

Human Resource Management in Libraries

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Abstract

Management is a process that permeates all organizations because of its indispensable nature. Every aspects of human endeavor require proper management. This process involves working with human beings. Human resource management indicates the human approach towards the people at work. This study aims to provide the best knowledge of human resource management in libraries and to establish and maintain sound organizational structure in libraries. In this study, libraries were pointed to assess the human issues related to human resource management and current status of professionals engaged. The remarks for improving library services to meet the users' needs are also discussed. This study mostly have used secondary data collected from different research papers, various relevant publications and books. This paper will be useful for library professionals, library and information studies students and the administrators who want to learn human resource practices in libraries and organizations...

Key words: management, management process, human resources, human resource management, libraries

Introduction

Management is a process that permeates all organizations because of its indispensable nature. Every organization requires good management to function effectively. The life and success of any organization is sustained through a well planned, tested and generally accepted management principles.¹ Every aspects of human endeavor require proper management. Management is the broad key keeping every human endeavor flowing. Therefore, human capital is a key and by all accounts increasingly an important part of the resource-base of an organization.

Management process involves working with human beings. Human Resource Management (HRM) indicates the human approach towards the people at work. 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. Along with the speedy changes in technology and economy, human resources are the most vital and play crucial role in management process.² The process of globalization also increased the importance of human resource management by manifold. Therefore, it is the essential job of the library management to discover the potential in each staff.

Literature Review

Human Resource Management (HRM) means managing people. It is a function performed in organizations that facilitate the most effective use of employees to achieve organizational and individual goals. The HRM practices have been defined in following literature searching in several aspects.

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¹ A. D. Ugah and Uduakobong Oscar Udoh, "Personal Management Theories and their implications for Libraries," *Library Philosophy and Practice* (2011), [Journal on-line], available from <http://unlib.unl.edu/LPP/Internet>; accessed 27 December 2016. (hereafter cited as Ugah and Udoh)

² Md. Milan Khan and Mohamed Emran Hossain, "Human Resource Practices in University Libraries: Experience and Realization," *Daffodil International University Journal of Business and Economics* (2015), available from <http://dspace.daffodilvarsity.edu.bd:8080/Internet>, accessed 4 November 2017. (hereafter cited as Khan and Hossain)

Khan and Hoosain viewed that HRM is developed largely in and for corporate settings; the principles and practices have import for non-corporate organizations such as public libraries, academic libraries within government agencies, and many special libraries. The HRM challenges include skill shortages, talent management, improving work , 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.³

Ugah and Udoh discussed personal management theories and their application for libraries. They highlighted that the process of library management requires skills at various levels. It is generally accepted that there are at least three levels of skills, such as technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. It is the essential job of the library management to discover the potential in each staff, what motivates him/her and apply the appropriate strategy.⁴

Ifidon wrote on library management. He highlighted the importance of staff that is needed to acquire and process books and render satisfactory service to the clientele. He, however, noted that once staff found their way into the library system and their appointments confirmed, they become a problem to the organization.⁵

Arua put up discussion on human resource management in university libraries. He suggested two approaches for effective use and management of library staff. In the first approach, he advocated employment and proper development and then retraining. The second approach is staff development which is a motivational tool in university library management.⁶

According to Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes, HRM practices can generate increased knowledge, motivation, synergy, and commitment of organizational employees, resulting in a source of sustained competitive advantage for the executive.⁷

Schuler and Jackson 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.⁸

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to provide the best knowledge on human resource management in libraries. The objectives are:

- to assess the concept of human resource management in the university libraries
- to identify the importance of human resource management in libraries
- to study and examine the relationships between various aspects of human resource management practices in libraries
- to investigate the various human resource management practices
- to establish and maintain sound organizational structure in libraries

³ Khan and Hossain, 9.

⁴ Ugah and Udoh.

⁵ S. E. Ifidon, "Management of Information Institution in a Depressed Economy: The Nigerian Experience," *Nigerian Libraries* 29, No.1& 2 (1995):33.

⁶ G.N.Aura, "Management of Human Resources in University Libraries under An Economic Adversity," *Nigerian University Library System* 21 (1998): 78-79.

⁷ J. K. Harter, F. L. Schmidt, and T. L. Hayes, "Business-Unit-Level Relationship between Employee Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Business Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87, No. 2 (2002): 268-279.

⁸ R. S. Schuler and S. E. Jalson, "Linking Competitive Strategies with Human Resource Management Practices|," *Academy of Management Executive* 1, No.3 (1987) : 207-219.

Scope of the Study

In this study, libraries were pointed to assess the human issues related to human resource management, current status of professionals engaged. The remarks for improving library services to meet the users' needs are also discussed. It has been emphasized that effective human resource management is the only way to get the best out of the personnel for successful management of an organization. This study also demonstrates that human resource management is positively related to POSDCORB effectiveness. It covers the relationship between resource and process, training and administration, and performance appraisal & services innovation.

Method of the Study

This present study has been carried out to identify the necessity of HRM and policy for building a new perception in libraries. This study mostly has used secondary data collected from different research papers, various relevant publications and books. It is a qualitative research and mainly focuses on human resource management interrelated with library different managerial and administrative activities.

Discussion and Realization of the Study

(a) Human Resource Management in Library Perspectives

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. It is a set of practices used by an organization to manage human resources through facilitating the development of competencies to sustain competitive advantage. With regard to library perspective, 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.⁹ The following figure shows HRM practices framework in libraries.¹⁰

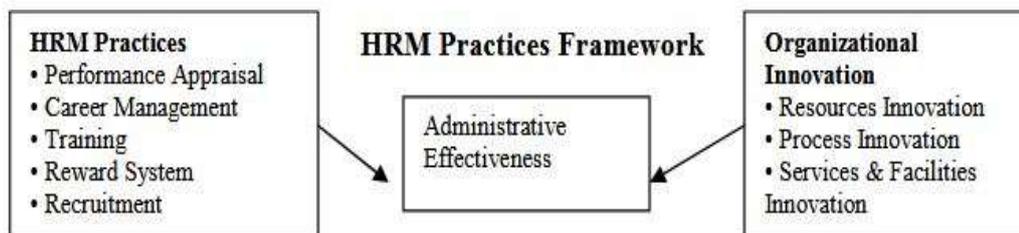


Figure 1. HRM Practices Framework in Libraries

Organizations use strategies to achieve HRM goals with competent and committed employees. Organizations should have excellent management practices and policies to human and resources in order to achieve its goals. Information seekers are using the library resources with the help of library personnel. So, it is important for libraries to have a good relationship between the information seekers and library personnel. Every library has its own objectives to develop this relationship. Libraries should try to meet the information needs of the users and provide proper services to the right users at the right time. Librarians and library staff should also endeavor to understand information seeking behaviour of their users and to provide more

⁹ D. B. Minbaeva, "HRM practices and MNC knowledge transfer" *Personal Review* 34, No.1, (2005) : 125-144.

¹⁰ Khan and Hossain, 4.

and more effective services to them. In this way, HRM plays a significant role in library practices in order to develop libraries in various areas.

In HRM practices in libraries, training also helps library staff master knowledge, skills, and abilities which would contribute to innovation in terms of resources, services, and management practices in daily operations. Hence, training develops the knowledge, skills, and abilities of library personnel to perform effectively in their job that will lead to higher organizational innovation in libraries.

(b) Need for HRM in Libraries

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.¹¹

The followings are the factors needed for the human resource management in libraries.

- (1) Learning new facts due to the emergence of electronic communications and information networks, increased awareness of the availability of information and services on the network will cause an expansion of user expectations and an increase in demand.
- (2) High performance levels and global competitiveness presuppose the availability of opportunities for education, training and career development in staff.
- (3) A new orientation of HRD will require a multi-skilling and skills enhancement approach, so as to create a stable and competitive work force in IT and librarianship as a whole.
- (4) All levels of staff need generic skills such as communication skills, problem solving skills and time management skills.
- (5) Training is needed for personnel about the software used for computerization and automation in their library.

(c) Elements of the Management Process

Libraries have its own managerial and administrative criteria to achieve goals and needs to meet the needs of the users in order to ensure better functioning and smooth running of an organization,

Lyndall Urwick, an Englishman, and Luther Gulick, an American, coined some basic elements of administration. These elements are known as POSDCORB which stands for the following seven elements:¹²



Figure 2. Basic Elements of Administration

¹¹ Khan and Hossain, 7.

¹² Khan and Hossain, 7.

In this way, all administration and management functions are executed in the library due to provide proper services and as well as development of library personnel. Libraries continue to face dramatic changes due to a wide variety of factors, such as advancement of ICT, emergence of information services, etc. 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.¹³

(d) HRM Challenges in Libraries

HRM is developed largely in public libraries, academic libraries within government agencies, and many special libraries. The application of ICT in libraries has dramatically changed the environment and faced different challenges to promote library activities as well as provide services to its users.

The challenges include skill shortages, talent management, improving work/ life balance, technological development, recruitment and retentive, changed employee expectations, motivational approach, and managing diversity. However, libraries expect to change effectively HRM policies 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. It ensures that qualified employees are capable of executing their functions.¹⁴

(e) Importance of HRM in Libraries

The uniqueness of the human resource approach requires different types of attention from managers. The human resource has characteristics that provide the greatest challenge as well as opportunity. Therefore, HRM is important in libraries for the following factors:

- (1) to provide training workforce and hiring strategies
- (2) to create motivation and establish performance appraisal in library workforce
- (3) to establish culture and values in libraries
- (4) to create an important responsibility of HR in libraries
- (5) to develop good relationship between library users and library staff

Manpower planning is one of the most important responsibilities of the HR Department. HR is responsible for keeping people motivated for their work. An effective performance appraisal helps in recognition and rewarding people's performance. Performance of an individual is dependent on the work atmosphere or culture that prevails in an organization. Creating a good conducive working environment is significant for the HR department. A safe and clean work culture helps in bringing the best of an employee and creates a higher job satisfaction. So, the proper HR department is a more essential part to help in building and managing a library. Hence, libraries should attribute a greater emphasis on setting up strong and effective Human Resource Department.¹⁵

The effective management of human resource in an organization is arguably the single most difficult, most complex, most ambiguous, and most important task that managers face. In this way, in order to overcome the challenges faced by the library professionals, HRM is important practices for effective use in libraries.

¹³ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴ Khan and Hossain, 9.

¹⁵ Ibid., 10.

Conclusion

HRM must have a sound background in the development and administration of personnel policies and procedures. In conclusion, it can be said that the HRM plays a vital role to promote library personnel and enhance the level of library's reputation from the effective users' feedback. Libraries are facing more challenges to recruit new manpower and they should always cooperate and communicate with HR department of parent organization to manage and convince the situation of the library as per requirement. In this way, success and failure of libraries mainly depend on good administration and working environment.

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