

## **The role of project human resources management in organizational health projects <sup>12</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

The current business world is forcing organization to adapt to change and find a competitive edge. It is crucial to utilize efficiently the resource of an organization; human resources are considered as one of the most important factor for the success of any project. Human Resource management help close the gap between employees' performance and the organization's strategic objectives in any project adopted. The health of employees has become a key determinant of their work performance; the project Human resource management can contribute a great deal in health project enhancement and improvement of work performance.

### **Introduction**

Globalization is constantly changing the professional life and presenting it with new challenges. As the world is shifting to knowledge-based economy, the rise of technology and in competition is reshaping the world and changing the employee's daily work. The entire organizational process is changing; the days of the traditional Human Resources (HR) is changing as well (Digital Analytics Team, 2019).

The Human resources role has been evolving now, adapting to the new reality and is needed in playing an important role during this transition in supporting the organization through these changes. Their new role is to manage those changes as they represent an important organizational resource: the people (Williams, 2021).

In all businesses, the management needs to acknowledge that they depend on their Human capital to achieve success. The human capital is the reason behind creating value (Ram Charan et al., 2015). Human resource function needs to be seen as an important function just as the finance

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function and become a true strategic partner in the company (Ulrich, 1998). The role of the Human Resource manager needs to be evolving as the value added by the HR manager is as important as the financial manager input. If the management sees that the people are the source of competitive advantage, then the Human Resource function needs to be elevated.

The Human resource function has the ability to make the connection between the organization and business results. Developing a comprehensive Human resource management that is embedded in the organization's history, culture, and structure will not only enhances performance, but also leads the firm's system to be more difficult for competitors to imitate (Liu et al., 2007). The success of the HR role depends on the knowledge of a business's strategy and the existing capabilities of the organization.

In the current era, the Human resource can contribute a great deal in build organizational capability to support the execution of business strategy (Hults, 2011). The HR' function or the people function has seen changes in its functions. The focus is now on the impact of people, motivation and engagement, as a critical distinguishing factor in the race for success during globalization and advance in technology.

The project human resource management is an essential element of project management and has an impact on the success or failure of a project (Cantemir, 2018). It is the role of the Human resource during a project to organize, manage and lead the project teams as the function has a strategic role (Demilliere, 2014). This article discusses the changing role of the project human resource management in the current changing business world and the contribution that human resources bring to any project especially in enhancing employee's health and improving work performance.

## **The changing role of the HR**

The Human resource role must be clearly stated. Redefining the role of the Human resource in this pace of change requires a commitment to change. Before organizations can survive in a volatile environment, HR needs to get its responsibilities together. HR need to be connected to the real world of the organizations and not only limited to handle paper works (Ulrich, 1998).

Agility is now working its way to Human Resource department. Agility is moving away from rules and planning based approach to be able to move/adapt as faster as the other functions. Agility offers organization with opportunity to be flexible, to adapt and respond quickly to alternations and to implement actions in order to control market uncertainty and risk (Sherehiy et al., 2007).

Now with the big Data there is a huge potential for the HR to advance and contribute a great deal to the wider business objectives and to drive the business forward nevertheless without losing its Human touch. The HR division is rich in people data; HR teams have exciting data options that go way beyond data that must be collected for the normal performance review. Thanks to data and analytics technology, companies can better look after their employees' physical and mental health (Marr, 2018).

Any project undertaken by an organization to keep up with the current world of business change starts with the understanding that Human resource management impacts project management (Demilliere, 2014). In each process of project management, the Human resource has a role to play. Ignoring the role of the HR might lead to project failure given that the decision makers and implementers are employees (Moutinho & Mouta, 2014).

In the current competitive world, businesses require their workforce to be more healthy and engaged. Sustaining a healthy and productive workforce continues to be significant, and ever more challenging in current times, in light of ongoing changes to organizations and the wider environment (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017). Therefore, the role of the project Human Resource management in health project is of a growing importance and crucial implications.

### ***The importance of employee's health in an organization's performance:***

The impact of health problems can impact the effectiveness of the activities of the human capital. Employee competence, job accountability, employee commitment, employee cooperativeness, employee' objectives and employee creativity ... can be affected by physical and mental health problems and can be reflected in their work performance.

Nevertheless even when health problems are serious, the employee might still be able to meet his performance expectations. The extents to which health problems impact work performance depend of personal factors and environmental factors surrounding the employee.

Employers can maximize their employees' job performance by using approaches to well-being improvement. The implementation of worksite-based health programs is important for reducing absenteeism and programs to address chronic health conditions and physical health also improve productivity while at work and minimize absence related to more-severe or poorly managed chronic conditions (Merrill et al., 2013). The need to create supportive policies and environments is a fundamental aspect of health promotion efforts and, as indicated by the particularly strong

associations of presenteeism levels with workplace support for physical and mental health for reducing presenteeism (Merrill et al., 2012).

Effective and comprehensive programs that address modifiable health risk factors may be beneficial for employees and employers; 25% of the total health care expenditures of a large group of private and public sector employees was associated with modifiable health risks such as tobacco, lack of physical activity and poor eating habits (Anderson et al., 2000).

In order for employers to assist employees with their personal physical and mental health at work (since they spend a large part of their lives at work), employers will need to create an environment to promote a state of contentment, which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organization (Tehrani et al., 2007). Health management programs are needed to offset the increasing cost of health risks on the medical care cost. Also, to reduce the impact on the employee' work performance (Boles et al., 2004).

Because Health and Human resource have a common denominator (the people); Employees 'wellbeing at work is the responsibility of the management; the implementation of HRM practices that promote commitment, trust and support through positive relationship with employees can influence the extent to which employee wellbeing at work is positively or negatively affected.

The project human resource management has the responsibility to lead and manage the employees in project management ensuring that they have the needed skills and competencies, ensuring that their workforce professional and personal needs are protected and that they work properly until the project ends. Effective Project Human Resources Management can promote job satisfaction and more positively linked to enhanced performance, reduced absenteeism and turnover (Renee Baptiste, 2008).

HRM practices should be based not only upon added value, but also on moral values. It should combine economic with relational rationality. The latter refers to establishing sustainable and trustworthy relationships with both internal and external stakeholders based on criteria of fairness and legitimacy (Paauwe, 2009).

Work should focus on a coordination with HR department to create a balance between maximizing performance and the risk that the employees may become stressed, making costly errors or resigning (Tehrani et al., 2007).

Previously, Business leaders worked with human resources departments to effectively communicate with employees about workplace topics such as performance and training, while ignoring the effect of behavioral health. Training leaders to conduct productive conversations about behavioral health requires re-education to help them understand where the line between privacy and empathy falls (Routt, 2021).

Health is complex and personal; the role of HR professionals is critical and crucial to make sure that:

- All employees' health is looked after through their life at work. The HR main function is to support its workforce needs, they see people as the main important asset of the organization. Their focus is on advancing their workforce both professionally and personally. The ability of the Human Resource department to make valuable business decisions concerning their employees needs to be in collaboration with other departments. Thus, HR professionals and the management need to work together to understand employee' behavior and to establish the basis of its success in the work setting.
- HR people are a crucial connection between the employees and managers; the importance of health should matter to all especially to the management. The management in an organization needs to understand the possible consequences of negative health outcomes on work performance. Once the management invest in their own health, engage in healthy practices and notice the benefits on their daily life, they will feel responsible to establish healthy work environments that encourage active participation. The pressure to achieve organizational goals with the main strategy puts them under daily pressure. Top and middle managements need to set goals for their subordinates, divide work, motivate, communicate clearly, follow up and develop performance.

Therefore, their ability to handle the pressure of their daily task might be hindered due to poor lifestyle and the existence of any medical condition. Their health might impact their performance. Besides, employees are inspired by managers when those are engaged in the right behavior.

Well-being is important to both individuals and organizations; HRM practices can be designed, delivered and implemented in a way that is most likely to enhance all aspects of an employee' wellbeing and to foster sustainability of the workforce (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017).

In a health project, the project human resource management has a dual important role of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the employees. Also, it has to manage the Project Team from its creation to its final success (selecting, training and managing) (Cantemir, 2018).

In today's market, businesses must find ways to sustain and bring out the best work performance from their employees starting with their health state. An employee's poor health doesn't only mean higher health insurance costs; this is only part of what the employer pays to keep employees healthy. There is an indirect cost that increases the burden paid and that is performance loss in unscheduled absences or lack of concentration or missing objectives (Lee, 2019). Currently, human resource professionals have added the addition of preventative health components to traditional health plans to increase employee's retention (Audra, 2022) as part of their role in keeping their employees competitive.

The relationship between HRM practices and performance outcomes on an individual level and organizational level is complex as the practices depend of the context of each organization. Nevertheless, there is a positive relationship between HRM practices and organizational outcome; HR generates positive value to the firm performance (Paauwe, 2009).

HRM practices at the organizational level affect the attitudes and behavior of employees at the individual level which affect key HR metrics such as employee productivity and consequently, might impact organizational level outcomes (Paauwe, 2009).

### **Performance and health measures: do they converge?**

Individual work performance is a topic widely studied in fields of management, occupational health and organizational psychology (Waldman, 1994) (Goetzel et al., 2001) (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). Many studies on individual work performance have been presented and different approaches circulate.

The field of management has primarily occupied itself with how one can make an employee as productive as possible, the field of occupational health has focused on how to prevent productivity loss due to a certain disease or health impairment (Schultz et al., 2009) .

Organizational psychologists have studied the influence of work engagement, work satisfaction, and personality on individual work performance (Matteson et al., 1984) (Barrick & Mount, 1993). A full understanding of the individual work performance concept in its specific work context would shape the design of workplace interventions and enable the assessment of that intervention

on individual work performance. It could as well explain the cause and consequences of individual work performance and how its different variable affect each other (Koopmans et al., 2011).

Nowadays, performance measurement and performance management practices exist in all lines of business. The current working environment is driven by increased globalization and extreme agility; the question is if performance measurements are changing as well and taking into consideration new variables.

Currently, the evolution of employee performance appraisal reflects a challenge for organizations represented by the dynamics of internal and external factors. Globalization is changing the face of appraisals; factors of organizational context such as organizational objectives, strategy, technology, organizational culture, HR procedures, employee' motivation... influence the design and implementation of employee performance appraisal in organizations. Consequently, an approach to employee performance appraisal consistent with the organizational context represents a powerful strategy for increasing human resources performance (Rusu et al., 2016).

The human resource is key in project management as it is the driving force in the process. The project human resource management has the ability to balance between bringing organizational effectiveness (among them maximizing work performance) and looking after the needs of the employees while achieving organizational goals.

### *Job performance is dynamic*

Individual work performance is dynamic as it changes changes over long period of time and changes within shorter time intervals (day to day) (Sonntag & Frese, 2012). Performance is not constant and individual characteristics predict performance trends; performance level may change over time due to its interaction with a change in traits, knowledge, skills, goal orientation, abilities, fatigue, job redesign, job tasks, work events and age. These variations may lead to positive or negative cycles that feed upon each other.

Looking at the intra-individual variations and their repercussion on job performance can add to our understanding on what happens when an individual is suffering from a physical condition. (Charles,De,Wolff et al., 2013) (Murphy, 1989) (Baltes, 1997) (Beal et al., 2005) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) (Miner & Glomb, 2010).

Time, obviously plays an important role in the recovery process and recovering can impact the health of an individual on a daily basis; job performance can be replenished after a positive weekend or familial activities or practicing a hobby or few sick days...

The process by which performance fluctuates within a person is complex. Unraveling the process of dynamic work performance would add to understanding the reasons underlying the performance process.

Approaches adopted by the organizations that seek to understand and enhance employee's work performance can include actions to improve their health as well. However, before the implementation of any approach, the evaluation of the employees' health state is essential.

## Limitation

Literature review on the role of the Human Resource Management in health matters and work performance is very limited. The design of workplace interventions that target employee's health to increase an individual's work performance is worth exploring.

## Conclusion

The article attempted to redefine the role of the project Human Resource management in today's business world. Human Resources can deliver much more than administrative tasks, it is the people function in an organization and can deliver organizational excellence in many ways; among them looking after their employees' health and the extent of its impact on work performance. Project human resources management has major contributions to the success of a project as it has the crucial task of matching the best interests of the employees with those of the organization.

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