FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

1st SEMESTER 2017

ASSIGNMENT 1

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

SHR811S
**Issues of note**

Due to your mode of study (distance), you are required to use the prescribed texts to prepare yourselves with the fundamentals of the subject. There are questions in the textbooks and many other journal articles you can read and use to brace up in this subject. There will be compulsory fortnight classes organised by COLL which you are advised to attend the classes in order to equip yourself with the necessary information in preparation for your understanding and the examination in this subject. **Note that this is Honours programme (post graduate course). You are required to be familiar with the expectation at this level.**

As you were clearly informed, that your assignment must be typed or clearly hand-written following the **APA style of referencing.** If you are not familiar with the APA convention, contact the library or use internet to acquaint yourself with such.

**Course Content:**

The most important asset of any business is its people, that is, the human resources. Effective management of human resources is very important for organisations that are competing in a highly competitive industry where hundreds of firms compete daily to serve investors, perform well for shareholders and gain assets and thereby make profits.

In order to achieve the above, it is highly relevant that HR practitioners and managers devote all their time and energy to make sure the job is done correctly by maximising the people utility for better performance.

In that the organisation may be able to achieve a competitive advantage, the management of the human resources must be matched with the business objectives. Competitiveness is related to an organisation effectiveness, which is determined by whether the organisation satisfies the needs of stakeholders.

The strategy that underlies achieving this competitiveness is the people practices which involves analysing and designing work, determining human resource needs (HR planning), attracting potential employees (recruiting), choosing employees (selection), teaching employees how to perform their jobs and preparing them for the future(training and development), rewarding employees (compensation),
evaluating their performance (performance management), and creating a positive work environment (employee relations).

You can be able to study these topics from the two recommended texts (Boselie or Grobler, et al.)

**Topics of the course:**

1. Overview of Strategic Nature of Human Resource Management
2. Strategic Human Resource Process
3. Human Resources and the competitive advantage
4. Managing Flexibility in work pattern for competitive advantage
5. Measuring HRM effectiveness within the Organisation
6. Ethical Issues and Challenges in HRM
7. The role of HRM in the 21st Century
8. International Dimension of HRM.

**The prescribed texts are indicated again for your views**

**Prescribed Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**
Recommended material
Journals: Harvard Business Review
Academic of Management Journal
International Journal of Human Resource Management


The assignment questions feedback

ASSIGNMENT 1

Question 1 (40)

With good research skill, prepare a theoretical short paper, not more than 5 pages to be presented at a seminar on the strategic relevance of human resource management in the 21st century in Namibia.

The outlines should be as follow:

a. a good capture of the global trend in the topic area /20/
b. comparison between the traditional and the strategic approach in the topic area /20/

SUGGESTED ANSWER:

The importance of this question is to make you consult some journal articles and understand the views of many authors around the world concerning the concept of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM). Hence, with that 1a question for instance, you are meant to be putting into consideration issues that determine the concept of SHRM as developed around the world. You will not wonder, the extent to how should go when you read something like this...‘around the world’, you cannot be expected to go into the view of SHRM all over the world, but atleast you may use, may be articles from the USA, UK and probably South Africa to represent your views from around the world, because the question simply means, international.

What are the issues within the concept that are necessary for consideration under 1a?

(i) The situation in the global market – the challenges that organisations face as a result of various change factors in meeting the interest of all the stakeholders. Evaluating the business environment to assess the SWOT of the business both internal and external.
Globalisation, Technology advancement, market competitive, government regulation, change in population/demography, change in the taste of consumers, economy, etc.

The first phase is to formulate the strategy that will be utilised by the business to evaluate the business context: looks at its strengths and weaknesses (internal) and opportunity and threat (external). Uncompromising safety standards and, most importantly, the ability to meet technically challenging, fast-tracked projects on time and within budget. The conglomerate requires certain HR needs to derive the behaviour, attitude and abilities of employees to help bring individual outcomes and organisational & social outcomes which benefited the conglomerate stakeholders. As HR practices such as:

HR practices must be consistently put together to help the organisation arrive at HR strategies which help to meet the change that is occurring in the organisational context, without which the success of the business will be in doubt.

The second phase: the organisation will then implement the strategy along with the HR practices which will help to have committed, engaged and empowered employees who are ready to help the organisation render services that will sustain the competitive position of the organisation.

The third phase: is the need to evaluate the HR practices to assess if the HR practices are actually driving the business objectives or are in consonance with the business initiative. This is to put the human resource function directly in the spotlight (Grobler, Bothma, Brewster, Carey, Holland and Warnich, 2014). This is to help ascertain how the human resource functions are contributing to the achievement of the strategic initiative. This may be seen from different perspectives: financial; customer; internal business process and learning and growth of the business (Niven, 2005).

And the forth phase: the control measure gives the opportunity to reduce to policies, rules guidelines for the human resource functions if they are found to be helping the organisation to achieve its objective.

(ii) The manner in which the strategy should be applied to the system of aligning HR strategy with the business initiatives.

(iii) Why is it necessary to ensure that the practices (functions) of HRM is derived from the business initiatives and why practitioners should understand that their roles should not be limited to administration only.


Expectation in 1b.
(i) Chapter 4 of Grobler, et al, (2012, pg. 89) is clear on this. However, you should note that you could not just put the table in your assignment and assume you have answered the question. You need to discuss this judging from various authors in summary; the work of Barney, (1991) is crucial on this. Differentiating between the two, as indicated helps to buttress the point of the relevance in iv of the 1a question.

Question 2 (30)

Apparently, many HR practitioners in the recent times around the world have had their job titles changed to include the phrase strategic partner. However, the scepticism about the ability of many HR practitioners to get to grips with the breadth and range of the concept, pointing out that there should education programmes in the subject because it is regarded as an important academic discipline.

In light of the above statement, provide the analysis of the impact of the strategic link between the HRM function and the business objectives.

SUGGESTED ANSWER:

The impact that adopting some HR practices consistently in line with the business initiative is the concept around this particular question. You are expected to driving your points from the point of collecting information (data) in order to identify and measure the rate at which the HR practices adopted by an organisation contribute to the success of the business.

When you consider the argument that HRM practice is critical to driving the success of the business! What will be the ground and rationale for your conviction?

Within and outside the organisation, it could be said as agreed by many (Grobler, et al, 2014) that workers within the organisation represents the most valuable assets, hence this puts the HR practices in the spotlight.

Judging from chapter 7 of the prescribed text: Grobler, et al, (2014) this concept can be understood and from different journal articles such (Beatty, Huselid & Schneier, 2005) new HR metrics: scoring on the business scorecard; (Kaplan & Norton, 2005) and (Nafukho, 2009) HRD’s role in identifying, measuring, and managing knowledge assets in the intangible economy.

Within the balance scorecard approach of the organisation performance, the management or the organisation look at the business from four different perspective:

i. Customer perspective
ii. Internal perspective
iii. Innovation and learning perspective
Question 3 (30)

Examine the principles underpinning the different linkages that exist between the HRM approach and the business objectives.

**SUGGESTED ANSWER:**

This particular question centres on the different types or approaches to aligning the HR practices with the business objectives.

You should know by now, the process of aligning the HR practices with the business objectives, hence the need to know that, there are different patterns, types or approaches to this process of aligning HR practices with the business objectives.

Hence, the different approaches/types/nature/patterns arise as such:

(i) Administrative
(ii) One way
(iii) Two way
(iv) Integrative.

You must understand that this is not the process of linking the hr practices with the business objectives, but as discussed above, the types or nature of the process.

Different types of linking or integrating between HRM practices and strategic objective


**Administrative linkage**

- HRM function’s attention is focused on daily activities.
- No input from the HRM department during the company’s strategic business planning function.
- HR department only involves in administrative work, which is unrelated to company’s core business needs.

**One-Way Linkage**

- A firm’s strategic business planning function develops the strategic plan and then informs the HRM function of the plan.
• The role of HRM is to design systems or programmes that implement the strategic plan.

• The importance of HR is recognised, but not considered during strategic formulation plan.

• This often leads to strategic plans that organisation cannot successfully implement.

**Two-Way Linkage**

• This allows for consideration of HR issues during the period of the strategy formulation.

• The integration occurs in 3 sequential steps:

  • strategic planning team informs the HRM function of the various strategies of the company is considering then the HRM executives analyse the human resource implications of the various strategies & presents the results to the team and finally; and

  • after decision has been made, the strategic plan is passed back to the HRM executive to develop HR programmes to implement the strategic plan.

**Integrative Linkage**

• Integrative linkage is dynamic and multifaceted. In most cases, the HRM executive is an integral member of the senior management team.

  • HRM function is built right into the strategy formulation and implementation process.

  • HRM executive gives strategic planners information about the company’s human resource capabilities which are direct functions of HRM practices.

  • HRM information allows the top managers choose the best strategy to consider how strategic alternative would be implemented.

  • After the determined strategic choice has been made, HRM develops to develop and align HRM practices that will give company employees having the necessary skills to implement the strategy.

The nature or type of the alignment between the HR practices and the business strategy has implication on the philosophy, values, operations and competitive position of the organisation. The material “The value chain of HR” (Boselie, 2014: p49) can be more educating on this.