The Effectiveness of High Performance Work Systems at Orpic: A Case Study

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Abstract: Studies state that human resources management is the process of selection and recruitment of employees as well as development of employees through their training and assessment of their performance. The objective of the paper is to examine the extent and effectiveness of arrangements at Oman Oil Refineries and Petroleum Industries Company (Orpic) to support its High Performance Work culture in the organization.

Theoretical concepts applied were the six components in High Performance Working, which are Work-flow design and teamwork, Staffing, Training and development, Compensation, Management processes and Leadership, and Supportive Information Technologies. Based on these, systems and processes at Orpic were examined.

It is identified that Orpic offers long-term training and development that helps employees gain experience in that can be augmented for further career prospects. Further, training programmes in Orpic cover a wide range of technical and non-technical skills. Education opportunities are delivered through strategies that include internship. Further, the study discovered robust systems of continuing professional development that enhance skills and abilities of its employees. Therefore, the paper sums up that the processes and systems at Orpic are important in terms of how they help the entire system function efficiently.

Key Words: Compensation, Continuing Professional Development, High Performance Working, Leadership, Management, Training

I. INTRODUCTION

Individual learning is acquired through personal development and is based on a limited schedule. Learning is a process by creating knowledge and transforming experience. The UK Employment Agency defines High Performance Working as an approach to managing organizations that aim to motivate participation and commitment of employees to work effectively to achieve the highest standards [1]. It is a series of HR practices, work structure, processes that are developed for implementation to improve employee performance [2]. Some studies have found that when organizations use High Performance Working there is an increase in productivity by 20% – 40%. [3]

The objective of the paper is to examine the extent and effectiveness of arrangements at Oman Oil Refineries and Petroleum Industries Company (Orpic) to support its High Performance Working culture in the organization.

The research uses primary data collection by interviews with the human resource employees at Orpic in the context of the theoretical concepts given under. The secondary sources of data were collected from Orpic website, annual report and statements, as well as web resources. The study applies theoretical concept of the six components in High Performance Working, which are Work-flow design, /teamwork, Staffing, Training and Development, Compensation, Management processes and Leadership and Supportive Information Technologies. Based on these, systems and processes at Orpic were examined.

Orpic was established in 2011 by the Government of Oman and Oman Oil Corporation. [4] It is one of the largest petroleum companies in the Sultanate of Oman, which has witnessed significant growth in the oil industry in the Middle East. Orpic refineries are located in Sohar and Muscat. Historically, Orpic was established with a merger of three companies Oman Refineries and Petrochemical Company (ORPC), Aromatics (AOL) and Oman Polypropylene (OPP). Orpic is currently owned by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and Oman Oil Company. There are future plans by the Government of Oman towards more streamlining of Orpic's governance.

Orpic employs around 2600 employees to achieve a common goal in an integrated company, representing 74%

by the Omani elite professionals. The number of employees is expected to increase by 2020 to 3,000 [5]. Aromatics and Propylene are produced in Sohar. Orpic provides chemical and plastic materials to Oman and the world. Orpic offers a wide range of petrochemical fuel products and their output is fuel. It produces around 222,000 barrels per day and then supplies the Sultanate of Oman with sufficient fuel through local marketers, while selling the remainder internationally through Oman International Trading**.** [6]. In addition, in Orpic there are many departments, which are Human Recourses Services, Corporate Support Services, Corporate Planning, Procurement Contract and Inventory**.**

This report will cover what is High Performance Working (HPW) and how Orpic applying concepts with their employees. The study of Gaye et al (2016) [7] say**s** HPW has become important for competitive advantage in business and human resource management and is important in attracting and selecting employee as well as in developing the workforce of the organization. Through HPW the company can support the competitive advantage of sustainability.

Training is important in the implementation of organizational activities that develop employee through their functions, roles and future responsibilities. The goal of learning, training, and development is to learn from the creativity of organizations through which employees enjoy value through effective functionality and competitive advantage. Training and development are the official efforts of an organization to improve employee performance. Learning process involves skills and attitudes change, and acquiring knowledge, which in turn enhance employee performance in an organization. Development and training focus on individual and group performance to maximize efficiency. In this study, it was found that training programs at Orpic constantly assesses training trends for employees. Orpic trains employees on computer skills also because there are systems in the company must be used by computers [8].

Organizational learning takes place when there is disclosure of inconsistencies alongside expectations and results, as well as organizational change needs within Orpic. Learning, training and development within Orpic is considered important and can make changes within the company. Learning, training and development aim to improve the performance of individuals and groups in order to succeed in the Orpic, so there are human resource development which is retained to be competitive in the market. [9].

There are some benefits to Orpic Company with training and development. The first one is the increasing profits in Orpic: Continuing training and development improves the efficiency and productivity of employees through which employees constantly get to know the technology through different techniques when the employee training reduces the time and money correctly. The second one is less

supervision within the Orpic: Training improves the skills of groups in the employee through the possibility of handling tasks correctly. From another angle when the employee is well trained and familiar to the work, this reduces the organization of supervision.

1.2 Continuous learning and professional development to drive sustainability

Continuous learning is on the edge of employees in continuous career growth. A study showed that 90% of managers feel that employees need to be constantly learning to keep up with their jobs at work. [10] Continuous learning is important for all corporate employees for the success of the company. Many companies provide financial support to employees in continuing learning to obtain a higher degree in the Masters. For example, Orpic provides support in continuous learning based on the job and employee desire. Sometimes Orpic sends employee to Malaysia for continuous learning and offers them a complete mission until the completion of learning. Through the support increases the productivity of Orpic employee and retain them for a long time and the company's sustainability. Professional development is important for companies to push around sustainability.

According to the study of Lount and Antohi (2015), [11] The European economic background was characterized by intense competition among companies. In this study, high-performance work systems in Europe were elaborated with details of how companies achieved success and development. High performance working is based on human resources practices used by the company, and human resources used by Romanian companies were also analyzed.

There are several benefits achieved through professional development. One is the increase of loyalty of employees and increase employees' comfort and happiness that help them to reach prospects of their career. Further one is to improve productivity within company. Staying on talent is important in Orpic to achieve long term profits and success. Career development is a top priority especially in search of a new job. For helping employees improve, company allows employees to pursue any job in return for financial subsidy offered. Based on this, one finds employees stay for a long time within Orpic.

A. Employee engagement in Orpic

Employee engagement is an approach in the workplace which is done by providing the best for the employees and is committed to the objectives of the company to maximize the success of the company. David McLeod says, "Employee participation is about how to create the conditions provided by staff as much as possible of their abilities [12]." The employee engagement is dependent on trust and commitment through communication with the organization and its members. Orpic has in place an

Employee Engagement and Trade Union through which activities and laws provided by the company are streamlined. Before the identification of these activities and laws, employees are consulted. An example this is the case of health insurance that the employee wants for any hospital of their choice. After the engagement, the company seeks appropriate suggestions on the employee benefits from the programs.

### B. Competitive Advantage in Orpic

The competitive advantage is that services and goods are identified superior by employees by a system. The company encourages such an approach, identifying its advantage it has when competing with other companies. Porter suggested four strategies that the company can do in order to gain a competitive advantage [13]: Cost Focus, Cost Leadership, Differentiation Focus, and Differentiation Leadership.

Competitive advantage in the Orpic Company includes training its employees in a range of programs that the employee needs, so that employees can develop their skills within the company. The company offers promotions for those employees who successfully complete the training. [14]

C. Performance Management at Orpic

Performance management is the process which enables employees to perform better from experiences and abilities .The goal of performance management is to reach goals effectively.

Orpic has a key component in integration and established a system known as Individual Performance Management (IPMS). [11].The aim of this system is to develop individual performance. This system consists of four steps:
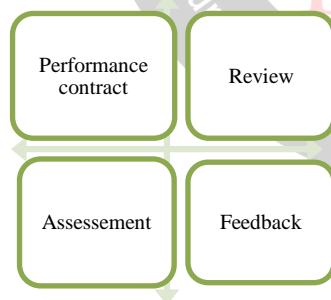
Fig 1: Performance Management

1. At the beginning of the year, the supervisor in the establishment joins with the employee in the individual performance assessment. In addition, there is a contract and a document, setting the objectives of the performance of the employee through three to seven SMART goals.

2. During one year, the employee and supervisor meet two to three times in the monitor and assess the performance of the employee through the performance contract.

3. The employee and the supervisor meet to review of the final results and evaluate the employee and then the supervisor provides the employee with observations about the performance.

4. Before the end of the year, the supervisor assesses the employees through the long performance achieved through the performance contract.

From the performance management Orpic uses collaborative working which is the teamwork and team spirit to achieve the company goals. Also, the company use weekly, monthly and quarterly meetings to coordinate the work among the departments and functionaries. Notably, the company rewards the high performers with different schemes. Those achieve above their performance every month is declared as a prize winner performer through a scheme. Also, at the end of the year, high performers get incentives or special allowance. The work culture at Orpic was identified very friendly, where team work and engagement with diversity of employees are stressed upon.

I.3 Learning cycle, Importance of Continuous Professional Development

In 1984, Kolb published a model of learning cycle, which consists of two levels, where four-stage and four-course learning cycle are highly focused on individual processes. [16]. "Education is done by acquiring concepts and applying them in a set of situations," Kolb says.

Learning is a process by creating knowledge and transforming experience. (Kolb, 1947, P38) [17].
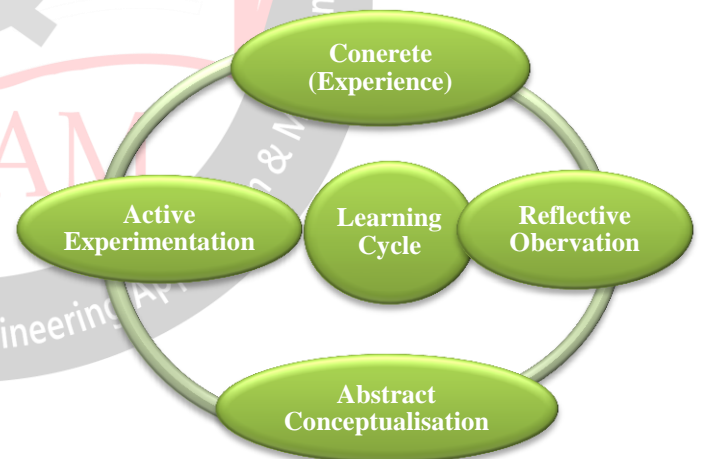
Fig 2: Learning Cycle

From this point of view, Orpic implemented this learning cycle through the following: Orpic offers long-term training and development that helps employees gain experience in the job, promoting personal development. Training programs in Orpic cover a wide range of technical and non-technical project (Management and IT) skills. Education opportunities are delivered through strategies that include internship at Orpic Training Centers at Mina Al Fahal Refinery. [18].

Continuing professional development is what drives Orpic and enhances the skills and abilities of the employees. At this stage, the individual works on his / her job tasks and through gentle learning that assists Orpic employees in learning from different ways and is related through practical competencies and education, and continuing professional development that helps improve Orpic productivity. Orpic there successfully offers continuous professional development for employees.

At the beginning of a year, Orpic sets the courses for the employees based on their lack of knowledge and determines the months for these courses to be completed. When the employee returns from the training, the employee gives a presentation to the HR Manager and his colleagues on what he has benefited from the course. After three months, the HR manager evaluates the employees who underwent training courses, does the course reflection too on their performance within Orpic. For example, Orpic provides the employees with the training Soft Skills, Technical Skills, Managerial Skills, Communication Skills, and Coaching Skills and assesses their performance [19].

Fig 3: Training Strategies at Orpic

1.4 Six Components in High Performance Working that Orpic Company use

    A. Work flow design /teamwork:

Fig 4: Work flow design/teamwork

Orpic follows a systematic process for seamless work flow design where teamwork is given priority. The communication channel and order of command is clearly visible to all employees, who are briefed in this element during the time of staff induction. Employees generally observe the hierarchy and line of communication and any deviations are notified individually. The flow of work is thus smooth without any hindrance.

    B. Staffing

Staffing is a process of finding employees and identifying, and developing the employee's relationship within the work. [20].The main objective of staffing is selecting the right employee for the company. In the staffing phase, there are activities that must be applied to set standards in performance, evaluate employee performance and train and develop the employees. Orpic does staffing through a systematic process. First, it identifies vacancy/position and creates a job description followed by release of advertisements. Currently, Orpic advertises thee opportunities through newspapers, social network and websites. There are specialized international and local staffing companies. People can submit jobs at Orpic and then the company wills short list applicants to be called for jobs and if the conditions are met, interviews are conducted and tests are administered. After joining Orpic, there is an induction day in which they are introduced to the rules and regulations of the company.

    C. Training and Development

Training is an opportunity to expand employee knowledge. Training and development are a subsystem that improves the performance of individuals and groups. Training involves skills as well as changing attitudes and gaining knowledge to improve employee performance within the company. Effective training helps develop skills and employee knowledge [21]. After the employee has been employed in Orpic for 3 months, there is a probationary period. During this time, Orpic company's has Individual development plan (IDP), which is aware of the plan that includes what training the employee needs in the period of career development and further training needed, based on the functional requirements. [22]

    D. Compensation

Some employers know that it is the retention of company employees that requires compensation [23]. Compensation consists of salaries, wages and employee benefits. The compensation can also be non-cash, which is provided by the company to the employee in return for the work he does. Compensation includes several types (basic salary / wages of additional work / insurance / sales commission). Orpic Company called compensation (benefits), including providing health insurance, housing loan, salary advance, etc. For example, an employee can avail an advance loan that is deducted from the salary without interest [24]. The employee's membership in the participation of the health club and the training, education and development are entertained. Each of the compensation must meet the

employer's conditions to receive compensation. In education sponsored employees must achieve high performance.

E. Management process and Leadership

The process of management includes planning and decision-making, determining the course of action for the future and planning the goals that will be achieved. Any organization that wants to achieve its objectives sets up the organizational structure accordingly [25]. Leadership at firms prepares positive attitude towards work and establishes goals with staff, while the company manager must ideally be a leader to encourage and motivate staff. The management also follows up with employees and controls them. All these are executed only when the objectives of the company align with its activities.

In the case under observation, the leadership in Orpic has a program (Entrepreneurship) which is dedicated to administrators and the general managers. This program at Orpic has components that enhance managers' and administrators' leadership skills. Furthermore, Orpic monitors their employees frequently on a regular basis leading to staff annual performance assessment by the personnel management team. In addition, the management gives the officials skills in the plans including preparing the budget of departments and how to manage various managerial crises within the company.

F. Information Technology Support

In companies there is support from IT and this support is to ensure ICT initiatives are in order to achieve the business goal. Orpic has an electronic system which is used by the employees to request assistance from IT when the equipment is disrupted.

Some of the benefits Orpic found after using High Performance Working principles are sound relationship between employee and employer, increased productivity that resulted in sustainability; better motivation due to incentives for employees, exchange of information and enhanced environment of knowledge-sharing ad team work culture among employees. Further, the company also were found supporting employees in personal and professional development / training.

1.5 Training approaches in Orpic (Employees)

Training process in Orpic target the employees for the job they perform: right training for the right jobs (tasks). By doing so, the company is building capabilities and enhancing the overall performance of the company. The effective training motivates the employees to work efficiently and produce quality work. Training process help the employees to take more complex jobs and prepare them for promotion to the next level. It was visible that Orpic offers programs in the Summer Internship for students from different colleges and universities in Oman and this is

accomplished through graduate studies for students to develop their skills through educational backgrounds. During the internship period, these students get hands on experience on daily activities. From Training and Internship processes, the following observations and evaluations were made to support high performance culture within Orpic:

A. Adoption of change

Orpic can be prepared to change thinking and behavior. To lead the company to success, the president can think much about growth, innovation and motivation employees for culture, which will determine the ability of these employees to change and grow.

B. Enable employee to make decisions

Orpic empowers employees to promote culture through high performance of staff, decision-making, decision-making, and responsibility for decision-making and problem solving.

C. Continuous improvement of strategy

Orpic has a high output and this is why Orpic should improve and maintain high performance in order to work better and progress in business.

D. Promote positive behaviors

The work of the employees is based on their promotion to success. Motivating them to work positively increases chances of high performance of employees within Orpic.

1.6 Social approaches issues (Organisation)

The aim is to make Orpic environmentally conscious and build relationships with the local communities, making the operation more secure, working closely with people in operations and helping to benefit from the activities of Orpic. The success of Orpic depends on the confidence of neighbors. This approach is on track because Orpic response and community is involved to ensure trust and maintain social relationships. Orpic has provided channels of appeal, a variety of techniques, workshops and meetings. In 2012, Orpic has prioritized the community issue by monitoring KPI's operations within Orpic. Orpic is involved in the management of social relationships that has an impact on Omani society [26].

1.7 Plan in Orpic Company to be Sustainable

For sustainability, organizations must develop plans to achieve the goal of promoting sustainability in terms of the environment, social, and financial as well as develop principles in achieving and measuring these goals. Sustainability is, "Everyone who needs survival and well-being is directly and directly dependent on the natural environment [27]." For this reason, Orpic has developed plans for sustainability over several years. The areas observed are elaborated below.

1. Individual Development plan (IDP): The individual development plan and philosophy in Orpic is responsible for the employees in stimulating individual development and encourages employees to ensure that staff roles are in line with future career aspirations, and this plan covers three years. From this Orpic provides courses that employees need, such as Stress Management, Customer Service, Computer Workshops, and Report Writing. [28].

2. Educational plan: Orpic provides a long-term program in the development of education which is a support from the company and extends from six months to five years. In this program, Omanis are selected to develop their talents to promote the goal of sustainability. [29].

3. Communication plan: In Orpic, the communication department is responsible for disseminating news that happens within the company. There are communicated through internal and external channels of communication. Internal methods include workshops, meetings, memos and emails, while the external system includes visit to schools to explain about important activities provided by the Orpic. Further external methods of communication include attending conferences and exhibitions of community to spread knowledge about Orpic. [30].

In 2012, Orpic provided training programs for sustainability: E-learning programs in leadership to understand employees of business strategy. 114 employees and 28 managers completed the training program. Partnership with the Omani Gas Company and Salalah Company for Methanol provided training programs for 95 trainees from Orpic, as the training was carried out for six months. [31].

Orpic has furthermore set up a project to be the Investment Bridges Company, which was established in 2012 and is responsible and leading the community and is the first in the Sultanate. The objective of this project is to contribute to the development of health, cultural and social services. This program has helped Orpic in sustainability. Further, 'Jussor program' has established, educational cultural center in Liwe, which focuses on the exploratory child Center at Al-falaj Public Park in the State of Sohar. [32].

1.8 Sharing knowledge within company, Key performance Indicators

In a study on Toyota, Wiley (2000) suggests that the share of knowledge can occur quickly within Toyota's productivity networks to compete with the other company. In this study, the share of knowledge in Toyota was contested and proved that the company has the ability to establish knowledge sharing processes through network level as well as capacity in productivity. Toyota has been involved in the sharing of knowledge by innovative ways to motivate employees to participate internally, while reducing associated cost in terms of types of knowledge and how to access them. [33]

Similar to this, sharing knowledge is important in achieving success within the company and it helps in making decisions as well as, and can change culture and drive innovation. Through the sharing of knowledge, Orpic provides messages, meetings and e-mails. The intranet system in Orpic allows the employees to access and gets important information within the company.

A. Benefits of using sharing of knowledge

As identified in the study, decision-making is done on a fast track. When there is any problem for the employee, Orpic resolves it by analyzing the trends and understanding the competition and the preparation of strategies.

Growth Stimulation is one of the priorities of Orpic. The main objective is to increase productivity through knowledge management. Employees can access information periodically and this enables the company to grow rapidly. As a supportive community, knowledge is exchanged in an efficient manner and it facilitates the company's search for knowledge through a site dedicated to exchanging information that can be stored in a safe place through the Internet.

Furthermore, employees in Orpic are motivated to come to work because the company provides incentive program to retain their employees and reward their hard work. Some offers are the low interest housing loan, development program, and medical insurance, team building opportunities, education program and reward program.

Interestingly, comparisons of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of the employees in Sohar plants reveal that the target of Orpic was 1000, whereas the actual performance indicates 1,018. This clearly shows that performance exceeds the KPI set for the employees. Local involvement and transparency of its operation at Orpic is identified through the company's objectives of allowing public to visit its plants, based on a streamlined plan. Orpic encourages members of the local regions to visit the facilities and know the role of Orpic through the local supplier as well as oil products. [34]

II. CONCLUSION

The study found that Orpic has used High Performance Working to support their employee for learning, training, and development. Orpic has established different system that helps High Performance Working which is Individual performance management, learning cycle and Individual development plan. From this, Orpic is very effective in High Performance Working because all systems within company are doing well and the employees are motivated to come to the work because company provide development program, team building. In addition, some suggestion to Orpic to develop High Performance Working, adoption of change is change thinking and behavior of employee and Promote positive behaviors. The study also discovered that

there is knowledge retention and incentive program within Orpic that lead to how staff turnover. It is identified that Orpic is an example of a company that employs High Performance Working to the best advantage for its staff and departments. This is found to invariably lead to overall stability and sustainability of the company.

III.   RECOMMENDATION

According to the current study, the following are suggested:

That Orpic develops a system of recording of teamwork workflow infractions which can be a reference point for future occurrence of similar incidents.

That Orpic widens its scope of considering competitive workforce that can be found using online methods and social media, such as LinkedIn.

That Orpic includes formal psychometric testing methods to further follow further objectivity in their recruitment.

That Orpic intensifies in-house training of workforce with special focus on emotional skills and soft managerial skills. This would include more scope for more stable workforce leading to increased productivity at work.

That Orpic adopts a full-fledged 360 degree staff appraisal system that would assess exhaustively attitude and work culture of employees.

That Orpic could further streamline their improvement strategies and encourage more employees to participate in future strategic rethinking exercises. This would also consider the prevalent economic factors and socio-political undercurrents.

IV.   LIMITATION

The current study has limited itself by assessing the performance of Orpic using interviews based on qualitative approach using the six factors of High Performance Working. It is recommended that future research in the same area in Orpic involves quantitative data collection. This can lead to providing statistical details of elements that can pinpoint the areas of development and sustainability that Orpic has achieved through implementing High Performance Working.

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