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Competencies required to be an Effective HR Graduate: An Analysis of the Perceptions of HR Professionals in Sri Lanka

Prasadika, W.G.

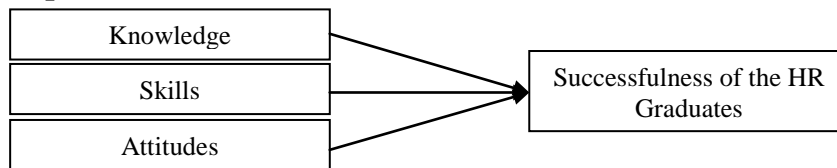
Area of the Study

To function effectively, HR professionals must master the necessary competencies and that mastery of HR knowledge comes from knowing the concepts, language, logic, research and practices of HR¹. Therefore the students who becomes a HR graduate, it is necessary for him/her that s/he can perform well to fulfill the requirements of his/her organization. This study focuses to explore the most important competencies required by HR graduates to become an effective product according to the view of HR professionals in Sri Lanka.

Problem

The problem statement of the study is the gap between HR graduate’s perception & HR professional’s perception about competencies required to become an effective HR graduate.

Conceptual Framework



Method

The data were gathered from a randomly selected sample of 50 HR professionals in Sri Lanka and 50 HR undergraduates in the University of Sri Jayewardenepura by using a structured questionnaire which consisted of 29 competency statements with 5 point Likert scale.

Data Analysis

Table: 1 Importance level of Knowledge

Competency	Level of Importance
Business Knowledge	Moderately important
Use of ICT	Moderately important
Knowledge of HR strategies	Most important
Knowledge of HR models	More important
Knowledge of HR methods and techniques	Most important
Knowledge of laws, rules and regulations relating to HR	Most important

Table: 2 Importance level of Skills

Skills	Level of Importance
Computer skills	More important
Skills in interviewing	Most important
Training knowledge skills	More important
Understanding of performance appraisal process	Most important
Ability to work well with others in teams	Most important
To mediate and solve conflicts	Most important
Negotiate	More important
Come to collective decisions	Most important
Ability to evaluate a situation	Most important

Ability to identify alternatives	Most important
Ability to select a reasonable alternatives	Most important
Ability to make decision to implement a solution to a problem	Most important
Leadership	Most important
Creativity	More important
Innovation	More important
Ability to adapt to international context	Moderately important
Second language skills	More important
Sensitivity towards others	Most important

Table: 3 Importance level of Abilities

Competency	Level of Importance
Ability to cope with core workers	Most important
Ability to cope with customers	Less important
Ability to cope with job	Most important
Ability to cope with supervisors	More important
Ability to cope with superiors	Moderately important

Findings

According to the results of this study, the main findings such as competencies of knowledge of HR strategies, knowledge of HR methods and techniques, knowledge of laws, rules and regulations relating to HR, skills in interviewing, understanding of performance appraisal process, ability to work well with others in teams, to mediate and solve conflicts, come to collective decisions, ability to evaluate a situation, ability to identify alternatives, ability to select reasonable alternatives, ability to make decisions to implement a solution to a problem, leadership, sensitivity towards others are the most important competencies to be an effective HR graduate. Most of the HR professionals who responded of the view that the above mentioned competencies were the most important to work as an effective Human Resource professional.

Conclusion

There is a growing need for HR professionals to provide significant input into the firm’s strategy, the core competency of being able to contribute strategically which is lacking. With a frequency of “knowledge of HR strategies” get a higher rank (30 out of 50) for the importance level of “most important”. But HR graduates are clearly lacking in this area. From the results, it can be recommended that HR undergraduates success **to be an excellent** in the competencies which represent as most important in this study. This can frequently be obtained through formal HR education, on the job training, or through professional organizations.

Note

1. Brockbank, W, Ulrich, D & Beatty, R 1999, ‘The Professional Development: Creating the Future Creators at the University of Michigan Business School’, *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 111-118.



Prasadika, W.G.

Department of Human Resource Management
 University of Sri Jayewardenepura