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DIVERSITY-SENSITIVE PERSONNEL MANAGEMET — A QUANTIATIVE ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPEKTIVE OF HR MANAGERS

Due to the fact that the structure of the population changes, the confrontation with diversity becomes more and more important. To analyze the perspective of HR managers regarding diversity, 30 telephone interviews were conducted with people from Germany. The results of our study demonstrate the need to implement measures to support diversity awareness. For the future it might be interesting to review the results obtained from the interview with a questionnaire.
Key words: diversity, intercultural competence, stress.

Introduction

The personnel selection process and the selection criteria need to undergo some changes because of the globalization. The importance of diversity for business rises for various reasons. These include the increasing globalization, the ongoing rationalization of manufacturing and service processes, the consequences of demographic change and the dynamics of social individualization process [7].

In science and in practice diversity management is becoming increasingly important. The focus of diversity management lies on the diversity of the members in an organization. The diversity may refer to many aspects. In this context Plummer [11] mentioned the so-called Big 8. According to Plummer [11] these are the most commonly considered dimensions, consisting of ethnic group, nationality, gender, organizational role or function, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical abilities and Religion [9; 11].

According to the Federal Statistical Office [5] 16.3 million people were registered with a migration background for the year 2012. Future projections indicate that the number of these groups will continue to increase and the existing workforce must be strengthened in order to achieve positive economic effects [3]. In Germany the numbers show that dealing with the aspect of migration should not be ignored and a systematic intervention is inevitable. The successful integration of migrants into society and the world of work is necessary to maintain the framework for a secured future life in Germany. This is the only way to ensure the competitiveness of companies within Germany, but also in international comparison.

Referred to Tjitra [13] the goal of a company should be to create intercultural synergies. This term was coined by Adler [1] and Harris and Moran [6] and in this context the input-process-output model was developed. The interaction of different cultures is considered as a cause of a synergy (input). Intercultural synergy is an automatic effect, based on the heterogeneity of the cultures. An organization is faced with this heterogeneity and has to deal with it effectively [1].

Therefore, the cross-cultural synergy is to be understood as an effective method to handle the cultural heterogeneity (process). The cultural differences must be considered as positive aspects and potential and the combination of the best of the culture leads to synergy. According to the model, this synergy leads to a special or better result and strengthens the company in competition (output) [13].

To achieve intercultural synergies both social skills and intercultural competence are important. There are different definitions for the concept of social skills. In this case, the definition of Kanning was used as a basis for this study. Kanning [8] referred to social skills the totality of knowledge, skills and abilities, which promotes the quality of the own social behavior [8].

The construct of social competence is a complex ability construct because it includes the components of assertiveness and relationship skills. If a person shows both components and if a person can create a balance between their own interests and the interests of his fellow men the person is called socially competent [2]. In the research literature the description of intercultural competence is very heterogeneous [4]. The definition of Alexander Thomas states that intercultural competence is the ability to grasp, respect, appreciate and use cultural conditions and factors that influence perception, judgment, sensation and action concerning oneself and other people productively [12]. On the one hand, a lack of intercultural competence complicates the work entry for migrants and on the other hand executives with low intercultural skills cannot judge the performance of people with a migration background correctly. This leads to interpreting different behavior caused by another culture as a deficit or as not fitting the profile. Finally, this leads to the fact that they interpret culturally-different behavior as a deficiency or non-compliance profile.

Method

Standardized telephone interviews were prepared and the interviews were conducted with executives and personal officers. The duration of the telephone interview varied from 20 and 30 minutes. The interview was recorded by using a tape recorder. After recording the interview was transcribed and presented in an anonymous form. Then the transcribed form was analyzed by quantitative content analysis [10].

In the present study, two research questions will be answered: First research question: Should the multipliers be more diversity-sensitive and should they develop specific competencies to enable the introduction and promotion of people with a migration background? Second research question: Are there

differences in the assessment of the multipliers regarding the stress levels of those with and without a migration background?

To answer the research questions several existing as well as specially adapted for this research purpose measuring instruments were used. The interview guide contains a total of 47 questions and it was received on the following aspects: biographical questions (10 questions), diversity (5 questions), social competence (7 questions), leadership (21 questions), stress (5 questions) und general competencies (6 questions). The phone interview includes closed and opened questions.

The sample consisted of a total of 30 people (17 executives and 13 personnel officer; ♀ = 13; ♂ = 17). 25 of the respondents showed no migration background. As a requirement for participation in the interview, the participants had to fulfil two conditions: Firstly, the people had to work at least in middle management and secondly, they had to work in the field of personnel selection. 17 HR managers were employed in middle management and six personnel managers were employed in senior management. Seven personnel managers did not wanted to give a statement. The company reported very different numbers of employees (Range: 54 to 170 000, M = 20 168). Concerning the professional experience, a total work experience of 16.95 years was recorded (SD = 10.83) and the average for professional experience specifically as a HR manager was 9.47 (SD = 7.31). The age ranged from 26 years to 52 years and the average was 40.83 years (SD = 9.31).

Results and Discussion

Concerning the first research question, whether the multipliers must be diversity-sensitive and should develop specific competencies to enable the entry and promotion of people with a migration background, two questions were evaluated from the interview guide. First, the participants have to answer a closed question. They should assess whether cultural stereotypes and prejudices have an impact on the selection of personnel and employee evaluations.

The statistical analyzes showed that half of the participants (15 people; 9 executives, 6 personnel officer) had the view that cultural stereotypes and prejudices have no influence of personnel and employee assessments, and the second half of the participants (15 people; 8 executives, 7 personnel officer) thought that they have an influence. Two of the statements made by people who were interviewed are presented below: Statement 1:»Yes I entirely admit, I fail again and again. For example, I have a problem with headscarfs. This is a very difficult issue as HR.«; statement 2: «I think a tiny bit. Nobody can make hands-free talking. […] I know when I think of a drawer. In individual interviews, I try to ask my questions in a different way again. […] I think nobody can acquit of these.«. It was also checked whether there are significant differences between the statements of the executives and the statements of the personnel officer.

For this, the X^2-test was used. The evaluations showed that the X^2-value according to Pearson was not significant (X^2 (1, N = 30) =.136, p>.05). Consequently, from the fact it can be concluded that there is no difference between

the two groups of people and only half of the participants believe that cultural stereotypes and prejudices have no control.

Moreover, the participants were asked whether social categorization and discrimination is important in recruitment and employee assessments. Again, the interviewees were given the opportunity to respond with yes and no. A total of 29 responses were evaluated. 21 HR managers had the opinion that social discrimination and categorization has no influence (11 executives, 10 personnel officer) and only 8 HR managers (6 executives, 2 personnel officer) stated that the phenomena have an influence on the selection of personnel and employee assessment. Similarly to the previous question, the X^2-test was performed to test whether there were significant differences between the groups. However, as with the previously evaluated question, the test is not significant (X^2 (1, $N = 29$) = 1.222, $p > .05$). Participants, who answered the question with «yes», had to tell an example. An interviewed person for example said: «Of course, that does not matter. Most important is the individual and what that person has done etc. I would never say that the cultural origin is important. [...] So I would say, for HR strategy it is important to map a diversity within the company and get this variety. But it is not the basis for positive discrimination.«. The results show that there are no differences in terms of social categorization and discrimination in personnel selection among executives and personnel officers. However, the HR managers are not aware that nowadays these phenomena have an influence on the selection of personnel and employee evaluations.

In the following, the second research question, whether there are differences between the assessment of the multipliers with respect to the stress levels of those with and without a migration background, should be answered. The assessment was carried out on a scale of one (not at all) to five (very). The mean values clearly show that the stress assessment for people with and without a migration background as well as the self-assessment respects to similarly pronounced stress levels: employees with migration background ($M = 3.26$, $SD =.9$), employees without migration background ($M = 3.26$, $SD =.94$) and own stress assessment ($M = 2.9$, $SD =.82$). Many interviewees said that the stress for people is identical with and without migration background. For example a personnel officer said: «I would not differentiate.«A further personnel officer gave the following statement: «That does not depend on migration background. I see, it's based on the complete team. It also depends on the area, in which the employees are employed.«. Whether the aspect of performance and task performance in relation to stress also plays an important role for people with and without a migration background, was affirmed by 26 interviewees. In assessing whether, performance and fulfillment of tasks in relation to stress in the interviewed person itself is important, 24 commitments were recorded. From the results we can conclude that managers and personnel officers have not recognized the added stress factor, which people with a immigrant background feel and they cannot sufficiently interact in the context of diversity-sensitive with these groups of people. Thus, the urgency of preparing for the topic of diversity has not yet been detected. The results illustrate that the

diversity principles should be more integrated into the company and management guidelines. Ideally, employees can internalize the pre-lived values and integrate into their actions. This is the most effective strategy to successfully deal with the changes of demographic change.

Diversity management aims therefore to create a corporate culture that is perceived in the workforce diversity as a resource and this is to be used as a strategic resource for the company's success [14]. However, at the moment there is no standard model for the implementation of diversity management. After extensive research, a model should be mentioned at this point.

It is based on a holistic and system-theoretical understanding of organizations and is primarily responsible for supporting staff in the implementation of diversity management. The model distinguishes five basic processes: Business context, actual analysis, business case and strategy, implementation of diversity management [15]. Finally, it should take into account that changes are dynamic in business and there is no panacea for the successful implementation [14]. Thus the presented model is a possibility of implementation, but every company should find the optimal solution with respect to the implementation of diversity management for themselves.

Further Research

For future research it might be interesting to review the results obtained from the interview with a questionnaire. Therefore, as a target group the range personnel selection should be selected. The target should be the verification of the hypotheses, based on the evaluations of these interviews.

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РІЗНОМАНІТНО-ЧУТЛИВИЙ ПЕРСОНАЛЬНИЙ МЕНЕДЖМЕНТ — КІЛЬКІСНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ПЕРСОНАЛУ З ПОЗИЦІЇ ПЕРСПЕКТИВ КАДРОВОГО МЕНЕДЖМЕНТУ

Резюме

У зв'язку з тим, що структура населення змінюється, конфронтація з різноманітністю стає все більш і більш важливою. Для аналізу перспектив HR-менеджерів, що стосуються різноманіття, 30 телефонних інтерв'ю були проведені з людьми з Німеччини. Результати нашого дослідження показують необхідність реалізації заходів з підтримки обізнаності різноманітності. Для майбутніх робіт видається цікавим розглянути результати, отримані з інтерв'ю із застосуванням опитувальників.

Ключові слова: різноманіття, міжкультурна компетенція, стрес.

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РАЗНООБРАЗНО-ЧУВСТВИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ПЕРСОНАЛЬНЫЙ МЕНЕДЖМЕНТ — КОЛИЧЕСТВЕННЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ПЕРСОНАЛА С ПОЗИЦИИ ПЕРСПЕКТИВ КАДРОВОГО МЕНЕДЖМЕНТА

Резюме

В связи с тем, что структура населения изменяется, конфронтация с разнообразием становится все более и более важной. Для анализа перспектив HR-менеджеров, касающихся многообразия, 30 телефонных интервью были проведены с людьми из Германии. Результаты нашего исследования показывают необходимость реализации мер по поддержке осведомленности разнообразия. Для будущих работ представляется интересным рассмотреть результаты, полученные из интервью с применением опросников.

Ключевые слова: многообразие, межкультурная компетенция, стресс