A STUDY OF THE CRITICALITY OF LINE MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE OF THE TOP HR EXECUTIVES IN THE OVERALL DELIVERY OF HIS/HER SERVICES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION

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Abstract- In the organizations, the need for an effective HR has increased owing to the changing demands of the organization. The rapid changes in market demands, product categories, customers' tastes, competitors' strategies, economic environment and technology requires the organizations to be more flexible. Previous research has been done on the role of line Managers in HRM. This is a cross-sectional study on the HR Executives. This research shows how the experience of line management and business contributes to the overall delivery of an HR Executive. This is based on Primary Data and Secondary Data. Delphi technique has been used for this research. In this research it has been found that prior experience of managing business processes such as sales or operations contribute significantly to the overall performance of the executives of Human Resource Department. This experience enables the HR employees to better understand the business and the demands of the internal managers who are the customers of HR. The findings are based on information obtained through interviews of top level executives in HR and from the exposure to HR Function in a multinational telecommunication company. The findings will help the academicians to understand what helps to improve the performance of the Top Executives of HR. The research will provide insights to practitioners by letting them understand how to provide better HR services to the employees and thereby improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the business. Overall it will help improve the productivity of the Organizations in the society.

Index Terms- Line Management, Delivery of service, Human Resource Function, Effectiveness

I. INTRODUCTION

The study has been conducted to address how the performance of the Top Executives of Human Resource can be improved in an organization. These performances help improve the performance of the organization as a whole.
The objectives of the study are:
i. Understand the key processes by which the Top HR Executives function in an organization
ii. Determine to what extent the previous Sales and/or Operations related experience contribute to the performance of the Top HR Executives.
Hypothesis is that the performance of Top Executives of HR is better if they have experiences in the Sales and/or Operations of any business.
The Research Paper starts with the Literature Review followed by Methodology, Discussion and Findings of the Study. The paper concludes with the Recommendations, Scope of Further Study and Conclusion.

II. SCOPE

This Research Paper focuses primarily on the performance of the Managers in the Human Resource Department. The HR Department is also known as Administration Department in certain organizations.
For the purpose of this research Line Manager is defined as someone who deals with any of the functional areas other than HR. The Paper explores how the experience of Line Manager contributes to the performance of the HR Manager. Performance is defined as the successful and timely delivery of the objectives. In this case, delivery includes whether the objectives have been reached and how they have been full-filled.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Evidence suggests that HR Role is increasingly assigned to line managers and that the extent of such assignment varies from country to country. Based on the information collected from 176 line managers working in different types of organizations in India, Srimannarayana (2010) finds line managers have relatively higher responsibility in HR activities such as performance management, and training and development and relatively lower responsibility in the employee compensation systems. So, LM experience will help HR to conduct these tasks more easily. He identifies significant differences in the role of line managers based on the nature of business undertaken by their organizations and the ownership of the organizations. So this is another indication that it helps the employees to better perform their job. Stuart (1992) observes that significant management involvement in HR function leads to high levels of HR programs ownership that help increase HR Program Effectiveness. Perry and Kulik (2008) find a positive impact of devolution of HR to line managers on people management effectiveness. Renwick (2003) reports significant organizational benefits and costs from involving the line in HR work. Line managers have

been seen to play a more prominent role in HRM activities. This may create a rift between the HR department and line managers. A line manager's perception of the HR department is not always favorable to HR department. As observed by JacFitz (1990), line managers perceive that HR department is expensive, do not add value, bureaucratic, unresponsive, interferes with operations and not focused on the business goals of the organization. As pointed out by Storey (1992), the HR professionals may consider the perception as a threat whereas Lowe (1992) considers it as an opportunity to perform better. The relationship between HR professionals and line managers is not a simple issue. According to Brewster and Larsen (2003), it is rather a complex, ambiguous and dynamic.

Authors mentioned that for the HR Executives values and perspective reflect the central, enduring, and distinctive attributes of organizational psychology highlighted in the Ford and Ryan article. Two CED attributes stand out for us in our roles: a core emphasis on psychology and the enactment of the scientist-practitioner model. Pattern of Management Development are found to differ according to country and, to a lesser extent, by international strategy. Country of Operation has an effect on the development of Human Resource Manager.

The above research has shown us how the experience of the Line Managers with the Human Resource Function affects the output of the Business. However, this research aims to explore how the previous experience of Human Resource Managers affects their performance.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The Research has been done by using Primary Data collected through experts' opinion by employing Delphi Technique applied to Top HR Executives. It also uses Secondary Data collected from Literature Review. The information has been analyzed by using percentages.

V. DISCUSSION

It has been found from the interview of the experts that for the Top HR Executives, it is important to do Business Partnering. They need to understand the business contexts, overall change in the external environment, reasons for this change and ways by which this change will affect the organization in the short-term and long-term impact.

The HR Executive needs to understand how to handle the impact of the change based on the market position of the company in the industry. Once one knows that if one is a market leader one has one approach and if one is a follower in the market then one has a different approach. The bottom line is that one need to change to adjust to the change environment. The executives need to anticipate the change and how this will evolve in the future. This will ensure the organizations to start their HR Programs in the right path. For example, there is a change that companies are moving towards more technology enablement. Organizational capability will increase based on technology enabled people and it is important to know for the HR People. The companies need to develop organizational capability through technology enabled people. HR has to drive change management, change initiate. The HR has to do people profiling. The Management has to identify in which category the employees fall i.e. whether they are trainable or not. If they are trainable then it will be one approach and if they are not then it will be another approach. Regarding fulfilling these objectives of HR, it has been found that HR Executives with LM Experience has been found to be able to deliver better.

The whole idea is linking business with the profile of the employees. So, because now-a-days in the whole business value process, HR must find what they need to deliver. HR has become more delivery based rather than task based. It is not very important that whether one is doing more task or not but rather it is more important that to what extent that task is contributing to the deliverables. It has got a link to the business results so it is important to assess the extent to which it is contributing to the business results. The final result is that everything must contribute to the business results.

The requirement of HR is to ensure that the business needs are fulfilled. So from business i.e. if HR Executives come from business to HR then the experience of Line Manager comes very handy because there they have already understood that if one has HR Support on that then it would be very beneficial and also the Executive knows what support line manager needs and so accordingly they can provide that support. For example, one of the HR Executives interviewed worked in manufacturing with a career of 15 years in supply chain and manufacturing. When he came to HR it was found that the core skills required in HR for example, training management, performance management, core HR, employee relations, and knowledge about these laws, have already been acquired by him. Besides these KSAs, one understands that rest is managing people. So if one has the business knowledge, then he/she knows which technical knowledge needs to be converted to business knowledge. It becomes much easier by having that business and line function experience.

There are many organizations who put the high performers into the Internal Audit Team whose main job is to audit the business processes. So it is advantageous if they go there because they already have understanding of all businesses. This is an effective way of nurturing the talents. This business partner concept has come to Finance, IT as well.

For the people of enabling function i.e. HR Function, another benefit of rotating them in the business is that they start to appreciate the business processes. Then

they can balance their approach in terms of being a sounding board as well as echo chamber. They cannot just work as sounding board. Also, many a times what happens is if there is no appreciation, the pressure from the business makes it echo chamber. In practice, whatever the business tells the HR Executives try to echo that. So, if there is business appreciation for enabling function, then as a sounding board he/she can challenge the business processes and decisions and can have out of box thinking, opinion, because he has got a business knowledge and function knowledge.

There are many variables that the Top Executives of HR should consider and should be able to demonstrate and these has to be accepted as a peer and valued colleague by other executives. The most important responsibility of Top HR Executives is to understand the business implications and to be able to discuss business objectives with other executives, e.g. management committee, and develop plans and ways in which HR can be a partner in achieving the business objectives. Head of the Departments and HR team has to build such an environment where the high performance is valued and rewarded by following goals and objectives of the Organization. These goals and objectives should be calibrated in the following ways:

- Fair Goal Setting Process and Calibrated Performance Management Process;
- HR Projects Implementation and communication with the main stakeholders;
- Training and Development in teams including the Training Needs Analysis;
- Key Contact Point for HR Centers of Excellence;
- Compliance with HR processes and procedures.

Experience helps the organizations to optimize HR services to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, and a positive customer experience in the service delivery model.

VI. FINDINGS

It has been found that ±20% of HR employees (Beram,T, 2017) has prior experience in Line Management (LM). Sources of disagreement between HR and Line Manager would be low as well if the HR Executives have LM experience. It does make a difference, because end of the day, one knows by delivering functional result, to continue to the business. So, one clearly has a clear line of sight (LOS). So, effectiveness of the delivery becomes meaningful.

The author believes that it is not mandatory to have prior experience of line management for the HR Executives. However, it is an added value. Even if it is absent the organization can bring that employee and give it to that employee because every individual is trainable provided they have the necessary education, eagerness, agility, hunger to grow, etc.

People in Supply Chain already have the experience of dealing with large number of people in factory.

Fast track program like the Management Trainee Program helps an Organization to get the key resources with the right skill set. This also enables an Organization to accelerate and develop high-potential talent by providing the leadership training and business challenges that propel individuals into management roles within the company. This fast-track program also builds leadership skills and depth of experience through work in diverse business groups and functions. It increases employee understanding of loyalty and the things that are necessary to achieve results in a competitive and innovative environment.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In every function of the Organization, those who have people management role should have line management experiences.

VIII. FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could be done to see how this LM experience could be further enriched to help the Top Executives of HR to gain their competencies for better delivery of their services.

CONCLUSION

Overall it can be said that the performance of the organization depends a lot on the successful delivery of the performance of the Top HR Executives. This can be further enhanced by providing more business knowledge to the HR Executives.

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