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Research Paper

A study of the status quo and favorable status of succession management deployment from the viewpoint of faculty members at Kermanshah university of medical sciences

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Abstract

Successful succession management is one of the necessities in any organization, especially universities. In the management of higher education, succession planning deployment requires proprietary methods. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the status quo and favorable status of succession management deployment from the viewpoint of faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2017. In this descriptive-analytic and cross-sectional study, 95 faculty members were selected from the Departments of Basic Sciences and Clinical Sciences using nonrandom quota sampling. As for data collection, the Kim's succession planning questionnaire was employed. To analyze data, the SPSS Statistical Software Version 23.0 and the statistical tests of paired t-test, Chi-square and ANOVA were used to compare the status quo of succession management deployment with its favorable status and to study its decisive factors. The results of the present study revealed that there was a significant difference between the status quo and favorable status of t succession management deployment ($P<0.0001$). The results also demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the status quo of succession management deployment and its favorable status in terms of policy setting, evaluation of candidates, development of candidates, and system evaluation ($P<0.001$). Moreover, the results indicated that the greatest deployment in the status quo was related to the evaluation of candidates whereas the greatest deployment in the favorable status belonged to policy setting. The findings of the present study demonstrated that there was a clear gap between the status quo and favorable status of succession management deployment from the perspective of faculty members. Hence, it is recommended that qualifications-based selection be employed as the basis on which succession management and talent management can be deployed successfully and effectively at medical universities.

Keywords: *Management; Succession Management; Health-Oriented Organizations.*

1. Introduction

The emergence of social organizations and their ever-increasing expansion are one of the most prominent features of human civilization. Thus, due to the various spatial and temporal factors and the specific characteristics and needs of societies, these organizations develop more and more by each passing day. The future belongs to organizations that use all of their potential and actual capabilities in the face of new challenges [1-2]. One of the actions that have created fundamental transformations based on the organized insight in human resources is the implementation of succession planning in organizations. The concept of succession planning refers to a process through which organization's human talents are identified for key occupations and positions in the future, and employees can be prepared through a variety of training programs for the intended positions [3]. According to Peter Drucker, leaders are made, but not born with innate qualities. So, there should be systematic approaches in organizations whereby future skills and competences are nurtured [4]. Succession management is a process by which suitable forces are selected from among qualified and talented individuals to hold key positions, such as top managerial positions [5]. Few organizations rely on identification and development of intra-organizational (initially) and extra-organizational managerial talents for their planning. Succession planning is done through a process called 'talent management.' Through this process, the organization's human capacities for key occupations and positions in coming years are identified, and employees will be prepared for these occupations and responsibilities through a variety of training programs [6].

There are several models in the organizational arena for the successful implementation of succession management. The simplest model of succession management is a set of systematic steps that allow one to continue another person's method in time and space. This definition does not refer to the steps of succession planning, but it simply emphasizes the new person's continuing with activities performed by previous people.

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2. Succession management

Mentoring Model: Identifying potential talents for managerial positions and transferring knowledge, experience and skills of senior managers to them will allow for the interaction between the experienced and inexperienced staff, thereby leading to the transfer of experienced staff's knowledge and experience to juniors and making them more qualified to fill higher positions [7].
Leadership Pipeline Model: This model is a kind of planned career path designed to develop the skills of senior leaders and executives in organizations. In this model, individuals learn new methods of management and leadership and quit the old ones [7].
Rothwell's Seven-pointed Star Model: In this model, prospective managers are selected through following seven steps: 1) making the commitment, 2) assessing the present work, 3) appraisal of individual performance, 4) assessing the future work, 5) assessing the individual's future potential, 6) closing the developmental gap, and 7) evaluating the succession planning program [5].
Key jobs are in fact the kind of jobs that play decisive roles in the future of organizations and make it difficult for employers to find qualified workforce for the intended positions [8]. As a prime example, one of the key jobs in societies is being a faculty member. Universities are vital institutions in the process of development of countries, through which the economic, social, political and cultural development of societies are facilitated in addition to producing knowledge and information. This influential institution is managed by instructors and faculty members working in it. In educational organizations, although industrial trade and competition are not involved, there is competition for attracting and retaining talented managers and staff and developing their skills. Research on succession planning in organizations, especially educational organizations, is very limited, and the existing literature review does not fully reflect all aspects of succession planning. Therefore, it should be noted that the results of other management domains cannot be generalized to succession management in the field of higher education [9], [10]. Furthermore, medical universities also suffer from the lack of knowledge and implementation of succession management [11]. For instance, the results of a study conducted at the level of managers of the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education were indicative of the gap between the status quo and the favorable status of succession management [12]. The need for increasing knowledge and awareness of the importance of succession management in health-related and medical organizations is essential towards the prevention of specialized workforce turnover [13]. Given the existing presumptions, the present study was conducted for the first time at the level of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences with the aim of studying the feasibility of deploying succession planning in health-oriented organizations from the viewpoint of faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences.

3. Method

In this descriptive-analytic and cross-sectional study, the statistical population consisted of 430 faculty members from the Schools of Medicine, Paramedics, Dentistry, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Health, Nursing, and Midwifery at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. In these schools, 430 faculty members were teaching, of which the sample volume was estimated to be 95 subjects using the Cochran's Sample Size Formula at the confidence level of 0.95. Moreover, sampling was carried out using the quota sampling. As for data collection, the Kim's succession planning questionnaire was employed, whose Cronbach's alpha measured 0.82 [14], [15]. The questionnaire prepared on base of mentoring model in Succession Management and consisted of 32 questions with Likert scale (1=very low, 2=low, 3=average, 4=high, and 5=very high) in two columns to examine the status quo (utilization rate of each factor) and favorable status (significance of each factor). Furthermore, direct questions were asked about all indexes in the questionnaire. In addition, the components of the questionnaire included: policy setting (Q 1-4: senior managers' commitment to succession planning and Q 5-8: identification of key positions), evaluation of candidates (Q-12: determining the competencies required for key positions and Q 13-16: identifying candidates), development of candidates (Q 17-20: out-of-job practices and Q 21-24: on-the-job practices), and system evaluation (Q 25-28: process and Q 29-32: result). At the beginning of the questionnaire, there were several questions asking about the subjects' demographic information: age, marital status, level of education, academic rank, gender, work experience, and type of employment. As for data analysis, the SPSS Statistical Software Version 23.0 was applied, and paired t-test, ANOVA and chi-square were used to compare the status quo and favorable status of succession planning at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha was employed to calculate the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire.

4. Findings

Prior to hypothesis testing, the distribution of the data of each hypothesis was first determined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, and the parametric statistical tests were used for data analysis. Additionally, mean and standard deviation were employed for ranking the components. The final sample size of the present study was 95 faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. Moreover, the mean age of the samples was 42.96 (+/-7.69) and the samples' average work experience was 8.82 years (+/-5.86). In Table 1, other qualitative demographic characteristics of the samples are shown.

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of Faculty Members

Variables	Groups	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Gender	Male	55	57.9
	Female	40	42.1
Marital Status	Married	73	76.8
	Single	21	23.2
Education	Master of Arts	17	17.9
	EdD	14	14.7
	PhD	64	67.4
Academic Rank	Instructor	19	20
	Assistant Professor	60	63.2
	Associate Professor	14	14.7
	Full Professor	2	2.1
Type of Employment	Fixed-term	21	22.1
	Fixed-term/Probation	18	17.9
	Contract	28	29.5
	Apprenticeship	6	6.3
	K Coefficient	22	24.2
Faculty of Teaching	Clinical Sciences	48	50.5
	Basic Sciences	47	49.5

Table 2: A Summary of the Descriptive Statistics of the Components of Succession Management Deployment

Main hypothesis	Mean	Standard Deviation	Total score
Status Quo	64.28	19.66	6701
Favorable Status	131	22.33	12445
Statistical Test	t-test	-	-
Interpretation	P<0.001	statistically significant difference	

Table.3: A Summary of the Descriptive Statistics of the Components of Results of Four Sub-Hypotheses Based on Paired T-Test of the Status Quo and Favorable Status Succession Management Deployment

Subsidiary Components	Mean		Standard Deviation		Statistical Test	Interpretation
	Status Quo	Favorable Status	Status Quo	Favorable Status		
Policy Setting	14.48	37.35	6.01	6.31	t=-22.22 df=188 p<0.0001	statistically significant difference
Evaluation of Candidates	18.11	33.13	5.81	6.71	t=-16.48 df=188 p<0.0001	statistically significant difference
Development of Candidates	16.44	31.97	5.66	6.74	t=-17.18 df=188 p<0.0001	statistically significant difference
system Evaluation	15.24	31.52	5.85	7.34	t=-16.90 df=179 p<0.0001	statistically significant difference

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α=0.967). The results of the present study demonstrated that the research hypothesis, "There is a significant difference between the status quo and favorable status of succession management at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences," was supported (P<0.0001) (see Table 2). As shown in Table 3, the highest deployment in the status quo and the favorable status of succession management deployment belonged to the evaluation of candidates and policy setting, respectively. However, the lowest deployment in the status quo and the favorable status of succession management deployment belonged to policy setting and system evaluation, respectively. In terms of the analysis of four main components of succession management deployment in the status quo, all of the items in the questionnaire measured less than three, i.e. they were weak.

As for the favorable status, the means of items in the questionnaire were higher than four except for items 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24, an indication of the significance of these items in the favorable status of succession management from the viewpoint of faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences.

As for the existence of statistical correlation between the demographic variables and the establishment of succession management in health-oriented organizations in the status quo and favorable status from the perspective of faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, it was concluded that there were not significant differences between the two variables in terms of gender, marital status, type of employment and the scientific ranks of faculty members (p<0.001).

In terms of the place of teaching (basic sciences faculty or clinical sciences faculty), no significant difference was observed between the faculty members of basic sciences or clinical sciences in terms of the favorable status as opposed to a meaningful difference in terms of the status quo (p=0.098). The ANOVA Test was applied to compare the favorable status (P=0/001) and status quo (P=0/01) of succession planning in terms of educational qualifications. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between faculty members in this respect. Furthermore, Tukey's Test showed these differences in the status quo (P=0.001) and favorable status between the doctoral degrees and other degrees.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to investigate the relationship between the status quo and favorable status of succession management and faculty members' age and work experience. The results indicated that there was a weak relationship between the status quo of succession management and age (r=0.1) as opposed to a relative relationship with work experience (r=0.43). However, a relative relationship was found between the favorable status of succession management and age (r=0.4) as opposed to a strong relationship with work experience (r=0.95).

In general, the results were indicative of the weakness of deploying succession management in the status quo and its importance in the favorable status, an indication of the existence of a gap between the establishment of succession management in the status quo and favorable status from the point of view of faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences.

5. Discussion

One of the major challenges faced by organizations is the increasing need for capable managers in coming years. So, considering succession management in organizations is of prime importance. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the status quo and favorable status of succession management deployment from the viewpoint of faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2017. The findings of the present study revealed that there was the possibility of deploying succession playing at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences from the viewpoint of faculty members, but it was believed that there was a clear gap between the status quo and favorable status of succession management deployment. This finding was consistent with the results of a study performed by Mehrtak et al. [12]. In the present study, the viewpoints of faculty members about succession management deployment were studied whereas in a study done Mehrtak et al. [12], the viewpoints of the managers at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education were focused on, and the combination of employment at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education in terms of education level and field of study was different from many other organizations. Additionally, it seems that the findings of the study performed by Mehrtak et al. [12] cannot be generalized very much to other organizations [12].

In the introduction section of the article, it was pointed out that the results of other areas of management cannot be generalized to the field of higher education, and the gap in the implementation of these programs in medical universities of the country is tangible and visible. More to the point, this management gap has not been addressed in many articles.

One of the studies that addressed the pathology of succession management at Gonabad University of Medical Sciences was conducted by Javanbakht [16]. Although the statistical population of this study consisted of senior managers and experts working at Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, the findings suggested that there were not enough continuous support and guidance by senior managers to successfully implement the succession management, and experienced and old managers could not facilitate the successful implementation of succession management and talent management at Gonabad University of Medical Sciences. Therefore, more serious attention should be paid to qualifications-based selection in HRM. The pathology of succession management at Babil University of Medical Sciences was considered by Salimi (2016), and it was concluded that necessary strategies, such as different training programs for recruiting new staff, had to be implemented [17]. Although it seems that the establishment of succession management is possible at the headquarters of medical universities, there are several reports saying that there are no good conditions for succession management deployment in Iranian governmental organizations [18], [19].

However, it should be noted that efforts are not focused on the system of succession management in the field of higher education and faculty members at medical universities. Zeinaldidi-Bidmeshki [20] reported that there were significant differences in

all dimensions between the status quo and favorable status of succession management at Tehran's public universities. In addition, commitment to systematic succession management was recognized as the most important component in this respect. Moreover, the results of the study conducted by Zeinaldidi-Bidmeshki [20]were indicative of the necessity of programs for the replacement of higher education staff as well as the need for senior executives' commitment and attention to making the preparation for the implementation of this program, including informing employees of their current and future job responsibilities at educational institutions. This finding confirms the findings of the present study since, in addition to reporting on the existence of the clear gap between the status quo and favorable status of the succession management at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, some other factors such as evaluation of organizational performance, determining the effectiveness of the selected candidates, identifying key occupations in managerial positions, identifying the required knowledge in key positions and evaluating the number of key positions with substitutes were identified as the most important components, too.

In the study of the components of succession management from the viewpoint of faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, policy setting was the first component, which refers to the scope of future decision-making. This factor was examined from two aspects: senior executives' commitment and identifying key positions. In terms of senior executives' commitment, more emphasis was on assessing the obstacles to the implementation and adaptation of succession planning to the strategies of the organization, which was inconsistent with the results of a study conducted by Hadizadeh Moghaddam & Soltani [14]. However, the greatest importance was related to identifying key positions, which was concurrent with the results of studies conducted by Zeinaldidi-Bidmeshki [20]and Saam Kan [21]. The differences between these two studies in terms of policy setting can be attributed to the structure of educational organizations because business enterprises have proved more successful than educational organizations in terms of implementing various HRM programs so far. Therefore, making the necessary preparations for the implementation of such programs in Iranian educational institutions is of particular importance since there are various statistics about the old age of managers and academic staff [20]. It should be noted that succession programs are not fruitful without the serious and sufficient support on the part of senior executives, and the existence of effective views from the top management of organization to its human resources and capabilities can emerge in cases like organization's investments in personnel education, delegation of authority to staff and investment in retaining employees (especially the key personnel).

With these presumptions, succession management can be considered a comprehensive program in organizations, which cannot be operational without the support of key executives, even if it has a well-documented process. In addition to senior executives' support, some studies point to the tendency of organizations towards qualifications-based selection, as an effective factor in the readiness for the implementation of succession management [22, 23]. This is a special point for which no scientific model can be found at the level of Iranian higher education through studying various sources.

A particular point that is noteworthy in the present study is the importance of adapting succession management to the organization's strategy, which was consistent with the results of a study conducted by Larry [24]. This understanding of strategy, as a model for selecting the branch heads of Islamic Azad University, was proposed by Ejtehadi [25]. More to the point, understanding the concept of strategy, strategy levels and strategy setting for its implementation are three prerequisites for strategic thinking. Strategic management is a set of decisions and actions towards regulation and implementation of strategies that relate the organization and its environment for achieving organizational goals, which, in some sources, is regarded as the most important feature of the heads of academic centers [26].

As for evaluation of candidates, identification of the required knowledge in managerial positions had the greatest perceived importance. While in terms of the identification of candidates, assessment of individual performance in the status quo and the assessment of occupational experiences in the favorable status had the greatest perceived importance. It should be noted that factors other than one's performance and talents are often involved in their selection and promotion in today's educational institutions. For example, one of the promotion procedures in the system of higher education is seniority. In other words, as time passes and employees get older and get further work experience, they will have the chance to be promoted. It should be noted that more attention should be paid to personal talents and performance, and there should be more suitable ways to measure their performance [20]. According to Fapohunda et al. (2015), succession management should be used in postgraduate education because some educational organizations lack the effective recruitment strategies for employing valuable managers, thereby resulting in a significant number of faculty members and managers retiring at the same age. As a result, due to the lack of substitution programs, they will be faced with abandoned talents and minds, the gap between skills and science, and most importantly, changes in the culture and functioning of institutions until retirement [27]. Although various models have been introduced for succession management, such as mentoring [15], leadership pipeline [8] and Rothwell's seven-pointed star model [5], some models should be sought that are specifically applicable to faculty members' levels of intellectual maturity at universities. According to Morin [28], faculty members believe that components such as talent management, job rotation, management training, coaching, mission and managerial planning are required for the successful implementation of succession management. Having reviewed the viewpoints of 219 faculty members at Ontario University, Morin (2013) concluded that managerial programs, talent management and having a role model played major roles in succession planning [28]. Nonetheless, some other models have been introduced about succession planning in academic centers, known as succession planning in new generation universities, including U Lead (with the goal of creating skills for sustainable leadership at universities), Provost Fellow (future leaders of organizations are identified by faculty members), and a third model which focuses on identification, development, and transfer of talented faculty members to key professions [29]. The issue of succession management in educational institutions, especially universities as the main producers of knowledge and information and pillars of knowledge generation in any society, is of paramount significance since outputs of these organizations are used as inputs by other organizations, and more attention needs to be given to this issue on the part of decision makers at macro levels. The present study had some limitations, including samples' lack of familiarity with succession management, problems with the distribution of questionnaires and their completion by faculty members at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, various specialties and fields of study, and relatively time-consuming sampling.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the present study demonstrated that there was a clear gap between the status quo and favorable status of succession management deployment from the perspective of faculty members. Hence, it is recommended that qualifications-based selection be employed as the basis on which succession management and talent management can be deployed successfully and effectively at medical universities. It is also suggested that more attention be paid to qualifications-based selection in human resources management and proper modeling be done for succession management in medical universities of the country.

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