Competence assessment and development in India

Introduction

To survive and thrive in today's digital age, human resource (HR) managers and/or HR development (HRD) professionals need to keep their workforce engaged (Gupta and Shaheen, 2017, 2018; Gupta *et al.*, 2018) and up to date (Ananthram *et al.*, 2018). However, it requires identifying and bridging the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) gaps for each employee (Bohlouli *et al.*, 2017). With the help of sophisticated technologies, it has become simpler to manage and analyse a large amount of KSA data for employees (Lakshminarayanan *et al.*, 2016; Soja and Soja, 2017). Yet, the importance of collecting quality data remains intact (Molan *et al.*, 2018). This special section seeks to explore the challenges that the HR managers and the HRD professionals face in managing competency-based data.

The special section is expected to answer the following questions: Why do organisations opt for a particular competency mapping technique? What are the challenges that organisations face in implementing and executing competency techniques? How are competency techniques used in the workplace? and What areas for future research are associated with competency mapping?

Objective

The purpose of this special section is two-fold. The first objective is to examine and share the experiences of practitioners in mapping employee competencies. The second objective is to understand the challenges practitioners face in assessing employee competency in the digital age.

Contributions

This special section has two papers. The first paper is "Assessing the relevance of digital competences on business graduates' suitability for a job". The objective of this paper is to compare the digital and generally demanded competence by the job market. For this, the authors telephonically interviewed 992 team and HR managers. The final usable responses were 231. To analyse the data and test the hypotheses, the authors used partial least square modelling. The authors found that out of the five dimensions of digital competence, four including communication, content creation safety and problem solving had a significant impact on the candidate's suitability for the post. The authors emphasised on the need to match the digital competence required by the organisations and the one developed by the training centres.

In the second article in this special section titled "A competency framework for contractual workers of manufacturing sector", the authors developed a competency dictionary and model for contractual workers in the Indian steel manufacturing sector. To accomplish this objective, the authors interviewed 30 supervisors and analysed the data using behavioural events interviews. The findings of their study revealed that the competencies could be categorised into knowledge, skills and attitudes. The authors then used them to develop a competency dictionary with behavioural indicators. It was coupled with a framework to map and evaluate the various competencies. Their paper is expected to help HR practitioners implement competency-based HR processes including recruitment and selection, training and development, and performance management particularly for the contractual workers in the manufacturing sector.

This paper forms part of a special section "Competence assessment and development in India".

Conclusion

The objective of identifying the competencies and analysing the data using rigorous competency mapping technique was realised in this special section. Both the papers contributed to this special section revealed competencies that can be readily used by the managers to assess their workforce.

References

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