



Analytical Study of the Approach and Management of Human Resource Managers and Senior Managers of Various Public and Private Companies

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Abstract

This study aims at investigation of the behavior of human resource managers and senior managers in international and national companies. To this end, 45 employees from an international steel company and 50 employees from a national brick company in Isfahan, Iran were selected randomly. A questionnaire with some questions was distributed among all of the participants about HR managers and senior managers in their companies. The data was analyzed using SPSS software version 20. The results of the current study showed that the managers of the international company tried to improve the level of their company by holding different training programs to transmit their abilities and experience. Also, they asked the employees to participate in English courses to develop their trading markets. While the managers at national company did not tend to hold training programs and give feedback. Furthermore, they did not follow teamwork activities and transmit their experience. This study is a new view for the relationship between managers and employees at work.

Keywords: Human Resource Management; Internationalization; Senior Management; Feedback; Business Management

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Introduction

A lot of companies recognize the importance of managing their Human Resources (HR) as effectively as possible. As the environment becomes more global, managing people also becomes more challenging, more uncertain and more subject to rapid change and surprise. Thus what we are witnessing within human resource management (HRM) is the rapid appreciation for and development of all aspects of global and international activities and issues associated with and affected by HRM. Because of the importance of managing people effectively in the global context,

many companies are devoting a great deal of more time, attention, skill, and effort into doing it well.

HRM is an essential function in organizations. It engages everyone and it takes time. Managing human resources effectively requires the special expertise of HR professionals in the HR department, and in partnership with senior managers and other employees. It involves attending to the concerns of the moment while keeping a longer-term perspective in mind. It also involves continuously improving and changing activities that take time to put in place and produce results. Consequently, HRM includes (a) the people managing activities, policies, and practices that firms can use to compete

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effectively now, and (b) the many changing forces (e.g., new competitors, new technology, business restructuring, legal, and social concerns) that organizations need to understand and respond to in order to ensure they are positioned to compete effectively over the longer term (Schuler, 2000) [1]. A central aspect of HRM is the link with the organization. After all, the competitiveness of companies and nations has been recognized to stem from the caliber of their people. The significant advantages of companies having workforces that are fully developed, highly motivated, and rewarded for creativity and innovation are widely understood. However, human resource is so central to the success of companies. Strategies need to be formulated in ways in which the human assets of the firm are a central feature. And this is theoretically consequential because: (1) there is not necessarily one best human resource practice or set of practices and (2) human resource issues are in the domain of all managers (particularly on senior and general management) and are not the preserve of the professionally trained personnel specialist (Schuler, 2000).

HRM involves "all management decisions and actions that affect the nature of the relationship between the organization and employees - its human resources" [2]. And it encompasses the "development of all aspects of an organizational context so that they will encourage and even direct managerial behavior with regard to people (Beer et al., 1984, p. 4).

According to Schuler (2000) human resource departments might also be concerned about the operations of key suppliers and customers. Managerially, human resource professionals are working more closely with the senior managers, to some extent a customer of the human resource department. As the human resource profession has become more involved in the global, external, and strategic issues of the organization, so has its critical goals changed.

Employees are resources in organizations, and as such, they need to be trained and developed properly in order to achieve an organization's goals and expectations (Brewster, 2007) [3]. HRM refers to the policies, practices, and systems in organizations for recruiting and developing their employees, as well as influencing their behavior, attitudes, and performance to achieve the organizations' goals (Stone, 2008) [4]. HRM, as a long-term strategy, plays an important role in creating and developing an organization's competitive advantage in the corporate world [5]. Employees have expectations regarding HR functions, including recruitment, selection, training and development, motivation, and termination in their organization, and the role of HRM has an important effect on HR functions [6].

Although line managers or production managers are dealing with quality of products or services, employees' working attitudes will strongly affect their performance. Employee satisfaction in organizations implementing HRM practices such as staff promotion, motivation, and training and development will definitely influence customer satisfaction, which is also related to employee performance [7]. Moreover, involvement of managers, especially line managers, in implementing HRM activities will improve the manager's skills and knowledge of dealing with employee issues over and above than the technical skills and knowledge in their own working areas [8]. In modern organizational design, HRM involves line managers in implementing HRM policy and practices, because line managers can integrate their knowledge and experience in a way that benefits the entire organization [9].

Involvement of senior managers is also importantly relevant to implement the HRM process. Senior managers are mostly looking at their organizations' strategic force and development of organizational effectiveness; thus senior managers play their roles as long term planners, and need effective communication techniques to communicate with their employees to make them understand what their managers want them to achieve for their organizations [10].

The best organizational strategy needs the best people to implement it, whether they are managers or employees, and people can drive the success of organizations by their behavior [11]. From this perspective, implementing an effective HRM process is an important way to create an organization's competitive advantage. In regards dealing with people, communication is the main tool between managers and employees; and communication skills can be defined as managerial knowledge to build good relationships with their employees [12]. Organizational performance is affected positively by managers' and employees' behavior effectively communicating their ideas and problems [13].

As the previous studies showed, HR department is very important in an organization but the balance between them and senior managers is vital [9-11]. Both of them must try to develop the organization by respecting the rules and having an effective relationship with the employees. This goal can be achieved differently in different organizations depending on their status to be a national or an international organization. This study focused on this point and tried to answer to the following research question:

Are there any significant differences between the human resource and senior managers in national and international companies?

According to this question, the following research hypothesis should be considered:

There is no difference between the human resource and senior managers in national and international companies.

Procedure

The participants of this study were 45 employees from an international steel company and 50 employees from a national brick company in Isfahan, Iran, who were selected randomly. Their job experience was from 1 to 15 years and all of them had at least diploma.

A questionnaire was distributed among the participants, which asked them some questions about human resource managers and senior managers in their company. The questionnaire was consisted of some questions about feedback, training programs, experience, language knowledge, abilities, and teamwork.

Results and Discussion

The current study aims at investigation of differences between human resource and senior managers in national and international companies in Isfahan, Iran. The questionnaire was given to 45 employees at an international company and the results showed that HR managers gave a positive feedback to other employees and in their training programs they transmitted the achieved knowledge and their experience to obtain better performance at work. Their language knowledge was in a high level and employees believed that they could overcome challenging situations with other international companies. Senior managers of this company had a good level of language knowledge and abilities, but they did not try to transfer their experience and abilities to the employees. In training programs, the senior managers preferred to give feedback to all of the employees, not individually, to give advice, and support the finding of solutions. Regarding to teamwork, both HR managers and senior managers emphasized on it because they believe in flexibility, creativity, and responsibility when the people are working on a team.

The same questionnaire was given to 50 employees at a national brick company in Isfahan, Iran. After analyzing the data, the results of the study showed that the HR managers in this company were responsible for hiring employees and selecting some issues for employees to work better; such as working in time and properly. They just hold one training program when the employee wanted to begin his/her job at company, after that they never had such a program or to share their experience and abilities. Senior managers at this company emphasized on more production and language

knowledge was not very essential to them. They preferred to talk about their experience to the other managers and not to the employees.

The hypothesis of this study was "there is no difference between the human resource and senior managers in national and international companies". As the results of the current study showed, the null hypothesis of this study is rejected. Because the behavior of HR and senior managers were completely different in both companies, based on holding different training programs, providing feedback, sharing their experience and abilities, relying on teamwork, and learning English. The international company tried to use a variety of these factors because of its relationship with foreign companies and competitive role of trading. While the national organization just preferred to sell and produce more inside the country without paying attention to other factors which indirectly controlled its production. The results of this study were in line with Chien, 2004; Zupan and Kase, 2007; Maxwell and Farquharson, 2008.

The results of this study would be important for managers in different departments of a company even national on international, because the surviving of a company depends on the employees and the employees will work better and more effective, if they have satisfaction in their job, which finally helps the managers.

In this regard, more study is needed with a large population of employees in different companies to evaluate a larger number of managers in different departments. Furthermore, a list of more factors should be added to the questionnaire to have a more complete and comprehensive evaluation. To be successful, the HR function must develop both an operational and a strategic HR capacity. It is important for HR to support organizational changes and to act as a strategic partner, yet it has to find an equilibrium between being a strategic partner and the operational, day-to-day reality, which forms the core of the profession.

Some would also debate the appropriateness and the ability of HRM to become more organizationally linked. There are many problems such as healthcare and literacy that are critical to the organization and rightly fall to the human resource department. Responsibility for these areas, some would suggest, is right and appropriate for HRM. Expanding beyond this operational domain of personnel is thus unnecessary. Furthermore, as human resource practitioners are not trained to be knowledgeable in the business, they lack the ability to link their activities to the organization.

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