



HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION – A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SELECT DEGREE COLLEGES IN PRIVATE SECTOR, VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates human resource management (HRM) practices in higher education institutions (HEIs) based on a comparative analysis of India and the US. Although higher education in India has grown over the decades, its quality, in general, has not kept up with global standards. On the other hand, many US universities have performed consistently well in international university rankings. Based on qualitative research collected from principal stakeholders of HEIs in India, HRM practices and policies followed by them are presented and discussed. Data collection for the research study was through web interviews during the period August–October 2020. The study reveals that Indian public HEIs do not have professional HRM teams. Also, they are in a formative stage in autonomous and private institutions. On the other hand, many HEIs in the US have developed mature HRM systems. This difference resonates in attributes such as structure of HRM, recruitment and selection processes, training and development programmes, performance management, career progression and talent retention.

Keywords: Human Resources Management, HRM Practices, University, Higher Education Institution, Motivation, Performance Management.

Cite this Article: B. Silpa and T. Subbarayudu, Human Resource Development in Higher Education – A Study with Reference to Select Degree Colleges in Private Sector, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, International Journal of Commerce and Business Studies (IJCBS), 11(1), 2023, pp. 10–17.
<https://iaeme.com/Home/issue/IJRMS?Volume=11&Issue=1>

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, international competition, innovation, and technology advancements have accentuated the importance of HRM for competitive advantage. According to Bontis, (1996), human capital may be the only sustainable competitive advantage that an organization has in the ever changing, globalized world. A study by Hasani and Sheikesmeili (2016) concludes that, more than ever before, human capital is more important than new technologies or financial and material resources. The changing nature of work – especially technological, organizational, and competitive developments – has meant organizations will always struggle to attract and retain an adequate supply of qualified employees from the labor market. According to Barney and Wright (1998), strategic human resource management (SHRM) as a concept became increasing important because in knowledge-based economies in the 21st century, the emphasis is on employees being considered as a primary component for attaining a competitive advantage. Other researchers also established that SHRM resulted in human capital with greater commitment and lower turnover. However, much of this discourse in the literature is related to business. There is a huge gap of literature research regarding the implementation of human resource management practices in higher education. An overview of previous studies indicates a lack of adequate research about the relationship between SHRM practices in higher education institutions. Yet, in an industry as labor-intensive as higher education, the effective use of human resources becomes critical. It was for this purpose that this study was developed to determine if the universities in Saudi are practicing strategic human resource management and, if so, to what extent. In the last two decades, Saudi Arabia has undergone multiple development plans which had positively focused on long-term modifications based on issues and problems associated with the local economy and the inherent social cultural factors (Looney, 2004). For example, in their sixth development plan, the government included major alterations in the structure of the economy to enforce expansion and growth in other industries (Alrebh, 2011). As a result of this development plan, the country has witnessed remarkable expansion in establishing a competitive resource-based market from global perspectives (AlHussain, 2011). According to statistics from the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA, 2013), Saudi Arabia is the largest economy in the Middle East, and holds 20% of the proven world reserve of crude oil, which represents 45% of the total GDP of the country (AlHussain, 2011). However, Saudi Arabia has recently (2014-2015), suffered from a number of economic and socio-political obstacles, primarily from the dependence on oil and the unstable political environment surrounding the country. The country has financed a great deal of its services (including education) with revenues from the oil industry, so the recent sagging oil market is bound to produce dramatic changes on the Saudi economy and a decline in state funding in many services, including education. Therefore, the current need for enhanced and improved human resource administration in higher education in Saudi is important for several reasons. The first reason is the increasing public demand for accountability in university administration with the accreditation drive undertaken by the Ministry of Higher Education. Secondly, the Saudi government has enforced Saudization as a law to replace foreign workers with Saudi nationals in all organizations, regardless of their capabilities and scale (Flynn, 2011), which has led to a dramatic change of the face of the typical Saudi workforce. Saudi citizens are becoming a larger part of the workforce, and the familiar image of a homogenous foreign workforce is dramatically changing.

Amidst this environmental change and the decline of resources, the role of human resources in the labor-intensive higher education organizations, with their high degree of autonomy and strong traditions, is vital, if not quintessential. Consequently, the management of those resources is becoming a critical issue. One avenue of literature on coping with environmental change and the decline of resources has been that of strategic management of human resources (Perry, 1984; Greenhalgh, 1983). This research study is one of the first of its kind contributing uniquely to the scarce limited body of knowledge about higher education human resource management practices in Saudi. There was no single piece of literature that was discovered that succinctly, fully, and accurately described the characteristics of a human resource office that is considered a strategic partner, especially from the perspective of higher education in Saudi Arabia.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (HRD) PRACTICES

The impact of human resource management practices has become a dominant study in the field of staff administration. Armstrong (2006) states that Human Resource is an important and rational method of administering an institution who's highly talented staff singly or as a team add to the realization of its targets. Researchers in human resource management have emphasized that staff administration procedures could result in greater productivity in addition to becoming known for continuously staying ahead of the challenge. In order to maintain the changing trend of human resource activity, human resource experts should expand and display fresh skills to accomplish their transforming role and tasks. HRM encompasses various activities which are designed to provide for and coordinate the HR activities of companies and also help in the efficient utilization of workers to attain company and personal objectives. HRM entails attracting and maintaining talented workers. This led to the formation of HRM departments/divisions to handle such functions and this has become a total integrated part of the whole strategy. The functions are diverse and include: Staff administrative set ups, staff appointments, sorting and posting, coaching & expansion, work evaluation, employee motivation, retention and turnover, emoluments and benefit.

Practices in human resources development are actions that prioritise people as the organization's most valuable resource and design plans that make the best use of those resources to meet the aims and objectives of the business. Strategic HRD adopts a more pro-active stance, thoroughly comprehends the business plans of the organizations, and creates HRD plans that are in line with those business plans. Thus, everyone needs to understand that the emphasis should be on strategic HRD, if HRD is to be efficient and have a significant impact on the organization development. Consequently, the organization's key HRD practices are discussed below:

1. Employee engagement

Increasing employee engagement is by far the most important objective for HR professionals in 2022. While many individuals have their own definitions of employee engagement, the vast majority believe it to be the mix of employee pleasure and productivity that is driven by intrinsic motivation. In addition, determining the intrinsic motivation of the entire workforce is difficult, but can be accomplished by sending surveys with the appropriate questions to the appropriate employees.

2. Performance reviews & performance management

Every organisation wants to boost employee performance, and they do this by following regular performance management procedures. Given that many firms consistently struggle with effectively completing employee evaluations, this tendency is not surprising. Since there were

several responses that were more specific to employee performance, such as finishing performance reviews by the deadline, improving the performance review process, beginning a performance review process, automating performance reviews, and developing competencies for performance reviews. Organizing performance reviews by individual departments, finishing all of them on time, incorporating core values into them, streamlining them, tracking high performers and under performers within the organisation, and improving overall employee performance are other crucial components of performance management. Therefore, the essential take away from the aforementioned considerations is that, in the current environment, efficiently and effectively completing performance assessments is a critical objective.

3. Employee training & development

Utilizing employee training software, a significant number of HR professionals plan to boost their organization's employee training and professional development programmes in the coming year. Effective training programmes improve staff performance and increase employee engagement. Workers value having access to free skill-development programmes that can open up new career opportunities and boost their productivity. Specifically, it is vital to create career growth paths for employees, provide training facilities, and promote new management.

4. HR software

As technology continues to improve, an increasing number of HR professionals wish to optimize their workforce management systems. Some organizations want to boost manager and employee participation in their performance management system (Valamis, 2022). Others wanted to develop a Human Resource Information System (HRIS) or integrate their various tools for performance management (Forrest Brown, 2022). Many of the other projects are simple to do once the appropriate HR technology is in place. A strategic solution makes employee involvement, goals, and performance measurable. A learning management system is used to easily construct employee training programmes (LMS).

HR Skills and Competencies

So what are the essential competencies for HR professionals? Today's human resource professionals will need to possess a far larger, more complicated skill set in addition to the competencies generally associated with human resource managers, such as recruitment, screening, employee relations and performance management.

1. Business Management & Leadership Skills: To be successful, human resource managers must possess the fundamental skills of business management and leadership. HR specialists must be able to address organisational issues in various types of organisations, including small, privately held firms, nonprofits, and multinational corporations. Handling the complex issues surrounding diversity and inclusion, comprehending hiring standards and employee rights, designing and managing competitive benefit packages, and keeping a positive organisational culture while dealing with personnel issues are examples of potential challenges.

2. Human Capital Development Skills: Even though they are two crucial activities that many HR managers are accountable for, excellent human resource management goes beyond just hiring new employees and managing personnel issues as they emerge. The truth is that finding new personnel in today's environment is an expensive, time-consuming process that isn't always going to result in success and longevity.

3. Communication & Interpersonal Skills: Effective communication and interpersonal rapport are two of the most important skills required for professional success in any field, but particularly in human resources. Human resource experts are known for their interpersonal skills for good reason: they interact regularly with employees at all organisational levels and must be able to connect with them in a kind, succinct, and professional manner. In the majority of organisations, the human resources department is responsible for managing conflicts between coworkers, coaching employees seeking career advancement, and counselling individuals in need of support; therefore, interpersonal relations and soft skills, such as the ability to listen well and build rapport with all types of people, are crucial.

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHRM)

For some time, many HRM experts have openly called for a certain important model of HRM. The important part involves managing particular HRM processes separately-employment, assortment, emoluments, education etcetera-in order that they support each other, thereby improving the good worker attitude results cited above (Becker and Huselid, 1998: 55). This is described as 'internal' or 'horizontal' 'fit'. The other important condition is to offer HRM its appropriate position in general organizational administration, such that other administrative resolutions are in recognition of HR consequence (and popularly, are themselves to a certain degree influenced by HRM opinions). Over a period, these suggestions have become popular as 'SHRM'. A realistic application of policy strengthens SHRM, with its hypotheses that policy is an idea expounded and put into action by a few top executives. In the SHRM format, an HR supervisor is among those top executives. Workers should be supervised in methods that compare results to the goals influencing company and commercial plan. Therefore, HR systems are secondary to bigger corporate objectives: 'before specific HR plans can be developed corporate and business level plans must be developed' 'traditional models of SHRM focus on matching people to strategy, but not on matching strategy to people'.

QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Though the definition of excellence particularly in advanced academia is difficult, Mishra (2007) argued that the expression has some thematic suggestions about which the entire theory spins; quality as absolute (is agreed and thought of as the uppermost achievable value), quality as relative (is portrayed in comparative expressions), quality as a process (is the result of schemes and routine needs), and quality as culture (identifies the significance of institutional outlook of quality as a procedure of change, where every unit is hesitant and recognizes the significance of quality). He observed that academic institutes are mainly preoccupied with quality as a tradition, although erstwhile schemes of quality have their individual areas. In a further viewpoint quality, as a concept, has been described in a dissimilar way by different interest groups. This is due to the fact that quality has many components and is viewed differently by everybody. In addition, different nations could be inclined to describe these expressions another way. The research will go by these descriptions of quality, quality assurance, accreditation, and licensing from Materu (2007). Quality in principle points to – suitability for a function. It sums up the idea of satisfying universally accepted principles. Such values could be determined by regulation of an institute, a supervising organization or an expert guild. In the varied space of advanced academia, suitability for a function differs enormously by subject and curriculum. Excellence in the framework of advanced academia points to suitability for a functional convention or being in compliance of normally recognised principles as described by institutes, worthiness control organizations and suitable educational and specialized societies. In a large amount of issues, excellence in universities and colleges incorporate their dreams and objectives, aptitude and skill of their lecturers, enrolment conditions, evaluation principles, the training and where it takes place, the suitability of its

alumni for industry, the state of its annals and laboratories, administrative efficiency, administration and headship.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF THE COLLEGES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Andhra Pradesh colleges are aided, unaided, or both. Aided colleges are those that get money from the university and operate under its guidelines. Unaided colleges or private colleges are those that do not get subsidies from the university, but are administered by private cooperators and are associated with any Andhra Pradesh university. According to their pricing structure, these are completely reliable. Assisted colleges have the number of class divisions approved by the government to receive funding; the other divisions are not aided. This assisted and unaided department is essential to the college's operations. The laws, regulations, and policies of the University Grants Commission (UGC) are closely adhered to by aided colleges, whereas unaided colleges adhere to these rules and regulations with caution.

In addition to diploma courses, the colleges provide a wide variety of courses for graduation and post-graduation. The student faces a difficult time obtaining admission to these colleges for any of the recommended courses. According to the percentage of their SSC and HSC grades, the students were accepted into these colleges. If they are accepted into well-known and reputable universities, they will have the chance to demonstrate their talents, skills and potential. Post-graduation was a requirement for hiring staff members who were given permanent positions. The entire breadth of the global education system has transformed as a result of globalization and technological advancements, particularly in higher education. It enabled the interchange of views, ideas and technologies as well as opinions. With new inventions and interventions, educational technology and technology in education have taken a dramatic shift. Students were exposed to new avenues of information and practise, which prompted them to adopt a different perspective on education. No longer is education a study of books and texts. It has escaped from the confines of the institution. In the new course's curriculum, the most practical considerations have been incorporated. Education is currently more professionally focused and technologically advanced. Several colleges provide these courses to their students. They expand the learning's horizons.

To enable students to pursue any professional degree and produce professionally, each college offers one of these courses. For the benefit of the students, professors, and growing office administrative personnel, the institution can also run a placement cell. More people with varied levels of independence are being dealt with by this college. The management, principal, and office holders are overworked. The demands on staff, students, the university, and society as a whole are increasing. A need for high-quality education exists. People want their expenses for their ward to be worth it. Teachers are increasingly held responsible and responsive to society.

Management Functions

- ✓ Appointment of principal and staff
- ✓ Go through the work of an institution.
- ✓ To complete governments requirement.
- ✓ To complete University requirements
- ✓ Expansion of the business, through the introduction of new course.
- ✓ Face external environment.

Principal Functions

- ✓ Overall management of institution
- ✓ Link between faculties and management.
- ✓ Appointment of staff, and maintaining pleasant relationship.
- ✓ Conducting various University exams.
- ✓ Dealing with the internal and external opportunities and restrain.

Office Bearers Functions

- ✓ Maintaining infrastructure and environment of colleges.
- ✓ Maintaining records of students and faculty.
- ✓ Collection of fees and other charges.
- ✓ Issue and submission of forms.
- ✓ Fulfilling requirements of universities.

CONCLUSION

We have shown how both institutions demonstrated an awareness and variable adoption of HRM strategies and practices. Degree College culture, derived from its former local government context and different curriculum emphases, lent itself more readily to the integration of HRM as both idiom and incidence. As a result, there was some evidence of a greater integration of Degree College strategic plans with its staffing policies and practices. At the same time, it would be wrong to emphasise the differences between the institutions, at the expense of the similarities. Both old and new universities have been forced into pragmatic solutions to problems, particularly as they relate to funding and establishing a market position. Both have introduced changes in staff management which resemble those described in work settings outside education in companies striking for excellence and competitive advantage. Some of these changes are in conflict with others. Direct communication with staff, determination of individual contracts and performance pay sit uneasily alongside teamwork or the continuing influence of collective bargaining. Both institutions acknowledged the continuing need for personnel procedures, but on a basis of advice and discretion rather than prescription and direction. Selection procedures were under review, but the selection task had still to be integrated with each university's overall aims. The industrial relations climate in HE is ever-changing, as the universities expand their role as employers, but within frameworks determined on the one hand by government directives and, on the other, by collective bargaining traditions. Training and development, a growth area in both universities, shows signs of becoming integrated with each university's overall mission, but in ways that are likely to be antipathetic to many staffs perceptions of their longer term needs. Performance appraisal procedures, however they are described, sit uneasily alongside predetermined staff development programmes that emphasise short-term targets in prescribed areas.

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Citation: B. Silpa and T. Subbarayudu, Human Resource Development in Higher Education – A Study with Reference to Select Degree Colleges in Private Sector, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, International Journal of Commerce and Business Studies (IJCBS), 11(1), 2023, pp. 10–17



<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/2UA9W>

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