

A Study on the Effectiveness of Human Resource Management in Promoting Work Place Diversity

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Abstract: Purpose: The paper advocates for increased human resource management and organizational management in building a positive work atmosphere as well as an expanded criteria for selection for inculcating occupational diversity that involves reliable traits like dispositional considerations like job, emotional intelligence and cultural flexibility.

Research implications: The research highlights the role of human resource managers in managing the workplace diversity in an organization and how workplace diversity must be seen as a long-term benefit rather than a challenge to be solved.

Findings: A human resource management approach to achieve and manage workplace diversity metabolizes the research and identifies core fields to facilitate diversity management.

Originality: It emphasizes that, based on how diversity management is handled by HR managers; it may have favorable, negative, or neutral consequences.

Keywords: Workplace diversity, Human resource management, Organization, Organizational goals, Opportunities, Workplace diversity management.

I. INTRODUCTION

Diversity is defined as embracing, recognizing and acknowledging individual differences regardless of gender, class, race, age, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual preferences, religious beliefs and so forth. The definition of diversity in an organization has been expanded to mean the collective differences of all the employees brought to the workplace, which are based on personal and group traits, strengths, ideals, ideologies, knowledge and competencies. Workplace diversity involves an organizational culture where each employee is empowered to evolve and excel irrespective of any factor that is considered to be unrelated to performance. Valuing diversity plays an important role in managing people effectively in an organization, which would ultimately help improve the workplace productivity.

Human resource management or HRM is the practice of guiding individuals to enhance their performance. Human Resource Management (HRM) may seem to only involve surveillance of employees in the organization but it also encompasses a variety of responsibilities related to the culture and mission of an organization. Workplace diversity has been largely considered a component of the Human Resource Management (HRM) because the main focus of this department is to put an emphasis on people's management with a strategic constructive approach to workplace diversity so as to achieve the organizational goals. The function of Human resource management is not

just limited to recruit individuals from historically underrepresented groups to increase their representation in the workforce of the organization. It also plays a significant role in ensuring greater equality in the workplace with an aim to help people from diverse groups to reclaim core facets of their personality and enjoy successful fulfilling careers

The need to promote and encourage workplace diversity was seen in the 1960s and 1970s United States. The policy to promote workplace diversity was then reviewed by the Nixon Administration in 1971, to ensure that a positive action outline is set with a goal. Globalization and technological advancements increased the profitability of the organizations but they face challenges such as market size, equity management and workplace diversity. This led to rise in the need of efficient Human Resource Management (HRM). In recent times, workplace diversity is seen as a strategy to increase productivity and lift morale in the organization.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To understand workplace diversity.
- To ascertain the role of human resource management practices on workplace diversity.
- To evaluate the impact of workplace diversity on individual, group and organizational performance.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The literature available from previous studies observed disparity in gender economic opportunity and social disparities, particularly in wages, as well as the racial bias against women, disabled and people with different sexual preferences in executive jobs. Past researches also focused on the shortage of flextime for young female workers, and proposed a more egalitarian workplace. On the other hand, this research aims to bridge the gap by encouraging a more concerted approach to develop an atmosphere in the workplace, which would enable employers to establish diversity recognition programs and initiatives. The paper focuses on to create awareness about diversity that will lead to a more inclusive approach for achieving organizational goals.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jayne and Dipboye (2004) in “Leveraging diversity to improve business performance: research findings and recommendations for organizations” stated that the growing attention given to workplace diversity in research and human resource management is an inevitable consequence of demographic and global economy changes. Moreover, according to them, an organization could yield huge benefits by achieving workplace diversity and effectively managing the workforce with formalized human resource management practices.

Babalola and Marques (2013) in “Integrated approach to workplace diversity through human resource management” the performance efficiency of human resource management is relevant to workplace diversity. They also suggested that the HRM activities should be directed in managing diversity in such a manner that the benefits from the differences are fully realized. To summarize, they said that workplace diversity could be achieved through integrated approach of human resource management combined with organizational management.

Konrad and Linnehan (1995) in “Formalized human resource management structures: Coordinating equal opportunity or concealing organizational practices” conducted a cross-sectional analysis of 100 organizations, found that the identity-conscious Human resource management structures have greater representation of diverse groups in the management. Moreover they claimed that such structures tend to address representation of various demographic groups in HR decision-making.

Reskin and McBrier (2000) in “Why not ascription? Organizations’ employment of male and female managers” with the help of data from National Organization Survey found that higher percentages of women were hired in organizations with formally defined HR practices. Further, they theorized that when Human Resource Management practices are performed judiciously then the distribution of

opportunities or positions is less likely to be based on characteristics that are unrelated to performance.

Goel et al. (2019) in “Diversity at workplace: performance of human resource management practices in IT sector in NCR, India” focused on the effectiveness of human resource management practices in the IT sectors with a diverse workforce. They conducted a primary research on a sample of 500 employees from all cadres of employment. The study’s inferential results focused on how ethnic, socioeconomic, diversity management positions and systems are related to the implementation of human resource management. The study highlighted that there exists a significant relationship between these variables and human resource practices in the organization.

III. SIGNIFICANCE

The paper makes an attempt to accentuate certain conclusions drawn from prevailing studies and literature. This paper also tries to fill the gap between the rhetoric and the observations. It is also highlighted that workplace diversity may lead to dissatisfaction and conflicts within an organization if a proper human resource approach is not integrated. Moreover, it must be noted that workplace diversity may not always act in the benefit of an organization. The human resource managers must assess the impact first before integrating workplace diversity into an organization. The role of human resource managers is very critical for effective diversity management and their perception about it reflects the approach of an organization in diversity and its application.

IV. ANALYTICAL CHAPTERS

A. *Workplace diversity*

“Diversity stands for the various differences in individuals as well as similarities that exist among them.” (Kreitner, 2001). According to this definition the concept of diversity extends to all the employees in an organization and includes the complete set of distinctions that distinguishes one human from the other. Hence, diversity is viewed as the sum total of all the differences rather than being identified entirely on the basis of racial or religious factors. It is a combination of people’s similarities and their disparities. The process of managing diversity in an organization entails an approach that involves using these variables simultaneously. Therefore, managers are required to incorporate the combination of disparities and similarities among the employees. Diversity can be classified into four layers:

External dimensions: These are personal characteristics over which humans have some control or effect. Money, leisure activities, work history, appearance, education and geographical location are all factors that come under external dimensions.

Internal dimensions: These are certain attributes that tend to have a significant impact on people’s views, desires and

behaviors for others. Sex, sexual identity, race, physical capabilities and age are some examples of these factors.

Personality: It refers to the specific collection of attributes that define an individual's identity. A person can portray several forms of personality traits. Some examples are, attitude, behavior and individual actions.

Organizational dimensions: The dimensions, which are crucial and pertinent to an organization, are organizational dimensions. Management status, job area, union membership and seniority are some of the factors included in organizational dimensions.

B. Role Of Human Resource Management In Workforce Diversity

In today's world, management of workforce diversity has become an issue of great concern because it is believed that leveraging disparities can result in a healthy environment where employees feel respected and their skills are put to good use in the pursuit of the organizational goals. Awareness of organizational behavior, optimizing talents, preventing stereotypes, acknowledging prejudices and biases and concentrating on performance are all important aspects of valuing workforce diversity. Owing to these aspects, organizations should view workplace diversity more than just an affirmative action program, a "nice thing to do" or a training initiative. Organizations find it difficult to implement workforce diversity because employees tend to have a preference to work in homogenous groups and an aversion to change. Human Resource Management should be skilled in teamwork, organizational development and bringing management change with strong communication skills in order to effectively manage workforce diversity.

The Human Resource Management should be able to establish ambitious but achievable targets for diversity programs in an organization dedicated to workforce diversity. Moreover, Human Resource Management must focus on the need to support the development of an internal workplace environment and skills that are outcome driven and not process driven. Acknowledging and accepting various employee needs helps to effectively manage workplace diversity. Human Resource Management should actively cultivate a transformational atmosphere in the organizations because then workplace diversity can be accepted as a vehicle for advancing productivity and organizational strategies. The fear of employees regarding getting fired and being uncertain about their career can be resolved through such practices as they allow employees to individually contribute in the organizational transformation. Thus, Human Resource Management must foster an atmosphere that would promote the benefits offered by workplace diversity and would ensure that the faith of employees in organizational change is maintained.

C. Impact Of Workplace Diversity On Individual, Groups And Organizational Performance

The relation between human resource management in workplace diversity and performance outcome could be assessed on three levels that is individual, group and organizational.

Individual

Human resource management creates a cordial atmosphere, which helps in management of workplace diversity, which in turn improves employee retention, work satisfaction and loyalty in an organization. Further, employees are more loyal and productive if they feel that the organization value and respect their individual differences. Thus, efficiently managed workforce diversity supported by successful human resource practices will boost morale and productivity of employees in the organization.

Group

As opposed to homogeneous groups, diverse groups are found to be more productive in brainstorming, job performance, organizational behavior and communication. Teams who transcend obstacles to diversity are able to develop, achieve a shared goal and learn which results in success and improved innovation. High quality decisions are believed to be directly in relation to group diversity (Richard & Johnson, 2001). Although, the benefits accrued from workplace diversity in the group performance depends a great on the human resource management practices of an organization.

Organization

Managing workplace diversity efficiently gives the organization a competitive advantage, especially in the arenas of ingenuity, innovation, problem-solving and flexibility. It also facilitates organizations to succeed in the market by meeting the needs of a varied client base while simultaneously lowering costs associated with lawsuits, absenteeism, lack of efficiency, labor turnover and recruiting. The best employees in the market are attracted, retained and hired by companies which value and respect diversity. Moreover, successfully managed workplace diversity is expected to have a positive impact on financial success in terms of revenue, profits and market share.

V. FINDINGS

The human resource managers must have the capability to direct organizations through following things in order to integrate diversity and to achieve its benefits:

- The importance of ensuring that the training for diversity is in line with the goals of the organization. This means that the human resource managers must be able to create and recreate the training for diversity in such a way that it would help to counter any derogatory attitudes while simultaneously incorporating value and expression of the stakeholders.
- Emphasizing on cultural change and development in the organization instead of encouraging justice and

resisting discrimination. In the process of matching the advantages and intricacies of workplace diversity, diversity training plays a significant role to adapt characteristics of personalities, attitude and beliefs.

- Human resource managers must be capable of taking strategic and realistic action in order to manage and incorporate workplace diversity so as to achieve positive results via social networks, leadership skills and mentoring of all the employees.
- The human resource management professional body of an organization should interact with different organizations that are engaged in diversity related study, education and practices. This would also include a comprehensive study of diversity education, which will facilitate in equipping human resource graduates to manage a diverse workforce.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Human resource managers play a significant role in creating an environment that embraces and sustains diversity at the financial, strategic as well as tactical levels. Diversity alone cannot guarantee instant, measurable gains in an organization, group or individual performances. Nonetheless, having a diverse workforce and handling it successfully can have a significant impact. The paper has yielded vital insights that can assist human resource management professionals in reaping the rewards of diversity campaigns while avoiding the drawbacks. The combination of effective human resource strategies to manage workplace diversity and the commitment of top-level manager towards diversity determines an organization's way to address workplace diversity, which is believed to have a favorable impact on employee, community and corporate results.

VII. LIMITATIONS

The limitation of the study is that it is not explanatory and is based only on secondary data from journals, articles, books and newspaper articles. The researcher did not choose empirical research due to time and money constraints.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

The paper focuses on the positive impact of human resource management on workplace diversity. Human resource management faces certain obstacles because the changes in the workforce demographics and structure are unavoidable. Each organization has different level of motivation to value workplace diversity. Certain organizations put a great emphasis on diversity, which is evident in its day-to-day work practices. On the other hand, some organizations adopt diversity programs just for the sake of doing it. This might help to eliminate discrimination in an organization but it does not create an environment where employers consciously encourage diversity. The value and respect an organization holds for workplace diversity must be expressed in its policies, culture and design. Moreover,

companies should look beyond the conventional requirements for recruiting and hiring to include diversity in the organization. The organizations must be motivated to carry on a continuous development of its employees through career advancement, capacity creation and succession planning. Surviving in a dynamic environment, organizations need to recruit and retain employees with necessary skills and qualities as well as engaging in their growth through continuous investment.

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