy experts stressed the absence of structured lifelong learning programs.	Sustained professional growth and performance enhancement	Continuous training is linked to higher employee engagement and organizational performance (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021)
	S9	Trainer Capacity Building	Training of instructors in modern pedagogy and digital tools	12	Training instructors noted a lack of pedagogical innovation and modern instructional methods.	Improved knowledge transfer and institutional training quality	Qualified trainers and modern pedagogy enhance institutional learning outcomes (CEPOL, 2016; Hillstead, 2022).
Work–Life Balance	S10	Structured Shift & Workload	Digital duty rosters and workload	16	Welfare officers and field	Reduced burnout, improved	Workload regulation significantly

(WLB)		Management System	balancing		staff highlighted excessive duty hours and irregular shifts as major stressors.	morale and productivity	improves police well-being and performance (Freeman & McVea, 2005)
	S11	Institutional Mental Health & Counseling Units	Stress management programs and psychological counseling	15	Psychologists and officers emphasized rising stress, burnout, and suicide tendencies among personnel.	Enhanced psychological resilience and ethical performance	Mental health support is critical in high-risk policing occupations (Stinchcomb, 2021; Subroto et al., 2025).
	S12	Family Support & Welfare Programs	Family facilitation, childcare, and welfare initiatives	11	Respondents reported a lack of family-oriented support and social imbalance due to duty pressures.	Higher job satisfaction, retention, and engagement	Family-friendly HR policies improve commitment and reduce turnover (Fujikawa, 2022; Malik et al., 2023).
	S13	Enforceable Leave & Rest Policy Mechanism	Digital leave management and mandatory rest cycles	14	Officers reported delayed or denied leave and insufficient recovery time after operations.	Reduced fatigue, better decision-making, and efficiency	Rest and recovery policies enhance employee performance and occupational health (JD-R Model) (Watters, 2021; Kurtz, 2020).
	S14	HR Analytics	Data-driven monitoring of	10	Policy experts	Improved strategic	Strategic HR analytics

		& Monitoring Systems	stress, staffing, and performance		recommended evidence-based HR planning for modern policing reforms.	decision-making and institutional efficiency	supports evidence-based public sector reforms (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Baran, 2024).

The thematic analysis of the HRM strategic interventions found that, the respondents were unanimous that the institution structural reforms in recruitment, training curriculum and work-life balance are critical to address the institutional barriers identified earlier in the Punjab Police. The results show the stakeholders, which were senior officers, HR, trainers, psychologists, welfare officers, and policy experts, all stressed the importance of competency-based and strategically aligned HRM framework to improve performance and organizational effectiveness of the employees. The triangulated evidence (S15) also supported the fact that it is vital to match the HRM policies with the global standards of policing in order to have sustainability in the institutional modernization and legitimacy.

In terms of recruitment and selection methods, the respondents were very keen on the implementation of a competency-based recruitment (S1) system and pre-induction psychological screening (S2). The participants indicated that the current focus on physical fitness and simple written examinations is not sufficient to measure cognitive, ethical, and emotional skills needed to be a modern-day police officer. Introduced as critical to the recruitment of personnel with analytical capabilities and emotional wellbeing was the adoption of formal psychological tests and the introduction of improved educational standards (S3). Furthermore, to reduce the impact of politics and bureaucracy, the respondents emphasized open and digitalized recruiting processes (S4) to enhance meritocracy. The other strategic issue that came out as being critical was the low rate of recruiting and pre-emptive deployment of the recruits to specialized forces like the Pera and other sub-forces (S5), and this lowers the manpower in the police stations and strains the work pressure on the available force. All these strategic interventions were seen to enhance operational preparedness, professionalism, and institutional responsibility.

Concerning training curriculum and teaching approach, the results have shown that curriculum modernization (S6) became one of the most highly endorsed strategies amongst the respondents. Field officers and training instructors stressed that the conventional drill-based pedagogy cannot be used to tackle the new issues of cybercrime, digital policing, civic relationships, and crisis management. One of the major reforms that were found to be needed to fill the gap between theory and field realities was the integration of experiential and scenario-based learning (S7). Respondents also supported the idea of sustained professional development initiatives (S8) and capacity building amongst trainers (S9) to achieve the prolongation of skills improvement and pedagogical novelty in the police training institutions. The strategies were viewed as increasing the flexibility, confidence, and decision-making ability of the officers, hence increasing the operational efficiency and service delivery.

Concerning work-life balance (WLB) strategies, the results showed that organized workload management and shift control (S10) were regarded as the most pressing change because of too long shifts, irregular working schedule, and unremitting professional pressure. Respondents highlighted that there is a dire need in institutional mental health and counseling support (S11) despite the increasing levels of stress, burnout, and psychological pressure

among the police staff. The importance of the formalized counseling units and stress management programs to promote the psychological resilience and ethical performance was emphasized by welfare officers and psychologists, in particular. Also, the implementation of new enforceable leave management systems (S13) and a system of family-oriented welfare (S12) was considered to be needed to decrease burnout, enhance job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Lack of such supportive mechanisms was estimated to be a direct contributor to the lack of motivation, engagement, and long-term workforce sustainability.

In a more strategic analysis, the triangulated results (S15) show that policy benchmarking and global HRM best practice integration is imperative to synchronize reforms at Punjab Police in line with current policing standards. All respondents were in agreement that individual or piecemeal HR reforms cannot produce sustainable performance results unless they are integrated into a consistent strategic HRM platform. The discussion indicates that a strategic HRM intervention that is based on competency-based recruitment, modern training systems, and work-life balance policies that are institutionalized can have a substantial impact on employee performance, burnout, and institutional legitimacy. Moreover, the multi-stakeholder perception triangulation with literature supports the validity of these strategies and signifies their policy applicability to the contemporary human capital management in policing organizations acting under the conditions of high operational pressure and limited resources.

9.1 Conclusion

The research paper finds that structural, procedural, and welfare-related issues in recruiting and selecting, training curriculum, and work-life balance practices are a major limitation to the effectiveness of HRM interventions in the Punjab Police, which cumulatively affect the performance of employees and organizational effectiveness. The thematic results showed that the old recruitment systems, lower recruitment rates, premature transfer of recruits to specialized units, the training pedagogies, poor training facilities, high workload, poor application of welfare policies, and the absence of psychological support by the institutions have been the factors that promote burnout, diminished motivation, skills gaps, and work exhaustion among police officers. These impediments have had a direct impact on the levels of professional competence, quality decision-making, and effectiveness in service delivery. Nevertheless, the paper has also found that these difficulties can be largely alleviated by strategic HRM-based mechanisms, including competency-based and transparent recruitment systems, pre-induction psychological screening, modernization of the training curricula, consistent professional growth, managed workloads, enforced leave policies, and institutionalized mental health and welfare support. The triangulated findings of multi-stakeholder respondents and the available literature show that incorporating the global best practices in a consistent strategic framework of HRM is crucial towards improving the workforce capability, motivation, and resilience. Thus, the need to align recruitment, training, and work-life balance policies with the modern policing requirements is essential to improve the performance of the employees and enhance institutional legitimacy and sustainable organizational performance in the Punjab Police.

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