BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

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THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING IN PRODUCING WELL-RESOURCED EMPLOYEES TO PUBLIC

Abstract

The term Human Resource Planning (HRP) can be used to achieve organizational objectives by understanding and planning for employees' needs in the short, medium and long term in order to deliver desired results. Little research that has been conducted on HRP and most are from the private sector and none to be found in the public sector. This study was conducted in the public institution in South Africa. The literature consulted provides an overview that HRP solves current and future organizational problems by ensuring that the right people are in the right place at the right time. This is achieved by analyzing the current profile of the workforce and comparing it with future needs so that gaps, which need to be filled, can be identified. The paper intended to investigate the extent to which employees are well-resourced to perform their duties in centres of the municipality to the community. The investigation used mixed methods in its data collection. 45 participants participated in responding the self-administered questionnaire and seven participated in one-on-one interviews. The study found that half of employees who are working for the centres of the municipality includes supervisors who lack educational attainments, as they hold only grade 12 and no development was initiated. The study recommended the whole the municipality to establish and implement a promotion policy. All necessary equipment and tools provided were insufficient, as required by the Act, to provide all services to the public.

INTRODUCTION

The term Human Resource Planning (HRP) was found to work more effectively in the private sector and no research was found in the public sector based on the concept. This is the first study conducted in a public sector institution, which evaluates the role of HRP in services delivered by employees to members of the public. The paper should have looked at all public institutions that render services to the public in South Africa (SA), but due to budgetary and time constraints, it was limited to only the Centres of the Municipality that are known as Sizakala Customer Care Centres. Muwangi (2011) stated that the provision of acceptable basic services is a critical element in the national developmental agenda, including municipal services in South Africa (SA). While the efficient management of workers is crucial for service institutions like municipalities, because staff members interact with customers who evaluate, judge and publicize the quality of service received (Dzansi, 2010).

Koma (2010) stated that strong state capacity is achieved through the creation of an inexpensive, efficient and effective public service

staffed by the brightest officials working without limitations and willing to address the needs of the community. However, providing care to every community in a country has long been a major concern till to date (Ngcamu, 2013). Employee performance and productivity is a serious challenge in both public and private sectors, as SA was rated the lowest in terms of productivity in the world (HRMPS, 2006). Makanyeza, Hardson, Kwandayi, Beatrice, and Nyaboke (2012) revealed that poor service delivery is uplifted by the interference and political manipulation of councillors, poor Human Resources (HR) policy, lack of employee capacity and poor planning in municipalities. The strategy to improve public services planning and build an employee motivation with sound HR policy was not found.

"In resolution of the above, the SA government came up with a document called the African Public Sector of Human Resource (APSHR). The goal of this document was to provide guidelines that countries can use to share their experiences and best practices and remind each other that public sector efficiency and effectiveness in achieving desirable outcomes can only be realized by having motivated and satisfied employees" (Issa, 2011, p. 6). A priority in the municipalities should be accorded to recruiting and headhunting the best suitable people to deliver services to the community (Koma, 2010). The municipality tries to empower its staff by enhancing their skills in order that the services they render are sustainable, effective, and efficient. However, the failure of employees who were employed by the municipality before to provide services to public demanded the municipality to establish a customer care centre, which was called Sizakala (an IsiZulu word meaning 'get help'). These centres were regarded as the social support interface between citizens and the municipality. Ngcamu (2013) highlighted that centres within the municipality were distributed unequally between urban core areas and rural-urban areas, which are unfortunately mostly associated with incompetent staff and unequal office equipment. However, Jacobson (2010) argued that Human Resource Planning (HRP) could solve current and future organisational problems by ensuring that the right people are in the right place at the right time. HRP provides direction, reduces uncertainty, minimizes waste and sets standards (Anyadike, 2013). Colley and Price (2010) suggested that HRPs is a major tool to achieve the organizational objectives by understanding and planning for employees' needs in the short, medium and long term in order to deliver desired results. This is achieved by analyzing the current profile of the workforce and comparing it with future needs so that gaps, which need to be filled, can be identified.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Recent state of the local government in South Africa

1.1.1. Shortages of the administrative capacity and institutional performance

A word capacity refers to the availability of tangible and also intangible resources. By tangible, it refers to human, technology and financial resources. On the other hand, it refers to having knowledge of adopting policies and assuming the delivery of services to the public. While intangible resources include commitments and leadership for implementation of policies and delivery of services to public. The National Capacity Building Framework (NCBF) for local government defined the word capacity as the potential for something to happen through individual, institutional and environment capacity factors.

- *Individual capacity* is the ability or competencies or lack thereof found within a person, normally it is reflected in a form of his or her generic and technical competencies, knowledge and behavior obtained through education, experience, training and networking.

- *Institutional capacity* is the potential and skills or lack thereof found with the workplace, such as human resources, business objective internal confidence and institutional memory.

- *Environmental capacity* is the competency or lack thereof found outside the structure of the

municipality such as demographic composition, legislative and social capital within the public (NCBF, 2008).

1.2. EThekwini municipality equitable offering of customer services

The Sizakala customer centres have been established throughout the municipality to give more customers access to municipal services. It was a place where the community can visit in needs assistance on any council related questions. Service Delivery Improvement Plan (2012–2015) stated that the performance of employees who deal with customers should be monitored regularly. The public organizations that deal with providing services to customers should ensure that underperformance is eliminated. Service delivery and customer care must be included in all future training program and additional trainings should be given to all those who deal directly with the public whether in writing or telephone or face to face. The duties of the managers in the public service institutions were to ensure that the values and behavioral norms of the institution are in line with the principles of Batho Pele. The council also subscribes to the principles of putting the customer first and encourage employees to apply the Batho Pele principles (Ngcamu, 2013).

Nevertheless, Sibiya (2013) revealed that a number of complaints lodged by customers at these centres took more than three months to be resolved, while some complaints received no feedback. Therefore, this was in direct opposition to Chapter 11 of the White Paper, 1997 on the transformation of the public service Batho Pele. Ngcamu (2013) revealed that these centres of the municipality provided inequal services, especially from those located in peri-urban or rural (first-stop shops) to those in regional and central business district (one-stop shops). Ngcamu (2013 revealed that centres located in townships and in rural such as Molweni, staff comes to work sometimes once a week or does not come, because the customers who visit those centres are very few. Most of customers surrounding that area prefer to visit regional area such as Pinetown one-stop shop. Customers lodged complaints to these centres, which hap-

pens that it takes more than three months to be resolved without any feedback. The challenges facing the HRD of the municipality rated from improving levels of competencies and literacy of existing staff. Secondly, skilled employees leave the municipal area in search for other jobs outside the world.

Lastly, municipal personnel with scarce skills in short supply up until to date (IDP, 2015–2016). The importance part seeking by the municipality was to develop its employees by improving their competencies in order to deliver effective and efficient services to the public. This goal was going to be achieved after the establishment of Workplace Skills Plan from the assessment of the needed competencies in order to improve the existing skills of the employees within the municipality and to deliver on the integrated development plan. The next phase was to implement training or program through the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) (EMAR, 2011–2012). Human Resource Development had number of challenges within the municipality such as few levels of competencies development and literacy, skilled employees leaving the municipality and search for jobs elsewhere and current staff having scarce skills in short supply. All the challenges mentioned above require the strategic direction that the municipality has to consider and resolve, as they affect people of the municipality.

1.3. HRP

HRP definition includes activities such as forecasting the HR requirements, making an inventory of existing HR and making assessment for improvement, anticipating HR problems and planning for recruitment, selecting and training strategies. Anyadike (2013) indicated that an effective HRP implies that sufficient people with right mixture of talents were available to perform needed job. While Yesufu (2006) argued that no tasks can be achieved without proper planning, Dessler (2001) stated that HRP was an employment planning, which was the process of formulation of plans to fill future opening based on the positions that are expected to be open internally or externally. While Anyadike (2013) viewed HRP as a management activity that involves a careful

analysis of existing workforce, job requirements in other sources and development of people who run the structures of the evolutionary organization now and in the future to achieve goals.

The HRP strategy was also referred to as a helpful tool in adding value to the literature on quality service delivery and the role of HRP in the improvement of service delivery in public sector, which was a critical element in the national agenda (Choudhury, 2007). HRP has received considerable attention as a method of linking strategic organizational goals with strategic HR practices and programs. In-depth studies were needed to explore current practices and measure the effectiveness of HRP in this setting. Such studies would have address the gap in both literature and practice relating to effective HRP strategies and processes in the public sector (Curson, Dell, Wilson, Bosworth, & Baldauf, 2010; Freyens, 2010; Johnson & Brown, 2004).The study analyzed the present status, problems and prospects of HRP as part of the roadmap to employee productivity in Nigerian public enterprises and it recommended those organizations to learn to embrace HR outsourcing as a trend in HRM, as it was believed to ensure productivity in the organization. It was possible for any organization to evolve and implement a sound HRP, if it was based on quality, quantity and spirit of harmony among employees (Prashanthi, 2013). Through in-depth analysis of the ways in which HRP can be practiced in the public sector, awareness of the importance of HRP could be created, and public organizations could be helped to achieve their goals. The HRP has been studied by other researchers from different perspectives.

Not all the authors mentioned above linked the HRP to whether service delivered by employees to public service institution like the municipality showed improvements or not (Prashanthi, 2013). HRP can enable the public sector institutions to improve organizational performance through enhancements in the provision of more effective and efficient services and programs (Colley, 2010). Khashane (2014) found that a strategic HRP involved designing and implementing a set of internal policies and practices that ensured institutional sustainability, while the collective knowledge, competencies and abilities of the employees con-

tributed to the achievement of an entity's goals. Anyadike (2013) recommended that public organizations should embrace HRP to ensure employee productivity and matched this with the organization's strategic planning to enhance employee productivity.

The HRP can help public sector organizations system to increase the efficiency of its employees by providing opportunities such as transfers, deputations, rotation, further training and promotion. By virtue of their critical nature in the organization effectiveness, particular attention should be paid to the need to plan to fill positions with qualified and skilled people (Sharma, 2012). The literature indicates that HRP can be a solution to the problems found within socially complex institutions. Insufficiency of HRP has been mentioned as the reason why public institutions that service people were facing problems and frustration (Anyadike, 2013). Literature indicates that some of the municipalities administrations were well-resourced, while others experiencing huge infrastructure backlogs and prevailing apartheid-based socio-economic legacies (COGTA, 2009). Centres were mostly associated with incompetent staff who had unequal office equipment (Ngcamu, 2013). One of the key issues relating to HRP of this municipality was low levels of skills development and literacy, while skilled employees leave the municipal area in search of jobs in other areas (IDP, 2014–2015). Number of complaints were exhibited from members of the community about staff and level of services they receive in these centres (Sibiya, 2013). Yet there was dearth in literature that provides any studies relating to how the HRP influences on quality of services delivered by employees in the public sector, especially in municipal environment

Aim of the paper. The aim of the study was to investigate how well-resourced were employees within the centres of the municipality to perform their duties.

2. METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted both quantitative and qualitative approach for the collection of data and it specifies the direct location where the research

was conducted, as well as the target population. A questionnaire and interviews were used as instruments of obtaining data from participants. Questionnaire was used, because it contained many questions for gathering relevant information from the participants, while the interview schedules allow the researcher to get in-depth information from the participants.

The closed-ended questions in a questionnaire were constructed to be distributed to the sample and open-ended questions for one-on-one interviews were prepared as well. The paper's target population was all the permanent employees working in either first stop shops or one-stop shops of centres of the municipality and the target was estimated to be approximately 65 employees from Western, Southern and Northern areas of the province of KZN, SA. The population consisted of two groups: smaller group (supervisors) who participated in qualitative and the larger group (junior employee) who participated in quantitative part of the study. For the purpose of the paper, probability sampling was used, because the population has a known chance of being chosen as subject in the sample. Therefore, all permanent employees working in the one-stop shops and first stop shops of the centres of the municipality have an equal chance of being selected to participate in this study, so simple random sample was used. For the qualitative part of the paper, the census sampling technique was used, because all members, which were supervisors, had to participate. Calculating the whole population of this study, 56 participants would be an acceptable representation of the population of 65 (Sekaran, 2003). Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed among 60 participants, which was a fair representation of a population of respondents 65 in order to get at least 56 responses. The research provided qualitative information after conducting seven in-depth interviews with supervisors of the municipality. For schedule interviews, there were 12 questions, which were aligned with the research objectives. All closed-ended questions helped to provide quantitative data in relation to the study questions and a five-point Likert scale was used. Only 45 participants participated in a quantitative part. All questions were written in English as the language most used by employees to communicate.

3. RESULT

Table 1. Responses on qualifications

Qualifications	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
National certificate	22	48.9	48.9	48.9
National diploma	13	28.9	28.9	77.8
B. Tech	4	8.9	8.9	86.7
B. Degree	4	8.9	8.9	95.6
B. Degree (Hons)	2	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	–

This finding provides evidence that there was a gap in the educational progress of employees working in these centres of the municipality, as indicated in the IDP (2012–2013), since almost half of them only have grade 12.

Table 2. Responses on equipment and tools

Equipment and tools	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	14	31.1	31.1	31.1
Agree	22	48.9	48.9	80.0
Neutral	4	8.9	8.9	88.9
Strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	–

This finding indicates that the municipality should prioritize on providing all necessary equipment and tools of work to all the centres so that employees can deliver services to public in an appropriate way, as required by the Act.

Table 3. Responses on communication and interactive skills training

Communication and interactive skills training	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	9	20.0	20.0	20.0
Agree	14	31.1	31.1	51.1
Neutral	16	35.6	35.6	86.7
Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	88.9
Strongly disagree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	–

This finding shows that the effort to improve communication and interactive skills should continue to improve the communication skills to public. This is a gap to be filled among all employees.

Table 4. Responses on study encouragement

Study encouragement	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	12	26.7	27.3	27.3
Agree	12	26.7	27.3	54.5
Neutral	14	31.1	31.8	86.4
Disagree	3	6.7	6.8	93.2
Strongly disagree	3	6.7	6.8	100.0
Total	44	97.8	100.0	–
No response	1	2.2	–	–
Total	45	100.0	–	–

This finding shows that the municipality encourages employees of their centres to develop themselves academically, since the Auditor-General's report shows that there was a lack of educational achievements. One of the previous findings highlighted that almost half of the employees only have grade 12.

Table 5. Responses on study financial assistance

Study financial assistance	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	10	22.2	22.2	22.2
Agree	10	22.2	22.2	44.4
Neutral	17	37.8	37.8	82.2
Disagree	4	8.9	8.9	91.1
Strongly disagree	4	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	–

This finding shows that the municipality provides funds to the employees of centres who want to study more. Therefore, an opportunity should be further provided to those who want to progress further academically or with their studies.

Table 6. Responses on internal training sessions

Internal training sessions	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	15	33.3	34.1	34.1
Agree	20	44.4	45.5	79.5
Neutral	4	8.9	9.1	88.6
Disagree	2	4.4	4.5	93.2
Strongly disagree	3	6.7	6.8	100.0
Total	44	97.8	100.0	–
No Response	1	2.2	–	–

This finding shows that the centres of the municipality provide internal training to develop those who have a challenge in performing his or her duties and they educate each other if there were new things to learn regarding delivering quality services.

Table 7. Responses on expectations from employees

Expectations from employees	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	5	11.1	11.1	11.1
Agree	16	35.6	35.6	46.7
Neutral	8	17.8	17.8	64.4
Disagree	5	11.1	11.1	75.6
Strongly disagree	11	24.4	24.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	–

This finding indicates that in the centres, more employees were aware of what was expected of them through planning with supervisors, however, others were not aware of the plan or what is expected from them, they just work, as they were required to.

Table 8. Responses on business strategy

Business strategy	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	12	26.7	26.7	26.7
Agree	19	42.2	42.2	68.9
Neutral	9	20.0	20.0	88.9
Disagree	2	4.4	4.4	93.3
Strongly disagree	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	–

This finding indicates that in these centres of the municipality, employees were educated about the business strategy and what to achieve.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Education

The public sector has recognized the challenges in the labor market related to recruiting, appointing and retaining the appropriate skills in the required environment (DPSA, 2009). Sharma (2012) stated that the HRP system would provide details of existing employees in terms of their demography, educational qualifications, competencies, training programs, experiences, performance management system records and succession plans. Questions should be raised about the appointment of staff who lack the capacity to ensure adequate internal controls, systems and processes (Jerome, 2010). The literature reveals that 69% of the municipal

managers had no qualifications and 28% of the chief financial officers did not have finance-related qualifications and 35% of technical managers had no engineering certificates (Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority, 2007).

The findings revealed by the study were that most of the supervisors of the centres of the municipality hold matric certificates and this has cascaded to junior staff. A lack of higher qualifications was a sign of inequality in educational achievement (Auditor-General Report, 2012–2013). The well-developed core municipalities have a higher level of education, while the township and rural have lower levels (Ngcamu, 2013). This finding clearly showed a gap of educational progress of employees working in these centres of the municipality, as 48.9% almost half of the employees only have grade 12 (matric). However, almost half of the employees agreed that in these centres, they were given an opportunity to further their studies and there was financial assistance provided, as well but a question was also imposing to the other half who were not sure about this doing of the municipality. This might have a conclusion that the information was not clearly communicated to all staff.

4.2. Tools of work

According to Ngcamu (2013), the centres of the municipality were mostly associated with incompetent staff to perform the duties of the centres. All employees who were working for these centres of the municipality have been hired based on the requirements stipulated by the post. It should also be noted that Ngcamu (2013) revealed that employees in these centres have unequal office equipment. However, this paper revealed contradictory findings, since 80% of staff who strongly agreed and agreed revealed that in these centres, there were working equipment and tools for employees to deliver quality services to the public. It should also be noted that even is staff only possesses senior certificate (grade 12), these positions in the customer units require people with communication and customer-orientated skills rather than qualifications.

Imperative part of the finding that needed attention of the municipality in planning was revealed by the result – it is "space". Some of the municipalities

administrations were well-resourced, while others were experiencing huge infrastructure backlogs and prevailing apartheid-based socio-economic legacies (COGTA, 2009). These centres were unequal based on working spaces, which cause a havoc in other centres during busy times. Morden centres like KwaMnyandu had enough space (ergonomics) to accommodate many customers, but in other centres, customers wait outside until a space becomes available inside to sit. This challenge of space also affected the service providers, since in most of the centres, they shared desks to work and in some, they shared one computer.

4.3. Training and development

Akhigbe (2013) indicated that HRP cannot exist in isolation to achieve the goals of the business. Therefore, it must be linked to other HRM functions that address the gap analysis between supply and future of HR such as training and development activities. One of the key issues relating to HRD of this municipality is low levels of skills development and literacy, while skilled employees leave the municipal area in search of jobs in other areas (13/14, IDP). Akhigbe (2013) argued that no organization is completely fine without paying attention to development of staff and this is confirmed during the assessment of the availability of supply of labor.

In the organization, managers need to check the job categories in a form of verifying the employees the organization has in terms of the number, skills they have, level of performance of the department, age experience problems and promotion to senior positions, including the necessary training for such promotion. The paper revealed that there was no much need for training on communication and interactive skills, as well as employee programs, however, some feel that there was a need of such training for the improvement, since employees have to see customer on their day-to-day activities. Findings also revealed that these centres did provide internal trainings to develop those who have a challenge on performing their duties and they also educate each other if there are new things to know for delivering quality services. Paper revealed that employees can appreciate to be moved from doing one job and experience other work in order to be multi-skilled, however, some did not see a need of such job rotation.

CONCLUSION

HRP on producing well-resourced people to deliver services was not at the level that it should be in this public institution. HRP can be well producing desired result in public institutions once the components of HRP are well implemented. The following points answered the research question put forward at the beginning of the study. The employees had the necessary working resources in the form of adequate equipment to perform their duties. However, in some centres, employees were sharing computers and desks. Most of the supervisors of the centres of the municipality lacked educational skills, as they hold only matric certificates, and this had cascaded to junior staff, as the study revealed that 48.9% of employees hold grade 12. A lack of higher qualifications was a sign of inequality in educational achievement and this result developed into a stumbling block when employees seeks senior positions. Some of the centres (modern) had enough space and staff to deliver services to customer, however, most of the centres were having serious space problem and number of service providers to render services to community.

Lastly, these centres of the municipality did provide assistance to develop its employees, however, those opportunities for development were not utilized by staff. Therefore, this concludes that employees within the centres of the municipality were not fully well-resourced to perform their duties. The level of skills and education possessed by each employee including supervisors were internal factors that display barrier to career growth for staff. Sharing computers was another internal factor that leads to poor service delivery by employees to customers. Inequality of office equipment proves that resources are not provided as required. If HRP was well implemented, there would be no half of low skilled employees that were stacked with grade 12 as a qualification for years with no progression. To enhance the quality of service delivery, the municipality needed to revisit its promotion policy for motivating employees to perform as required in order to reach senior positions. It also needed to create more training and development activities that are related to customer orientation. HRP is also concerned about planning for retirement, these centres need to provide a sound strategy on investing in young employees, since there are more than half of the existing staff. Lastly, the municipality needed to revisit its HRD, since it lacks the renewing terms of intern and contract staff because of their experience, and since HRP is also about to attract the number of people with required skills and experience. It is recommended that the municipality needs to provide a strategy of capacitating employees academically, so that they can be able to apply for senior positions within the municipality, since the findings revealed that most of the supervisors and half of the employees only hold the 'matric certificate', which was another factor that affects them when pursuing senior positions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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