The Three fold Need Analysis for the Human Resource Management Program

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Abstract
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has seen a number of improvements to its competitiveness in recent years. One among them is to develop Saudi human resources, by intensifying the quality of education to match the requirements of industry. New degree programs in human resources management (HRM) for female students provides wide career opportunities to effectively organize people in a way that best meets the strategic planning of the business. The threefold need analysis conducted before the commencement of the program works for designing curriculum. This paper seeks to present a rationale in the use of three fold need analysis by assessing workforce demand, industry feedback and students survey. The triangulation of the data shows significance difference between the present and targeted situation analysis in HRM. The industry also conversed the growing importance of human resource and the need to design the curriculum focusing on effective methods of managing people.

Key words: Curriculum design, Needs analysis, Present situation analysis, Target situation analysis, Human Resource Management

1. Introduction

In this increasingly globalize environment, development of Saudi manpower capabilities are regarded as vital factors within the framework of industrial development and the competitiveness of Saudi industry in the future (SIDF, 2013). The kingdom of Saudi Arabia ranked is 24th among the 144 countries in The Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015. The position makes the Kingdom second highest rated of the 20 largest emerging market economies (WEF, 2014). The country has seen a number of improvements to its competitiveness in recent years, which have resulted in enhancing the country’s educational system by introducing new education programs, research and development initiatives and building numerous schools and universities. Since 1930’s, education has benefited from continual private and public support in Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom represents the largest market for education services in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, and accounts for 75 percent of total students in the GCC general education (K-12) system (USSABC, 2009). As part of the objectives of the Kingdom’s development plans, women in Saudi Arabia are encouraged to pursue higher education and professional careers. The glint of career growth and the revenues earned is drawing the attention of numerous young Saudi female students to the university colleges. Data on the economic status of women in Saudi Arabia are inconsistent, but they suggest substantial economic involvement in the country. They are seeking to become active members of society, where their roles are defined in terms of what they can offer for their country’s economic, social and cultural development (Asha et al 2013).

Now, with the Kingdom marching into the twenty first century, developing human resource remains the strategic choice in accelerating economic development. The future economic climate would be

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characterized by more openness; high competitiveness; new economic trends; information and technology innovations and various numerous challenges in Human resource management (SIDF ,2013). A concentration in human resources provides the budding managers with the most effective methods of leveraging and managing people in changing environment. The scope of the HRM degree program includes labor relations, compensation, organizational change, employee motivation, managing diversity and integrating technology with people needs. It will help in developing the competencies needed in the workplace such as negotiation, counseling, conflict resolution, coaching, leadership, problem solving and interpersonal team work. The development of new human resources management concepts, growing importance of labor training, changes to legislation and work organization methods, the number of career options in HRM has increased and continues to grow drastically.

Needs analysis is essential domain in developing new curriculum (Ping Li and Zhihong Lu ,2011). An Empirical Study on Needs Analysis by Yan Wu, (2012), Mona (2014), Guzman Mancho-Barés and Enric Llurda(2013) and Md Jamal Hossain (2013) helps to investigate the industry and community demands for designing curriculum. In addition to articulating how a new program will support college mission and vision, it is important to study the project and trends with respect to the new developments in industry, employment opportunities and occupational programs for the women and community interests.

2. Literature Review

Broadly defined, Need analysis is a procedure to collect information about learners' needs and is essential in determining the core of any course (Richards, 2001). A needs analysis involves gathering of information of what students know and what they need to learn. It is important to know learners’ need, wants, desires, demands, expectations, motivations, lacks and requirements (Brindley, 1984). A needs analysis in language teaching, has received extensive attention by many researchers (Pratt, 1980; Richards, J.2001) The significance of needs analysis is highlighted in English for specific purpose (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and English for academic purposes (Jordan, 1997); in general language courses advocating learner-centered curricula (Nunan,1988; Tudor, 1996), task-based curricula (Long & Crookes, 1992), as well as performance-assessment (Norris, Brown, Hudson, & Yoshioka, 1988). Brown (1995) defines needs analysis as the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to satisfy the language learning requirements of the students within the context of the particular institutions involved in the learning situation.

A number of articles have been published on need analysis such as those by Basturkmen (1998), and West (1994). However, the actual detailed studies on this topic are scarce (Iwai, Kondo, Lim, Ray, Shimizu, & Brown, 1999; Chaudron, et al., 2005). In Japanese perspective, moderately a few studies have looked at variables such as students' bio data, motivation, strategies, learning beliefs, learning styles and preference, and perceived difficulty in learning (Hiromori, 2003; Kikuchi, 2005; Kuwabara, Nakanishi, & Komai, 2005). There is a learning need to identify the gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state or in other words the gap between ‘what is’ which refers to present situation and ‘what should be’ which refers to target situation (Berwick, 1989).

Chambers (1980) was the first to use the term target situation analysis and defined it as the “communication in the target situation”. The present situation analysis was first proposed by Richterich and Chancerel (1980) and it points on students’ needs at the end of a language course (Robinson, 1991). In present situation analysis the sources of information are the students themselves, the teaching establishment, and the user-institution (Jordan, 1997). Needs analysis may be seen as a combination of target situation analysis and present situation analysis. While target situation analysis focuses on the final results of satisfactory teaching and learning the present situation analysis aims to describe the situation of the learners’ at commencement. Present situation analysis may be conceived as a complement to target situation analysis (Robinson, 1991; Jordan, 1997). If target situation analysis tries to establish what the learners are expected to be like at the end of the language course, present situation analysis attempts to
identify what they are like at the beginning of it and estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, learning experiences (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

However, merely adopting the two approaches present situation analysis and target situation analysis would not be enough to find the way from what is to what should be students’ learning needs, the needs posed by social development and market demands should also be taken into account. The importance of integrating social considerations into the curriculum design has been echoed by other scholars as well (Shu, 2004; Hu, 2005; Zhang, 2007). On the basis of given literature review there exist a gap in the study of need analysis for HRM program for female university college students in Saudi Arabia. The actual detailed studies on this topic are scarce, the only studies that were carried out was analysis of the management competency in university female students in eastern province of Saudi Arabia (Asha et al., 2013). Therefore the present three fold need analysis study aims to:

1. Assess workforce demand, employment opportunities in the field of HRM
2. Communicate with Industry about HRM needs
3. Conduct survey with students and alumni associations about the present and target situation of HRM

3. Methods

The study is based on ‘mixed-methods research’, that makes use of both qualitative and quantitative data in a way that enables the insights to be mutually illuminating (Bryman, 2006; Bryman and Bell, 2007; Saunders et al, 2007). Mixed-methods research provides a number of advantages as it uses both positivist and interpretivist approaches through Triangulation. This will enable to check whether the interpretation of the evidence that is made in the light of other available evidence gathered in a different way adds credibility to the conclusions (Saunders et al, 2007). With these principles as points of reference, this research analyzes these sources of data. Here are the details of the three types of data collected:

a) Documents: Job title from ministry of civil service website, workforce demand, employment opportunities from Saudi Arabian monetary agency and programs offered by other universities in the eastern rejoin of Saudi Arabia.

b) Interview with representative of local industries

c) Conducting survey for the students and alumni through self-assessment questionnaire

The data from the students and alumni were collected by self-administered questionnaires distributed to female students and alumni under University College of Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. The duration of each program is four academic years plus one academic year for the preparatory program. The four years spent as an undergraduate at a university college are typically known as the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior. The University Preparatory Program is a prerequisite for entry into the undergraduate programs.

The questionnaire was prepared in English. It contained two sections; the first section was designed to gather information about the demographic factors, age and educational levels. The second section had different scale, against the attributes of need analysis. The 15 questions focused on various attributes focusing on the present situation analysis, target situation analysis and HRM functions. Respondents were randomly selected in order to eliminate the sampling frame errors in the sample units and to ensure the representation of the population understudy. They were politely approached to fill in the questionnaire. The purpose of the study then explained. Once they had agreed to participate, researcher then left the respondent alone to answer the questionnaire and did not interfere in any way, so as to avoid any potential bias. Once completed, the respondent returned the questionnaire to the researcher. The responses obtained were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software for windows.
4. Data Analysis

This section explores the data obtained from the following sources:

a. Assess Workforce Demand, Employment Opportunities in the field of HRM

According to the data released by the ministry of civil services there are more than hundreds of job titles in the field of HRM. The information from the website of Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (the central bank) reveals that the number of working Saudi women in the private sector witnessed a huge increase of 85% in 2013 rising to 398,538 from 100,000 in 2011. These huge increases in employment have far outstripped the steady growth of women working in the public sector. The year 2014, witnessed for the first time in the recent history more Saudi women working in the private rather than the public sector. Even though comparatively broad-based, the biggest increase in female employment has been in the retail sector, private teaching and nursing and construction. The rise in the prospect of employment in retail sector is due to government measures of employing only women in lingerie stores, while the construction sector back office, which was once dominated by expatriate men, was replaced by Saudi women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Labor force in Saudi Arabia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government sector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Saudis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td><strong>Source:</strong> Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency.</td>
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</table>

The demand for the labor force is shown in Table 1. in Saudi Arabia Conversely, it is worth noting that the number of working Saudi women (both in the public and private sectors) remains comparatively low, at about 831,000, compared with 1.78m Saudi men (and 8.1m expatriates males) despite the fact that women's education levels are now on a par with men, and improving rapidly. Among the recent notable landmarks, in 2013 it was the announcement -female business-process outsourcing centre at Riyadh, creating 3,000 jobs. The latest employment data reinforces that the government will seek to boost the number of Saudi workers in the private sector and replacing foreign workers with Saudi females employees. The government has announced a succession of plans since 2000 `Saudizing` the economy. So there will be a huge demand for workforce and employment opportunities in field of HRM.

On the other hand, an investigation of programs offered by other universities in the region has been done to assist the need for HRM program. All the three women universities in the region are providing programs in the field of business including: finance, accounting, general business administration, information management system and management. However, none of the universities have HRM program. Therefore, HRM program is essential to provide the knowledge and building the skill sets for women professionals in field of HRM.
b. Communicating with Industry:

The program advisory committee at the University College is formed of equal representative from the industry and the academia, to assist all programs in identifying the needs of the stakeholders and obtain input from employers on curriculum. The objectives of the program advisory committee include:

- To provide input about needs of industry/employer
- To find the gaps in skills and knowledge lacking in graduates
- To determine areas of improvement and further, apply them in revising curriculum
- To develop industrial academic interface
- To advice on areas for enhancing community services

The representatives from relevant industries were selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience to ensure the degree program is current and relevant to the workforce needs in the given fields. Feedback from the program advisory committee members from companies like Sahara Petrochemicals Co, Baker Hughes, National Petroleum Services, Weatherford Precision Energy Service Co. Ltd, Ernst&young, Halliburton, National Industrialization Company (Tasnee) and Saudi Aramco were considered for the study. Besides this, the interviews were conducted with the company supervisors of the field training students of the University College like Global IWI, Silver-trading Company, RC Hospital, Tamimi Company, Topaz Company, Samsung Company, Al-Olayan, Al-Bassam and National Commercial Bank. The representatives of the industry highlighted the growing importance of the human resource management in industry and recommended the improvement in the present curriculum to meet industry needs. The program objectives should focus to develop students’ in-depth understanding of the theories and conceptual frameworks, underpinning people management, design appropriate human resource strategies, enhance students’ self-confidence, critical thinking in decision making and effective communication in analyzing HRM issues and acquire professional competencies in the effective use of current information and related technologies to perform successfully in a human resource management environment.

c. Conducting surveys with students and alumni

The analysis of Self-assessment questionnaire with the students and alumni were carried out using the descriptive statistics and t-test. The t-test was used to measure the significance of the difference in means of present situation and target situation analysis.

The Present Situation Analysis Considers Parameters Like

- Knowledge in the field of HRM
- Use of the concepts of HRM in the studies/job
- Importance of HRM in comparison with other subjects
- Satisfaction level with respect to soft skills

The Target Situation Analysis Considers Parameters Like

- Opinion on establishing a new HRM degree program
- Influences of the new program on improving people management
- Extent of usefulness in finding a better job
- Extent in Identifying, analyzing and solving complex HRM issues
- Understanding of the strategic role of human resource management
- Extent to which organization believing in investing in people
- The following hypothesis can be derived from the students

H1: There is no significance difference between present need analysis and target need analysis

Table .2. summarizes the output of the descriptive statistics and t test. The mean for the present situation analysis is 3.51 and target situation analysis was 3.61. Mean score above 3.80 is considered high, 3.40 -3.79 considered moderate and below 3.39 considered as low perceptions. The students and alumni perceived the present and target situation analysis moderately. The statistically significant difference in the means of present situation and target situation analysis were compared (p < 0.05). The null hypothesis is
accepted, and the above hypothesis is rejected. Thus there exist a significance difference between present situation and target situation analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>Sig</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Situation</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Situation</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Table 2: Descriptive Analysis and T test

The response with respect to the biggest obstacle faced in courses related to peoples’ management in Table 3. 44% of respondents believe the shortage of enough practice in HRM, while 30% feels that shortage of teacher’s expertise in both business professional knowledge and business English and 26% believe shortage of suitable textbooks or materials are the biggest obstacles related to managing people.

Table 3: The biggest obstacle faced in courses related to peoples’ management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A shortage of suitable textbooks or materials</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A shortage of teacher’s expertise in both business professional knowledge and business English.</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A shortage of enough practice</td>
<td>44%</td>
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</table>

Table 4: The HRM function Lacking and Difficult to Master

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRM functions</th>
<th>graduates are lacking</th>
<th>most difficult to master</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory management</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making in HRM issues</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing a training program</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation issues</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance issues</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to HRM functions as shown in Table 4., The competencies graduates are lacking for, 24% respondents feel it is decision making in HRM issues and designing a training program while 26% of respondents feel it is difficult to master supervisory management while 32% respondents are in favor of compensation issues. Thus a concentration in HRM would help the student’s bridge the gap graduates are lacking and most difficult to master in terms of HRM functions.

5. Conclusion

Economic changes, new developments in industry and career opportunities suggest potential for new occupational programs. Though specific human resource functions are the responsibility of the human resource department, the actual management of human resources is the responsibility of all the managers. It is therefore vital for all managers to appreciate and give due significance to the different human resource activities in the organization. The stimulus to consider the elements for the three fold analysis development of new programs came from numerous sources including workforce demand, students and industry representatives. It is rather clear that syllabus planning needs to pay closer attention to the aspects identified as crucial by the local industry representatives. The new degree program in Human resource management will help successful management of an organization's human resources especially at a time when the world in a state of flux.

References


