

Original Research Article

Work Practices Effectiveness among the Employees of Telecom Sector Organisation in Northern India: A Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary Organisations have been recognizing knowledge workers, intellectual assets and work practices as competitive edge for an organisation rather than other resources. These organisations utilize their useful time and resources in making their employees abreast with the changing market conditions. Thus, much more emphasis has been laid upon the effective work practices in an organisation. The purpose of this paper is to study the work practice in a select organisation which ultimately improves effectiveness and performance of an organisation. An analysis of the literature reveals clear connection among the variables of work practice effectiveness. Also, Regression analysis shows relationship among Work Practice Effectiveness and its variables (Work Practice Effectiveness at individual level, Work Practice Effectiveness at team level, Work Practice Effectiveness at workplace level and Work Practice Effectiveness at organisational level). All the variables WPEI, WPET, WPEW and WPEO are responsible for 73% change in Work Practice Effectiveness. Comparative analysis of select public and private organisation shows that for improving organisational performance, effective work practices should be enhanced. Moreover, it has been revealed from the results that private sector organisation focus more in improving all the variables of work practices effectiveness than public sector organisation.

1. Introduction

Now-a-days Organisations are considering the corporate knowledge, knowledge workers, intellectual assets and work practices as a valuable asset that can be managed effectively in order to improve organisational performance. These organisations also spent their useful time and resources in making their employees abreast with the changing market conditions. In return, it has been expected that these rapid market changes should be adapted and executed significantly by these employees. For this, much more emphasis has been laid upon the effective work practices in an organisation. The purpose of this paper is to study the work practice in a select organisation which ultimately improves effectiveness and performance of an organisation. Thus, for the sustainability of the organisation in a competitive environment, effective work practices are required to be improved.

Work Practices is the means by which work is usually done in a particular organization (dictionary meaning). Work practices are the ways in which the employees of an organisation carry out their tasks and responsibilities. Work practices may also define as the ways of structuring that are things one must do, or ways in which something is done. They are not implemented by technologies, but are usually conceived by intelligent humans, though not necessarily (Wikipedia definition). Work practice is a term used to describe the way organisations go about doing their jobs and the way ensure that the outcomes of work undertaken are in accordance with the mandate and objectives of organisation. It has been seen that when organisations recognize the value of planning and review, team communication, staff access to information and

collaborative leadership, work practices are strengthened, they are accountable and they are continuously improving. Effectiveness is the capability of producing a desired result. When something is deemed effective, it means it has an intended or expected outcome, or produces a deep, vivid impression. Thus, Work practice effectiveness means a degree to which objectives of an organisation are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved by using work practices. Also, it means "doing the right thing" effectively by using adequate resources available.

The various variables which include Work practice Effectiveness can be evaluated at four levels (i) Individual level (ii) Team level (iii) Workplace level and (iv) Organisational level, so as to ascertain a holistic picture of the combination of all (Source: Addy, D. et al. (2004). The work practice Questionnaire: A training evaluation measurement tools for the alcohol and other drug related field, Flinders University). These are as following:

1. Work practices effectiveness at individual level includes following variables:

a. Role Adequacy: employees have necessary experience to respond organisational needs, organisational issues, confident to respond organisational matters and developed necessary skills to tackle problems effectively.

b. Role Legitimacy: focused upon the legitimate role of an individual in an organisation. It also deals with role and responsibility of employees in an organisation to respond organisational needs, issues and matters effectively.

c. Individual Motivators and Reward: A manager's job is to identify employees' drives and needs and to channel their behavior, to motivate them, toward task performance. When an employee is productive and the organization takes note of it, Rewards will be distributed. It includes experience, utilization of time, giving importance to organisation issues, personal satisfaction and getting rewards.

d. Personal Views: means to express the opinion, identifies and takes into consideration the views of the employees of an organisation. It deals with finding organisational related problems and handling these problems in order to facilitate the people.

e. Career Motivation: is to motivate employees towards a great career which may come from the present workplace itself. It may include expertise, improvement over the past and professional advantages in responding organisational issues at workplace.

2. Work practices effectiveness among team level includes following variables:

a. Team Capacity: may include comprehensive knowledge base among the staff, good quality workers, to respond confidently. It may also include responding organisational problems willing, as top priority, legitimate part of their work, education and training are important etc.

b. Informal Support: means getting support from colleagues informally like supervision, encouragement, peer support, guidance, mentoring, good communication, seeking advice etc on work related matters.

c. Formal Support: means getting formal support, supervision, guidance, tools and resources needed at their workplace.

d. Team Cohesion: means having good team spirit and morale. It also includes good communication, encouragement and support for teamwork, establishing good relationships, comfortable in seeking help or support and sharing work willingly.

e. Team Knowledge Base: Team knowledge includes a comprehensive knowledge base among the people and focus upon the education and training of the employees in an organisation.

3. Work practice effectiveness at Workplace includes following variables:

a. Workplace Conditions: is to provide job security, expected wages and salaries, allocated work space and good physical conditions at workplace that encourage employees to work efficiently.

b. Workplace Pressure: is to experience constant pressure at workplace as too much is expected from the employees. It also includes quality services being provided.

c. Workplace Support: includes providing adequate support to employees when problem arises at workplace and also encouraging them to find positive solutions.

d. Workplace Performance: is to maximize the potential of people and organisation thus, encouraging them to perform efficiently at workplace. It includes developing critical skills to manage complex employee issues, improve employee performance and respond effectively to conflicts, if any.

e. Workplace Feedback: is to receive constructive feedback from people, which can be analyzed, discussed and reviewed. It includes both positive and negative feedback for improved working relationships.

4. Work practice Effectiveness at Organisational level includes following variables:

a. Organisational Role Legitimacy: means to address and guide upon organisational issues, roles and responsibilities, to improve services, and play important role to play in responding these issues.

b. System Influence: deals with organization's service requirements, evaluation of responses, leaders, competitors or champions etc.

c. Opportunity for Input: to take into consideration staff ideas and suggestions, to express views and opinions, staff participation e.g., practice and policy committees, working committees etc.

d. Organisational Monitoring and Review: generally deals with policies and procedures, their reviews, job descriptions, monitoring quality of services etc.

The study done by Frits K. Pil, John Paul Mac Duffie (1996) gives a clear evidence that use of high-involvement work practices and policies results in superior quality and productivity. The work of Peter Cappelli and David Neumark (2001) also reveals that implementing of work practices can result in considerable improvement in overall performance. Improved quality, higher productivity, lower scrap rates and lower turnover are some of the results seen when the work practices are used successfully. Donald and Taylor (2005) argues that in order to achieve good practices, employer needs to provide a workplace environment in which all workers are treated fairly and are able to fulfill their potential which improves productivity. Since lot of research has been conducted in the western countries regarding Work practices effectiveness and its influence on business performances, the main focus of this research is to study Work practices effectiveness in Indian organisations.

2. Literature Review

Work practices are the ways in which the employees of an organisation carry out their tasks and responsibilities. March and Simon (1958) identified two types of work viz. programmed work and non-programmed work. Programmed work is those in which both the means and ends of the work are well defined. Programmed work can be labeled as "standardized production" and non-programmed work as "innovation work." Another type of work has been identified by Tushman (1979), related to subunit work characteristics to subunit structure and performance. Such work has non-programmed means and programmed ends.

Gill (2009) states that there is no single agreed-upon definition or consensus on High Performance Work Practices, common themes have been identified which focus on the synergistic application of work practices that enhance employee skills and increase their involvement (Gephart and Van Buren 1996; Wright and Snell 1998). High Performance Work Practices have also been described as "High Involvement Work Systems", "Progressive Work Practices", "High Commitment Work Systems" and "High Performance Work Systems".

The literature on the work practices shows that Good work Practices allowed the organisation to identify the gaps between desired good practices and what is happening in reality and in turn provide suggested development actions. It also monitors employees understanding and perception of the company's values and culture. Thus, there is need for improving the management practices. Improving Information management practices is a key focus for many organisations, across both the public as well as private sector. Thus, as a result of it, there is a significant impact on work practices. (Malhotra, 2005).

The results from existing literature show that practices at work place in the organisation do matters. The organisations having better practices have better out comes. The researchers divide the given organisations into two groups based on particular interests. These are (a) Leaders and Laggards (b) What sets off leaders from laggards. It has been seen that leaders perform well in all of the best practices. Leaders are not merely using best practices but also use them effectively. Laggards, on the other hand, do not have well applied practices and may have problems in performing effectively at the work place. Thus, there is a need to improve the practices in order to catch up with the leaders (Sanner and Wijkman, 2005). In addition to it, human resource also played a significant role in improving work practices. Effective human resource structures can enhance the returns on high performance work practices because it requires a heavy investment in human capital, that is lost if the organization cannot attend and retain quality employees. Guthrie (2001) focused on optimum level of work practices. The study indicates a positive association between use of high involvement work practices and employee retention which may ultimately result in higher productivity.

Policies and procedures of an organisation are in a position to be transformed into improved work practices, which is the objective and desired outcome of evidence-based policy framework. Frits K. Pil, John Paul MacDuffie (1996) in the given study cleared evidence that use of high involvement work practices and policies result in superior quality and productivity. The study by Peter Cappelli (2001) shows that implementing of work practices can result in considerable improvement in overall performance. Improved quality, higher productivity, lower scrap rates and lower turnover are some of the results seen when the work practices are used successfully. Donald and Taylor (2005) in order to achieve good practices, employer

needs to provide a workplace environment in which all workers are treated fairly and are able to fulfill their potential which can result in an improved performance.

Employee participation also plays an important role in enhancing Work practice effectiveness in an organisation. Managers who educate themselves through participation in organization's external networks are more likely to adopt HPWP (Erickson and Jacoby, 2003). Cappelli and Neumark (2001) found that HPWP were associated with increased labor costs and argue that organizations may respond with work intensification, scaling back or discontinuing HPWP after a few years. Allen and Russell (1999), High performance work practices diminish employee turnover and increase productivity and corporate financial performance by improving employee knowledge, skills, abilities motivation and engagement. However, while these practices have a positive impact on employers, it has been argued that they have a negative impact on employees by intensifying work processes and stress.

High performance work practices have been linked to competitive advantage; workplaces would do well to perceive unions as having the potential to have a positive impact on employer outcomes. In addition to the wide use of work practice effectiveness in corporate sector organisations, high performance work practices also play a significant role in health care organisations.

Scheck and McAlearney (2011) confirmed that the presence of high performance work practices in health care organizations. Informants in all case study organizations agreed that HPWPs has been an important driver of organizational success. Further, the emphasis placed on the staff engagement subsystem of HPWPs particularly interesting, as nearly all informants able to describe how the organizations paid attention to the individual management practices.

The study finds that whereas more intensive use of high involvement work practices promotes organisation effectiveness, this effect depends on the competitive strategy being pursued. The use of high involvement work practices positively associated with performance in organisations competing on the basis of differentiation and shows no relationship in organisations pursuing a strategy of cost leadership.

Gill and Meyer (2013) also investigate the relationship between unions, employee relations and the adoption of high performance work practices (HPWP). It has been found that unions, when coupled with good employee relations, facilitate the adoption of high performance work practices and consequently have a positive impact on organisational competitiveness. Although there has been growing evidence that high performance work practices (HPWPs) affect organizational performance, varying sample characteristics, research designs, practices examined, and organizational performance measures used has led extant findings to vary dramatically, making the size of the overall effect difficult to estimate.

Thus, by reviewing the above literature, it can be concluded that work practice effectiveness does occur in an organisations that contributes to the effective and efficient performance of an organisation. This work practice effectiveness can take place at each and every stage of the work environment i.e. it occurs at individual level, among the teams, at the work place and also at the organisational level. Ashleigh and Nandhakumar (2002), in the given study, has investigated the concept of trust using organizational work practices in three groups viz. within the team, between teams and when interacting with technology.

3. Methodology

The primary data has been collected by using a standard questionnaire (sources: Addy. D. et al. (2004). The work practice Questionnaire: A training evaluation measurement tool for the alcohol and other drug related field, Flinders University. The Secondary data has been collected from various books, journals, annual reports, magazines, newspapers, published papers, websites etc.

The study has been conducted in the selected cities of northern India i.e. Jammu, Chandigarh and Delhi. The respondents of the research study comprised of the employees of telecom sector viz: BSNL (Public sector) and AIRTEL (Private sector). The questionnaire used for measuring Work practice Effectiveness of employees of telecom organisations was based on 5-points Likert scale. The questionnaire comprises of two sections. First section is related to demographic profile which includes seven statements, Section second of the questionnaire is related to Work practice Effectiveness which consists of four

dimensions viz. Work practice Effectiveness at individual level, Work practice Effectiveness among teams, Work practice Effectiveness at workplace and Work practice Effectiveness at organisational level.

Reliability of Scales

The Reliability of the scales has been tested by checking the internal consistency of the data with the help of Cronbach's alpha values. Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or above implies strong scale reliability (Cronbach, 1951). The Cronbach's alpha values for Work Practice Effectiveness at Individual, team, workplace and organisational level comes to be 0.933, 0.945, 0.865, and 0.943 respectively which are above 0.70, the lower limit of acceptability (Hair et al., 2009) indicates that the scales are quite reliable.

Validity of Scales

The factors of the variables have under gone the KMO test to check the validity of the scales. The KMO values of Work Practice Effectiveness at Individual level (0.821), Work Practice Effectiveness at Team level (0.830), Work Practice Effectiveness at Workplace (0.669) and Work Practice Effectiveness at Organisational level (0.813). Since, the KMO value of all the factors lies between 0.6-0.8 or above, the scales are considered to be valid. Thus, the construct for the study has been highly reliable and consistent.

4. Results and Discussion

Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents in the select telecom organisations has been discussed in detail as follows:

Gender- On the basis of gender, respondents have been classified into two categories viz. male and female. Analysis has revealed that out of a total number 68.9% were males whereas 31.1% are females. The results show that male respondents are more willing to respond as compared to their counterparts.

Age- On the basis of age, respondents have been classified into three categories viz. Less than 35 years, 35-50 years and above 50 years. Out of the total respondents, majority of the respondents are in the age group falling below 35 years (46.2%), followed by those between 35-50 years (35.7%), and remaining respondents with age group above 50 years are much lower in percentage (18.1%). It has been seen that in telecom sector organisations there are small number of respondents with age group above 50 years.

Geographical demographics- On the basis of geographical demographics, the respondents have been divided into three categories viz. Chandigarh, Delhi and Jammu. The demographic profile indicates that out of 747 respondents, 295 (39.5%) are from Chandigarh, 254 (34%) are from Delhi and 198 (26.5%) are from Jammu.

Tenure of work- On the basis of tenure of work, respondents has been categorised into four categories viz. Less than 2 years, 2-5 years, 5-10 years and More than 10 years. It has been seen that majority of the respondents (34.8%) ranges from 2-5 years, followed by more than 10 years (26.9%), below 2 years (19.5%) and lastly ranging between 5-10 years (18.7%).

Monthly income- As far as the monthly income of the respondents is concerned, respondents has been divided into three categories viz. Less than Rs.15,000, ranging between Rs.15,000-30000 and above Rs.30,000. More than half of total numbers of respondents (53.4%) have a monthly income of Rs.15,000-30,000 followed by those with income above Rs.30,000 (24.4%) and remaining with income below Rs.15,000 (22.2%) respectively.

Qualification- On the basis of qualification, respondents are divided into four categories viz. Under graduate, Graduate, Post-graduate and Others. As revealed from the data majority of the respondents are graduates (34.7%), followed by the respondents who are postgraduates (31.5%), under graduates (25%) and others (8.8%).

Regression analysis has been done in order to find relationship among Work Practice Effectiveness and its variables (Work Practice Effectiveness at individual level, Work Practice Effectiveness at team level, Work Practice Effectiveness at workplace level and Work Practice Effectiveness at organisational level). The values of correlation ($R=0.859$, $\text{sig}=.000$) clearly shows strong relationship amongst all the variables. Also, value of adjusted (R^2) comes out to be 0.737 that shows that all the variables WPEI, WPET, WPEW and WPEO are responsible for 73% change in Work Practice Effectiveness.

Comparative study of Work Practice Effectiveness

Work practice effectiveness can be compared between public and private sector organisations at four different levels- at individual level, team level, Work place level and organisational level.

Regarding Work practice effectiveness, at individual level role adequacy is more in public (3.49) than private (3.31), personal views are again better in public (3.58) than private (3.54), role legitimacy is more in public (3.79) than private (3.58) and career motivation is higher in private sector (3.00) than in public sector (2.84) organisations.

Work practice effectiveness at team level, team capacity is more in public sector (3.73) than in private sector (3.33), Team informal support is stronger in public sector (3.66) than in private sector (3.52), Team Cohesion is again more in public sector (3.80) than in private sector (3.61), Communication is better in public sector (3.81) than in private sector (3.59), team formal support is stronger again in public sector (3.50) than in private sector (3.39) and team knowledge base is strong in private (3.77) than in public sector organisations (3.69).

At Work place level, workplace pressure is more in private sector (3.34) than public sector (3.22), workplace organisation is better in public sector (3.34) than in private sector (3.13), workplace are better in private sector (3.47) than public sector (3.34), workplace support is more in public sector (3.48) than in private sector (3.36) and workplace feedback is better in public sector (3.36) than in private sector (3.23).

In case of Work practice effectiveness at organisational level, the organisational role legitimacy is higher in public sector (3.35) than in private sector (3.04), professional development opportunities are more in case of private sector (3.31) than public sector (3.49), system influence is more in public sector (3.39) than in private sector (3.35), organisational monitoring and review is better in public sector (3.69) than in private sector (3.52) and opportunities for input is more in case of public sector (3.31) than in private sector (3.22).

5. Conclusion

In the factor wise overall Work practice effectiveness at individual level, respondents accorded higher mean score to "Role adequacy" (3.41), "Personal views" (3.56), "Role legitimacy" (3.69) and "Career motivation" (2.91). It indicates that respondents as an individual possess strong views regarding their respective telecom sector organisations. This emphasized the role of an individual possessed; their views about the organisation, responsibilities offered increases the level of effectiveness in an organisation. Also, career motivation plays a significant role as an individual growth and development at workplace.

Further, at team level, respondents having mean scores "Team capacity (3.44), Team informal support" (3.59). "Team Cohesion" (3.72), "Communication" (3.71), "Team formal support" (3.45) and "Team knowledge base" (3.74). It indicates that as a team, respondents have a capacity to support formally as well as informally. There is a strong cohesion among the employees as there is good level of communication among them. Also, effective team knowledge base exists among the teams in order to respond organisational related problems more effectively.

At Work place level, respondents accorded mean score "Workplace pressure" (3.28), "Workplace organisation" (3.22), "Work Conditions" (3.41), "Workplace support" (3.42) and "Workplace feedback" (3.30). This emphasized the role of a work place for an individual to work in a given environment. It indicates that pressure at workplace, its organisation and environmental conditions do affect the Work practice effectiveness. In addition to it, proper support and good feedback also significantly influence the efficiency of an individual at workplace.

Work practice effectiveness at organisational level, exhibits mean scores "Organisational role legitimacy" (3.21), "Professional development opportunities" (3.41), "System influence" (3.37), "Organisational monitoring and review" (3.61) and "Opportunities for input" (3.27). It shows that legitimate organisational role, its proper monitoring and review have a strong influence on the organisations system. Also, opportunities for professional development and input for the organisation also increases the efficiency and effectiveness of Work practice effectiveness.

6. Recommendations

Work practice effectiveness means a degree to which objectives of an organisation are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved by using work practices at different levels viz. individual, team, workplace and organisational. Thus, for improving Work practice effectiveness, organisations need to emphasize on all the four variables (Thapa, A, 2014). For effective work practices at individual level, emphasis should be placed on role adequacy, personal views and role legitimacy in private sector organisations while career motivation should be the main area of public sector organisations to put stress upon. Team capacity, Team informal support, Team cohesion, Communication and Team formal support are the variables which need to be considering into account by the private sector organisations while Team knowledge base should be focused by the public organisations in order to improve Work Practice Effectiveness at team level. For improving Work Practice Effectiveness at Workplace level, Workplace organisation, Workplace support, Workplace feedback should be emphasized by the private sector organisations while Workplace pressure, Work conditions should be improved by the public sector organisations. For getting better Work Practice Effectiveness at Organisational level, Organisational role legitimacy, System influence and Organisational monitoring and review need to be improved by the private sector organisations while Professional development opportunities, Opportunities for input need to be emphasized by the public sector organisations. Thus, for high Work Practice Effectiveness in organisations, all the variables need to be work out and emphasis should be given in improving these variables in order to achieve overall performance of an organisation.

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