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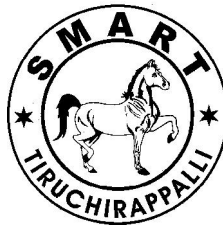
HUMAN RESOURCES - A VALUED ASSET IN HEALTHCARE

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Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive and correlation study was to examine perceptions of HR Managers and their assistants regarding their Human Resource Management Competencies and performance of Human Resource Management activities. The Study also sought to describe the relationship between Human Resource Management Competencies and performance of Human Resource Management Activities of HR. HR Managers were selected for the Study because they represent the first line of management. They also represent a group of Extension Managers least likely to have formal education or specialized training in Human Resource Management. The highest Human Resource Management Competencies perceived were adapting to fast change, effective relationship with employees and communication with employees. The Human Resource Management Activities identified by HR were developing and maintaining positive work environment, administering wages and benefits, ensuring safety and health at worksites, and organizing and designing jobs. The correlation between the summated competency and activity score was significant with a positive relationship between the variables, r =0.52, p<.05.

Key Words: Human Resource Activities, HR Competencies, HR in Health Care

Introduction

Hospitals provide an essential service. One important area of improving and maintaining Service Delivery is to better manage the HR function and human resources. Human beings are the most important resources in Health Care. Top management personnel began to realize that" Human resources are the most valuable assets that any organization possesses and without these, other resources are useless, and their effective management is the key to its success." Human Resource Managers do not manufacture or sell goods but they contribute to the success of the organization. In other words, success depends upon the ability of HR Managers to coordinate human capital and other material resources and in turn, the ability depends upon the key competencies required to fulfill their roles. Hence the research on HR Personnel in Hospitals was carried out in order to identify what might lead to better outcomes for employees, patients and, as a consequence, the organization.

Competent Human Resource Manager is essential to maintain smooth and cordial relationship between the administration and its employees. Therefore planning of human resources is the key to any health care provision. The objective of Human Resource Policy is to a) attract, recruit, retain and develop competent personnel and b) create a continuously learning health care organization.

Aims of the Study : The main aims of this Study are

(a) To understand better the key Competencies required to fulfill the role of HR Managers in the Specialized Hospitals at Trichirapalli and their ability to work on it.

(b) To examine the relationship between the Competencies of HR in performing their activities and its influence on human relations.

Review of Literature

An attempt has been made to review the research works already undertaken in the area of Human Resources in Health Care.A review of selected studies has been given.

Choi Sang Long (2009) examined the relationship between the demographic factors of HR & HR Competencies in manufacturing companies of Malaysia. The result of the study revealed that all demographic factors such as HR Experience, Education Level, Firm Size and Salary are positively related with the Competencies of HR.**Fadi El - Jardali (2009)** analyzed the sound Human Resources Practices.The Study found out that there is a need for a cadre of competent HR Managers in Hospitals to deliver good quality and safe healthcare. **James R.Linder (2001)** examined the perceptions of Ohio State University Country Extension Chairs regarding the Human Resource Management Competencies and performance of Human Resource Management Activities. The Study pointed out that a competent HR Manager can effectively perform the Human Resources Management Activities. **Dr. Kawee Chaisiri, MD. (1994-1997)** took a case study of Yasothon Hospital. The Study showed that Human Resource Development is important for effective health care delivery and it can be effectively implemented through KAIZEN or continuous improvement which is one of the core competencies of HR.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers proposed to study the efficiency of the HR personnel in Specialty Hospitals, as the HR Management is the backbone of the Service Industry. Well qualified HR personnel enhance the efficiency of the Hospital Industry. HR in hospitals provides a timely examination of what might lead to better outcomes for employees, patients and, as a consequence, the organization. Hence the Researcher carried out the Study under the title "Human Resources – A Valued Asset in Healthcare".

Theoretical Framework

Human Resource Management is concerned with the "people" in management. Since human resources are to be utilized to the maximum possible extent to achieve the individual and organizational goals, hospitals are not an exception. Proper Human Resource Management can result in job satisfaction among the employees of hospitals.

In this Study, the major roles played by the HR Managers are presented in the **Table-1.**

There are several major studies available on HR Competencies. This Study adopts six domain factors identified by Brockbank and Ulrich (2003).The six competencies are Strategic Contribution, Personal Credibility, HR Delivery, Business Knowledge, HR Technology and Internal Consultations.

Research Hypothesis

Correlation Analysis and Regression were used to investigate how the conditions of HR Competencies are related to their ability to perform the Human Resource Activities. The following is the hypothesis:

H1: The ability to perform the Human Resources Activities are Positively related to the HR Competencies.

Methodology of the Study

Sampling Design

Researchers have taken Trichirapalli District for the Study. There are hundreds of well equipped Hospitals with world class professionals. Simple Random Sampling was adopted. Trichy is an evolving, well equipped

City consisting of around 90 hospitals located in a serene environment. Out of them, the Specialized Hospitals were taken for the study.

Period of the Study

To test the above hypothesis, respondents were interviewed and data were collected during 2009-10.

Selection of Respondents

The sample selected for this Study comprises of HR Managers and Assistant Managers from Specialized Hospitals at Trichirapalli. In total, 30 respondents in Specialized Hospitals were chosen for the Study and the Study was carried out during 2009-10.

The Instrument

The data collection instrument used in this research was the quantitative methodology. The survey included a combination of open and close-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. First part was designed to assess the competencies of an HR Manager, based on the six competency domains and 17 competency factors adopted in the *Human Resource Competency Study* (HRSC) (Brockbank & Ulrich, 2003). A Likert Scale was used on the questionnaire with the following ratings: 1 = Very Low (VL); 2 = Low (L); 3 = Average (A); 4 =High (H); and 5 = Very High (VH). The respondents were asked how well they performed the competencies identified in the questionnaires. The 17 items in the instrument were arranged in groups of six competency domain. The second part was designed to measure the participants 'perceived' ability to perform 14 Human Resource Management Activities. The participants' were asked to indicate their ability to perform each activity by using a five-point Likert-type Scale. The points on the scale were: 1 = Low (L); 2 = Marginal (M); 3 = Good (G); 4 = Excellent (E); and 5= Outstanding (O).

Analysis

Descriptive Statistical Analysis such as Mean, Standard Deviation was carried out, along with Correlation Test. The Test was carried out at 5% level of significance.

Human Resource Management Competencies

The **Table - 2** presents the Mean and Standard Deviation of Human Resources Competencies. Nearly twelve Human Resource Competencies recorded mean greater than 4.0. Human Resource Competency Score (69.02), was computed by summing the individual human resource competencies. The average of Human Resource Management Competencies was 4.06.

Competencies are defined as "predictors of success." Competency Based Assessment is a system of assessing a person's knowledge and skills, that could affect an individual's ability to perform. The average competency score of HR was 4.06. Nearly twelve Human Resources Competencies recorded Mean which was greater than 4.0, which means that they were competent for their superior performance in a given job, role or a situation in hospitals.

The deviation for Culture Management was slightly higher (SD= 0.67) when compared to other competencies. Culture in general is concerned with beliefs and values on the basis of which people interpret experiences and behave, individually and in groups. Broadly and simply put, HR can share common experiences that shape the way to understand better the employee's attitude and organization and the coordination of low level employees. Next to the Culture Management, Training & Development (SD = 0.6), Labour Knowledge (SD = 0.6) and the usage of HR Technology (Re-Engineering, SD = 0.64) recorded lesser deviation. Employee Training (both higher level and lower level) is a specialized function and it

is one of the operative functions of Human Resource Management. It bridges the gap between job requirements and employees' present specifications. Therefore HR Managers and low level employees must be provided with the training facilities in order to motivate them to put forward their best effort and do manpower planning and development. Labour Knowledge and Awareness of HR Technology is essential for an HR Manager in order to ensure quality of work life. HR Managers are those who bring a high quality workforce which is essential for hospitals which deal with the lives of people. Thus, more competent managers will be needed for the future.

Human Resource Management Activities

Table - 3 presents the Mean and Standard Deviation of Human Resource Management Activities. Thirteen Human Resource Competencies recorded Mean which was greater than 4.0. The Human Resource Management Activities Score (61) was computed by summing up the individual Human Resource Competencies. The average of Human Resource Management Activities Score was 4.36.

The ability of the managers is influenced by various factors in performing their activities. Using Mean as indicators, the highest levels of performance was on the following Human Resource Management Activities: developing and maintaining positive work environment, administering wages and benefits and ensuring safety and health at worksites. Lowest levels of performance were recorded on selecting and hiring of employees, legal aspects of recruiting and selection and complying with legal aspects of compensation. The low level performance resulted because the managers were not properly trained to select the employees and they must also gain experience in selecting and recruiting the right employees. The managers lack the competency of HR Delivery (Training and Development) and hence the lowest level of performance in selecting and hiring of employees, legal aspects of recruiting and selection and complying with legal aspects of compensation. In short, the ability to perform the human resources activities depends upon the competency.

Testing of Hypothesis

H1: The ability to perform the human resources activities are positively related to the HR competencies.

Table - 4 shows the relationship between the competencies and abilities to be moderate and positive correlation and significant with $r = 0.52$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore the hypothesis is held true. Hence the performance of Human Resource Activities depend upon the Competencies. The correlation between the summated competency and activity score was significant with a moderate positive relationship between the variables, $r = 0.5$, r^2 0.25 and this would mean that out of the total variance, 25% of the variation in the dependent variable (i.e.) the ability of an HR, has been explained by the independent variable (i.e.) the competency of an HR. Both the ability and the competency scores were higher and as the score of competency increases, the score of ability also increases. This implies that they have positive relationship, but only 25 % of the ability was explained by the competency. Therefore competency is not the only factor responsible for the performance of human resources activities but other factor such as the experience may also be responsible for the performance of Human Resource Activities. Hence both experience and competencies are the factors responsible for the performance of Human Resources Activities. Only an experienced and a competent HR manager could contribute to the success and growth of an organization and hence they are treated as valued assets for the organization.

Conclusion

It is concluded from the above Study that there is scope for hospitals to enhance competencies of existing HR Managers, and strengthen the HR Management Component. There is a need to develop a competency framework for the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior required for various HR Managers. One of the major findings of this Study was that many respondents combine their duties in the HR Department with other roles in the hospital. This exemplifies the need for competent and well-trained HR Managers who can fully assume these roles in hospitals and work continuously to improve the status of employees at their hospitals. In this context, Middle Managers (Department Heads) can play a vital role in HR Management and provide supervisory support. These Middle Managers can participate in selection/recruitment processes of HR and they can perform supervisory functions related to HR performance management and appraisal. HRM is a discipline which requires a distinct knowledge base and training. As a result, further education or training is generally required in order to have the necessary competencies to perform well. There is a need to expand HR professional knowledge and competencies for the effective management of human resources who are treated as the real assets for the organization as the success depends upon the effective utilization of Human Resources. Hence an experienced and a competent HR Manager could contribute to the success and growth of an organization and no wonder they are treated as a valued asset for the organization.

Scope for the Further Research

This Research paves way for further research on

(a) HRM in other major Industrial Units.

(b) A comparative HRD practices existing in Private Hospitals and Government Hospitals.

(c) HRD Practices in health care with special reference to employees' perception of HRD Practices.

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Table-1
HR Role in New Millennium

Role	Expected Outcome	Image	Activity
Management of Strategic HR	Executive Strategy	Strategic Partner	Aligning HR and Business Strategy:"Organizational diagnosis"
Management of Infrastructure	Building an Efficient Infrastructure.	Administrative Expert	Re–Engineering Organization Process:"shared services"
Management of Employee Contribution	Increasing Employee Commitment and Capability	Employee Supporter	Listening and Responding to Employees:"providing resources to employees"
Management of Transformation and Change	Creating a Renewed Organization	Change Agent	Managing Transformation and Change:"Ensuring capacity for change"

Source: ICFAI Research Center.

Table - 2
Human Resource Management Competencies

I Strategic Contribution Skill	Mean	Standard deviation
1.Culture Management	4.1	0.67
2.Adapting to Fast Change	4.4	0.61
3.Strategic Decision Making	4.1	0.3
II Personal Credibility		
4.Achieving the Results	4.1	0.5
5.Effective Relationship with Employees	4.3	0.59
6.Communication with Employees	4.3	0.54
III HR Delivery		
7.Selection of Candidates	4.03	0.40
8.Recruitment of Right Candidate	4	0.57
9.Training & Development	4.2	0.6
10.Retaining the Employees	3.7	0.58
11.Legal Compliance	3.5	0.5
IV Business Knowledge		
12.Vlaue Chain Knowledge	3.8	0.49
13.Labour Knowledge	3.9	0.6
V HR Technology		
14.Total Quality Management	4.1	0.6
15.HR & Kaizen	4	0.57
16.Re-Enginering	3.8	0.64
VI Internal Consultation		
17.Develop Solutions to the Employees Problem	4.3	0.53

Average HRM Competency Score 4.06

Note: 1=Very Low (VL); 2=Low (L); 3=Average (A); 4=High (H); and 5=Very High (VH).
Source: Computed from primary data

Table - 3

Human Resource Management Activities

Human Resource Management Activities	Mean	Standard deviation
Developing and Maintaining Positive Work Environment	4.7	0.45
Administering Wages and Benefits	4.7	0.45
Ensuring Safety and Health at Worksites	4.5	0.59
Selecting and Hiring Employees	4.1	0.54
Legal Aspects of Recruiting and Selection	4.16	0.68
Organizing and Designing Jobs	4.37	0.57
Orienting, Training, and Developing Employees	4.3	0.53
Complying with Legal Aspects of Compensation	3.93	0.52
Complying with Fair Employment Laws and Regulations	4.27	0.57
Human Resource Planning and Policy Development	4.27	0.37
Identifying and Coaching to Resolve Employee Problems	4.4	0.56
Motivating Employees	4.6	0.49
Analyzing Jobs and Writing Job Descriptions	4.3	0.58
Appraising and Counseling Employees for Performance	4.43	0.57

Average HRM Activity Score 4.36

Note:1=Low;2=Marginal;3=Good;4=Excellent;5=Outstanding. Summated HRM activity Score=61
Source: Computed from primary data

Table - 4

Correlation Test Between the Respondents' Competencies and the Ability to Perform Human Resources Activities

S.No	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Statistical
1	Competency	69	9.2	r =0.52
2	Ability	61	7.4	p<0.05 significant

Source: Computed from primary data