



HR STRATEGY AS LAISON WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS – AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Organization is the foundation upon which the whole structure of management is built. Organization is related with developing frame work where the total work is divided into manageable component in order to facilitate the achievement of objectives or goals. Organizational effectiveness is the same discipline concerned with understanding, predicating and controlling human behavior in organizational effectiveness or human resource management. There is several researches on Strategic human resource management, in India, it is on initial stage, adoption of SHRM is on induction stage. In this paper I focus on how SHRM liaison between business strategy helpful for organizational effectiveness. Primary data has collected through questionnaire, interviews observation etc. for secondary sources I found IUP press, Tata McGraw-Hill publicized articles etc.

INTRODUCTION

The essence of any organization around the globe lies in people capabilities, human capital, intellectual assets, intellectual properties, talent management, and competency management. The gradual and radical growth of human resource management since the advent of world trade is, perceptible and imperative. The metamorphoses that happened in the arena of personnel management led to the emergence of human resource management and the forces pressure culminated the discipline human resource management into a distinct philosophy and assumed the nomenclature as strategic human resource management (SHRM). The strategic human resource management assumed such a relevance that the organization operating in the global context is without it, the survival and success is nowhere and therefore, it is only a day dream. One has to therefore comprehend what the strategic human resource management means and how it has assumed centre stage in the global business strategy.

Why companies are craving for the inclusion of strategic human resource management as essential and vital component without which the organizational performance and success is downplayed are lead to debacle.

Specifically, SHRM involves that

- Human resource management is fully integrated with the strategy and the strategic needs of the firm
- Human resource policies cohere both across policy areas and across hierarchies
- Human resource architecture of the firm as a part of organization's architecture is a judicious mix of structure, system, rewards, processes, people, styles, skills, and shared values (Mckinsey-7 Ss).
- Human resource architecture of the firm results in increased financial performance. HR architecture is composed of the systems, practices, competencies, and employee performance behaviour that reflect the

development and management of the firm's human resources.

- Human resources practices are adjusted, accepted, and used by line managers and employees as part of everyday work.

Traditional HRM v/s Strategic HRM

Strategic human resource differs radically from traditional HR in a number of ways, as illustrated in Exhibit below. In a traditional approach to HR, the main responsibility for people management programs rests with staff specialists in the corporate HR division. A strategic approach places the responsibility for managing people with the individuals most in contact with them, their respective line managers. The summarized differences are shown in the following table below

	Traditional HR	Strategic HR
Responsibility for HR	Staff Specialists	Line managers
Focus	Employee relations	Partnerships with internal and external customers
Role of HR	Transactional, change follower, and respondent	Transformational, Change leader, and initiator
Initiatives	Slow, reactive, fragmented	Fast, proactive, integrated
Time horizon	Short-term	Short, medium, long (as necessary)
Control	Bureaucratic-roles, policies, procedures	Organic-flexible, whatever is necessary to succeed
Job Design	Tight division of labour, independence, specialization	Broad, flexible, cross-training, teams
Key investments	Capital, products	People, knowledge
Accountability	Cost center	Investment center

(Source: Jeffrey A. Mello, *Strategic Human Resource Management*, Thomson, 2003, p. 102)

The present study of this paper aimed at addressing the following significant research issues.

- How the strategic fit between firms' businesses and HRM strategy on HRM effectiveness and organizational performance is impacted?
- Whether SHRM plays a strategic role in achieving organizational objectives of the sample companies?
- Whether people strategy comprises all objectives and actions for the cost- efficient provision and development of qualified people as required implementing the business strategy?
- How does the HR policies, practices and programs designed and delivered provide optimal support to line management in formulating and implementing the business strategy and people strategy?
- Whether SHRM in sample multinational companies covers policy issues and decision making regarding the acquiring, retaining training and development, compensation and promotion on human resources at all levels to support and drive organizational strategic objectives?

Objectives of the study

1. To study the nuances of Strategic Human Resource Management in select Global Companies;
2. To identify the strategic role of HR Professionals in sample global corporations;

3. To examine the SHRM policies and practices that influence human behavior in sample companies;
4. To Analyze the method and quality of HR strategy and Business strategy alignment in sample companies; and
5. To evaluate the impact of HR strategy effectiveness on the organizational effectiveness of sample global companies.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study encompasses strategic human resource management, business strategy, linking HR strategy with business strategy, HR policies, HR practices, HR programmes, HR as a success factor, HR as a strategic factor, HR as a source for attaining sustainable competitive advantage, strategic human resource management and resource based view, SHRM environment, HR architecture, organizational capabilities, people capabilities, people strategy, human behaviour, 7S frame work model of Mckinsey, traditional HRM Vs. Strategic HRM, barrier to strategic human resource management, quantifying HR outcomes on account of SHRM through balanced scorecard.

Review of literature

The research program undertook meticulous and careful review of literature comprising books, articles, research papers, reports, journals, magazines, past theses, dissertations on the topic strategic human resource management. The review of literature provided in depth knowledge on the concepts of SHRM and related discipline. Further, the review helped to identify the research gap. The review of literature covers the period of more than 30 years mainly the Research programmes undertaken by Stalwart and established multinational companies and HR managers associated with them. Further, the global reputed academicians and authors developed wonderful, relevant, utilitarian and wondrous literature contributing to the concept of SHRM practices. In and across the globe. A few review of literature, abstracts are presented below.

Pawan S. Budhwar and Naresh Khatri (2001) in their research paper entitled a comparative study of HR practices in Britain and India appeared in international journal of Human Resource Management, USA traces the major developments in the field of human resource management briefly and then highlights the need for more cross-national HRM studies. The human resources strategies on HRM policies and practices were analyzed. The study finds significant strategic differences in recruitment, compensation, training and development and employee communication practices between India and Britain.

Hsi-An Shih and Yun- Hwa Chiang (2005), in their paper entitled Strategy alignment between HRM, KM, and Corporate development sought to examine the relationships between corporate strategy, human resources management strategy, and knowledge management strategy, as well as their interactive influence on knowledge management effectiveness. They took the sample size of 147 Taiwanese large companies in banking, services, and manufacturing industries responses from multiple informants were collected from each firm. This study finds that fit between KM strategy and both corporate as well as HRM strategy are significantly related to better KM effectiveness in terms of process outcome, learning capacity, and organizational outcomes.

Ken Kamoche (1996) in his research paper entitled Strategic Human Resource Management within a Resource-Capability view of the firm appeared in Journal of management studies, critically looks at the field of strategic human resource management and in particular the debate about the strategic value of the human resource. Drawing from the strategic management literature and the concepts of resource heterogeneity, the authors explain a resource-capability view of the firm and argue that the mutually reinforcing interaction between the stock of knowledge, skills and expertise (resources) and the organizational routine and human resource policies and practices (capabilities) generates human resource competencies whose strategic value is realizable to the extent that they are linked with core competencies.

Dan-Shang Wang and Chi-Lih Shyu (2008) in their research article will the strategic fit between business and HRM strategy influence HRM effectiveness and organizational performance in International Journal of Manpower examined the fit between the strategy of business and human resource management affecting HRM effectiveness and organizational performance. Further they aimed to find whether a better fit between firms strategy and HRM strategy would strengthen HRM effectiveness and organizational performance. The sample size is Top 1000 manufacturing companies in Taiwan. The main findings were that strategy fit between a firm's business and HRM strategy has a positive and direct impact on HRM effectiveness and labor productivity. This study also estimated the practical significance through calculating the impact of HRM effectiveness and strategy fit on labor productivity by each standard deviation increase, respectively.

Brain E. Becket and Mark A. Huselid (2001) articulated in their paper strategic human resource management where do we go from here in the referred international Journal of Human Resource Management by identifying the key challenges facing strategic human resource management and going forward discussed several new directions in both the scholarship and practice of SHRM. They focused on the concept of the "black box" between HR and firm performance emphasizing the integration of strategy implementation as the central mediating variable in this relationship. There are direct implications for the nature of fit and contingencies in SHRM. They also highlight the significance of a differentiated HR architecture not just across firms but also within firms.

Daniel Z. Ding and Syeds Akhtar (2001) in their research work on the topic entitled The Organizational choice of human resource management practice: a study of Chinese enterprises in three cities in the PRC examined the effects of an organization's contextual variables on the choice of human resource management practices to secure, nurture, reward and retain managerial employees. The contextual variable included organizational characteristics (ownership, age and size), on the one hand and its competitive strategies (innovation, quality and cost) and the strategic role of the human resource function, on the other. Using structural equation analysis, they examined both the direct and indirect effects of the contextual variables on HRM practices. The indirect effects were measured through the strategic role of the human resource function. Results indicated that ownership and the strategic role of the human resource function were key variables in explaining an organization's choice of HRM practices.

Christopher j. Collins and Kevin d. Clark (2003) in their research programme and Article published in Academy of Management Journal explored the black box between human resources practices and firm performance. Specifically, they examined the relationship between a set of network-building human resource practice, aspects of the external and internal social networks of top management teams, and firm performance. Results from a fields study with 73 high-technology firms showed that the relationships between the HR practices and firm performance (sales growth and stock growth) were mediated through their top manager's social networks.

Irene Nikandrou and Nancy (2007) explained their experience with mergers and acquisitions makes companies develop practices that enable them to handle the process more effectively. They verified the practices that successful companies, with acquisition experience, adopt when managing their personnel. They pointed out that, the Strategic Human Resource practices differ the top-performing from non-top performing companies, on the basis of 1999 cranet data. Increased HR involvement in strategic decisions, formalization of HR practices, building organizational capability through training and development activities, line management devolvement and internal labor market opportunities are the main strategic HR practices adopted by successful companies.

Bruce c. Skaggs and Mark Youndt (2003) in their paper entitled Strategic Positioning, Human Capital, and Performance in Service Organization; A Customer Interaction Approach published in Strategic Management Journal, USA employed a customer interaction approach to examine how service organizations strategic positioning relates to their human capital. And how the interaction between strategic positioning and human capital impacts organizational performance. Results from 234 service organizations in 96 different industries indicate very strong relationship between strategic positioning choices and human capital. We also find that certain combinations of strategic positioning and human capital result in superior performance.

Patrick Wright et al., (2008) in their empirical research paper reveals that the human resource function has consistently faced a battle in justifying its position in organizations. In times of plenty, firms easily justify expenditures on training, staffing, reward, and employee involvement systems, but when faced with financial difficulties, such HR systems fall prey to the earliest cutbacks.

They, however say that the resource based view has proven to be integral to the conceptual and theoretical development of the HRM literature. The RBV has been successful in stimulating a substantial amount of activity in the SHRM arena.

McMahan and McWilliams (1992) presented that, RVB is an important perspective that provided a rationale for how a firm's human resources could provide a potential source of sustainable competitive advantage. They noted that a certain business strategy demands a unique set of behaviours and attitudes from employees. Further, certain human resource policies produce a unique set of responses from employees. A firm's HR practices could provide a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

Research Gap

Among HR practitioners, the term strategic human resource management is used broadly to signal the view that human resource management activities should contribute to business effectiveness. This linkage between HRM activities, the needs of the business, and organizational effectiveness is the core of the area called strategic human resource management. Two guiding assumptions of strategic human resource management are that (1) effective human resource management requires an understanding of and integration with an organization's strategic objectives and (2) effective human resource management leads to improved organizational performance. When HR policies and practices are aligned with an organization's strategic objectives, the system can be described as "vertically integrated".

The key defining aspect of strategic human resource management is not a change in the activities included under the HRM umbrella, rather, the essential shift toward the use of measures of organizational effectiveness as a primary criterion for judging HR effectiveness. Vertical integration understanding the organization and its context, horizontal integration is creating coherent HRM systems, demonstrating effectiveness is showing how HRM systems influence organizational performance and partnership is HR professionals working co-operatively with line managers as well as with non management employees.

Research on the contribution of human resources and HRM practices to organizational effectiveness has addressed a wide array of questions –

- What is the effect of HR practices on the development of a firm's human resources?
- Which HR practices lead to greater organizational performance?
- To what degree does that depend on firm strategy?
- How does a firm ensure that its HR practices fit with its strategy?
- How does it ensure that its individual HR practices fit with one another or does fit even matter in HR practice?
- Must the attributes of a firm's base human resources always align with an *a priori* strategy, or can its stock of skills, knowledge, and interactions drive strategic direction?
- How does a firm ensure resources are aligned to support current strategies, are adaptable to new strategies, and are able to influence new strategic direction?
- How does a firm actively build and continuously renew strategic human and organizational resources to fuel competitive advantage?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Research Methods used

- Causal or cause and effect relationship between independent and dependent variables
- Descriptive
- Analytical

• Cause and Effect Relationship

The research programme identified independent and dependent variables such as HR strategy, Business Strategy, Corporate Strategy, Strategic human resource management, HR as Strategic Partner, Change agent, Employees Champion, HR architecture, Line Management, SHRM Environmental Factors, Investment in HR, Organizational Capabilities, integration of HR Strategy with Business Strategy, HR Policies, HR Practices, HR Programmes, Vertical Alignment, Horizontal alignment, Balanced Scorecard. These strategic and sensitive variables are linked on the basis of casual relationship. The sensitive variables contributed profoundly to this paper.

• Descriptive Study

The study articulates what has happened and what is happening on the strategic human resource management front in advanced countries and developing countries including India. The time tested SHRM Models and theories developed by renewed global HR stalwarts such as Randall S. Schuler, McMahan, David Guest, Jeffrey A Mello, Hueslid, Dave Ulrich, McWilliams, Patrick Wright, and so on are the contributors of research variables, which form core of the study.

• Analytical Study

Across the countries in the globe, the global players such as multi-national companies, transnational companies and global companies, operate in multi-cultural, multi-economic system, multi-political environment, multi-legal environment, and multi-technological environment, the concept Strategic HRM therefore, gained currency to achieve strategic objectives of subsidiaries located in different parts of the world say for example IBM, Sony, DELL, Siemens, L&T, and Ness Technology. The facts and information relating to sample companies SHRM programmes are analyzed in this paper.

B. Sampling

i. Universe/Population/Sampling Frame

- All renowned Fortune 500 Companies operating in India.
- All Global Companies, MNCs, and TNCs operating in the territory of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and New Delhi (sampling frame).

ii. Category of Respondents

- The organizations practicing Strategic Human Resource mechanism across the industries, subsidiaries, functions, and departments.
- The organizations which linked their HR strategies with Business strategies to achieve corporate objectives.
- In the organizations stated above, seasoned HR Practitioners/Professionals/Experts, Global HR Consultants, HR Executives, HR Strategist, HR Partners, and Employees therein.
- HR Academicians and Columnist.

i. Composition of Sample Size

Sl No	Category of Respondents	Size	Sampling Techniques used
1	Fortune-500 Companies operating in South India and New Delhi across the industries such as Information Technology Telecom, Electronics, Electrical, Engineering, Pharmaceuticals and Health Care, Hospitals, Banking and others	60	Stratified Random Sampling
2	HR Practitioners/ HR Executives/HR Strategists / HR Partners/HR Directors in the Sample Companies	60	Judgmental Sampling
3	Global HR Consultants	20	Simple Random Sampling
4	HR Academicians	10	Judgmental Sampling
5	Top Management	60	Judgmental Sampling
6	Line Managers	100	Stratified Sampling
7	Employees	300	Stratified Sampling

C. Data Collection

i. Primary Data

For the purpose of primary data collection, the study relied on well structured questionnaire, schedule, personal interviews, and e-mail survey technique called 'quick survey'

ii. Secondary data

The secondary data on the topic have been collected from globally renowned HRM text books, empirical research papers, sample firm HR manual, annual reports, internet information, published theses, dissertations, internationally acclaimed HR journals, Magazines, and New bulletins, News papers, micro-films on the topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nuances of Strategy Human Resource Management (SHRM): The respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale, the nitty-gritty of strategic human resource management practices in their organizations. The results are tabulated, summarized as follows

Strategic Human Resource Management is used by the company to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through people competencies. This is considered by 82 percent of the sample HR Executives in the organizations. Further, 85 percent of respondents (N=60) expressed that human assets in their organizations are considered as unique assets, impossible to imitate by other organizations and therefore possess resource based view (RBV).

SHRM means several connotations for several people, according to 74 percent of the respondents, it means involving HR department, HR policies, HR practices, and HR programmes at all levels of decision making. 66 percent of the respondents considered SHRM as HR manager participating in meetings convened by other functional heads. 75 percent of the respondents indicated that focusing on capabilities building of employees is SHRM. However only 27 percent agreed that strategic human resource management involves taking part in resolving post merger or acquisition and diversification issues by HR department. It can be concluded that people and HRM practices are acting as a source of competitive advantage for the firms.

Table 1. Nuances of SHRM

Sl. No	Statements	Responses (n = 60)				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	In our company Strategic Human Resources system is designed to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through people	21 (35%)	28 (47%)	07 (12%)	03 (05%)	02 (03%)
2	In our company we believe that the Human assets cannot be duplicated and therefore become the competitive advantage that an organization enjoys in its market	20 (33%)	31 (52%)	06 (10%)	02 (03%)	01 (2%)
3	In our organization Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) means SHR Manager:					
	a. Involving in decision making at all levels	19 (32%)	25 (42%)	10 (17%)	03 (5%)	03 (4%)
	b. Participating in meetings convened by other functional Heads	17 (28%)	23 (38%)	09 (15%)	06 (10%)	05 (9%)
	c. Focusing on building capabilities of employees	21 (35%)	24 (24%)	08 (13%)	04 (7%)	03 (5%)
	d. Taking active part in resolving conflicts of post-merger or acquisition, diversification and the like	09 (15%)	07 (12%)	25 (42%)	16 (26%)	03 (5%)

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2. Independent Variable – Recognition of Organizational Capabilities

Sl. No.	Organizational Capabilities	Responses (n=44)		
		Mean	SD	Range
1	HR operating efficiency (ability to perform HR practices better, faster and cheaper)	1.79	0.84	1-5
2	Human (Intellectual) capital (to attract and Retain employees who have competence and Commitment)	1.97	0.98	1-5
3	Leadership Depth	1.70	0.75	1-5
4	Learning	1.93	0.86	1-5
5	Change	1.90	0.82	1-5
6	Shred Mindset	1.75	0.80	1-5
7	Strategic clarity	1.75	1.02	1-5
8	Accountability	1.68	0.94	1-5
9	Boundary less organization	2.02	0.83	1-5
10	Collaboration	2.00	0.85	1-5
11	Simplicity	2.15	0.99	1-5
12	Risk	2.27	1.00	1-5

(Source: Primary Data)

Effect of organizational capabilities on investor satisfaction

Data about extent of recognition given to organizational capabilities was collected on a likert scale with 5 points. Table 2 and 3 provide descriptive statistics regarding the independent variables.

Further the current level of organizational capabilities was measured as follows

Table 3. Current level of Organizational Capabilities

Sl. No.	Organizational Capabilities	Responses (n=44)		
		Mean	SD	Range
1	HR operating efficiency (ability to perform HR practices better, faster and cheaper)	2.72	0.49	1-5
2	Human (Intellectual) capital (to attract and Retain employees who have competence and Commitment)	2.72	0.49	1-5
3	Leadership Depth	2.14	0.77	1-5
4	Learning	2.55	0.56	1-5
5	Change	2.52	0.55	1-5
6	Shred Mindset	2.40	0.50	1-5
7	Strategic clarity	2.44	0.56	1-5
8	Accountability	2.37	0.49	1-5
9	Boundary less organization	2.38	0.55	1-5
10	Collaboration	2.52	0.51	1-5
11	Simplicity	2.58	0.61	1-5
12	Risk	2.74	0.52	1-5

(Source: Primary Data)

Finally, the investor performance was measured on a similar likert type scale which averaged to 2.27 with a standard deviation of 0.64. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics regarding correlation between the dependent variable of investor performance and the independent variables of organizational capabilities, which are mostly positive and significant. This result provides initial support for the hypothesis.

Table 4. Correlation between Investors and Organizational Capabilities

HR Operating Efficiency	.470 .001
Human (Intellectual)	.048 .382
Leadership depth	-.062 .347
Learning	.208 .093
Change	.044 .390
Shared Mindset	.054 .367
Strategic Clarity	.018 .456
Accountability	-.107 .249
Boundary less Organization	.155 .163
Simplicity	.246 .058
Risk	.196 .107
Collaboration	.096 .274

(Source: Primary Data)

There were significant cross-correlations between the dependent and independent variables. Investor satisfaction was significantly correlated with HR operating efficiency, learning,

simplicity, and to some extent with risk. Table – 4.5, 4.6, & 4.7 shows the results of the regression analysis that were done to test the hypothesis. The model is significant at 0.01 level with an R² of 55 percent. Hence, we accept the hypothesis that organizational capabilities have a favourable effect as investor satisfaction.

Table 5. The R-square value

Model	R	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.690 ^a	.476	.64055

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 6. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10.823	12	.902	2.198	.041 ^a
Residual	11.899	29	.410		
Total	22.722	41			

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 7. Regression Coefficients

Model	Coefficients		t	Significance
	B	Std. Error		
HR operating efficiency	.786	.263	2.991	.006
Accountability	-.1.181	.413	-2.858	.008

(Source: Primary Data)

Multiple regression of investor satisfaction on the independent variables was found to be statistically significant, explaining 47.6 percent of the variation in investor satisfaction. The variable with highest impact on investor satisfaction was accountability, followed by HR operating efficiency. Other variables did not have a statistically significant impact on investor satisfaction. Further, accountability had a negative impact on investor satisfaction, while HR operating efficiency had positive impact. The null hypothesis H1 that organizational capabilities affect investor satisfaction is accepted. We see that accountability had a negative impact on the dependent variable. We should not jump to conclude that Indian employees are averse to being accountable. The concept of organizational capability coined by Ulrich D is relatively new, and is highly contemporary. It is the in thing in organizations today. Empirical studies in HRM seem to be consolidating attention and certain broad areas of policy namely careful investment in HRM practices do pay off in desired business results. This was the conclusion of the studies that were considered in the review of literature. The same has been corroborated by the present study as well. This brings to light that, innovative HR practices are prevailing MNCs in India and also they are resulting in favourable business performance. This acts as a message to the global companies having business units in India and those companies planning to enter India.

Findings

The important findings based on the objectives of the study and hypothesis of the research programme which have been tested by the appropriate inferential statistical techniques are enumerated below:

- The sample organizations consider strategic human resource management as an integral part. SHRM is

designed to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through people and HRM practices.

- In the sample firms human resources are considered as unique asset capable of producing sustainable competitive advantage to the firms. The HR capabilities are developed to achieve the concept of resource based view wherein, the capabilities are not possible to duplicate, emulate or substitute by the rival firms.
- Strategic human resource managers assumed the goal of strategic partner, change agent and employees champion. Further, a strong and positive correlation exists between HR manager and line manager at all levels of the organization.
- The HR policies, practices programmes are percolated or aligned in such a manner that, these variables intrude into various departments, functions etc., to achieve the corporate objectives.
- Strategic Human Resource considers the concept of HR Architecture in that the people competencies and capabilities are the fore runner to achieve organizational objectives.
- SHRM in sample multinational companies includes policy issues decision making regarding acquiring development, measurement reward payment and the like to achieve corporate objectives.

Conclusion

The resource based view of SHRM has significantly and independently influenced the fields of Business Strategy and corporate strategy. By turning attention towards the internal resources, capabilities and competencies of the firm such as knowledge, learning and dynamic capabilities, it has brought strategy researchers to inescapably face a number of issues with regard to management people. SHRM gained currency in advanced countries and contributed to the organizational success. Global HR practitioners and consultants several models on SHRM and offered theories. These contributions helped the organizations to grow and achieve competitive edge. In the Indian scenario the human resource management practices are followed by the Indian Corporate still today as staff function rather than as line function.

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