



Perceptual convention and effectiveness of talent management in higher education institutions

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Abstract

Like any other organization of society which engages into the cause of social and human welfare and for the advancement of knowledge economy, educational institutions are the most important establishments that deal directly with the future of society and nation. As the success of any organization depends primarily with the performance of its human resources, similarly the success of educational institutions depends on the performance of its students and teachers. And for a better output the educational institutions must have, on its board, talented people for mentoring students and guiding them to become able citizens of society. To have a cohort of bright and talented people, educational institutions must have such policies and practices in place that would be able to retain the talents with them and make the most of their expertise for the betterment of the cause of institutions and society. Talent management practice in an educational institution may be understood as a human resource management strategy that seeks to identify, develop, deploy and retain talented and high potential faculty members and other staff. Although talent management practices may be perceived to be a relatively recent approach in educational institutions, yet the strategy in itself has been prevailing in some or the other form. With an influx of private universities in Indian higher education system which is almost saturated with a huge number of private professional and technical colleges, the issue of survival and sustenance for these institutions has taken a prime seat. These privately managed educational institutions are on the verge of closure because of dwindling students' strength turning up for admission. The main reasons for this alarming situation are exponential growth of private professional education institutions, very poor quality of outputs, poor academic environment, very high attrition rate of faculty and staff, absence of talent management strategy, etc.

This study looked into the talent management practices of private universities situated in Gautam Buddha Nagar district of the State of Uttar Pradesh in India and made an attempt to articulate the perceptual alignment of faculty members with the established convention of sample universities regarding the scope and efficacy of talent management practices prevailing in those universities.

Keywords: management, education, institutions, organization, human resources

Introduction

The success of any organization depends primarily with the performance of its human resources. Similarly the success of educational institutions depends on the performance of its students and teachers. And for a better output the educational institutions must have, on its board, talented people for mentoring students and guiding them to become able citizens of society. To have a cohort of bright and talented people, educational institutions must have such policies and practices in place that would be able to retain the talents with them and make the most of their expertise for the betterment of the cause of institutions and society. Talent management system in an organization is an internal human resources management strategy that seeks to identify, develop, deploy and retain talented and high potential employees in order to capitalize on their potential for the betterment of the organization. In India, this strategy or mechanism is not an alien. However, in educational system in India, this is something a new way of looking at the old practice. With the advent of privatization in education and particularly in higher education, the educational institutions are undergoing a massive structural transformation. With the cut-throat market competition and phenomenon of poaching in regards of human resources, institutions are facing tough challenge in order to retain good

people with them. However, retaining good human resources is preceded by identifying the talents in the institutions, involving them with the central wave of the educational processes at the institutions with the ultimate goal of the former.

Despite the fact that talent management practices may be implemented in educational institutions, there can only be a meaningful manifested intervention if both the authorities and faculty members are in tune with its objectives. However educational institutions are generally unaware of the differences between the perceptions of staff at various levels. The rationale behind talent management in educational institutions may be based on the fact that academic performance and output of the institutions are dependent on the quality and performance of its people. Physical infrastructure and other academic resources are important but it is the people who make the difference. The human resources of any educational institution create value and institutional ethos by sharing their collective wisdom and intellect with their fellow staff members. This means that the better people an institution has, the better it will perform. The future of most educational institutions is dependent on the attainment, development and retention of talented people to create the leadership capacity and talent required to implement new

strategies so as to meet current and future needs of the society in which they operate.

The backdrop of the present study

Higher education in India has been primarily managed by the Governments at Centre or States only. Though there have been exceptions in the past but majority of higher educational institutions, especially university system, in post independent India has been from government sector only. The recent couple of years have witnessed an influx of private universities in India, and that too with a very fast pace. At present, out of 822 universities in India, there are 282 private universities. It is fast becoming a preferred choice to set up a private university than a private college. However in order to survive and sustain, these universities will certainly need to equip with best infrastructure, best academic facilities and of course – best brains or human resources to impart quality education and prepare students to survive in globally competitive environment. It seemed interesting to find out what kind of strategy these private universities are adopting to excel in terms of academic performance. The National Capital Region is a favoured choice of many students coming from all corners of country to pursue higher education, professional and technical education. Catering to these students, there are a number of institutions that have come up in the recent years.

The large infrastructure and academic resources of these private universities are due to the legal obligations as prescribed by the University Grants Commission of India and State Acts. One thing that differentiates these universities from the colleges or institutions is the autonomy of these private universities. On one hand where colleges and institutions are affiliated to State universities, they are bound to conform to the rules and regulations of the affiliating universities and follow the university prescribed curriculum and have to participate in the admission and examination processes conducted by the State Universities; on the other hand the private universities are having freedom to have their own admission process, own examination and evaluation system, so many other things that have to be devised by themselves under the broader outline of the University Grants Commission (U.G.C.).

The part and obligation of these institutions, in this circumstance, turn out to be extremely pivotal and go about as a determinant to survive and support. These private universities have been asserting to have the best scholastic and human resources that apparently give them an edge over others. In this specific situation, it appeared to be imperative to investigate the talent management methodologies and other HR administration frameworks that are being received by these colleges.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were as the following:

1. To investigate the approaches of talent management practices adopted by the identified private universities.
2. To assess the perceptions of faculty members of the identified private universities regarding the Talent Management Practices in their respective organizations.
3. To examine the talent identification mode of identified private universities as perceived by their faculty

members.

4. To compare the perceptions of the three groups of faculty members of the three identified universities, about the talent management practices prevailing in their respective universities.

Research Methodology

This study adopted eclectic approach of research. The research comprised both the quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative research involved a survey questionnaire that was distributed among a convenience sample of faculty members of the identified three private universities of Gautam Buddha Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh. The qualitative research involved face-to-face interviews, using a semi-structured interview schedule, and informal discussions with the faculty members and other staff of these universities. The study combined both quantitative and qualitative research methods to address the main focus of the research.

Population and Sampling

The faculty members employed in private universities of India constituted the population of the study. The sample comprised of three identified private universities of Gautam Buddha Nagar district, 20 faculty members from each of the three universities thus making it a total of 60 faculty members.

Research Tool

The research tool of the study consisted of a questionnaire having questions based on 5 themes – namely – (i) the strategy that organizations adopt in employing Talent Management Practices, (ii) the procedure that university follows in identifying talent within organizations, (iii) the alignment between Talent Management Practices and other HR management mechanisms, (iv) the level of adequacy of the talent management systems, and (v) Talent Management Practices and Organizational support. The respondents were asked to mark their responses on a five point Likert Scale based response sheet. Besides, a semi-structured interview schedule was also used to collect qualitative data in order to analyze, examine and understand the talent management practices in these universities.

Data Analysis

The items in each of the five sections were measured on five point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagreed to strongly agreed. Although Likert scales are strictly ordinal, several researchers consider the scale to be at an equal interval level when there are at least five categories of response. In line with the approach of several authors the Likert type scale with five response categories was considered as an equal interval scale in the study. The data so collected were subjected to simple statistical techniques and a test of ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was computed on the data so obtained to assess the variance of the responses of the different groups at a pre-decided level of significance.

Results and Discussions

In the wake of gathering and examining the responses of the employees, the mean reaction to every response was worked out. The so figured mean responses were subjected to the

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). On the Likert Scale based response sheet, options ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree with their respective numerical equivalent of 1 to 5. The neutral score of the Likert based questionnaire is 3. So it was decided that - if the calculated mean score of each

response would be slightly more than the neutral score, the response would be considered as positive. Otherwise, where the mean score was lower than the neutral score, the response of the teachers would be considered as negative.

Table 1: Item wise and group wise mean response of the faculty members

		Mean Response		
		A	B	C
Theme 1	Responses about the strategy that University adopt in employing Talent Management Practices	3.5	3.7	3.8
Theme 2	The procedure that university follows in identifying talent within organizations	3.2	3.6	3.8
Theme 3	The alignment between Talent Management Practices and other HR management mechanisms	3.2	3.1	3.6
Theme 4	The level of adequacy of the talent management systems	2.9	2.8	3.1
Theme 5	Talent Management Practices and Organizational support	2.8	2.9	3.2
	Mean	3.12	3.22	3.50
	Standard Deviation	0.277	0.409	0.332
	Median	3.20	3.10	3.60

From the data presented in the above table-1, we find that themes 1, 2 & 3 attracted positive responses; whereas, responses to themes 4 & 5 are negatively skewed. The result of ANOVA test suggests the F-value to be 1.644 and p-value (assuming null hypothesis) to be 0.234. This value of p (0.234), which is greater than 0.01 and 0.05 suggests that the null hypothesis about the difference of opinion should be accepted and the alternative to it be rejected. Thus we find that as far as difference of opinion is concerned, there is no significant difference between opinions of faculty members coming from various universities. It is also evident that faculty members' perceptions are somewhat positive on the issues of – (i) organizational approach towards employing talent management practices, (ii) approach of identifying talent within the organization. (iii) the linkage between Talent Management practices and other human resource management mechanism. However, faculty members' perceptions about (i) level of adequacy of the talent management systems, and (ii) talent management practices and organizational support, are negative. This suggests that in order to have an all successful Talent Management System in place, educational institutions must look into the core issues and try to rectify the systemic deficiencies in order to survive and excel in the present day's tough competitive environment. Unless and until the human resources of an organization are appreciated for their work and they are well taken care of by the organization they are associated with; they would not be able to give their best to the organization.

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