

Barriers to Job Localization Policy in Private Sector: Case Study from Oman

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Abstract : Even though efforts to increase the participation of nationals in the workforce have been in place for more than a decade in the Sultanate of Oman, the results are not impressive. Citizens' workforce participation - it is argued in the literature - is hindered by institutional, as well as attitudinal concerns. The purpose of this study was to determine barriers to Omanization (employment of Omani nationals) in the private sector as perceived by the senior managers in government and private sector. Data were collected predominantly through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with managers who directly deal with Omanization policies from both the public and private sector. Results from the data analysis have shown that the majority of participants acknowledged a work preference in the movement (public sector). The private sector employees' compensation and benefits package was perceived to be less attractive than that offered in the government (public sector). The negative perceptions (stereotypes) shared by expatriates regarding work attitudes and competencies of citizens in the local labour market was also overwhelmingly perceived as a major hindrance. Furthermore, institutional issues such as, ineffectiveness of rules and regulation regarding Omanization, inappropriate quota system and lack of public awareness towards private sector's jobs, are also perceived problematic to successful Omanization. Finally, results from the data analysis were used in recommending strategies for potential consideration in the pursuit of a successful Omanization programme.

Keywords : localization, job security, labour force structure, Omanization, private sector, public sector

Conference Title : ICHRMPD 2015 : International Conference on Human Resource Management and Professional Development

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : March 29-30, 2015