

INTERLINKAGE BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

In current scenario supply chain management (SCM) is a familiar management terminology. This paper reviews current research on supply chain management (SCM) within the context of human resource management (HRM). Supply chain management (SCM) provides demonstrated results such as delivery time reduction, improved financial performance, greater customer satisfaction and others that's why supply chain management is applied by companies globally. This paper tends to describe the interlinkage between supply chain management (SCM) and human resource management (HRM). It describes how human resource management practices influence the supply chain management. Literature review method is opted to find out the relationship between these two broad concepts. The result shows that human resource management (HRM) practices are highly effective for the successful implementation of supply chain management (SCM). The objective of this research paper is to find out the role of HRM in Supply Chain Management. To fulfill the research objectives simple questionnaire method is used.

Keywords : *Human Resource Management, Supply Chain Management, Planning, Communication, Coordination, Selection, Collaboration.*

INTRODUCTION

The object of this paper is to draw attention to the importance of human factors in organizations and to identify the relationship between human resource management and supply chain management. Human is the most important asset of an organization. To attain the objectives of an organization better management of human resource is compulsory.

According to Storey (1995), human resource management is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques. Human resource management is that kind of system which influences the workforce of an organization. The practice of HRM includes recruitment, selection,

training, performance appraisal, compensation management, industrial relations etc. Huang (2000) said that, HRM practice is that kind of practice which influences employees' intention to leave, levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Recent researches in supply chain management emphasize to promote integration and collaboration among supply chain members for high level customer satisfaction. Integration and collaboration among supply chain members is very important because it improves their quality of service. According to Smith, Carroll, and Ashford (1995) "In supply chain management there must be cooperation and coordination among supply chain members". According to Lee, So. & Tang (2000) "There should be greater information sharing among supply chain partners". Christopher & Peck (2004) said that better collaboration, in turn, contributes to greater adaptability and resilience across the supply chain. According to Ragatz, Handfield, and Petersen (2002) "We can easily increase efficiency stemming in supply chain with the help of co-development and co-production". Kohli & Jaworski (1990); Narver & Slater (1990); and Slater & Narver (1994) said that integrative and collaborative supply chain management activities are explicitly the result of an emphasis on customer focus, customer value-creation, coordinated marketing, and profit generation. According to Mentzer et al., (2001), "Firms are said to have adopted a supply chain orientation (SCO) to conduct several activities of supply chain management (SCM) more effectively". Ketchen and Hult (2007) argue that effective collaborative supply chain management offers a substantial and largely untapped source of potential competitive advantage for many firms. According to Min et al., (2007), "Performance across the entire supply chain is expected to benefit from each member adopting a SCO and thereby working collectively".

The evolution in supply chain management thinking has substantial implications for human resource management. According to Mentzer, Stank and Esper (2008), "The researcher of supply chain management are re-examining traditional jobs,

roles, responsibilities, and skill requirements, within and between functional areas including marketing, logistics, operations, and procurement". They further said that the supply chain management researchers are also rethinking about jobs, roles, and relationships between firms. Arthur & Boyles (2007); Becker & Gerhart (1996); Lepak, Marrone, and Takeuchi (2004); and Takeuchi, Chen, and Lepak (2009) said that, human resource (HR) systems i.e. HR architecture, principles, philosophy, policies, and programs play a vital role as carriers of institutional themes and as mechanisms for operationalizing responsibilities and relationships within supply chains.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To know about how HR practices will be helpful in Supply Chain Management.
- To examine the role of HRM in the optimal performance of the Supply Chain Management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentzer et al., (2001), "Supply chain is a set of three or more entities (organizations or individuals) directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products, services, finances, and/or information from a source to a customer". According to Niezen et al., (2007) "Supply chain involves multiple players or firms. Each of these players can contribute several value creating activities to the overall production and distribution process. Consequently supply chain interactions are expected to be complex, varied and to require deliberate orchestration in order to leverage information and other resources". According to Borgatti & Li (2009); Koulikoff-Souviron & Harrison (2008), "Relationships can be very tight or quite loose, coordinated or emergent, transactional or commitment-based, continuous or periodic, and one-way or reciprocal. As a result, social capital, cognitive/cultural institutional forces, and social network characteristics become crucial for crafting effective

interactions". According to Gittel & Weiss (2004), "Relationship based coordination often contributes to effectiveness". Ketchen & Hult (2007) elaborate the upstream and downstream component of supply chain management. The upstream component of a supply chain begins with raw materials and the downstream component ends with the delivery of a product or service to a final customer. This creates a complicated system of information and resource flows which require time, space and strategic interests. Mentzer et al., (2001) emphasized on the complexity of the supply chain management and said that supply chains differ in their level of complexity. According to Lambert & Cooper (2000), "An organization may have direct relations with some members of the supply chain (immediate suppliers and customer) and more distant, indirect relations with others (suppliers of the immediate supplier and customers of the immediate customer) leading to tiers in a supply chain structure". Granovetter (1973) and Greenhalgh (2001) said that, complex supply chains include both strong and weak ties, relationships that vary in terms of rapport, bonding, breadth, and affinity. Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, and Tsai (2004) elaborate the network related characteristics of a complex supply chain structure such as connectedness, proximity, density and norms of reciprocity.

Supply chain management simply means the supply of service or product to its ultimate customer. According to Bowersox and Closs (1996); Lin and Hui (2009) "The purpose of supply of service/product is to provide it (service/product) to the demander/ demanding unit at the right time, with the right quantity, in the right quality, with the right cost and at the right place. It deals with strategy and coordination between marketing and production as well as factors relating to demand management and forecasting. According to Lin and Hui (2009) "At its essence, logistics deals with satisfying the customer needs".

Sousa and Voss (2002); Kaynak (2003); and Othman and Ghani (2008) identified some factors which affect the effective implementation of Supply Chain Management. The factors are flexible

organization; built-to-order manufacturing; focus on customer; inventory and cost reduction; supply chain coordination; harmonious relationship with the suppliers; quality of data and reporting; management leadership strategy; communication; and human resource management policy. Shadur and Bamber (1994); Gower and Tallon (2002) said that, to be able to achieve the above, companies require human resources who have a broad level of skills i.e. team-building, problem solving, leadership etc. They further said that the human resources should be flexible and adoptable in their roles, innovative and adaptable to reorganization. Gower and Tallon (2002); Othman and Ghani (2008) said that, several research shows that in an international level, companies that are effective in their supply chain management practices have pointed out that they put a lot of emphasis on developing their human resources by adopting human resource management practices such as: training and retraining their staff and providing them with adaptability that will help them to fulfill their role in a supply chain. According to Ou et al., (2010) "If organization wants to successfully implement their supply chain practices then it is must that the human resources' of the organization clearly understand the philosophy and principles behind supply chain management (SCM) and there must be a collaboration and coordination between firm human resources. Ahire and O'Shaughnessy (2000); Ahire and Dreyfus (2000) explore the relationship exist between Human Resource Management and Supply Chain Management. They said that, the organization's human resource management must ensure that the workforce possesses the necessary skills for the effective utilization of quality data i.e. incoming materials and parts etc. and reporting process, enabling the staff to get vital information and knowledge on issues such as occurring problems in production processes.

The practices of Human Resource Management and the functions of Supply Chain Management are interrelated with each other. For instance, HRM practices include staffing, training, evaluation and compensation. In Supply Chain

Management, staffing refers to assessing team compatibility; training means customer focus; evaluation means to evaluate individual performance; and compensation means pay for performance.

Table -1 at the end of this article gives an idea of supply chain aspects, where HR managers can contribute effectively.

Planning

Planning play a vital role in every kind of business wheather it is a manufacturer business or service industry. Planning simply means what to do, how to do, when to do, and whom to do. Planning is very important not only in human resource management but also in supply chain management. According to Bowersox et al., (2007) supply chain management planning tools are intended to integrate the resource planning activities in a firm or organization. He identifies some common planning tools i.e. material requirement planning (MRP), manufacturing resource planning (MRP II), and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). Material requirement planning (MRP) is such kind of planning that allows an organization to schedule production activities. Manufacturing resource planning (MRP II) integrates manufacturing capabilities and capacities with the benefits of MRP. An enterprise resource planning (ERP) tool allows an organization to integrate all processing information tasks related to all processes in the value chain. Kumar (2001) emphasized on IT tools for effective planning in supply chain management. He states that, several existing IT tools can be used to execute or manage the various activities and relationships in the entire supply chain.

Communication

Communication simply means the exchange of ideas and information between two or more persons. Communication plays a vital role in the implementation of supply chain management practices. There must be a high quality communication among various players of supply chain management. Communication is a key element of human resource management as well. According

to Verderber and Verderber (2004) "Communication is a human experience, a social activity, a process vital for the development of human relations both in interpersonal and working level. Katz and Kaha (1978); Huselid (1995); Mayrhofer et al., (2002); Mullins (2007); and Torrington et al., (2008) said that, communication is the medium through which an organization accomplishes its goals. It is a necessary prerequisite for the existence of an organization and a key factor in the development and success of the organization's targets. Csapo and Featheringham (2005) said that, Effective communication is an essential factor of organizational success whether it is at an interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organizational or external level. According to Ray (1983); Tourish and Hargie (2004) "Dysfunctional communication within an organization can create problems such as poor interpersonal relationships, confusion about the organizational objectives, uncertainty and friction among employees, work stress, absenteeism, poor organizational climate, difficulty in taking the right decisions and reduction of work efficiency".

Coordination

Coordination is another important aspect which plays an important role not only in Supply Chain Management but also in Human Resource Management. Effective coordination among human resources' of an organization is must for its survival. Coordination is also vital for several players of supply chain management. Without coordination organization can't be able to implement its supply chain management practices optimally. According to Malone (1987) "Coordination is a pattern of decision making and communication among a set of interrelated players who perform tasks to achieve goals such as maximizing their utilities or the overall profit of the supply chain". Buhalis and Laws (2001); Sinclair and Stabler (1997) said that, to maintain a competitive advantage over equally efficient rivals, many large tourism firms have already adopted supply chain coordination strategies.

Selection

In context of Human Resource Management Selection refers to the process of choosing the most suitable candidate for the vacant position in the organization. On the other hand, in context of Supply Chain Management, selection refers to the process of choosing the best supplier which reduces the overall cost of the final product. In other words, supplier selection is a process by which the firms identify, evaluate, and select the suppliers of their

required raw materials. According to C. Bai and J. Sarkis (2010), one of the necessary and important steps in managing the companies' corporate legitimacy and reputation is controlling and monitoring the supplier evaluation and selection. V. Baskaran, S. Nachiappan and S. Rahman (2012) and R.K. Kannan and V.Tan (2002) identifies four important factors which must be considered in the selection of a supplier. The factor includes Price of the raw material, quality of the raw material, delivery time and service. It is depicted in fig. 1.

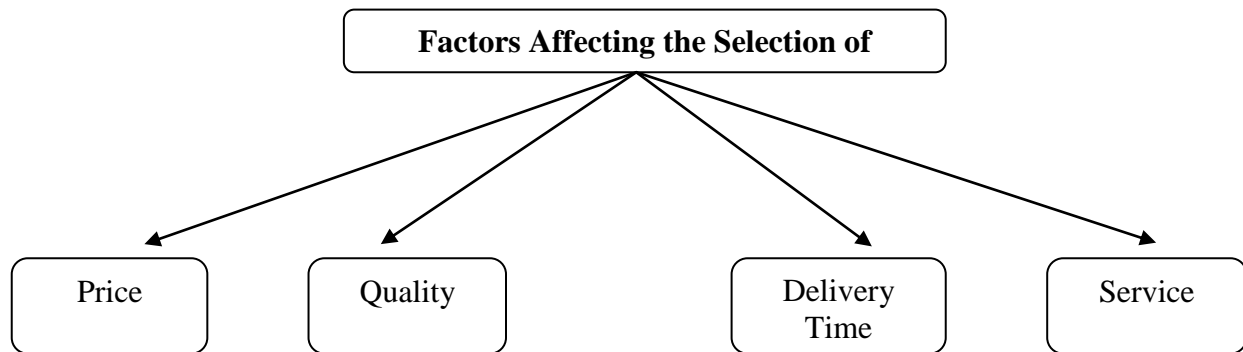


Figure 1: Factors affecting the Selection of Supplier (V. Baskaran, S. Nachiappan and S. Rahman (2012) and R.K. Kannan and V.Tan (2002)

Different researchers have different kind of opinions related to the selection of supplier in Supply Chain Management. According to K. Green, B. Morton, and S. New (1996), environmental evaluation criteria would lead to choosing more compliant suppliers. G. Noci (1997) classified environmental supplier selection criteria into four categories including green competencies, current environmental efficiency, supplier's green image and net life cycle cost. L. Enarsson (1998) proposed an instrument based on Ishikawa fishbone for suppliers evaluation from the environmental point of view. They identified four factors of supplier evaluation including supplier evaluation as a company, his processes assessment, product evaluation, and transportation.

Collaboration

Collaboration plays a vital role in each kind of business. Collaboration is necessary for business entities in order to achieve their objectives more

efficiently and effectively. As firms seek to remain competitive in today's marketplace, they often look externally for assistance in meeting customer expectations. One way this can be achieved is through supply chain collaboration. According to Whipple et al., (2010) Supply chain collaboration refers to a long term relationship where participants cooperate, share information, and work together to plan and even modify their business practices to improve joint performance. According to Handfield and Nichols (2002), a collaborative supply chain is best described as the "integration and management of supply chain organizations and activities through cooperative organizational relationships, effective business processes and high levels of information sharing to create high-performing value systems that provide member organizations a sustainable competitive advantage". Fawcett et al., (2008) said that collaboration's goal is to have parties work cooperatively to devise and implement better

approaches to solving problems and delivering the value customers expect.

Fontanella (2002) pointed out the reasons of failure of collaboration. He discuss the unfulfilled promise of supply chain collaboration citing an overreliance on technology, treating every customer/partner the same, and a lack of trust as barriers to successful collaborative results. Bowersox et al., (1999); Fawcett and Magnan (2002); Barratt (2004); and Daugherty et al., (2006) states that, if companies want to derive the benefits of collaboration, they have to be prepared for the work that goes into collaborating. They further said that maintaining long-term strategic coordination between partners, poor internal communication prior to collaboration and the speed with which to expect benefits have all lead to collaborative failures. According to Thron et al., (2006) the main challenges in supply chain collaboration range from the need for coordination of operational resources to developing the necessary capabilities required for implementing successful collaboration.

Collaboration is also important in context of Human Resource Management. It is very helpful for the organization to achieve its goals optimally. Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) said that helping behavior is a robust predictor of group and organizational performance. According to Boxall and Macky (2009) ; Frenkel and Sanders (2007); and Beltran-Martin, Roca-Puig, Escrig-Tena, and Bou-Lluser (2008), helping behavior has become more important in light of movement toward greater employee involvement, interactive work structures, and human resource flexibility within organizations.

METHODOLOGY

As the researcher seeks to assess the relationship between supply chain management (SCM) and human resource management (HRM), the research method opted for this purpose is literature review. The literature review was collected through a number of published research papers based on their relevance. A simple questionnaire method and five

point likert scale was also adopted for data collection.

DATA COLLECTION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was collected from ten manufacturing companies situated in Haridwar, Uttarakhand. Five persons from each enterprise participate in the survey. Table - 2 at the end of this article shows demographic details of the participant.

A number of questions were asked to the respondents related to several variables used in this research i.e. planning, selection, training, communication, coordination and collaboration. To simplify the process we classify each variable into five sub-categories on the basis of likert scale. Following are the details of each variable:

Planning

Planning is categorized into five sub-categories i.e. proactive planning, strategic planning, tactical planning, operational planning and reactive planning. Out of 50 respondents, 25 were in support of proactive planning. 15 participants are in support of strategic planning in the organization whereas, only 10 participants were in the favor of tactical and operational planning. It includes 5 for each. No participant was in support of reactive planning. Table-3 show the details related to this variable at the end of this article.

Selection

Selection of supplier is further divided into five sub-categories on the basis of likert five point scale i.e. very expensive, expensive, moderate, cheaper and highly cheaper. Out of 50 respondents only 10 respondents says that they have choose very expensive supplier for their operations. The respondents further said that they choose very expensive supplier because the quality standard of such kind of suppliers are very high. 8 respondents said that they have chosen expensive supplier for their operations. Majority of respondents i.e. 25 said that they have opted moderate kind of supplier. The

reason behind the selection of moderate supplier is that they not only fulfill the cost reduction criteria but also the quality standard is sufficient to meet the requirements of the organization. 7 respondents from small firms are in the favor of cheaper supplier. Table – 4 at the end of this article provides summarized data related to this variable.

Training

Each respondent said that they all provide on the job training to their employees. Training is further divided into five sub-categories i.e. very high level training, high level training, moderate level training, low level training, and very low level training. 25 respondents were in favor of very high level training. This is because after providing such kind of training to their employees they will be able to perform their job very effectively and efficiently which in turn, made the organization more competitive. 10 respondents are in favor of high level training. 12 respondents were in favor of moderate level of training whereas, 3 respondents were in favor of low level training. The respondents which were in the favor of low level training said that we recruit experienced and highly skilled individuals in our organization so that they will require only low level training. No respondent were in the favor of very low level training. Summarized data related to this variable presented in Table – 5 at the end of this article.

Communication

The sub-division of communication on the basis of likert five point scale includes excellent communication skills, good communication skills, moderate level of communication skills, low level of communication skills and very low level of communication skills. 35 respondents said that the employees must have excellent communication skills to fulfill the requirements of the job. 10 respondents said that good communication skills may be sufficient to do a job whereas, 5 respondents were in favor of moderate level of communication. The respondents which have a favor in moderate level of communication said that if a person have several other constraints such as loyalty, sincerity etc. then

we can ignore some of his/her weaknesses i.e. the level of communication. The level of communication can be improved with the help of training, they added further. No respondents were in the favor of low level and very low level of communication skills. Summarized data related to this variable are presented in Table-6 at the end of this article.

Coordination

The five sub-categories of coordination includes high level of coordination, good level of coordination, moderate level of coordination, low level of coordination and very low level of coordination. 30 respondents were in the favor of high level of coordination among the supply chain players so that they will be able to satisfy the ultimate customer at fullest. 10 respondents said that good level of coordination is sufficient among supply chain players to do their job effectively. 10 respondents were in the favor of moderate level of coordination among supply chain players. No respondent was in the favor of low and very low level of coordination. Table – 7 at the end of this article shows the summarized data related to coordination.

Collaboration

Collaboration is further divided into five sub-categories based on likert five point scale i.e. very high level collaboration, high level collaboration, moderate level collaboration, low level collaboration and very low level collaboration. 25 respondents were in the favor of very high level collaboration. This is because, working jointly will results always better than working individually. 12 respondents were in support of high level collaboration. They said that high level collaboration is enough to fulfill the objectives of the organization. 10 respondents were in the favor of moderate level of collaboration, whereas, 3 respondents were in support of low level of collaboration. The supporter of low level collaboration said that, some persons are more interior in their behaviour so that we can't be able to understand them and collaborate. Table – 8 at the end of this article shows the summarized data related to collaboration.

The above data shows that to become more competitive, to achieve the set objectives and optimum execution of SCM, organizations must choose proactive planning, select moderate kind of supplier, provide very high level of training, select such human resource which have excellent communication skills, high level of coordination among supply chain players and other business entity, and ensure very high level of collaboration among business partners. However, the data also provides good weightage to strategic planning, expensive or very expensive supplier, high or moderate level of training, good communication skills, good or moderate level of coordination, and high level of collaboration. The selection of such tools depends up on several factors like size of the business entity, types of employees i.e. skilled or unskilled, finance related issues i.e. debt financing or equity financing etc. The HR manager must consider these important things in their mind before framing any kind of policy for the organization.

CONCLUSION

In business context, the role of Supply Chain Management (SCM) is more and more important because globalization spreading its wings further and deeper. The literature review shows the direct relationship between Supply Chain Management and Human Resource Management. Primary data also shows linkage between SCM and HRM. For the successful implementation of Supply Chain Management practices organizations must consider HRM functions. In the changing scenario, the role of HR managers drastically changed. It is a big challenge for business concerns that how to meet such kind of expectations of globalization and other changing scenario. To manage such kind of expectations organizations may develop a cross-functional team.

Details of Tables

Various Aspects of SCM in Relation to HRM

Picture of Interface between Supply Chain Management and Human Resource Management					
HR Function	Planning	Communication	Coordination	Selection	Collaboration
Supply Chain Orientation	Planning for Sustainable Supply Chain Management	Ensure communication among supply chain players	Ensure coordination among supply chain players	Select best supplier	Collaboration among stakeholders of SCM.

Table – 1 (Source – Author)

Demographic Details of Participants

Variables	Frequency	Per centage
Gender:		
Male	35	70
Female	15	30
Age:		
25-35	4	8
31-45	6	12
46-55	25	50
Over 55	15	30

Education Level:		
Bachelors	-	-
Masters	40	80
Ph.D.	10	20
Other	-	-

Table – 2**Data Analysis: Planning**

Variable(s)	Frequency	Respondent Percentage	Percentage of Contribution in Revenue
Proactive Planning	25	50	40
Strategic Planning	15	30	30
Tactical Planning	5	10	20
Operational Planning	5	10	10
Reactive Planning	-	-	-

Table – 3**Data Analysis: Selection**

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Very Expensive Supplier	10	20
Expensive Supplier	8	16
Moderate	25	50
Cheaper Supplier	7	14
Highly Cheaper Supplier	-	-

Table – 4**Data Analysis: Training**

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Very High Level Training	25	50
High Level Training	10	20
Moderate Level Training	12	24
Low Level Training	03	06
Very Low Level Training	-	-

Table – 5**Data Analysis: Communication**

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Excellent Communication Skills	35	70
Good Communication Skills	10	20
Moderate Level of Communication Skills	05	10
Low Level of Communication Skills	-	-
Very Low Level of Communication	-	-

Skills		
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Table – 6**Data Analysis: Coordination**

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
High Level of Coordination	30	60
Good Level of Coordination	10	20
Moderate Level of Coordination	10	20
Low Level of Coordination	-	-
Very Low Level of Coordination	-	-

Table – 7**Data Analysis: Collaboration**

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents
Very High Level of Collaboration	25	50
High Level of Collaboration	12	24
Moderate Level of Collaboration	10	20
Low Level of Collaboration	03	06
Very Low Level of Collaboration	-	-

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