

## HUMAN RESOURCES KNOWLEDGE DISCLOSURE BY LEADING BANKS: CASES FROM KSA

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**Abstract:** In the sustainability of the banking industry, Human resources (HR) plays a vital role, and reporting the value of employees is key to sharing the health of the bank. A plethora of HR information is disclosed by the banks of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) through annual reports. However, the extent of disclosure by KSA banks remained under-studied. An exploratory multiple case-study methodology was applied to understand the extent to which HR knowledge is disclosed by the KSA banks. The annual reports (2015-19) of the top five leading banks were reviewed using a purposive sampling approach and were thematically analysed. Through signalling theory, it is found that the KSA banks voluntarily provide favourable signals to their stakeholders by disclosing best practices on talent acquisition and development, compensation-benefit, performance management, employee retention-turnover, employee engagement-well-being and HR achievements. These disclosures are not influenced by the number of employees or sales turnover, or capital.

**Keywords:** Human resources, disclosure, HR information, Saudi Banks, Signalling theory, HR knowledge

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### Introduction

The backbone of any economy relies on the performance of its banking industry. Besides financial capital, a significant role is played by human resources (HR) capital in the sustainability of this industry. For the existence and effectiveness, the financial sector makes extensive use of human capital (Kamath, 2007). Like financial reports, human capital reporting indicates the health of any organisation. The stakeholders, around the globe, recently started showing keen interest in monitoring the effectiveness of HR. The banks of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), holding 27% of the GCC total banking assets (FitzHerbert, 2020), are no exception to disclosing HR-related information in their annual reports. The banking regulatory system of the KSA is almost at par with the international standards laid down concerning banking supervision. KSA's banking industry is unique as it leads the Islamic world where all banks must adhere to the Sharia banking law (Kamali, 2005; Rao, 2017). The HR information related to training

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and development, employee fairness, incentives, diversity and inclusion of female employees and people with determination, is annually reported by the regulatory authority of the KSA banking industry, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA).

SAMA encourages commercial banks to follow good practices to disclose HR information in their annual reports. Though not enforced by the regulatory authority, the KSA banks have recently started to disclose HR information in their annual reports.

This research aims to explore the HR disclosure by the top five leading banks of KSA (hereafter, the banks) in their annual reports – National Commercial Bank (NCB), Al Rajhi Banking Corporation (RBC), Banque Saudi Fransi (BSF), Samba Financial Group (SFG) and Riyadh Bank (RB). Although numerous studies were conducted on HR disclosure in developed countries, the subject remained understudied in the context of the KSA's banking sector. This study has added new knowledge in the field of HR reporting by the Banking industry of the KSA through systematic exploratory qualitative research. The study has probed into understanding the extent to which HR information is disclosed by the top five leading banks from 2015-2019. The present research has not considered the year 2020 due to unforeseen circumstances posed by the Covid-19.

### **Literature Review**

Over the past century, HR has evolved from personnel administration to human capital and human assets. Here, this important source of energies, knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies is referred as HR, that many organisations consider as the most vital asset for their sustainability and growth (Sürdü, Çaliskan, & Esen, 2020). The value created by HR as people has shifted where they are now considered as intangible assets to attain organisational goals (Guthrie and Petty, 2000; Kamath, 2007; Kaur, Raman, & Singhanian, 2014a; Sürdü et al., 2020). Cabrita, Silva et al. (2017) emphasized HR as the most crucial intangible asset that possesses the competencies to be innovative and problem-solving. Cabrita et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of HR and considered it as an intellectual capital that facilitates the development of a knowledge-based economy.

#### ***Significance of HR knowledge disclosure***

Since HR contributes significantly to the performance and sustainability of the organisation, the disclosure of HR-related knowledge to the stakeholders becomes important. Organisations disclose HR knowledge to build sustainable advantage, suggested Guthrie and Murthy (2009). The value of HR knowledge disclosure to build human capital is reported by Bae and Patterson (2014) and Suryani (2019). Through HR knowledge disclosure, the information related to 'efficiency and effectiveness of HR, the effect of HR on the company's value, and the financial consequences of HR (Sürdü et al., 2020, P.1) has been reported by the organisations. In addition, employee well-being and happiness-related scores through publishing it in their annual reports and websites have been disclosed by

organisations (Benuyenah & Pandya, 2020). Research has suggested that the main source to disclose information is through Annual Reports that are accessible to internal and external stakeholders (Subbarao & Zeghal, 1997). During 1960-70, researchers developed HR accounting models to measure HR costs and economic costs, and organisations started revealing these in their annual reports (Guthrie & Murthy, 2009). These studies focused on the costs associated with employees, such as acquisition costs, learning costs, remuneration costs and exit costs (Jaarat, 2013; Pandya & Pandya, 2014; Shah & Pandya, 2020). However, Gröjer and Johanson (1998), Steen et al. (2011a) and (Cabrita et al., 2017) criticised these models for lacking reliability, validity and for ignoring unmeasurable aspects of HR (Pirzada, Mustaph, & Alfani, 2017). Regardless, the significance of sharing HR knowledge with stakeholders encouraged us to probe deeper into the benefits sought by KSA banks and the extent to which this knowledge is disclosed.

#### ***International HR knowledge disclosure practices***

The annual reports of 100 UK organisations were analysed by Vithana, Soobaroyen, and Ntim (2021) and, 22 HR disclosure items (unmeasurable) were found that categorized into Procedure/systems related and Sustainable HR-related. In the meta-analysis of leading Indian companies, Kaur et al. (2014) founded 18 HR items that were disclosed in annual reports, mainly comprising of HR costs and HR value per employee. In another study by (AlMamun, 2009), 16 HR items disclosed by companies in Bangladesh were founded. Comparing HRM items that were disclosed in the annual reports of companies in the UK, Canada, USA, Germany, Japan and South Korea, items were grouped into five categories – Training, Value added, Equity issues, Employee relations and Compensation (Subbarao & Zeghal, 1997). The authors founded that most of the companies disclosed HR knowledge to meet the statutory requirements and the collective bargaining agreements. However, with the growing importance of HR knowledge disclosure, many companies voluntarily disclosed HR knowledge to improve transparency with various stakeholders (Guthrie and Petty, 2000). Many countries collect labour data from organisations, as noted by Patterson, Pandya and Cho (2018) and the UAE and South Korean organisations were found sharing HR knowledge with the government. Nonetheless, studies in KSA remained non-existent and provided an opportunity to investigate the HR knowledge disclosed in the region.

*HR knowledge disclosure in the Banking sector and KSA banks:* The literature on HR knowledge disclosure in the banking sector was scanty and in the context of KSA remained non-existent (Khan & Ali, 2010). Furthermore, studies suggested that banks shared HR knowledge with their stakeholders (Cabrita et al., 2017; Serenko & Bontis, 2013) due to the complex operations, structures, and stringent regulations in which HR played a critical role in enhancing bank's competitive advantage (Khan & Ali, 2010; Zubairu, Sakariyau, & Dauda, 2012). A unique banking system is noted in the KSA, wherein conventional banking is combined with Islamic banking that has undergone drastic changes over the past decade. The

liberalization and the globalization of financial markets all over the world led to expansion in Saudi banks' operations and product diversification (Almazari, 2014; Assaf, Carloa, et al., 2011). The HR regulations for 13 local licensed banks and 17 foreign licensed banks to follow were developed by the regulatory agency of Saudi Banks, the Saudi Monetary Agency (SAMA). Applying the core functions of HR, these are grouped into talent acquisition, talent development, compensation and benefits, performance management, employee separation and employee well-being (Itani, 2017). In this study, the HR knowledge disclosed by the banks is mapped against the HR items grouped under these functions while being receptive to any other information that emerged during the analysis stage.

#### ***Theories and Models related to HR knowledge disclosure***

The disclosure of intellectual capital by organisations is expounded by some well-known theories. The legitimacy theory (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Suchman, 1995), stakeholder theory (Laplume, Sonpar, & Litz, 2008) and signalling theory (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011) have been the most significant theories. The organisations make efforts to function within the norms and bounds acceptable to society (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Suchman, 1995) was posited by the legitimacy theory. This has assisted organisations in building a positive image amongst their stakeholders and in attaining their strategic goals (Campbell, 2003). Such efforts are directed towards the corporate social responsibility of the organisations towards their stakeholders (Greenwood & Simmons, 2004). For banks, the employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, government, society, lenders, competitors and media are considered as stakeholders. Stakeholders theory has postulated that organisations disclose information through annual reports to provide stakeholders with information related to the value and performance of the organisation (Laplume et al., 2008).

Linking the legitimacy theory and the stakeholder theory, it can be presumed that organisations prefer to disclose information that is in their favour. If not required by the regulations, organisations would hold the information that is detrimental to their image. The Signalling theory has suggested an asymmetry in the information disclosed by different organisations that gives favourable information to the stakeholders and withholding the unfavourable information (Connelly et al., 2011; Karasek III & Bryant, 2012; Spence, 1973). The HR knowledge disclosure in many countries is optional (Guest, Sanders, Rodrigues, & Oliveira, 2020). Researchers applied signalling theory and founded that organisations that are more committed to employees have revealed information related to recruitment (Chang & Chin, 2018; Suazo, Martínez, & Sandoval, 2009), compensation and welfare (Guest et al., 2020; Holtbrügge & Kreppel, 2015) in their annual reports. Chang and Chin (2018) have found that employee-oriented HR departments share detailed HR knowledge with employees through internal communication and on their website, attracting highly qualified talent. To understand the extent of HR knowledge disclosed by the top five banks of the KSA, this study adopted signalling theory.

This theory has imbibed the principles of stakeholder theory (Karasek III & Bryant, 2012) to identify the HR knowledge that is disclosed in the annual reports. The reviewed existing literature has indicated that the extent to which HR knowledge is disclosed by the organisations is limited and in the context of the banking sector in KSA is in dearth. This led to the genesis of this study, where we have investigated the HR knowledge disclosed by KSA banks. Further, the prevailing studies have focused on fulfilling the regulatory requirements whilst disclosing the HR knowledge through their annual reports (Pirzada, 2016). However, as discussed in this section, the statutory regulations that have mandated banks to share their HR knowledge remained absent in the KSA. Refuting the application of legitimacy theory and stakeholder theory, this research was designed based on the signalling theory. Further, this field has not been investigated until now. Hence, our research aimed to understand the extent to which KSA banks revealed their HR knowledge to their stakeholders to give them signals of their performance. The methodology section and the results have shed more light on how this study filled the existing gap.

### **Research Methodology**

The HR information items founded in the literature review and the principles of signalling theory have guided the research methodology to understand the extent to which the KSA banks have disclosed their HR knowledge through their annual reports. The ontological assumption that there is no single theory that can explain the subjective knowledge, HR, has led us to embrace a constructivist research paradigm (Creswell, 2009; Gialdino, 2009) to systematically explore the HR knowledge disclosed by the banks. The research scope that framed this study was comprised of the items of HR knowledge that were disclosed by the banks, the details of HR knowledge disclosed by the banks, comparing the HR knowledge disclosed by the banks, and if the amount of HR knowledge disclosed has increased or decreased during 2015-2019.

Yin (2018) has proposed to apply a qualitative and exploratory case study method when the inquiry is on 'what' and 'how'. This study aimed to investigate 'what HR information is disclosed', 'what details are included in the disclosure' and 'how this information was disclosed'. Furthermore, because the HR information is subjective and there is a dearth of supporting theories or models, the authors applied the exploratory, multiple case study method. The cases were comprised of the top five leading banks of the KSA (more details in the next paragraph) and were bounded by the HR content disclosed in the annual reports (2015-2019) (open data). The annual report of 2020 was not included because of the unexpected influence of the Covid19 pandemic on the business environment.

The banking industry of KSA is comprised of 26 commercial banks, including branches of foreign banks. Using the purposive sampling method, the top five leading banks were chosen with an assumption that the practices implemented by them will set the benchmark for other banks to follow. These five banks were rated

as leading banks in KSA by the Corporate Finance Institute, Forbes Middle East, and Advrratings. All these banks are public banks and are ranked as top five based on their total assets, net profits, turnover, market capitalization, number of employees and position related to an Islamic bank. Table 1 depicts the profile of the banks that are included in this study wherein NCB and RBC are leaders, compared to SFG, RB, and BSF in terms of turnover and workforce.

The content of the annual reports (2015- 2019) of the banks was thematically analysed using the six-step process proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The reports (total words – 1,379,078) were independently reviewed by both researchers that generated initial codes (Researcher A – 822; Researcher B - 794). The codes were compared to eliminate the repetitive and irrelevant codes, and the themes were extracted (54), reviewed, filtered, and defined (42 themes) based on homogeneity and density approach. The latent-inductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and an interpretive analysis were conducted to compare the HR knowledge disclosed by the banks, vertically and horizontally, across five years. The results were triangulated using the word count density approach (Dicle & Dicle, 2018). The HR items mentioned in the literature became the foundation for the thematic framework (Sürdü et al., 2020; Itani, 2017; Zubairu et al., 2012; Khan & Ali, 2010). The results are reported for each thematic domain in the next section.

**Table 1. Annual turnover and number of employees of KSA Banks**

		NCB	RBC	SFG	RB	BSF
2015	Turnover (Bn.USD)	2.457	1.9251	1.4067	1.0935	1.0908
	Employees (nos.)	2,586	2,374	3,917	6,167	3,207
2016	Turnover (Bn.USD)	2.457	1.9251	1.4067	1.0935	1.0908
	Employees (nos.)	12,310	13,684	3,755	6,337	3,233
2017	Turnover (Bn.USD)	2.646	2.4597	1.3554	1.0665	0.9531
	Employees (nos.)	13,436	13,077	3,530	6,332	0.9531
2018	Turnover (Bn.USD)	2.8809	2.781	0.8262	NA	0.8937
	Employees (nos.)	12,883	12,372	3,497	NA	3,027
2019	Turnover (Bn.USD)	3.078	2.7432	1.0773	NA	0.9774
	Employees (nos.)	13,058	13,532	3,991	NA	2,998

## Results

The inductive-latent thematic analysis has revealed seven main themes, nineteen sub-themes, and sixteen sub<sup>2</sup> themes depicting the HR knowledge that was disclosed by the KSA banks in their annual report providing signals to the stakeholders regarding the performance and value of employees (see Figure 1). In this study, the HR knowledge disclosed by the banks was grouped into seven thematic HR domains – Talent acquisition; Talent development; Compensation and benefits; Performance management; Employee engagement and employee services; Employee retention and turnover; Achievements and awards for HR initiatives. Figure 1 has showcased the HR knowledge disclosed by the banks for each

thematic domain, sub-theme and sub<sup>2</sup> theme. Accordingly, RBC bank has disclosed 16 items of HR knowledge, NCB and BSF have disclosed 15 items of HR knowledge, RB has disclosed seven items, and SFG has disclosed three items. This section has highlighted the main results.

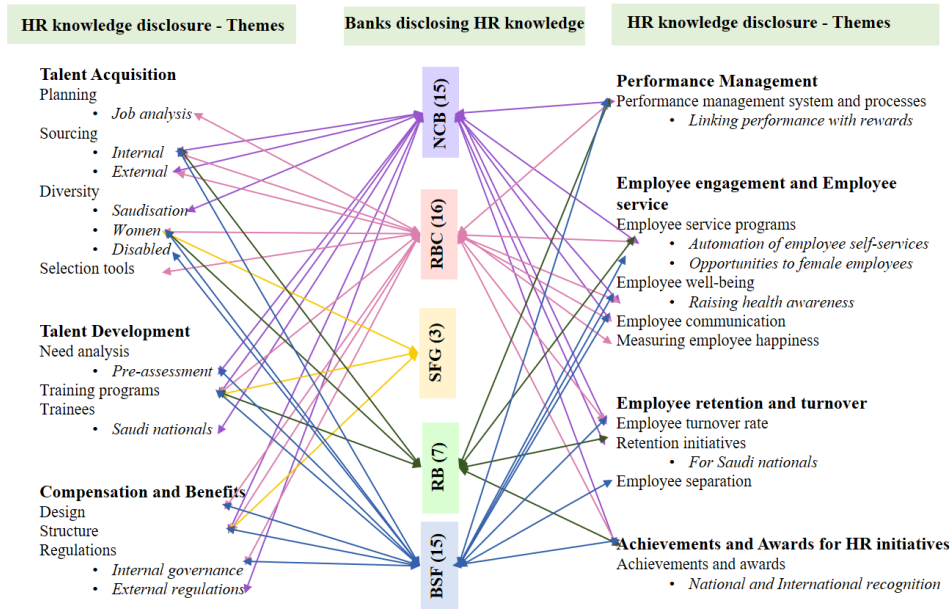


Figure 1: Leading KSA banks disclosure of HR knowledge – Thematic analysis

**Talent acquisition (TA):**

Talent acquisition as a thematic domain has emerged using the density and homogeneity approach with manpower planning (job analysis), recruitment sourcing (internal and external sources), diversity in recruitment (Saudisation, women, disabled), and selection tools as themes (see Figure 1). It is also noted through the comparative analysis that RBC has disclosed HR knowledge related to its job analysis process, sources of internal and external recruitment, initiatives to employ women, and the selection tools used in talent acquisition. RBC has also provided details on creating job descriptions, conducting job evaluations and details on sourcing talent through career fairs and applying online ability tests and motivational interviews to acquire talent. NCB and BSF have covered an equal number of sub<sup>2</sup> themes wherein NCB has covered internal sources, external sources, and Saudisation (recruiting Saudi nationals) while BSF has shared initiatives in recruiting women and disabled along with the assessment tools used in selection. NCB has highlighted the special program ‘Rowad Al Ahli’ to acquire talent through job rotation, recruiting fresh graduates through scholarships program – ‘Wessam’, whilst disclosing the efforts to improve the Saudisation rate. BSF has disclosed knowledge on the internal mobility of employees for career advancement

and efforts to include the disabled at the workplace. RB has remained conservative in sharing knowledge on TA and mentioned having an 'iRecruitment' system as a recruitment source and initiatives to include women in the workforce. Though the information on TA was not shared by SFG, like the other four banks, it had revealed the efforts taken by the bank to promote women inclusion in the workforce.

***Talent development (TD):***

The information about training programs offered to their employees was revealed by all the five banks. The information regarding special training programs for employees, such as the AlAhli technology program, Wessam Al Ahli, and Rowad AlAhli was provided in detail by NCB. It has also highlighted the e-learning portal designed to deliver high-quality training to develop and retain talent and achieve Saudisation rate by developing KSA nationals. The details to develop top management through pieces of training provided by the prestigious Business schools including Harvard, Wharton, Stanford, and International Institute for Management Development were also provided. Several details, such as international assignments to groom leaders, training-need-analysis, and qualification assessment to design training programs, were revealed by BSF. The TD programs to assist employees in career progressions and manage challenging situations were also mentioned by the RBC in its annual reports. The training programs are linked with the performance management system, stated RB. While remaining conservative, SFG just mentioned the existence of talent development programs. Under this domain, HR knowledge related to pre-assessment, training programs, and training Saudi nationals was shared by NCB; except for providing information on trainees, BSF followed NCB; details about their training programs were shared by RBC, SFG and RB.

***Compensation and Benefits (C&B) and Performance Management (PM):***

Three sub-themes emerged from the inductive analysis – Designing C&B; Structure of C&B; and following internal and external regulations. HR information explaining the design, structure, and internal governance of C&B was disclosed by BSF and RBC. The detailed disclosure on the design of a mixed (fixed and variable), transparent and consistent C&B structure, highlighting its 'Thrive' program to retain talent, was provided by BSF. The design of the C&B structure that is governed by its Board of Directors was made by the external consultant. The market structure and the performance indicators of the bank and individuals were aligned through the design. The medical insurance to employees and their parents was also disclosed. A similar transparent governance system of its C&B structure and the mixed C&B design that is based on the annual market survey to promote merit and excellence of its employees was disclosed by RBC (Hanif, H., Rakhman, A., Nurkholis, M., & Pirzada, K., 2019). The deferred compensation in the form of shares to their senior executives was provided by RBC and NCB. Applying KSA's labour laws in administering its C&B and encouraging employees to take a risk through the C&B structure was highlighted by NCB in its annual report. Except for



providing a provident fund scheme, SFG barely has disclosed any knowledge on its C&B structure. No information regarding C&B in its annual reports was provided by RB.

Compared to previous themes, limited information concerning their PM systems was disclosed by the banks. All banks, except for SFG, have mentioned having a structured PMS. Evaluating employees at all levels through a technical system was disclosed by NCB. The PMS of RB, BSF and RBC is linked with the C&B structure wherein using Fact sheets to drive employees' performance through a transparent and fair system was highlighted by BSF.

***Employee engagement and Employee service (EES):***

The sub-themes that emerged under this domain were employee service programs, employee well-being, employee communication and measuring employee happiness. Maximum details under this domain disclosing information related to automation of employee self-services through the SAHL system was revealed by RBC. An increasing trend in their employee engagement and happiness scores was reported by RBC and open communication channels (portal, group discussions, newsletter, and roadshows) and including employees' family during Ramadan festivities were attributed to it. Following RBC, using MyHR for employee services and raising health awareness amongst its employees was reported by NCB. In addition, supporting female employees for driving license, organizing break cancer and blood drive awareness programs and using 'your voice' and 'ideal wall' initiatives for employees to share ideas, build a network and raise grievances were shared by BSF. Except for SFG, signals to stakeholders on the automation of their employee services systems or portals were provided by all the banks. Except for mentioning that it has employee well-being programs, SFG remained silent on this theme.

***Employee retention and turnover (ERT):***

Under this domain, the bank that shared maximum details was BSF, disclosing its employee turnover rate and conducting exit interviews during employee separation. Both employee turnover rate and retention initiatives for Saudi nationals were shared by NCB. While sharing retention initiatives, SFB accounted for developing its HR policies and initiatives to manage talent to retain them. RB and RBC provided a statement related to retaining employees. The detailed information on the practices implemented was provided by none of the banks. Further, the retention initiatives were inclined towards retaining Saudis for attaining Saudisation.

***Achievements and Awards for HR initiatives:***

Strong signals to the stakeholders by sharing their achievements and awards for various HR practices and initiatives were provided by all the banks, except for SFG. For TA, the Institute of Public Administration awarded NCB as the best national organisation in employing graduates, and BSF received the Best Nationalization Initiative award. For TD, NCB received the 'Best HR development' award from Banker Middle East. The ISO 9001 Quality

Management system certificate was secured by NCB and BSF, displaying their talent development initiatives. Additionally, an award from the King Salman Center for promoting the inclusion of disabled employees and an Employer Excellence award by Naseba was achieved by BSF. The LinkedIn Talent Awards MENA was awarded to BSF and the Best employer of the KSA award was banked by RB. Receiving the GCC best employer brand award was shared by RBC. However, the details of activities performed to receive these awards were not disclosed by the banks.

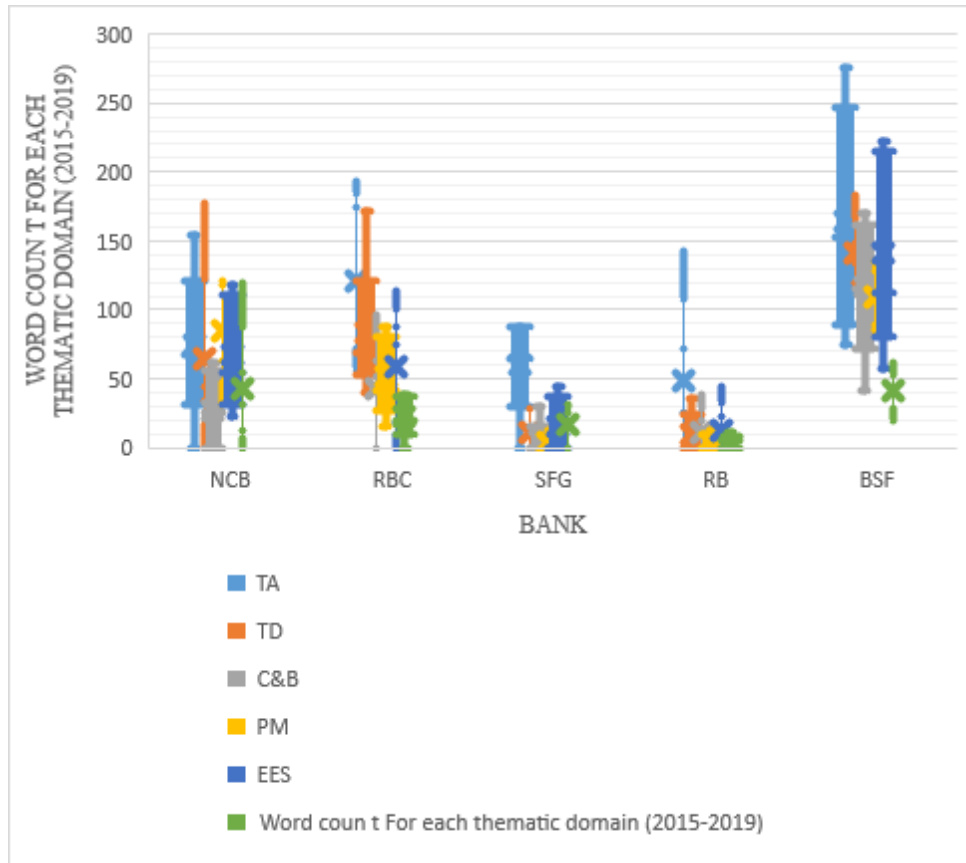


Figure 2: Word count density for thematic domains (2015-19)

The results by comparing the number of words included in the annual reports over the five years (2015-2019), for each thematic domain presented above, were triangulated. In disclosing HR knowledge, BSF led the RBC and NCB while SFG remained highly conservative in sharing its HR knowledge, as indicated by the results (see Figure 2). From the aggregate word count, it was noted that the annual reports of banks in the year 2016 and 2017 provided more HR information and that banks disclosed more information in TA and EES. The results from thematic

analysis and word count density analysis were in alignment wherein BSF emerged as the bank disclosing maximum HR knowledge related to C&B and ERT, and followed NCB and RBC for revealing TA, TD, PM and EES related information. In disclosing HR knowledge across all themes, NCB and RBC were almost at par. The SFG's lower standing matched with the fewer word counts in the annual reports and absence of data.

### **Discussion**

A clear demarcation between the banks providing detailed HR knowledge in their annual report and the banks that did not disclose much was provided by the results. Though the Central Bank of KSA (SAMA) does not enforce banks to disclose HR knowledge, it is suggested by the interpretive analysis of results that some banks had chosen to reveal HR information related to TA, TD, C&B, PM, EES, ETR, and HR achievements and awards received by the banks. Except for HR achievement and awards, the remaining HR knowledge disclosed by the KSA banks is similar to the information disclosed by the banks and organisations in other countries (AlMamun, 2009; Chaudhry & Roomi, 2010; Christian, 2010; Sukhmeet Kaur, 2017). Banks disclose detailed knowledge on TA (Cabrita et al., 2017; Chang & Chin, 2018; Sürdü et al., 2020) and KSA banks were no exception was posited in the existing research. A detailed account of training need assessment, aligning the TD with performance indicators, designing special development programs for top leadership and compensation design and linking performance with the compensation was provided by the KSA banks. In Spanish companies (Alvarez, 2015), Nigerian banks (Onohua, Okafur, & Onudugo, 2020), commercial banks in Bangladesh (Mohammad, Tobiagi, & Razak, 2016), and other countries (AlMamun, 2009; Cabrita et al., 2017; Sürdü et al., 2020), such disclosures have been noted. Information on ERT and initiatives for employee engagement were also disclosed, which Sürdü et al. (2020) and Mohammad et al. (2016) discussed. Achievements and awards were disclosed by the KSA banks, but none of the previous studies identified this theme.

Further, an exploratory comparison of the HR knowledge disclosed by the banks shows that the NCB bank revealed maximum details under all the themes under study while limited HR information was shared by SFG in its annual report. One can presume the banks with higher total assets, profitability, number of employees, and sales turnover reveal more information than others do (Christian, 2010). However, comparing banks of similar size, BSF disclosed more in-depth HR knowledge while being smaller than SFG. Applying Signalling theory (Spence, 1973), this difference in the extent of HR knowledge disclosure is because of the willingness of the banks to share their HR strengths with the stakeholders. None of the banks under this study revealed any information that is detrimental to its image and sustainability. The banks that are deeply committed to their HR reveal detailed information, posited by Chang and Chin (2018), signalling the stakeholders about the employee satisfaction, commitment, trust and value of HR. Despite being

smaller, as compared to NCB and RBC, the BSF gave positive signals by sharing HR information on their manpower planning, diversity, selection tools, automated HR systems, and measuring employee engagement. SFG and RB were at the lower spectrum disclosing a few details with their stakeholders, for the reasons not found in this study (Pirzada, Mustaph, & Alfani, 2017). The Islamic banks are conservative in disclosing their practices, noted Zubairu et al. (2012). On the contrary, an adequate amount of HR knowledge was disclosed by NCB and BSF while others banks remained conservative.

### **Conclusion**

This study aims to explore and understand HR-related knowledge disclosed by the top five leading banks of the KSA. The leading banks disclose HR knowledge to send positive signals to their stakeholders through disclosing HR information related to TA, TD, C&B, PM, EES, ERT and HR achievements, as found in this study. Banks disclose the HR knowledge voluntarily, noted this study through the application of the signalling theory. Some banks disclose more information and success of their initiatives, as indicated by the thematic and interpretive analysis of annual reports of the top five leading banks of the KSA, suggesting that the banks that are committed to their HR and stakeholders prone to share detailed HR knowledge regardless of the organisational size and number of employees. A variety of HR knowledge is shared by NCB and BSF through annual reports, while the least HR information was revealed by SFG. The open-access annual reports (2015-2019) of the five leading banks were explored in this study and reviewed the data published in English. This was the main limitation of the study because some KSA banks publish more information in Arabic. Further, limited information was published by RB in 2018 and 2019, posing challenges to conducting a comparative case study. To overcome these challenges, we have planned to conduct a mixed-method study to investigate the reasons for disclosing HR knowledge under different themes. This study is of value to the banks to understand the various aspects of HR knowledge disclosure and the importance of sending the right signals to its stakeholders. The HR professionals will be encouraged to record the outcomes of their HR initiatives and to build a positive brand image. The scholars interested in HR knowledge disclosure or KSA banks will gain from the new piece of knowledge on the best practices to share the variety of HR knowledge. The regulatory authorities, including SAMA, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of HR, are recommended to develop guidelines and regulations to be implemented by all the commercial banks and other organisations to disclose HR knowledge on a uniform basis. Learning from international best practices, the organisations are suggested to standardise the HR items to be disclosed, share HR best practices through detailed disclosure of HR knowledge, be consistent in HR knowledge disclosure, and share the knowledge through various platforms. The organisational management is advised to identify more sources to disclose HR knowledge,

beyond annual reports, to provide signals to the stakeholders, fulfil regulatory requirements, and build brand image through valuing HR.

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## ZASOBY LUDZKIE UJAWNIANIE WIEDZY PRZEZ BANKI WIODĄCE: PRZYPADKI KSA

**Streszczenie:** W zrównoważonym rozwoju sektora bankowego Zasoby ludzkie (HR) odgrywają kluczową rolę, a raportowanie wartości pracowników jest kluczem do dzielenia się zdrowiem banku. Mnóstwo informacji kadrowych jest ujawnianych przez banki Królestwa Arabii Saudyjskiej (KSA) w rocznych raportach. Jednak zakres ujawnień przez banki KSA pozostawał niedostatecznie zbadany. Zastosowano eksploracyjną metodologię wielu studiów przypadku, aby zrozumieć, w jakim stopniu wiedza HR jest ujawniana przez banki KSA. Sprawozdania roczne (2015-19) pięciu czołowych banków zostały poddane przeglądowi metodą celowego doboru próby i przeanalizowane tematycznie. Poprzez teorię sygnalizacji okazuje się, że banki KSA dobrowolnie przekazują korzystne sygnały swoim interesariuszom, ujawniając najlepsze praktyki w zakresie pozyskiwania i rozwoju talentów, wynagradzania świadczeń, zarządzania wydajnością, rotacji pracowników, zaangażowania pracowników, dobrego samopoczucia i osiągnięć HR. Na ujawnienia te nie ma wpływu liczba pracowników, obroty ze sprzedaży ani kapitał.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zasoby ludzkie, ujawnianie, informacje HR, banki saudyjskie, teoria sygnalizacji, wiedza HR

## 主要银行的人力资源知识披露:来自沙特阿拉伯的案例

**摘要:**在银行业的可持续发展中,人力资源(HR)起着至关重要的作用,而报告员工的价值是共享银行健康的关键。沙特阿拉伯王国(KSA)的银行通过年度报告披露了大量人力资源信息。然而,KSA银行的披露程度仍未得到充分研究。应用探索性多案例研究方法了解 KSA 银行披露人力资源知识的程度。前五名主要银行的年度报告(2015-19)采用有目的的抽样方法进行审查,并进行了专题分析。通过信号理论,发现沙特阿拉伯银行通过披露人才获取和发展、薪酬福利、绩效管理、员工留任率、员工敬业度和人力资源成就的最佳实践,自愿向其利益相关者提供有利信号。这些披露不受员工人数、销售额或资本的影响。

**关键词:**人力资源,披露,人力资源信息,沙特银行,信号理论,人力资源知识