

Factors Undermining the Effectiveness Development of Human resources in Organizations

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Abstract

Human resource development is an important function in organizations as it provides the framework to help HR to augment their abilities, knowledge and organizational skills. Implementing HR development initiatives involves undertaking planned and systematic activities which aim to augment the HR skills as a strategy to meet contemporary and future work demands. However, several factors such as; lack of finances, poor employee evaluation, organizational policies, poor change management and leadership, lack of finances, lack of human resource planning, conflicts and disputes undermine the effectiveness of development of human resources in organizations. Given that HR development is function of HRM, adoption of robust leadership and management to limit the adverse effects of factors that undermine HR development.

Keywords: *Human resource development, change management, human resource planning.*

Introduction

Human resources are fundamental elements in the organizational productivity; they actively enable companies to leverage their capital to achieve different goals and objectives. The human resources also utilize their abilities, knowledge and skills to generate revenue for the company. With this significance, Armstrong & Taylor, (2014) assert that human resource management (HRM) is essential in enhancing the productivity of the human resources in a company. As such, HRM refers to the processes employed by the company to leverage its human resources through strategic and administrative roles.

Typically, HRM entails a range of functions such as; worker protection by providing safe working environments, aligning human resource policies with the legal requirements, training and development of HR, benefits and compensation administration, retention of employees, developing workplace policies and undertaking hiring activities. In general, Storey, (2014) argues that human resource functions among to human resource development such that the activities continuously add value to the human capital.

Human resource development is an important facet in human resource management due to advantages associated with it. Swanson et al., (2001) observe that HR development leads to addressing of issues concerning workers. It uses its strategic planning tool to addressing the dynamic requirements of employees in line with changing needs of the job markets. This entails addressing issues such as improving health plan, enhancement of retirement plans, making work arrangements flexible and improving benefit packages. HR development also involves building capacities that are fundamental to gaining a competitive edge by addressing employee commitment, loyalty and talent. Furthermore, human resource development entails building commitment of employee in the institution.

Typically, building commitment involves providing challenging jobs to employees and harmonizing the recruitment process with the needs of the organization. Werner & DeSimone, (2011) advance that teamwork in HR improvements also constitutes HR development; this commonly involves collaboration between supervisors, managers and human resource professionals in the assignment of roles and aligning the capabilities of human resources with their preferences and business priorities.

Lastly, human resource development involves training and development of employees to continuously improve their productivity and skills and coordinating their subsequent benefits. While

the strategies employed in human resource management and more importantly, HR development focus on improving human capital and organizational productivity, its implementation is marred by a plethora of factor. This article will outline the key factors that undermine human resource development.

Factors that undermine effective human resource development

Poor change management and leadership

As defined by Cameron and Green (2015), change management refers to leveraging of resources, tools and knowledge as well as application of systematic approaches to handle changes instituted in an organization. Change management is typically underpinned by robust leadership. Essentially, leaders steer change management by setting standards for accountability, connection and clarity regarding the implementation of new strategies. Furthermore, leadership is important in change management as it helps in instilling new mind-sets, communicating and aligning the vision as well as increasing the agility of the company. Hornstein, (2015) advances that new strategies are successfully adopted in the organization when leadership and change management are in mesh and treated as priority by the company.

This relationship extends to human resource development given that the process typically promulgates new strategies and initiatives that are applied to or adopted by the human resources. Hence, lack of change management and poor leadership critically undermines human resource development.

Firstly, some initiatives of HR development involve successful cultural change initiatives such introduction of new technologies, changing the profile of employee populations, decentralization and empowerment of the workforce and changing HRM strategies. These changes require leadership and change management skills as guides failure with which the organization culture will lead to increased resistance to change that in turn undermines HR development. Secondly, some HR development initiatives lead to significant changes in the organization leading to changed work environments, responsibilities and transitions.

While these changes are aimed at improving HR development, their implementation is undermined by negative effects associated with change. Hayes, (2018) assert that poor change management leads to customer losses, diminished product quality, reduced morale and impacts on workflows. Poor change planning undermines HR development as it stifles the agility and effectiveness of implementing policies that seek to improve the capability of human resources.

Lastly, change management is important in transitioning human resources by limiting the level of resistance to changes. Under the Kotter's 8 Step Change Model, successful implementation of change leads to sustainability of new measures put in place as well as articulating organizational culture and new behaviors that advance HR development (Guérin et al., 2015). Hence, poor change management critically undermines HR development by increasing resistance to new strategies of HR development.

Lack of finances

Implementation of human resource development and HRM activities require financial resource inputs. Brewster, (2017) posits that meeting HRM goals and objectives and performing daily activities in the department are dependent on the financial health of the company. However, acquisition of money or forming working relationships between HR department and finance department is commonly difficult. This poor relationship typically arises from conflict regarding the mandate of the departments in the company. Owing to the conventional perspectives and goals of these departments, disbursement of finances to run HR activities is common. Apart from lack of disbursement from the finance department, liquidity problems in the company can lead to limited finances. The financial limitation will undermine human resource development initiatives by curtailing their full implementation.

Lack of human resource planning

According to Chaneta (2014), human resource planning refers to the sustained processes of systematic planning aimed at leveraging the human resources. Essentially, the process involves

identifying contemporary and future needs of employees such that they develop their human capital. Collings et al. (2018), indicate that human resource planning is important in instituting human resource development by leveraging technologies and tools such as behavior science, policy, management information systems (MIS) and social media to improve human resources.

Lack of human resource planning critically restricts the scope human resource development objectives and strategies. Firstly, poor planning leads to inconsistent assessment of contemporary capacities of human resources and establishing their skill catalogues. Consequently, HR development plans regarding future development plans, responsibility addition and improvement of skillsets is limited.

Secondly, poor HR planning limits the credibility and comprehensiveness of forecast reports regarding the projected needs of HR and external challenges that can limit HR development such that the strategies based on the forecasts are inadequate.

Thirdly, HR Planning is important when undertaking gap analysis which aims to outline the gaps between desired HR position and the current position. With poor gap analysis, HR development initiatives such as hiring and employee retention, balancing forecasted labour supply and demand, building new skills and identifying current limitations will be undermined.

Organizational policies

Organizational policy or human resource policies are written guidance the handling of various HR issues. Policies are fundamental in the implementation of HR strategy in the most practical and effective manner. Additionally, they underpin human resource development initiatives by asserting transparency and consistency to be observed by managers and employees as well as creating a receptive organizational culture for HR development activities (Greene & Kirton, 2015). In organizations where the policy capacity is insufficient, comprehensive development of human resource development is undermined.

Unfavourable Policies that focus on availing capital and financial resources to the HR department limit HR development because it is resource intensive adventure. Lack of robust policy provides weak institutional frameworks with which responsibilities of human resource development depend on as well as undependable internal practices that control the management of intellectual and human capital of the institution. Poor policies also limit the practicability of building people-centered approach and administrative system that can comprehensively develop human resources.

Inadequacy in policy also undermines human resource development by reducing the professionalism of HR management through poor administration and lack of administrative reform which are fundamental factors when fostering human resource development.

Conflict and disputes

According to Folger et al. (2015), all organizations deal with issues which predispose the human resources to conflicts and disputes. Essentially, when employees work together with different work styles, differences in goals and with different interactions, conflict is likely to emerge.

This emergence occurs at different levels that is; within the individual, individual and the organization, employee and employee, employee and team or team and team. Some contributors to conflict are; personal situations that adversely impact on team work performance, work performance evaluation, actions of the supervisor, changes in the workplace, overstepping authority, leadership problems, confidentiality issues, inadequate resources, work scheduling, workload allocation, ethical concerns, lack of information, questioning of perceptions, gender/race/personality differences, testing of values and poor communication. When such situation arise, it is imperative that measured, comprehensive and timely conflict management strategies are employed.

Informal and formal conflict management approaches are employed to resolve such disputes. When these approaches are success and conflicts resolved, greater productivity and creativity normally result. However, poor conflict resolution and perennial conflicts and disputes at the workplace undermine human resource development. Essentially, conflicts and disputes limit strategies put in place to improve collaboration and team work as well as employee motivation improvement. Strategies targeting employee behavior improvement are also constrained because disputes and

conflicts exacerbate inappropriate behavior. Employee engagement initiatives and development strategies that foster inclusion and diversity are adversely affected by disputes and conflict because they foster polarization and fictionalization among employees. Conflicts also lead to poor employee health, low job satisfaction, poor decision quality and reduced quality of work life leading to poor human resource development.

Lack of employee evaluation

Employee evaluation or performance appraisal is important in determining the employee's performance at work. Conventionally, this is undertaken once a year with subsequent results used for other HR functions such as layoffs, pay rise and promotion. DeNisi and Smith, (2014) posit that typical performance appraisals help in identifying limitations in knowledge and skill of employees and their strengths at the workplace. The results are then consolidated and employed in human resource development.

Thus, lack of employee evaluation or poor performance appraisals critically limit the application of needed improvements in employee development. Iqbal et al., (2015) advance that poor appraisals lead to poor motivation in employees thus limiting human resource development programs related to employee motivation and engagement. It also constrains the application of appropriate performance management especially when HR managers seek to review, monitor and plan on the contribution of individual employees and collective contribution of the HR to the organization.

Poor results from employee evaluation activities also limit the support that staff may need to perform their duties better especially their needs in training and development. In terms of employee retention, poor evaluation can provide minimal legal support for vicarious liability and employee dismissal; this can culminate into legal challenges that undermine human resource development activities.

Conclusion

Human resource development is an important facet in HRM. However, a variety of factors such as poor change management, lack of finance, poor employee evaluation, conflict and disputes, poor organization policies, lack of HR planning undermine the efficiency of human resource development activities. The issues highlighted collectively point at poor leadership and management in the organization which brings about or exacerbates the factors that undermine HR development.

It is imperative to note that HR development is fundamental in developing the abilities, knowledge, organizational and personal skills of employees. It helps in motivating employees, organization development, succession planning, mentoring and performance management in the organization which makes it a highly significant facet when improving organization productivity. It is therefore imperative to institute comprehensive management and leadership practices that offset the impact of undermining factors as well as preventing their manifestation which negatively impacts on HR development.

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