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MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS AT A RESEARCH INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Most developed countries achieved economic growth through increased research and development. Therefore, countries continuously commercialise their research output resulting in the creation of strong economies. This is not the case with most developing countries. Developing economies, for example South Africa still lags in terms of research output and its commercialization despite huge financial investment made by the government each year to revive research institutions. Financial investment without considering soft aspects such as management competencies is not enough to bring success in research institutions. This study therefore argues that assessing management competencies in research institutions is one of the strategies that can be adopted to revive performance of research institutions in developing countries. It is therefore upon this background that the objectives of this research were two-fold, thus: (i) to assess employees' perceptions of management competencies among former technical employees in management roles and (ii) to measure if there are differences in perceptions among employees in different gender and age groups. A quantitative descriptive approach methodology, with the use of a structured questionnaire was employed to collect data from a minimum sample of 142 employees at a research institution in South Africa. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilised to conduct descriptive analyses that include mean, standard deviation and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that employees had negative perceptions on the management competencies (direction establishment, sense of purpose, people alignment, risk taking, inspirational and ethical standard) of former technical employees in management roles. It was also found that there were no differences in perceptions of management competencies among employees in different gender and age groups. These findings led to major theoretical and practical implications aimed at improving management and output within research institutions.

Keywords: Perceptions, management competencies, research institutions.