Strategic Management of Human Resources

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Introduction

Universities' competitiveness depends on its ability to follow up the innovations in technology and science procedures (Mabeym et al. 1998). The competitiveness requires successful human resources management to make the needed innovations to assure the university's follow up in the academic field. The assessment and allocation of human resources in universities is considered crucial in decreasing the cost and improving productivity of it. As the higher education universities value is dependent on the value added by their staff, human resources management of these universities will ensure the addition of new values and continue competing (Schuler and Jackson, 2000).

Academic staff resistance against innovations is an important barrier against necessary innovations in universities and a source of irritation in universities' image. It therefore can be of crucial importance for the competitiveness of those universities that plan to innovate to know when they have to expect academic staff resistance and how to handle it.

For a university to lead a successful human resources management, all the strategic components should be included as part of its strategic management of human resources. Strategic management should include the concentration on vision and mission of the university. Human development should concentrate on improving the capabilities of the university academic staff to meet the requirements of the university to accomplish its objectives.

This essay will discuss the concept of human resources strategic management in universities and the methods to overcome innovation inside the university.

Background

The academic staff of the university is considered the major component of strategic management process. The value added by the academic staff to the university is considered the main motive to accomplish a sustainable competitive position for the university. On the other hand, education is considered one of the economic derivatives for its role in qualifying human resources as a measure of development of countries (Sall, 2004, p.2). So, most countries concentrate on education as a mean to improve the educational knowledge which impacts the labor market quality and the development processes (Hannagan, 1992: 157-177). This justifies the concerns to improve education. The direct impact on the quality of graduated human resources quality will be the quality of the academic staff quality. So, universities should concentrate on the academic staff as one of the major components of strategic human management of universities.

The strategic management of human resources at universities should meet the total quality required by the university to increase its competitiveness. The evaluation of human resources at universities is considered one of the major processes that provide feedback about the capabilities of the academic staff and teachers at the university. The strategic management should depend on reliable sources of information that considered helpful to have successful strategic management plan. The strategic management of a university required the consideration of evaluation of the past as well as, the present and the future to ensure the integrated planning of human resources.

The next section will explain the major components that should be considered when planning the strategic management plan of a university.

The Elements of Strategic Management of Human Resources

The strategic management of human resources plan of a university should consider the major components that affect the quality and the value of the university in the educational market. The first motive factor of human resources development strategy of universities is the overall strategy and goals of the university. Considering that the purpose of human resources strategy is to help the university to achieve its goals (Robertson, 2004).

The strategic management of academic staff and teacher in the university should be realized as of the total strategy of the university. Figure 1 shows that the academic staff is responsible to stick and accomplish to the vision, mission and values of the university. The academic staff will be responsible to add value for the academic work to improve the performance of university.
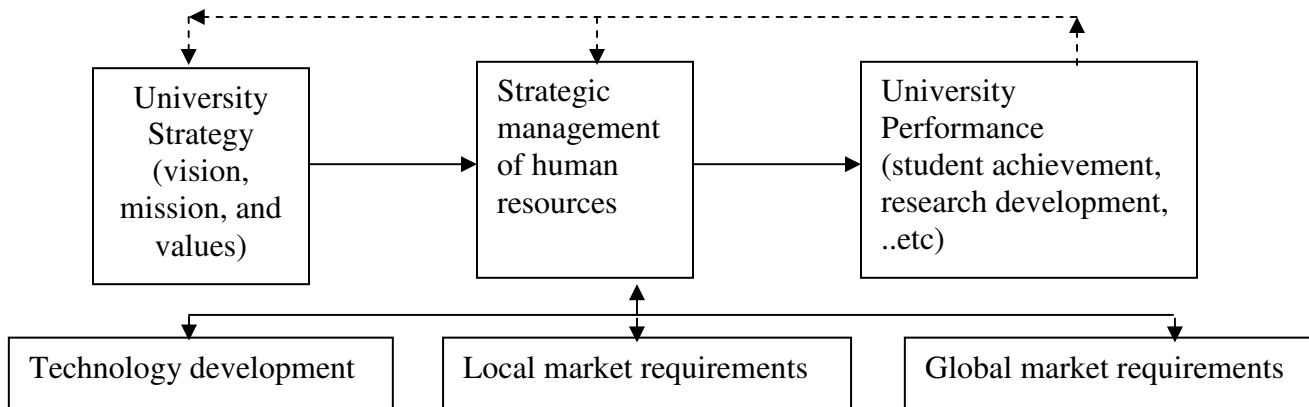

Figure 1: The position of the strategic management of human resources in universities.
Source: Developed by researcher using information from (Schuler and Jackson, 2000).

The previous chain that shows the position of human resources in the university regarding the whole strategy, also reflects the interaction of the academic staff with the other targeted parties in the university. The value added for the university will be reflected through the student and scientific research performance of the university. The two types of strategies; university whole strategy and academic staff development strategy receives their feedback for development and improvement for the future through the university performance which can be measured through students, local society, and university ranking locally and internationally. The results of feedback will determine the limit of value added by the academic staff for the university and the future plans required to increase this contribution.

The important questions can be introduced, why the continuous management of academic staff of universities? The previous build figure shows the major causes of the need of continuous management of academic staff. The three major factors that contribute for managing and developing academic staff are the technological developments, the local and global market developments (Mabeym, 1998). The contributors to the requirements of continuous development of academic staff are innovationable with time. This requires the academic staff to meet these innovations to be able to improve his capabilities to meet the value of the university and improve to match the targeted parties.

Academic Staff Performance Appraisal: Objectives and Measures

Resources management, organizational sociology, and more recently applied psychology, have focused their efforts on usability and acceptability of performance appraisal tools and procedures. They have concerned themselves less with questions of validity and reliability than with the workability of the performance appraisal system within the university, its ability to communicate university standards to academic staff, to reward good performers, and to identify academic staff who require training and other development activities.

"*When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it...[otherwise] your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely in thought advanced to the stage of science*". (Lord Kelvin (William Thomson) 1824-1907)

Performance measurement is a topic which is discussed very often these days. Literally, it is the process of quantifying action, where measurement is the process of quantification and action leads to performance (Andy Neely el al., 1995).

The pressure for achieving and continuously improving performances leads firms to develop formal performance management processes. The performance management process should be considered as one of the key business processes and, according to Bititci et al., (1997, p. 524), it can be defined as "the process by which the company manages its performance in line with its corporate and functional strategies and objectives". The performance management process covers a broad set of activities, spanning from strategy formulation and revision, to accounting, personnel appraisal, etc.

Performance measurement is a broad topic, nevertheless, this research will focus on the issues associated with methods of performance measurement, and evaluation, and try to come to a conclusion of the best or effective methods for measuring performance, basically this research will be to trying to answer the following questions:

- What are some the contemporary performance measures used?
- Where are these measures used?
- What do these measures provide? (benefits that they provide, and disadvantages)
- Are these measures effective and give the required outcomes?

This reflects the importance of performance measurement tools in providing enough information for the appraisal of the academic staff at university. The appraisal will show the shortages and advantages of the academic staff that will the university management to have its own short and long term strategies to develop its human resources. The criteria of the academic staff performance will depend on value, capabilities and university development and change (Schular and Jackson, 2000). The measurement tools should collect information about the academic staff creativity, innovation and vision that contributes in adding value to the university.

The Importance of Innovation for Universities

Innovation became the main criteria of these days due to the different conditions, the rapid innovation in the industrial revolution, information, telecommunication and competition, the innovation of working forces structure, innovation of working cultures, increasing the public consciousness among societies and individuals (Osterman, 2000).

Innovation indicates the move to a new system, which either indicates the ambiguity or a new try to achieve move success. So, individuals differs in dealing with innovation according to their concepts, culture, and experience with innovation. The traditional life is preferred from a wide sector of people because it lacks dangers and its away of fail according to their understand. But in most cases and according to the innovations in world, it means the remove of the individual away of his society to live in isolation. Such negative response to innovation stops the success of organizations, individuals, societies and countries (Schuler and Jackson, 2000).

Innovation should occur according to the previous facts, so it is urgent to find solutions for the following questions: How to manage innovation? How to alleviate the damages and negatives? How to use innovation to make success? How to move to a new innovation with stable steps? To answer these questions, one should analyze and study the different components of innovation, the directions innovation let him in, and the future effect of innovation on him. In the industrial and service sectors, innovation affect many directions. It affects the financial regulations, through the new need to add new technology, or the expenses needed to face the new innovation, and the financial expenses that should be paid to train the human resources to face innovation. The human resources are considered the main factor that will be affected through innovation. The innovation indicates to find a new staff of human resources who are able to deal with the new conditions.

In many cases, the previous experience of the human resources of the industrial or service organizations are not enough to run the new systems, so training will be one of the solutions that can be used to face innovation. The other solution which may affect the individuals in the organization represented in changing the present working staff with others familiar with the new technologies that will be or the new systems that will be applied. For example, an organization dealing with traditional market channels with its old salesmen staff, it faced high competition through the new similar goods enter the market which affected its sales, this foundation to face the decrease in its sales should innovation the methodologies of marketing using the modern procedures of marketing and advertisement which is not familiar to its employees. This leads the organization to replace its salesmen staff with one familiar with the modern marketing procedures. This threatens the old staff of the organization which leaves may physiological effects on them.

What makes innovation to done regularly are the basics that should be followed in managing innovation in the organization. These basics should rely on the past, present and the future. Any organization that will make innovation should have plans for that innovation based on the further investigation of its part and its present condition to figure out its destination. The more clear the plans the more success innovation will be lead but this innovation will not happen regularly because it will cost the organization much. This cost will extend from the HR to innovation that may involve the assets of the organization and adoption of new technology that use the employees efforts to learn it in short time.

Moreover, the knowledge of the university will enhance university innovation and performance. Most of enterprises recognized the importance of knowledge management at the present time. So, if the enterprise has a knowledge management system, it tries to modify it to meet the needs of organization to support the other processes. The knowledge management has an effect on the innovation and performance of the enterprise. Knowledge of management affect innovation and performance through two sources of knowledge management. The first source was the social one and the second one was the technical one. The social knowledge management is related the knowledge management resulted of the social context inside the enterprise, while the technical knowledge management is the one existed inside the enterprise and related to the technical work progress. The social knowledge affect the knowledge management inside the enterprise, also the technical knowledge management affect the knowledge management capabilities inside the organization. The knowledge management affect positively both the innovation and performance. The knowledge management will speed innovation and enhance performance. This resulted from having the knowledge that support such processes inside the enterprise (Liao and Chuang, 2008).

Practical case

University of Jordan as example for strategic human resources management and innovation

University of Jordan is one of the oldest Jordanian universities. In the previous years, the previous years the university was applying manual system for the whole processes run inside the university. The academic staff knowledge of computer and deal with modern communication was necessary because of the physical deal with students. The technological development worldwide and the science development in different disciplines make the university to seek for new goals to achieve to follow up these developments.

The university takes in consideration the development of the academic staff to improve their capabilities to deal with the new technologies. One of the basic requirements added as one of the obligatory conditions should be available by the academic staff is passing the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) supported by Microsoft Office company. This condition improves the ability of the academic staff to deal with computer and the new communication available tools at the university as one of the requirements of the teaching process.
The academic staff became able to contact the other science organizations abroad to improve their experience or to search for new development in science globally. On the hand, the improvement of these capabilities made it possible for the academic staff to improve their communication with students through advanced technological tools. This kind of innovation faced resistance in its first steps because of the usage of new technology in the teaching process, but later on as one of the university rules, it became highly distributed among the academic staff.

The new technological additions in the university facilitates their deal with the library, the contact with the other departments of the university, the contact with student via non-routine procedure all times.

One part of human resources management concerning the academic staff in the university is the admittance of the academic member according to fear and clear testing procedure. Such procedures make it possible for the university to attract the most creative academic staff, which makes it one of the best universities at the level of Middle East.

To improve the quality of the academic staff, the university applied very high quality promotion procedure for its staff. The academic staff member requires publishing specific number of papers in judged scientific magazines inside or outside Jordan to get the promotion. The procedure has been improved through increasing the number of published papers which ensures the continuous contact of the academic staff with science and its developments.
The innovation process of the university is current looking to improve the academic performance at the university. This is considered the vision of the University of Jordan (http://www.ju.edu.jo/Home.aspx).

University seeks hard to have very qualified academic staff to lead its PH.D. programs. The qualify of the University makes it target for most academics to be members of its.

The University is seeking to keep as distinctive in the academic field concerning the quality of education for undergraduate and graduates stages. In this regard, the University emphasizes on the academic staff to update the course they teaching. The University emphasizes on its academic staff to improve their dealing with students in one aspect and to improve their role in adding value for the university through different scientific and social activities.

One of the basic innovations the University leads in the previous years was the communication with its academic staff and teaching members via the internet. The academic staff or the employee can used the internet to be updated with new news about the university through the academic staff private portals.

The improvement of the academic staff capabilities to use the new technology in communication improves their ability to contact the electronic library of the University. The staff can access most of the published magazines and dissertations through the internet and download them. Such innovation in the University has been accepted widely by most of the academic staff as it improves their contact with the available science resources in the University.

Despite, the strategic management of the academic staff in University of Jordan and the high innovation made in this respect, still the University needs more wider strategic plans for the management of academic staff. The academic staff still now did not used the internet for the communication with students for homework, projects, exams or any other distant academic activities. The academic staff trust of such tools are weak and even the University attitudes to deal with such procedures still immature.

The strategic plan of human resources lacks the training of the academic staff for different important eras helpful in the academic processes. The university also lacks the feedback about the capabilities of the academic staff to be able to draw future plans for the development of its staff. One direction plans are not helpful to overcome most difficulties and innovation in the surrounding world. The University needs to run its own local studies to evaluate the academic staff and to judge the academic performance in the University.

The other important aspect that is not considered in the strategic planning of academic staff at the University is the removal of students evaluation of the academic process inside the University. The target of the whole academic process is the student, so the students should be the major source of information about the quality of the academic performance of the University. The lack of this important points make the strategic plans used to develop the academic staff in the University disintegrated.

Conclusion

This study represents a case study of the University of Jordan concerning strategic management of human resources in educational organizations. The results of this research have shown that the innovation can be executed but the results of the innovation cannot be seen in short time. The resistance of innovation of academic staff for the application and use of new technologies to activate the communication and effective management of human resources will slow down the tangible results closely. On the long run, the interviews have shown that the human resources management and the innovation process can be executed successfully as the academic staff will be obligated to use the new technologies in his academic activities.

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