

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: EXPERIENCE AND REALIZATION

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Abstract: *University library is a microcosm of the institution as it faces most of the issues confronted by the campus Human Resource department. The scale of the issues may be smaller but, in terms of their effect on the operation of the library and its ability to fulfill its mission, they are very critical. Human Resource Management (HRM) is a function performed in organizations that facilitate the most effective use of employees to achieve organizational and individual goals. Maximizing the efforts and contributions of human beings is a major problem today in the libraries. As a part of this study, University libraries were pointed to assess the human issues related to human resource management in these libraries, current status of professionals engaged, their views and remarks for improving library services to better meet the user needs are also discussed. It has been emphasized that effective HRM is the only way to get best out of the personnel for successful management of an organization. This study also demonstrates that HRM function, policy and benefits are positively related to POSDCORB effectiveness. Its effectiveness fully mediates the relationship between resource and process, training and administration, and performance appraisal & services innovation.*

Keywords: *HRM, POSDCORB, University Libraries and HR Functions.*

Introduction

Human capital is a key and by all accounts increasingly an important part of the resource-base of an organization. Human resources have been called the “key ingredient to organizational success and failure” (Baron and Kreps, 1999), including success and failure in company innovation performance. It is important to understand why and how human capital encourages innovation, and what deployment of human resource management (HRM) practices inside the organization can produce desired levels of innovation performance. The HRM has emerged and evolved as one of the most important areas of organizational discipline and practice. It has not been developed in isolation but in the context of organizational change and economic development. The uniqueness of the Human Resources (HR) approach requires a totally different type of attention from managers. The HR has characteristics that provide the greatest challenge as well as opportunity. A company’s HR is fragile with delicate relationships, along with unpredictable contributions, and permanency is uncertain (Guest, 1991). University libraries have also an internal HR department and staff devoted to handling all or some of the library’s HR functions in cooperation with the HR department of the parent institution. In other libraries, individual positions may be dedicated to HR functions.

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The most common position titles are HR or personnel officer, staff development officer, or organizational development officer. From library to library, the level of the position varies from line librarian or professional, to department manager, to associate or assistant director, while the reporting relationship also varies. A key factor in personnel development is the head librarian for his approach affects a great many other people in the organization. There are many specific ways the chief administrator's leadership has an impact on the library's staff development program. His leadership is important in developing, with his employees, a clear statement of policy on personnel development and continuing education a statement. It is known and understood throughout the organization which is made realizable through supportive procedures, adequate financing and a positive working atmosphere. His leadership in developing a strategy for the selection of highly motivated employees based on the institutional objectives to be achieved is also important.

Review of Literature

As the world is becoming more competitive and unstable than ever before, manufacture-based industries are seeking to gain competitive advantage at all cost and are turning to more innovative sources through HRM practices (Sparrow, Schuler, & Jackson, 1994). HRM practices have been defined in following literature searching in several aspects.

Minbaeva (2005) viewed HRM practices a set of practices used by organization to manage human resources through facilitating the development of competencies that are firm specific, produce complex social relation and generate organization knowledge to sustain competitive advantage. Against this backdrop, we observed in library perspective that HRM practices relate to specific practices, formal policies, and philosophies that are designed to attract, develop, motivate, and retain employees who ensure the effective functioning and survival of the organization.

According to Wang (2005), innovative firms treat HRM practices as the organization's strategy to encourage team responsibilities, enhance organizational culture, and build up customer relationships through participation and management.

According to Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002), HRM practices can generate increased knowledge, motivation, synergy, and commitment of organizational employees, resulting in a source of sustained competitive advantage for the executive.

Delery & Doty, (1996), defined that performance appraisal increase employee commitment and satisfaction since employees are given chance to discuss about their work performance. This, in turn, will lead them to perform greater in innovative activities. In a similar vein, career management assists employees to attain their career goals and objectives. If employees are likely to feel satisfied with their career management, which in turn, lead to motivate them to perform in innovative activities.

Reward system provides financial reward, promotion and other recognition, in order to motivate employees to take risk, develop successful new products and generate newer ideas (Guptal & Singhal, 1993). Reward system encourages employee to become motivated, thereby increase their participation in contributing innovation ideas, which leading to high organizational innovation. Hendry and Pettigrew (1992) propose that a number of internal factors such as the organizational culture, structure (positioning of HR), leadership, level of technology employed and business output directly contribute to forming the contents of HRM.

Hamel and Prahalad (1991) contend that a competitive advantage is obtained if an organization can obtain and develop human resources, which enable it to learn faster and apply its learning more effectively than its rivals.

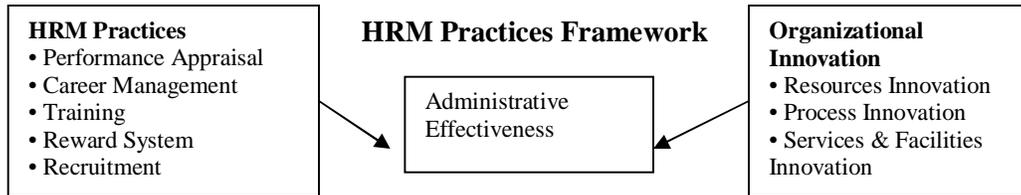


Figure-1: HRM Framework in Libraries (Model developed by the authors)

Schuler and Jackson (1987) defined HRM practices as a system that attracts, develops, motivates, and retains employees to ensure the effective implementation and the survival of the organization and its members. Besides, HRM practices are also conceptualized as a set of internally consistent policies and practices designed and implemented to ensure that a firm's human capital contribute to the achievement of its business objectives.

Training helps employee master knowledge, skill, and ability which would be contribute to innovation in terms of products, production processes, and management practices in daily operation (Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Hence, training develops the knowledge, skill, and ability of employees to perform effectively in their job that will lead to higher organizational innovation.

Methodology of the study

This present study has been carried out to evaluate the necessity of HRM and policy for building a new perception in libraries. To obtain this objective of the present study, researchers mostly have used secondary data from different period of research papers. Secondary data have been collected from various relevant publications and books. It is a qualitative research and mainly focused on human resource management (HRM) interrelated with library different managerial and administrative activities among the users as well as library personnel in collaboration with HR department of the parent organization.

Objectives

1. To study and examine the relationships between various aspects of HRM practices in library or organization.
2. To investigate the various HRM practices, i.e., planning, recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, training and development, career management and rewards at the managerial levels.
3. To assess the concept of HRM in the university libraries.

Discussion and Realization of the Study

1. HRM in library perspectives

a. Human (H) in Library Perspective

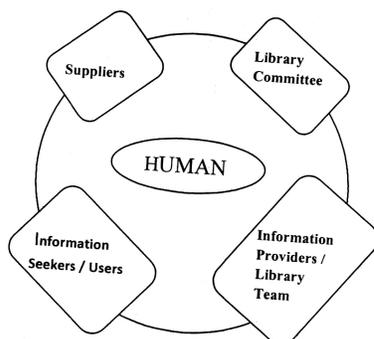


Figure-2 Human Chain in libraries (Model developed by the authors)

Information seekers are using the library resources with the help of library personnel. Suppliers are supplying library materials of the libraries as per demand by the library authority after giving their quotation.

Quinn (1995) outlined the differences between committees and teams, illustrated in table-1, in six basic areas like responsibility, authority, management, objectives, process, and information.

Table-1. Differences between committees and teams

Areas	Committees	Teams
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charged with a special project or task • Members may be selected or may be volunteers • Involvement of members varies by individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for an entire work process such as acquisitions • Members selected based on their role in the work process • All members expected to be involved
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less authority • Primarily consultative or advisory • Usually recommends or advises, but does not make the final decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More authority • Teams participate in problem solving and implementation of decisions
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More passive and reactive • Leaders usually appointed rather than selected by the group • Discipline and responsibility externally imposed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More proactive and less reactive • Leaders operate as facilitators and may be selected by the team • Discipline and responsibility internally imposed

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on a special project or task • Objectives may be vague • Objectives usually determined externally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on specific objectives • Team specifies objectives • Objectives determined and refined by the team
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets formally but less frequently • Degree of interdependence is much lower • Committees operate in more formal ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets regularly and more frequently • Higher level of interdependence • More task focused • Higher levels of motivation
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on management for information • Information is limited and controlled • Relevant information for users • Information needs and seeking behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathered from peers and other sources as well as management • Members have greater knowledge of each other's jobs • Teams rely on training to analyze problems and generate solutions • Training in team-based skills

b. Resource (R) in library perspective

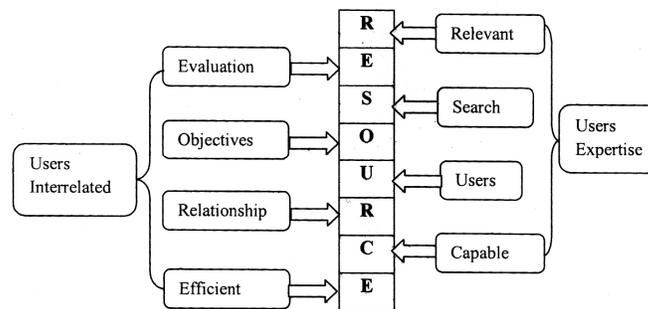


Figure 3: Resource in library perspective (Model developed by the authors)

Organizations use mechanisms to achieve HRM goals with competent and committed employees. Organizations can achieve very little even if they have excellent technological and other resources at their command. Every library has its own objective to develop relationship between the users and staff. Libraries try to meet users' needs and provide proper services to the right users at the right time. Users evaluate library services and put their feedback through online / e-mail. They search their relevant resources and access into library databases with the help library personnel.

c. Management (M) in library perspective

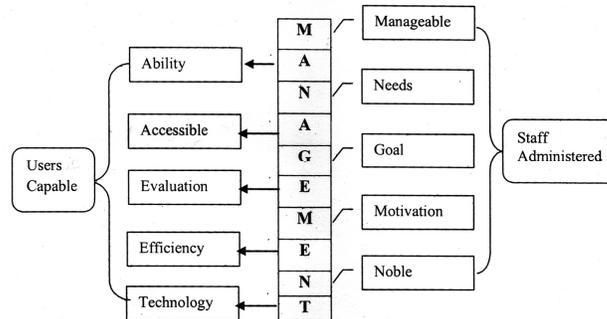


Figure-4: Management in library perspective (Model developed by the authors)

At the organizational level, the goal of management is normally to have competent and motivated employees to ensure managerial effectiveness and growth of the organization. Organizations normally direct their HRM efforts towards the development of competencies and organizational culture. Organizations use mechanisms to achieve HRM goals with competent and committed employees.

In this digital era, users are capable to access into library database with the application of technology. They have ability to giving their feedback and evaluate library’s services and facilities by using resources.

Users meet their need by using required library resources and library personnel is maintained their professionalism through proper services to the users at the right time.

POSDCORB in university libraries

University libraries have its own managerial and administrative criteria to achieve goal and needs to meet the user needs in order to ensure better functioning and smooth running of an organization,

Luther Gulick propounded some basic element of administration. These are known as ‘POSDCORB’ which stand for the following seven elements:-

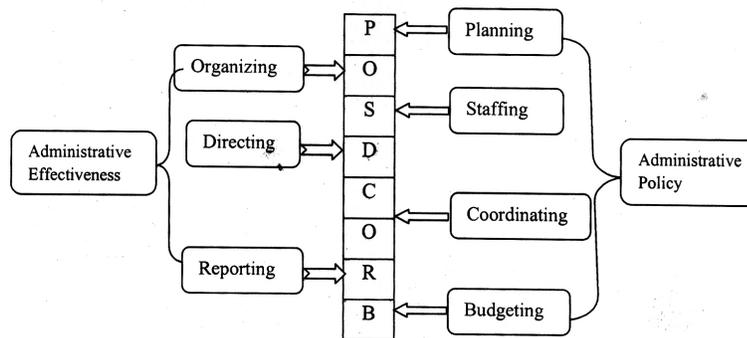


Figure-5: POSDCORB in library (Model developed by the authors)
Function of management and administration in university libraries perspective

According to James A. F. Stoner-“Management is the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the efforts of organization members of using all other organizational resources to achieve stated organizational goal”. All administration and management function are executed in the library due to provide proper services and as well as development of library employee. Libraries continue to face dramatic changes due to a wide variety of factors. Library administrators must constantly assess how effective the HR function is in the library. To do this, they need to assess their current needs and the climate in their operation. One constant concern is the morale of the employees.

(a) Administrative policy

- i. Planning:** The primary function of an administrator is to plan and determine the goal and ideas of an institution. Planning presupposes the stock taking of the existing conditions and the relevant causes. The solutions are suggested for removing the problems by phased programme. The efforts are made to remove the basic defects and their future implications are taken care of. Same is the case with Library Planning.
- ii. Staffing:** An organization for its efficiency needs proper staffing, recruitment and retention policies. Practical experience of various jobs at the credit of applicants for various posts should be taken in to consideration at the time of appointment. Staffing includes the training of staff and maintenance of favorable conditions of work for them. The chief librarian should be a competent and dynamic person with an aptitude of research.
- iii. Coordinating:** It is essential to inter-relate various part of an organization in a harmonious way. The co-ordination can be achieved if the head knows about all the jobs and effect such as administrative machinery that he feels practically on necessary to interfere. It depends upon the kind of organization has been brought in to being, as to whether is line type or line and staff type of structure or functional type of organization. There should be delegation of power or proper functioning but they should be answerable to the chief only instructions.
- iv. Budgeting:** It includes fiscal planning, accounting and control. No organization can function properly without adequate finances. Librarian has to convince the authorities about the usefulness of the services rendered by libraries.

(b). Administrative effectiveness

- i. Organizing:** Planning to be fruitful needs a sound organization, which means such a structure of authority, is established which is capable of achieving the set of goals. Though the structure, work-subdivisions are arranged, defined and coordinated for the set goal. In Library Organization, the decision is taken as to what kind of authority is to be provided for an area of service.

- ii. **Directing:** The efficiency of the staff depends upon the personal qualities of the Chief Librarian. He should be capable of performing his duties as a leader. Besides, possessing knowledge, he should be able to infuse confidence amongst the staff-members. He should prove to be an ideal leader by dint of his hard work and sincerity for the welfare of the staff. Directing includes continuous decision making and develop the team in order to fulfill the need of the users.
- iii. **Reporting:** It means keeping the library authorities well informed about the progress or regress of the work. The chief of the library has to submit an annual report to executive authority concerned. This practice keeps the Chief Librarian vigilant about his activities. Various section Heads of the Library may maintain proper records and statistics of the work performed for the purpose.

HRM functions in university libraries perspective

This guide takes, as its organizing framework, a model of strategic HRM advanced by Boxall and Purcell in their book *Strategy and human resource management* (Palgrave Macmillan, third edition, 2011). They conceptualize workforce performance as a function of capabilities; motivation and work organization are structured so as to allow employees to perform well. To this we add employment relations with the policies, programmes and practices which govern the relationship between employees and employers on the basis that employee relationship management is a key responsibility of the HRM function.

The guide follows the perspective adopted in most HRM textbooks and looks at the subject from an organizational point of view, but it also acknowledges that a range of other factors shape the use of HRM policies and practices, including government and regulatory frameworks.

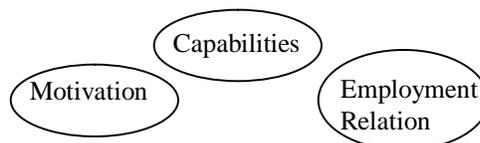


Figure 6: Organizing framework in libraries (Model developed by the authors)

HRM challenges in university libraries perspective

HRM is developed largely in and for corporate settings; the principles and practices have import for non-corporate organizations such public libraries, academic libraries within government agencies, and many special libraries. The application of ICT in universities have dramatically changed the environment and facing different challenges to promote library activities as well as provide services to its users. The challenges include skills shortages, talent management, shifting demographics, improving work / life balance, technological development, recruitment and retentive, changed employee expectations, motivational approach, and managing diversity. However, the library is still expected to change along with the parent organization and respond effectively to whatever HRM policies are executed in order to develop library working environment. Through

collaboration with other functions of the organization, library HR can increase its understanding of qualifications and skill sets to ensure that qualified employees are capable of executing their functions.

Significance of HRM in university libraries perspective are:

i. To help in hiring and training the workforce

Manpower planning is one of the most important responsibilities of the HR department. HR managers devise hiring strategies for bringing in the right kind of people in their organization. They prepare their job description which is best suited for the role in the company. After hiring they also plan for the employee's induction with a well laid out training and development plans for them.

ii. To take care of the performance management system (PMS) for a team

HR is responsible for keeping people feel motivated for their work. At first come the tasks of defining an individual's role. Thereby an effective feedback mechanism from time to time helps the employees to improve their skills. This helps in alignment of the organizational objectives with their own personal goals. An effective PMS helps in recognition and rewarding people's performance.

iii. To build culture and values in the libraries

Performance of an individual is dependent on the work atmosphere or culture that prevails in an organization. Creating a good conducive working environment is expected from the HR department. A safe and clean work culture helps in bringing the best of an employee and creates a higher job satisfaction.

iv. To create an important responsibility of HR in libraries

There can be many occasions where there is a disagreement between the employee and the employer. It cannot avoid conflicts from happening; but try to positively manage them for developing good relationship. Here comes the role of the human resource department in acting as a counselor and a mediator to sort the issues in an effective manner. The HR takes timely action so that thing does not go out of hands.

v. To develop good relations between users and staff

Establishing cordial relations lies with the HR to a great extent. They are responsible for holding meetings, seminars and all official gatherings on behalf of the management. Apart from core HR role, if required, the department also lends a helping hand in drafting policy and marketing plans for the company / library. So it observes very well to see that a proper HR department is more essential part to help in building and managing an organization. Hence, companies / organizations are attributing a greater emphasis on setting up strong and effective Human Resource Department.

HR policies and plans in university libraries

The effective management of an organization's employees (i.e. its human resources) is arguably the single most difficult, most complex, most ambiguous, yet most important task that managers face. It is an area of management policy-making that is not characterized by rigorous globally accepted professional standards. This is true for at least four reasons:

- HR policies refer to human behaviour which is complex and culturally dependent.
- There are many different HR policy instruments and practices.
- The success or otherwise of different HR policies, programmes and plans is difficult to evaluate.
- Many managers believe that people management is just common sense.

Conclusion

Overall, the researchers found that library associations and interest groups addressing university library management, human resources and staff development expressed an interest in building partnerships internationally to more effectively inform practices and meet new challenges. Libraries continue to face dramatic changes due to a wide variety of factors. Library administrators must constantly assess how effective the HR function is in the library. To do this, they need to assess their current needs and the climate in their operation. One constant concern is the morale of the employees.

In concluding that HR department can play a vital role to promote library personnel carrier as well as enhance the level of reputation of university libraries from the users through their effective feedback. University libraries are facing more obstacles to recruit new manpower for the library and they should always cooperate and communicate with HR department of organization to manage and convince the situation of the library as per requirement. Researchers need to realize in practically that human resource is called "Key ingredient to organizational success and failure" has been mentioned by Baron and Kreps (1999). This is very realistic and noteworthy for any organization. Success and failure mainly depend on good administration and working environment.

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