

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

Ph.D Thesis – Defence

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Title: Sustained Competitive Advantage: Strategic HRM Initiatives, Antecedents and Consequences in Indian Context

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Abstract

In the last two decades, researchers have argued that human resources may be seen as a source of sustained competitive advantage. In such a context, it is important to examine some new and emerging HR roles and practices (i.e. staffing, employee separation, learning & development, performance appraisal and compensation) from a strategic perspective. The present study explores how Indian organisations look at their human resources strategically when faced with challenging and competitive environment. Also, it explores strategic initiatives (i.e. building work culture) being taken to manage human resources within the organizations and how these initiatives promote positive attitude and engagement among the workforce. The study included resource based theory, social exchange theory, behaviour theory which helped conceptual model with the help of literature review. Thus, we aim to study ‘Strategic HRM initiatives, antecedents and consequences on sustained competitive advantage in Indian Organizations’. For the present study, we adapted explorative cum descriptive design, and purposive sampling method adopted considering the feasibility, approachability and availability of data across four different types of organizations in India. Our study included 132 respondents whose designations varied from asst. Manager to Director/VP of HRM. Five different questionnaires were developed namely, SDDS, OPQ, SHRMPQ, and SHRM IACQ to collect data. The study revealed that though the organizations are having various types of combinations of HRM practices such as recruitment & staffing, resource management, formal and informal hiring, hiring & rehiring policy, employees’ separation, career development and promotion, learning & development, performance appraisal, and compensation etc., but most of the common HRM practices considered are recruitment and staffing, employees’ separation, learning & development, performance appraisal, and compensation. Most of the organizations are putting “customer second” by giving prime importance for human resources to achieve sustainable growth and performance for long time. Further, the study found that of achieving SCA from a set of HRM practices from strategic perspectives, the HRM professionals have to link cultural variable along with psychological factors in organization. The present study result found organization’s goals & flexibility, shared view, role task & recognition and reinforcement as sub-elements of building work culture; emotional, work place, cognitive and behavioral attitudes are the sub-factors of employees’ attitude; and work place, emotional, behavioral, cognitive and work task engagement as the sub-factors of employees’ engagement. These results of the study would be presented orally in detail. The HRM is no longer considered an isolation function by the employer (i.e. the top management) in the organizations. However, the study concludes that while the employer framing strategies for human elements in order to delivering a high quality products and services to attract their customers and maintain sustained competitive advantage, they have to get support from human resource professionals towards building work culture, employees’ attitude and engagement context.