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Competencies Analysis for Future Employees to Optimize Organizational Performance

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Abstract:

Human resource management as a strategic function looks for different management skills in the candidates during recruitment process. Having management skills in the form of competencies are crucial to optimize organizational performance. Therefore, analysis of competencies is essential for the candidates who will be the future employees to understand the strategic directions of an organization. The objective of this study was to identify the competencies which were required in the future employees by the human resource management to increase performance of an organization. This research has been accomplished by analyzing the application of competencies in candidates who were seeking jobs in Malaysia. A qualitative research method has been chosen by having in-depth interviews of six graduates of business and management studies from Kuala Lumpur. Data has been analyzed systematically using NVivo computer program. The findings of this study revealed that the job seekers are not well aware of the required competencies by the prospective employers. Comfortable job and good working environment were the most desirable preferences of job seekers to ensure their carrier path and overall performance. Professional knowledge and communication skills were the most significant competencies stated by 66% of job seekers. This study can be beneficial to the candidates for preparing themselves more effectively according to the desired competencies by the employers to sustain in the ever-challenging job market in 21st century. The investigation can be carried out with more specific job industry with larger sample size for better results as a scope in future.

Keywords: Competencies, employees, organizations, performance

1. Introduction

In 21st century, organizations are seeking to create more competition among them by taking emerging markets, more customers, more sales and profit. To become a global leader, many organizations are setting their goals by having innovative products, steady growth rate, improving quality, productivity and achieving sales target. The recognition of these goals achieves through the human resource management in an organization. The relation of human resource management and strategic management has been shaped by beginning of another order for the most part known as strategic HRM (Wright and McMahan, 1992). HRM has been the most significant part of the management science that went with authoritative succession plan. The management sciences have been considerably more evolved and spread as a result of their immediate effect on the truth of people and social orders. Its underlying foundations are as old as people where individuals share duties to discover sustenance, plants and cooking managed by the industrial revolution (Price, 2007). As the way to progress, HRM accomplishes the success of organizational performance.

Globally, organizations are having shortage of experienced employees which impacts very slow growth rate in the organizational success. The radical management changes require the operations of HRM to continuously think and react to challenging situations. The process of identifying and developing effective workforce is required as experienced current employees are switching randomly. Certain competencies are required by HRM for selective individuals to become future

employees. Competencies are conceptualized differently in different countries as work ethics, behaviors, communication styles, and employer-employee relationships are also different in different countries (Kowske & Anthony, 2007). There are many competencies studied in social science. Here, the question is what competencies in a person to become an employee are required by the human resource management and how the strategy followed to increase overall performance of an organization? Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the competencies which were required in the future employees to optimize organizational performance.

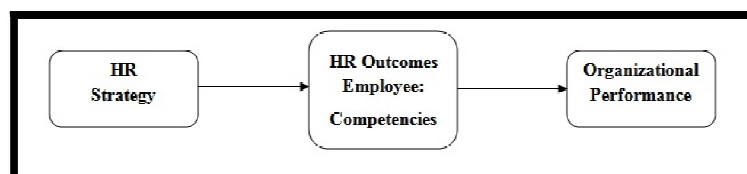
Numerous researchers said that the accomplishment of the association relies upon its representatives and their conduct while executing a marketable strategy (Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Delery and Doty, 1996; Wright and McMahan, 1992; Dyer, 1984). Also, those associations that can guide and impact the conduct of their employees can contend, remain and perform better (Huselid, 1995). Pfeffer (1995) and Osterman (1994) additionally accentuate that utilizing HR methodology as support, inspiration, strengthening, preparing, safe business, and expertise improvement prompts expanded generation, execution and benefit. HRM assumes a fundamental job concerning workforces as how to enroll them and spot them on their particular areas that suit them appropriately and where their aptitudes, effectiveness and ability can be used accurately. In this way, any inability to oversee HR as proficiently as conceivable can quickly and definitely influence the techniques and targets of organizational performance.

2. Literature Review

Human resource management (HRM) strategy has been defined as “processes that plan to deploy human resources, and activities aimed at achieving the organization's goal” (Wright & McMahan, 1992). This definition expounds an immediate effect on the outcome of the company and believes exercises to be a part of the HRM. The effect of HRM and its connection to the presentation of the company has been reflected, making the company's exhibition subject to its capacity to find a powerful workforce (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990). Past analysts demonstrated that the execution of HRM technique emphatically influences the presentation of the company and makes a sort of cooperative energy and fellowship among their workers (Schmidt and Hayes 2002; Hilsop, 2003; Morrow and McElroy, 2003).

HRM technique speaks to an exhaustive procedure for setting up an arrangement for the execution of HRM capacity dependent on the key heading of the company. It centers primarily on workforce management, workforce allocation, training and development, rewards and motivation, employee relationships. Along these lines, the HRM technique can be characterized as a lot of strategies and practices intended to progress in the direction of the commitment of workforce capital to the accomplishment of the association's goals (Delery and Doty, 1996). As per Bryson and Ryan (2012), the corporate insurgency and solid challenge inside the market have prompted the improvement of HRM to turn into a powerful procedure that influences the general execution of the association. Improvements in public activity, human and management sciences have been reflected in HR, moving from the investigation of individuals' conduct to learning dependent on exact proof. In this way, it is a mix of methodologies that adjust to the everyday work inside the association and develops after some time and rise of new difficulties (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). All things considered, Minbaeva (2005) brought up that the viability and effect of HRM technique is estimated by its capacity to create skills, make social connections, and optimize organizational performance.

The relationship between strategic HRM and organizational performance has been widely studied in many researches (Arthur, 1994; Dalton, 2003; Datta et al., 2003; Gollan, 2005; Huselid, 1995; Whicker & Andrews, 2004). In light of past studies, HR procedure is centered on continuous evaluation of organizational performance, career management, reward system, training, development, education and employment. Most part of past research has demonstrated that there is a positive connection between the HRM strategy and the organizational performance, and generally centered around estimating cost related functions, work fulfillment, motivators, and other HR procedure approaches. In any case, not many of these studies indicated the part that identifies with the scholastic viewpoint and investigation of the capabilities of future employees. Job seekers are future employees of an organization who tends to prove the required competencies by HRM function during recruitment process. In this study, the relationship between strategic HRM and organizational performance has been linked through competencies of employees in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: The Relationship between Strategic HRM and Organizational Performance
Adapted From Armstrong (2006)*

Competencies have been defined as “more than just knowledge and skills which engages the capability to meet up complex demands by drawing on and assembling psychosocial resources in a particular context” (OECD, 2005, 4). For example, the talent to communicate successfully is a competency which may be inspired by a person's knowledge of language, practical experience and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating. Kabir, Robel and Hashim (2017) suggested ten lead competencies which are required to develop for an individual to excel organizational performance. Competencies are being studied for centuries. We can follow them in any event back to the medieval guilds, where students learned abilities by working with a mentor. Currently, teachers have made reams of learning and abilities

records to help educational modules development in schools. Scientific classifications of objects for the psychological, social, and effective domain which includes information, aptitudes and frames of mind/values/responsibilities have been assembled and reconsidered. In the job industry, the word “competencies” may have one of 2 major implications (McLagan, 1997). Some competencies relate to the job which includes the task, result and desired outcome. Others relates to the quality of the person doing the job which includes knowledge, skills and attitudes. The final structure of competencies is a mixer of the two (McLagan, 1997).

OECD (2005) defined the two competencies classification as technical competency and core competency. Technical competencies are specific competencies which generally required performing a given job within a job family. It covers different fields of knowledge relevant to the specific job to perform. Technical competencies are at the heart of what we do. Technical competency requirements to perform a specified job successfully are asked by the employers in the job vacancy announcements. Core competencies are competencies which go over the abilities that are vital across all jobs. The importance of core competencies may differ according to the specific job responsibilities and requirements. The OECD Competency Framework portrays fifteen core competencies grouped into three clusters, the delivery-related competencies, interpersonal competencies, and strategic competencies.

The SCANS (1991, i) study report acknowledged a five-competency framework that built on a three-part levels of personal qualities and foundation skills for getting success in the modern workplace. Persons in the workplace should be able to creatively use resources; interpersonal skills; information; systems; and technology. These competencies require a foundation of the basic skills of reading, writing, arithmetic, speaking, and listening; the thinking skills of solving problems and reasoning among others; and the personal qualities of individual responsibility, sociability, self-management, self-esteem, and integrity. Based on this framework, Finegold and Notabartolo (2008) regrouped the competencies framework (Table 1) to act upon challenges of 21st century job market.

Analytic Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Ability to Execute	Information Processing	Capacity for Change
Critical thinking	Communication	Initiative and self-direction	Information literacy	Creativity / innovation
Problem solving	Collaboration	Productivity	Media literacy	Adaptive learning / learning to learn
Decision making	Leadership and responsibility		Digital citizenship	Flexibility
Research and inquiry			ICT operations and concepts	

Table 1: List of 21st Century Competencies – Revised Grouping by Finegold and Notabartolo (2008)

Educational Research Institute of Poland published a book written by Sienkiewicz et al. (2014) where they framed 13 basic competencies expected from job seekers which are Professional knowledge, Teamwork, Team management (motivating, control, organization, planning), Communication skills, Independence, Innovativeness, Creativity, Risk-taking, Coping with uncertainty, Problem-solving, Responsibility, Flexibility, and Resistance to stress. Pandey & Guha (2014) concluded in their study that strategic management of human resources play significant role in developing competency required at work place. Organizations are coming to the point that competencies can be used to prevail over financial crisis and also at the time of market permanence and development.

Based on the above literature, there are many competencies which applicable to job seekers during recruitment process. Sometimes academic lessons are not sufficient enough for a job seeker if that person does not possess practical experience to gain such competencies. The argument centered on whether the job seekers are well aware of the competencies required by employers and what are they. Therefore, in this study, the research focused on competencies gained by job seekers to cope with current management practices.

3. Methods

This study performed a qualitative research design to identify the expectations and competencies gained by management graduates about the impact of human resource management strategy on organizational performance. According to Somekh & Lewin (2005), methodology of human resource is the interpretive paradigm, which recognizes subjectivity while implicitly adopting the perspective of the sociology of regulation. Qualitative research method undertaken in this research was semi-structured interviews. The sample consisted of graduates from International Islamic University Malaysia located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Criteria for sample selection were that the respondent had completed Masters or PhD and age exceeded twenty-one. This group of respondents was the ideal candidate who looks for a job in the market. The participants were selected using non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique. The members of the sample were communicated directly and agreed with them for the interview on the appropriate date and time. After taking consent from the participants, the interviews were conducted with semi-structured questionnaires. It is then being written literally into transcriptions. The research was limited to a number of six interviews and was held from 7 to 14 May, 2019. The questions were clearly open-ended, giving the participants the freedom to express their opinion and to clarify their point of view comfortably. After that, NVivo computer program (version 11) has been used to analyze the data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

4. Analysis

In this research, all the interviews were transcribed and coded separately before analyzed them by NVivo. Total 4550 words, 225 paragraphs and 139 text references were found in 6 interview transcripts (Table 2).

	Total Words in Source	Total Paragraphs in Source	Number of Nodes Coding Source	Coded Percentage of Source	Number of Text References	Number of Audio Video References	Number of Image References
Transcript 1	890	38	1	0.1677	38	0	0
Transcript 2	624	35	1	0.1433	17	0	0
Transcript 3	705	37	1	0.1331	17	0	0
Transcript 4	610	40	1	0.1905	20	0	0
Transcript 5	1002	37	1	0.1505	28	0	0
Transcript 6	719	38	1	0.1637	19	0	0

Table 2: Summary of Total Transcripts

From the word cloud (Figure 2), it can be seen that “Organization”, “Human” and “Management” are the three most spoken words in the interviews. From the tree map (Figure 3) of words, it shows the mapping of words in a form of a tree.



Figure 2: Word Cloud

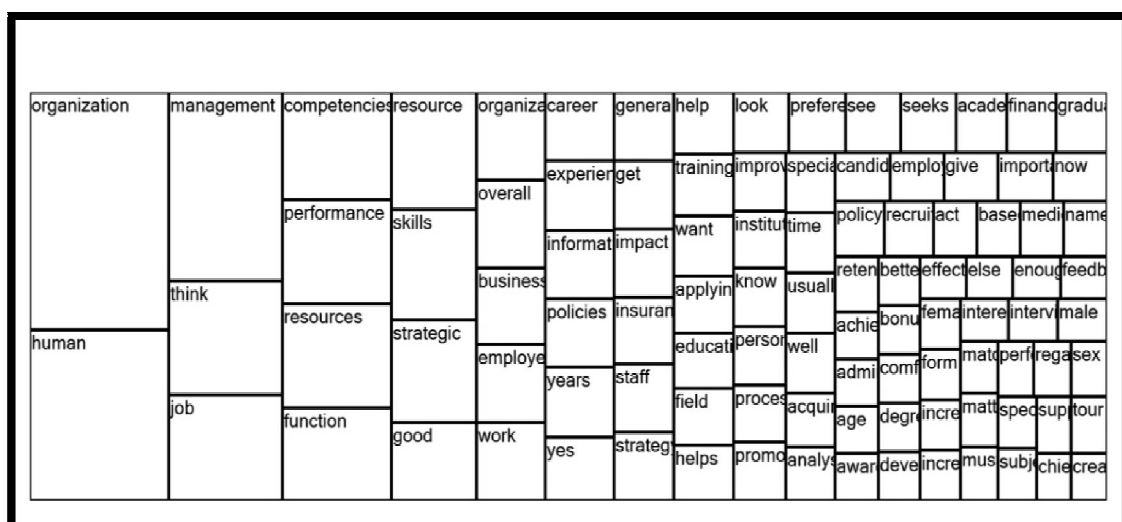


Figure 3: Tree Map

From the cluster analysis diagram(Figure 4), the category of words clustered in each category has been shown.

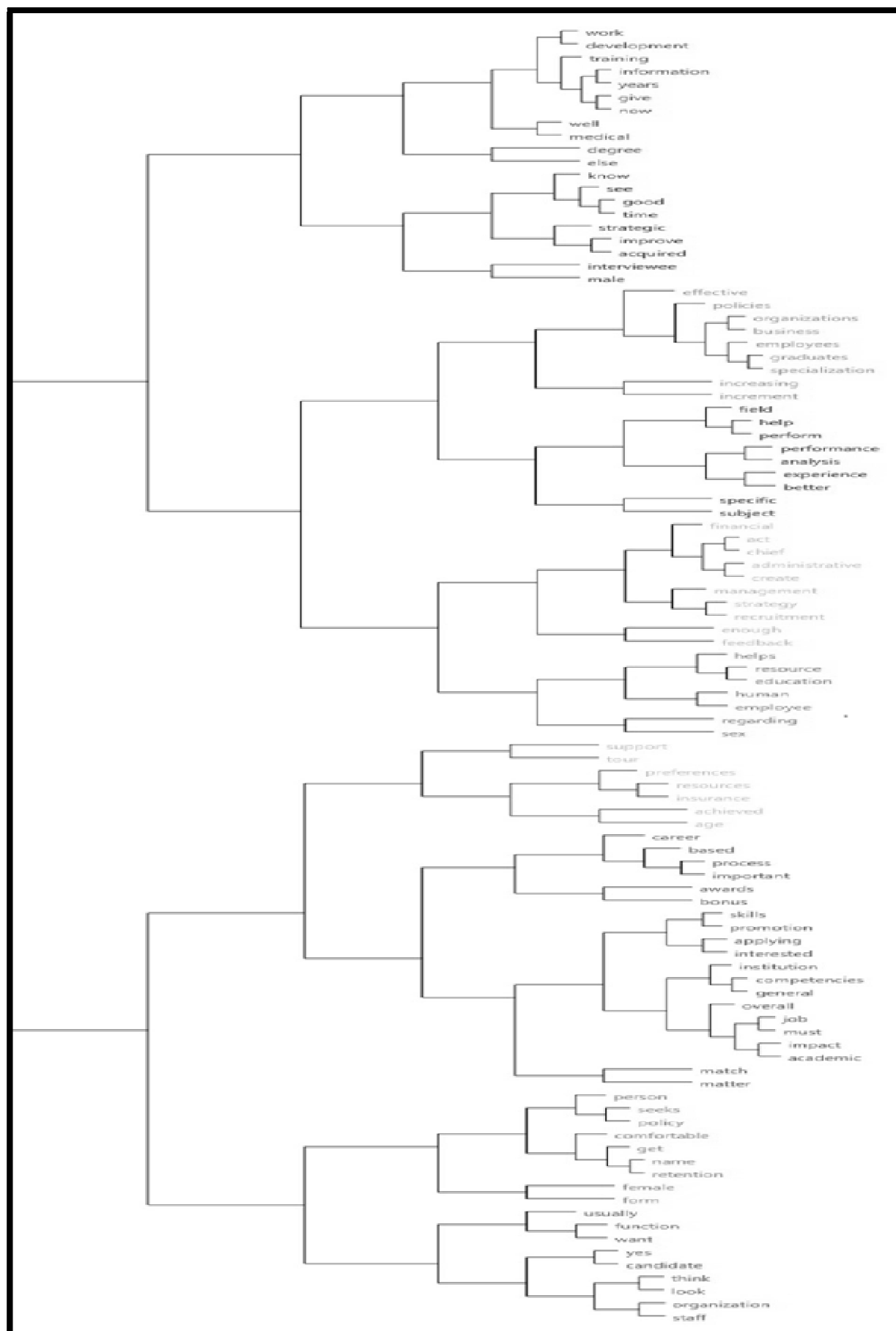


Figure 4: Cluster Analysis Report

There are other two reports which compare the number of nodes by its coding references (Figure 5) and number of nodes by its items coded (Figure 6).

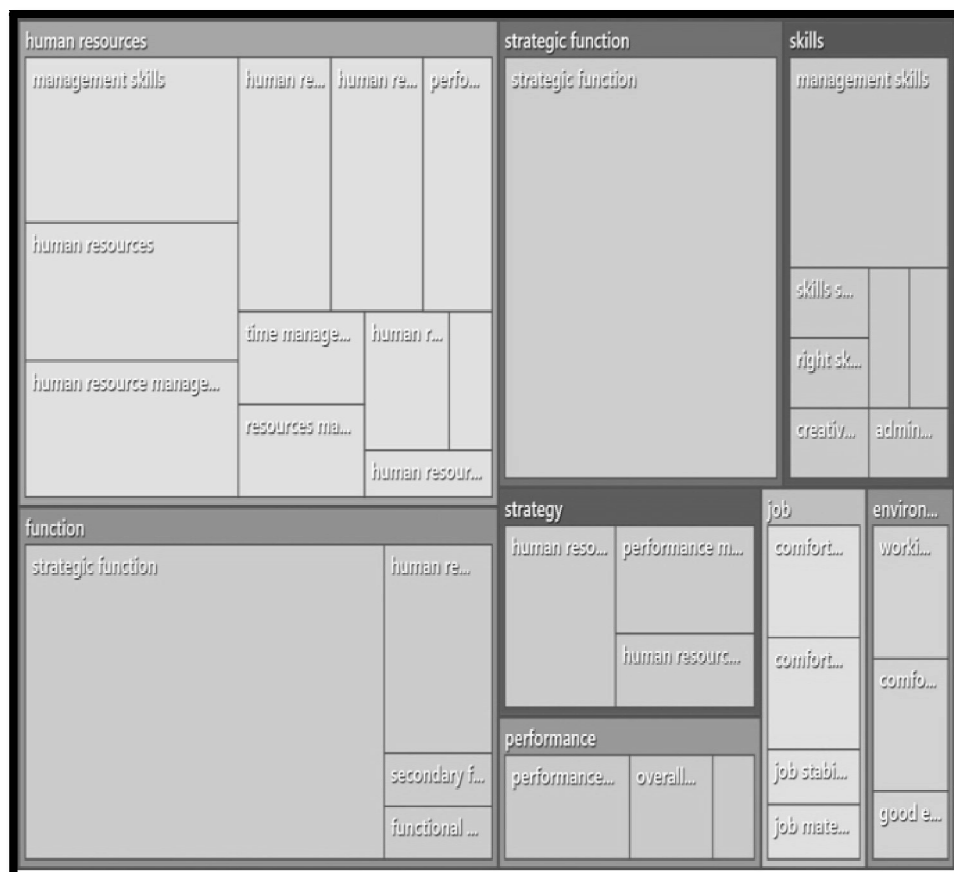


Figure 5: Nodes Compared by Number of Coding References

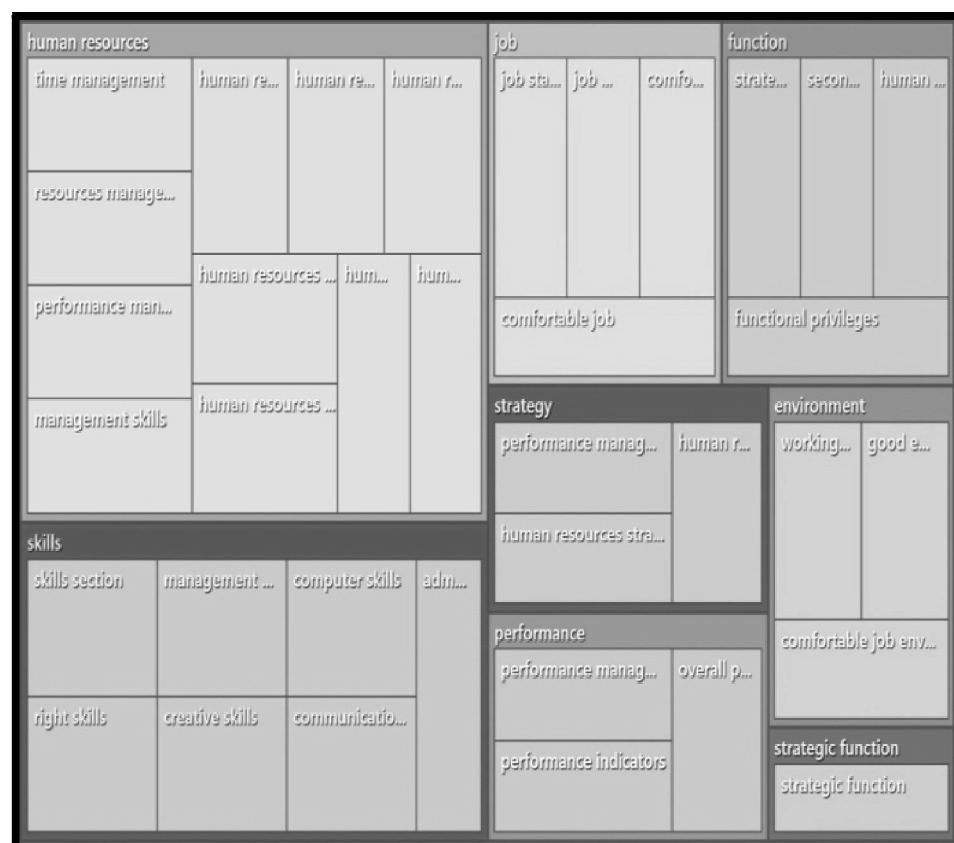


Figure 6: Nodes Compared by Number of Items Coded

Total 662 words were being coded from all 6 transcripts. The summary of total codes has been shown in Table 3. These codes were then recoded and grouped under certain categories. Each category has been then labeled and put inside a table which has been considered as themes. From this table it can be seen that, "Organization" being the highest spoken word where Human Resource Management is an integral part. The second highest spoken word is "Human" which refers to the employees of the organization. The themes which have been developed from the codes are indexed in Table 4 according to their coded reference. 1 (one) being the highest reference and 6 (six) being the lowest reference among the derived themes.

Source Type	Number of Sources	Number of Coding References	Number of Words Coded	Number of Paragraphs Coded
Codes_Transcript_1	1	38	133	38
Codes_Transcript_2	1	17	81	17
Codes_Transcript_3	1	17	88	17
Codes_Transcript_4	1	20	108	20
Codes_Transcript_5	1	28	141	28
Codes_Transcript_6	1	19	111	19

Table 3: Summary of Total Codes

Hierarchy	Themes
1	Human Resource Management
2	Strategic Function
3	Management Skills
4	Comfortable Job
5	Working Environment
6	Overall Performance

Table 4: Themes-Hierarchy

5. Findings

There were strong inter-relationships among the themes derived from the interviews (Creswell, 2007). From the six themes it can be said that, human resource management is a strategic function requires management skills in the employees to ensure comfortable job opportunity and working environment for the overall performance of an organization. This statement clearly identifies the similarity of what the research objective was in this study. From the interviews, demographic information (Table 5) indicates the validity of certain age group, educational background, specialization, job experience of the respondents which were ideal for the subject matter studied.

Demographic Variable	Interview 1	Interview2	Interview3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Interview 6
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age (Years)	21-25	36-40	26-30	26-30	21-25	31-35
Education	MBA	PhD	DBA	MBA	MBA	DBA
Specialization	Finance	BA	HRM	Finance	Finance	Marketing
Job Experience (Years)	3	6	6	0	5	5

Table 5: Demographic Information of Respondents

Most respondents answered about comfortable job as a preference while they choose organizations. Management skill was the most desirable one for employees to have lead competencies. Suitable work environment was the most required one from organizations as a retention policy answered by the respondents. They also agreed upon human resource department as a strategic function and it helps organizations to achieve better performance. They do not have adequate knowledge about competencies. Four of the respondents were focused about their carrier path, future prospect, but rest two was confused. They were interested about discussing competencies and keen to see the outcome from this study. The name of the competencies which they have acknowledged has been marked(✓) in Table 6 of competency profile.

Name of Competencies	Job Seeker 1	Job Seeker 2	Job Seeker 3	Job Seeker 4	Job Seeker 5	Job Seeker 6
Professional knowledge	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
Teamwork				√		
Team management				√		√
Communication skills	√		√	√	√	
Independence						
Innovativeness						
Creativity					√	
Risk-taking		√				
Coping with uncertainty		√				
Problem-solving				√		
Responsibility						
Flexibility				√		
Resistance to stress						

Table 6: Competencies Profile of Job Seekers

6. Discussion

Each of the respondents agreed upon their learning received from educational institutions on business management which have a significant impact on their capability building and the development of their competencies and skills. Schools of Business Administration have an integrated and comprehensive program designed for all management and financial skills to develop. This education gives students a range of skills such as time management, working in a team, solving critical problems, learning different languages and usage of computer software. Hence, one of the interviewees said: *"I have learned to praise all of these skills, whether administrative, financial or communicative."*

About getting input from the companies, respondents have stated that they receive criticism approach with candidates who are respected. The companies are not obliged to give input to candidates, yet in some cases they give to keep a record. One interviewee contended that criticism comes as association with the companies which frequently relies upon the connections that the candidate has inside the company and could really compare to the capabilities and skills. Hence, one of the interviewees said:

"Through my experience in dealing with organizations at recruitment, the relationships (social relationships, friendship) are the most important when hiring, and then comes the specialization and certificates after that."

The interviewees thought about that the incorporation of HRM in the whole management system of the company as a key capacity positively affects the exhibition of the company and expands the adequacy of its presentation. The achievement of the company is connected to the presence of HRM as a vital strategic function. A company where HRM is a strong capacity is certainly not a cutting-edge association. Hence, one of the interviewees said:

"Human resource management (HRM) is a strategic and supportive function at the same time, because it supports all other departments in their functions by dealing with employees."

A portion of the interviewees said about that the association which is keen on creating the management skills through the preparation of its workers is reflected in the expansion of its presentation. HRM in decent associations looks for the most elevated abilities in candidates to get the best result in the briefest time. One of the interviewees pointed out that managerial skills are different from one job to another and said:

"The skills of a technological job different from the managerial function, the skills of an accounting function different from the marketing function and the planning differences from the public relations."

In any case, the greater part of them accept that there are general abilities that must be met in each activity, for instance, communication capabilities, management skills, or planning expertise. About optimizing organizational performance, one of the interviewees said:

"No one can deny that the comfortable job and the good working environment make the employee do his work with the maximum energy and the best performance."

This demonstrates the significance of an agreeable occupation and great workplaces are superior to having money related benefits which will guide the future employees to perform well and offer loyalty towards the organization.

Through the analysis of competencies, the impact of strategic human resource management to optimize performance of the organization, it is seen from this research that the consensus of the interviewees about management skills playing a major role in doing so. These results correspond to the competency framework developed by Finegold and

Notabartolo (2008) where it explains that comfortable job relates to flexibility under the competency group "Capacity for Change". Management skills are defined by "Interpersonal Skills", although the respondents did not aware details on it. Professional knowledge and Communication skills are the two most (4 participants out of 6 means 66%) significant competencies found in this study. Teamwork, Creativity, Risk-taking, coping with uncertainty, Problem-solving, and Flexibility are the least significant ones (1 participant out of 6 means 16%) whereas Independence, Innovativeness, Responsibility, and Resistance to stress are not recognized by the respondents. This is a clear indication of weakness between the understanding of job seekers and human resource managers regarding competencies. In present scenario of job market, proactive action to align these unrecognized competencies can be a competitive advantage for job seekers to get better jobs quickly and sustainably.

7. Recommendation

Organizations around the world develop different strategic plans to get success. They create a long-term vision and short-term mission for their future. They also make strategies to reach their goal and create certain policies, values which they usually try to follow in their daily operations. Human resource management is one of the functions which strategically create values in an organization for the employees to sustain in the potential future leadership roles. HR department recruits people with lead competencies and retain them in various ways to keep them in the organization. But employees are not fully aware of these values or competencies and fail to perform. Therefore, HRM in an organization should act as a strategic function rather than a support function. Thus, it can be more efficient for a department who recruits the employees and retain them. Employees are the main productive source of an organization. Productivity reflects on revenue and overall performance of an organization. HR strategy plays critical role for employees to demonstrate their competencies that the organization is striving to achieve its goal. HR managers' ask different management skills in the form of competencies while advertising jobs, but these competencies are not well aware by the candidates due to lack of orientation from education institutes or self-learning. Students, who are graduating from schools and looking for a job, need to understand different competencies requirement under given competition in the job market. There are competency-based interviewee preparation programs conducted by different human resource development consultancy firms which can be a good option for interviewees to learn about applications of different competencies.

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