

**A respectful workplace in Higher Education Institutions : An empirical study**

By

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**Research Guide:**

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**Abstract:** Human Resource Management practices enable higher education Faculty to perform better through increased productivity. There are several practices that higher education institutions observe in the modern day scenario in order to motivate, improve productivity and retain the talent of Faculty. This paper has examined one aspect of Human Resource Practices, i.e., the respectful workplace concept through the analysis of six statements given to 32 respondents.

### **1.1 Introduction**

Higher education is an instrument for improving the social life of a nation. The quality of a civilization depends basically on the character of human being not on the physical equipment or the political machinery. The main task of education, especially higher education, is the improvement of this character. The World Conference on Higher Education held in Paris 1998 UNESCO (1998) stated that the formation and transformation of higher education is needed in order to allow the whole society to overcome the challenges of the 21st century, to develop and advance knowledge, and to provide and train capable, responsible, enlightened individuals and qualified specialists and professionals, without whom no country can advance socially, culturally, economically, or politically.

The slow evolution of HR, along with the unique higher education environment, has resulted in HR in understanding of value the broader organization and secure a must transform their operations if a leadership seat is desired, but cautioned that the adoption of a value added HR paradigm requires redefining HR roles, developing new HR competencies, and implementing new approaches and outcomes accountability. However, they did not validate a framework for nor clearly re-define the HR roles, competencies, or other elements of value-added transformation. (Akdemirb, 2013)

The success of any educational institution is believed to rely mainly on the quality of its human resources and its consideration of human resource management as the heart of the educational administration (Jones & Walters, 1994). Addressing the environment of higher education which has become more competitive and open for market-driven decision making, human resources are the

most powerful assets that an institution could possess to fit in this competitive environment and to suit the modern entrepreneurial paradigm. Human resource management plays the role of translating the organizational strategic aims into human resource policies and creating human resource strategies that could gain better competitive advantage (Tyson, 1997).

The global economic recession with deepening regional and professional dissonances is significantly reflected on the labor market opportunities. University graduates, who should get the attention, are at the forefront. Within the labor market, typical for its constant transformation, preferred and employers' (ie. commercial and non-commercial subjects) sphere requirements conflict with the quality of the workforce. The most prominent is the educational system being the reflection of the graduates' quality and readiness for required skills. (Soukalová, 2015)

Lawler and Mohrman (2003) maintained that moving to a value-added approach to HR service delivery requires describing the role of human resource management (HRM) in a different way. They argued that an HR entity adopting a value-added approach must be prepared to re-configure HR functions, define new HR competencies, and adopt a different mix of activities to support large-scale organizational change. Lawler and Mohrman based their arguments on results of three descriptive survey studies conducted between 1998 and 2001 that examined the level of value-added strategies adopted by HR in medium to large size organizations. In their research, they identified and studied eight areas impacted by adoption of value-added approaches and strategic focus within HR. These areas included (a) HR roles and activities, (b) design of the HR function, (c) shared services units, (d) outsourcing, (e) e-HR, (f) talent management, (g) HR skills, and (h) HR effectiveness.( Akdemirb, 2013)

New possibilities for social advancement predetermines above all education as it provides opportunities for development of all faculties to every member of the society by which this becomes the basic social, ethical as well as political requirement. Education and qualification thus represent the only source that the mankind will have in an unlimited amount, and human capital thus becomes the most precious wealth. The fundamental condition for achieving the given aim is to make the education process more effective. Then it is the higher education without whose development it will not be possible to significantly upraise the level of no other groups of human resources.

Expansion, diversification, improvement and close relation of higher education with scientific research and economic practice (profit and non-profit sector) are becoming one of the most

significant ways towards the nationwide prosperity today. The priority task is to provide graduates with such knowledge and skills to become employable and so that they are able to assert themselves in the rapidly changing requirements of the labor market.(Göttlichová, 2007) (Soukalová, 2015)

There are indications that HR operations in higher education are moving toward this value-added approach to HRM (Brault& Beckwith, 2003; Joinson, 2000; Kemper, 2001). The study utilized a value added service delivery model developed by Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) as a framework to examine the perceptions of faculty members about the level of value-added HR service delivery adopted in their institutions (Weinacker,2008).

Brault and Beckwith (2003) cited shrinking budgets, increased accountability for outcomes, and increased complexity as reasons for human resources (HR) in higher education to shift to a more strategic and value-added paradigm of service delivery. Brault and Beckwith described a value-added roles model for higher education, and posited that a value-added HR approach requires a re-definition of HR roles, the development of new competencies, and the implementation of new approaches and outcomes accountability..(Akdemirb, 2013)

However, for the universities to fulfill all the requirements that are posed onto them, they must first of all develop and run activities supporting the quality of their activities and of their effective operation on the education market. The important factor of the effective university activities are ensuring the sufficient number of high-quality students and fulfilling the message of higher education within the society. (Soukalová, 2015)

## **1.2 Literature Review**

Triplett (1997) reported that personnel administration was one of the last specialty areas to emerge in higher education. When institutions first originated, professors received annual or quarterly wages and were responsible for hiring and paying their own assistants (Mackie, 1990). HR and emerging corporate HR paradigms examined for relevance to higher education (Kemper,2001).

Two of these HR paradigms have been discussed in the literature. These include the traditional paradigm (Brault& Beckwith, 2003; Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2003), and the strategic partner paradigm (Brockbank, 1999; Browning, 2003; Hammonds, 2005; Kemper, 2001; Lawler & Mohrman, 2003; Prophal, 2002; Ulrich, 1997; Williams, 2004). Both paradigms focus on the delivery of HR services and both are evident in the higher education environment (Brault& Beckwith). A third

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paradigm the value-added paradigm, is emerging in the literature (Brault& Beckwith; Lawler & Mohrman; Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005). This paradigm views HR as part of the larger organizational system and expands the strategic partner paradigm to include additional HR roles, functions, and competencies (Ulrich & Brockbank). This dissertation utilized a descriptive survey methodology to examine whether college and university CEOs perceived that the value-added paradigm of HR service delivery is evident in higher education HR (Weinacker, 2008).

The increasing number of private universities, as well as the increase in the number of public university faculties, are the sign of another indicator which is diversification of higher education. The reflection of the increasing life standard in the higher, more complex and more differentiated consumption in continuity with multifaceted and diverse demand, the necessity of a wider and more complex offer and a higher differentiation of the market into submarkets is reflected also in the direction of the market of education needs. That results in the need of a prompt reaction from the education institutions, i.e. the ability to react with an offer of new products in a flexible way, being it for instance in corporation of new education programs or various other services thus filling the empty and not covered market gaps. (Soukalová, 2015)

Noe et al. (2003) defined the traditional paradigm of HRM as “ the policies, practices, and systems that influence employees’ behavior, attitudes, and performance: (p.5). Traditional HRM systems in education include compensation, training and development, performance management, recruitment, selection, and employee relations functions (Kemper, 2001). Typically, HR personnel and departments in higher education operating within the traditional HRM paradigm, provide administrative and support functions by processing paper work, insuring that paychecks are cut accurately, and serving a general administrative/gatekeeper role (Brault& Beckwith, 2003). However, the value of the traditional paradigm of HRM has been widely debated in favor of a more strategic paradigm (Brockbank, 1999; Browning, 2003; Hammonds, 2005; Lawler & Mohrman, 2003; Prophal, 2002; Ulrich, 1997; Williams, 2004).

In this paradigm, the primary function of HR is to translate organizational strategy into human resource priorities. Human resource leaders are involved in defining organizational strategy, translating strategy into operational priorities and actions, and designing HR practices that align with the strategy (Kemper, 2001). Thus, HR performs a key role in achieving organizational vision and purpose and sustaining and maintaining competitive advantage (Noe et al., 2003).

Building on the work of Ulrich (1997), Brault and Beckwith (2003) introduced the concept of HR adding value in the field of higher education and discussed the roles and competencies of HR professionals from a value-added perspective. When describing the value-added roles model for higher education Brault and Beckwith also classified HR activities into four categories. These categories included (a) providing skilled staff, (b) enhancing organizational effectiveness, (c) motivating performance, and (d) designing and implementing effective processes. However, the Brault and Beckwith value-added model was never validated through scientific research. In addition, since the Brault and Beckwith work, Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) built on previous works and introduced a new value-added frame work for HR the Value- Proposition Model (VPM) of HR service delivery. ( Akdemirb, 2013) In terms of functionality, human resources management comprises a wide range of practices including “hard” aspects such as recruitment and retention, and “soft” aspects such as work life balance, motivation, and career development. (Gordon &Whitchurch, 2007).

### **1.3 Research methodology**

Organisations, experts and researchers have investigated the roles and sets of practices that human resources department should undertake in higher education institutions. In this regard, The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) have presented some guidelines for human resource practices in higher education including major functions that human resources department should consider in higher education institutions.

Those functions include:

- (1) Employee Benefits – Takes into account the benefits associated with health, dental, prescription medications, workers compensation, and other benefits related to the well being of employees.
- (2) Diversity and Respectful Workplace – Includes policies, programs, and activities that promote a harmonious environment in the workplace, and show respect for individuals and their roles at the institution regardless of their distinguishing characteristics.
- (3) Global Human Resources – Complying with the rules and laws of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, as well as those in any country where an ex-patriot may reside.
- (4) Human Resource Management – Includes practical policies and processes on applicant selection and recruitment, development and training, employee relations, general management and records retention, and legal factors.
- (5) Performance Metrics – Includes comprehensive range of metrics in main human resource programme areas where data should be collected and analyzed to explore trends and performance measures.

(6) Recruitment/Selection/Termination – Includes procedures for acquiring, interviewing, and recruiting of quality employees, in addition to assuring minority recruiting. Moreover, procedures and policies for terminating the dismissal of employees (Jones & Walters, 1994).

(7) Risk Management, Safety, and Health – Includes providing advices in occupational health, environmental protection, the areas of safety and risk management.

(8) Wage and Salary Administration – Includes developing and adopting criteria for regulating compensation in a reasonable equitable manner (Jones & Walters,1994).

(9) Employee Compliance – Legal Matters – Includes assuring the compliance with all corresponding laws regulating the recruitment, management, and termination of employees.

(10) Employee Relations – Labour Issues – Includes handling legal concerns of employees' contracts and negotiations, along with the establishing negotiation team and strategies (Jones & Walters, 1994).

(11) Information Systems and Technology – Includes providing human resources focused technology to enhance the quality of services when recruiting, while maintaining compliance and empowering professional development and retention.

(12) Employee Leave and Holiday – Includes non-work activities of employees by allowing paid or unpaid leisure, whether required by policy or designed by the employer.

(13) Payroll – Includes the determination of compensation.

(14) Retirement – Includes providing plans for retirement comprising analysis of plans and implementation procedures (Jones & Walters, 1994).

(15) Training and Development – Includes providing training and development programmes that meet the employees' needs.

Of the above, it was decided to explore the concept, (2) Diversity and Respectful Workplace – Includes policies, programs, and activities that promote a harmonious environment in the workplace, and show respect for individuals and their roles at the institution regardless of their distinguishing characteristics, where in the respectful workplace aspect of the above was explored.

The following questions were asked to 34 faculty teaching Post Graduate Programmes in various Colleges of Bangalore City. The sampling method was convenience sampling.

1. Do you feel valued at work
2. Do you receive recognition from your manager
3. My senior at work cares about me as a person
4. The last time you accomplished a big project, did you receive any recognition
5. My suggestions regarding my work are considered favourably
6. Someone at work has talked to me about my progress

**1.3 Tabulation and Analysis**

The above questions were asked through the Likert Scale and analysed.

**Table 1: Age of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20 to 30 Years	7	21.9	21.9	21.9
31 to 40 Years	9	28.1	28.1	50.0
Valid 41 to 50 Years	11	34.4	34.4	84.4
51 to 60 Years	5	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total	32	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2: Gender of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	13	40.6	40.6	40.6
Valid Female	19	59.4	59.4	100.0
Total	32	100.0	100.0	

The Reliability Test was conducted through the calculation of the Cronbach’s Alpha for the answers given to the six statements.

**Case Processing Summary**

	N	%
Valid	32	100.0
Cases Excluded	0	.0
Total	32	100.0

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.929	6

An Alpha value that is above 0.70 is considered to be highly reliable. The Alpha value obtained here is 0.929. Therefore the data collected through the answers given by the respondents to the survey is considered as reliable and further analysis may be conducted.

The Factor Analysis was conducted to select the more prominent components among the others.

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.829
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square 153.309 df 15 Sig. .000

A score of 0.60 suffices for the KMO Bartlet test to say that there is a sampling adequacy which enables the data to get further analysed. The score here being 0.829 qualifies the data for the factor Analysis.

**Communalities**

	Initial	Extraction
1. Do you feel valued at work	1.000	.891
2. Do you receive recognition from your manager	1.000	.613
3. My senior at work cares about me as a person	1.000	.712
4. The last time you accomplished a big project, did you receive any recognition	1.000	.800
5. My suggestions regarding my work are considered favourably	1.000	.766
6. Someone at work has talked to me about my progress	1.000	.675

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.459	74.321	74.321	4.459	74.321	74.321
2	.640	10.663	84.984			
3	.336	5.592	90.576			
4	.288	4.808	95.384			
5	.198	3.295	98.679			
6	.079	1.321	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component
	1
1. Do you feel valued at work	.944
2. Do you receive recognition from your manager	.783
3. My senior at work cares about me as a person	.844
4. The last time you accomplished a big project, did you receive any recognition	.895
5. My suggestions regarding my work are considered favourably	.875
6. Someone at work has talked to me about my progress	.822

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The component stating that the Faculty feels that they are valued at work has been extracted.

**1.4 Findings:**

1. The Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated the reliability of the collected data.
2. The Descriptive analysis has shown the components that make up the six statements depicting the feelings of the Faculty as regards their workplace.
3. The KMO and Bartlet test shows that the data can lend itself to Factor Analysis.
4. The Factor Analysis picked the component that says that the Faculty feels that they are valued at work.

**1.5 Concluding remarks:**

HRM practices on business performance, namely training and development, teamwork, compensation/incentive, HR planning, performance appraisal, and employee security help firms' to improve business performance including employee's productivity, product quality and firm's flexibility. In the current study, only one aspect of HRM practices was studied and the outcome is that the 32 respondents selected through a convenience based sample feel that they do have a respectful workplace.

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