

Strategic competencies of HR managers and impact of rater's gender on evaluations

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Abstract

The competitive business environment is pushing the human resource (HR) function beyond its traditional administrative role into a strategic role in business. The comparative study examined the perceived importance and ability of HR managers in their strategic roles as perceived by HR managers and non-HR managers of various U.S. organizations. The study also examined the impact of gender on a rater's perceptions of HR managers' competencies in the same strategic roles. A mail survey was used to collect quantitative data in the domains of *strategic management*, *business knowledge*, *management of talent*, *employee relations*, *quality of work-family life*, and *information technology*. Non-HR managers rated the importance of HR managers' strategic roles significantly higher than the perceived ability of HR managers in those strategic roles. Non-HR managers rated the ability of HR managers significantly lower than how HR managers self-rated their own abilities. Data further indicated that male managers rated the competencies of male HR managers at a significantly higher level than those of female HR managers. This gender bias toward male HR managers suggests that gender may impact performance evaluations in organizations.

Keywords: HR managers, strategic competencies, gender bias