Research Article

HR Strategic Partner Role and Organizational Performance
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Abstract

Background: A number of studies have described why it is essential for human resources (HR) to start performing the strategic partner role that will add value to companies. Various variations in HR techniques and framework have been motivated to improve its understanding and potential to performing the strategic partner role expected of it. Researchers suggest that HR’s capability to perform the strategic partner role is a little of its capability to efficiently perform both transactional solutions and amazing ideal opinions. The need for HR to stabilize its incorporated solutions and efficiency in assisting organizations is necessary. Strategically, HR needs to deal with the complex problems in its features by developing information within associates as well as rotating their workers. Several important connections are available concerning the company of HR and the amount of the strategic partner role it plays. Therefore, the addition of associates, especially the profession of the mixed line-HR associates for the enhancement of HR companies and techniques are completely connected with the strategic partnership of HR. The findings of this study certainly show the possible techniques by which HR is able to play the strategic partner role, which is interesting by itself with enhancing HR companies that maintains the efficiency of the strategy the company has used. This paper is therefore an attempt to determine these developments and how the strategic partner role can add value to organizational performance. This paper describes the strategic revolution in HR practice as obtained from the reviewed literature.

1. Introduction
Several researchers have advocated for an enhanced understanding of the process through which the practice of HR can influence organizational performance (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Long, 2008; Ulrich et al., 2008). Though several models have been recommended (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Long, 2008; Ulrich et al., 2008), yet empirical examinations of the links between these multiple potentials have been negligible.
Ulrich (1997) opined that the role development for HR professionals are viewed conventionally in a transition form, which include; operational to strategic; quantitative to qualitative; policing to partnering; short term to long term; administrative to consultative; functionally oriented to business oriented, etc. To enable them to add value and provide results, HR professionals are expected to commence by defining the deliverables of their work and not by concentrating on the behaviours of HRM since deliverables guarantee the effect of HRM functions.

According to Bhatnagar and Sharma, (2005), the key HR roles of strategic partner, functional expert, employee advocate, strategic partner and leader must be fulfilled by HR professionals in terms of deliverables, if their strategic partnership prospect with their organizations must be realized. A number of forces have teamed up in support of this concept that human resources (HR) ought to play more strategic partner role that add value to organizations. Currently in the business milieu, organizations are undergoing vibrant transformations with substantial effects in relation to the approach by which HR are managed (Younger et al., 2011). Possibly, dominant among of these transformations is the prompt application of information technology as well as the increasing dimensions of expertise job that organizations implement. The swiftly changing business environment and the developing complexity of modern organizations are also of vital significance.

According to Abdullah and Sentosa (2012), these momentous transformations have engendered an increasing unity to the fact that efficient and effective human capital management is imperious to the growth of an organization. Though, this situation has provoked the need to probe into how human capital should be managed as well as the essential responsibilities that HR is expected to perform in relation to human capital management, and as a result, in what way should the HR function be organized to ensure it adds value to the swift changing corporate milieu. Traditionally, HR has predominantly focused on the managerial facades of human resources management, however, through the development of information technology (IT), the corporate workforce of HR started losing prominence in this field of work, since most of its administrative tasks could be easily performed with the use of self-service information technology solutions that organizations could host themselves or that were outsourceable (Aitchison, 2007).

The responsibility of HR is speedily increasing and undeniably its impact is exceptional in the development of organizations with the necessary labour force that is adept of accomplishing the organizations designated functions that ensures the realization of its business strategy (Caldwell, 2010). This human resource is realized through the development of competency models as well as focusing on the recruitment, staffing, and the improvement of workers. While information technology (IT) is regarded as a critical instrument in the management of personnel and the development of capabilities, these rudimentary HR activities as well as its ancillary methods are adequately created and implemented by professionals well proficient in matters relating to the organizations’ business and strategy. Besides, the various decisions,
vibrant, and implicit facades of this study reveal the fact that HR’s critical role in adding value to their organization will remain momentous in this area of management (De Alwis, 2012).

Lee et al., (2010), argues that the evolving rate of talent dearth and constrained flexibility of organizations in the use of inadequate human capital to diverse prospects limit organizations strategic options. Since human capital is important in the proficiency of an organizations strategy formulation, it makes reasonable sense for HR to be alleged to be a critical part of an organization's strategic development. As a result, the only way HR could add value to the organization is to contribute to corporate strategy development and implementation. Nevertheless, this is evidence that HR has the proficiency of adding value to organizations through the design of strategies that allow essential talents to provide diverse strategies and strategic ingenuities that are showcased in the leadership quality they exhibit as they support organizations in developing required capabilities that will ratify the strategies initiated, as well as contributing immensely to the application and transformation management (Bates, 2011). Chandra (2009), argues that the failure of several strategies is not because of insignificant thinking, but as a result of insignificant application. They argue that failures in the application of strategies are typical because they refuse to recognize and acquire the necessary skills and organizational competencies that will ensure their acceptance by the workers, as well as sustain the organizational transformations and knowledge needed to perform the new tasks anticipated of them.

Kim and Sung-Choon (2011) among several researchers have conducted studies and revealed the possibility of HR playing a strategic partner role that is capable of adding value to their function as well as give their organizations competitive edge. The study reveals that there is a significant relationship between HR practices and organizational performance. It further reveals that the organizations that are more focused on HR practices as well as emphasize on performance are the ones with the maximum selling value per worker. The researchers also emphasized that HR practices may be crucial to defining the value for market establishments, stressing the enhancement in HR practices as having the capacity of growing market values significantly (Kim and Sung-Choon, 2011).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Performing the Strategic Partner Role

De Alwis (2010) in his study argues that for HR to play the anticipated strategic partner role, a collection of elements that would be seen in the organizations, showing that HR is playing the strategic partner role as revealed in various studies. Conversely, Hertog et al., (2010) argue, that for organizations to improve the HR value adding strategy, the following strategic elements are necessary as specified in the subsequent essential steps:
1. Underscoring the capability and skills necessary for business strategy.
2. Intensifying the concept and purpose of HR potentials beyond improvement process and effectiveness, but to involve attention on strategic analyses capable of turning data into valuable strategic resources.
3. Raising the HR effort on planning, organizational development and design.
4. HR Managers must possess the requisite experience that will enable them to play the strategic partner role.
5. Expand HR professional knowledge of business as well as their relationship with the organization.

2.2 The Strategic Partner Role of HR

Al-Taee and Alwaely, (2012) argues that the strategic partnership role of HR in an organization may be partly determined by the specific business model the organization uses in relation to its expectation of achieving a competitive advantage. It is palpable that amidst the organizations that rely on their skilled workforce in order to realize competitive advantage, the need for HR to strategically add value to the organization will be high (Bourne and Franco-Santos, 2010).

Almamun (2009) however, argues that when organizations begin to initiate strategies that are knowledge and information centered, HR will definitely begin to play the strategic partner role. The researcher emphasized that knowledge and information strategies certainly stimulates human capital development, adding that the extent to which an organization acquires the knowledge and information it requires for the implementation of strategy, consequently enables HR to play strategic partner role in the organization.

The strategic partner role of HR reflects a significant relationship when quality and speed is strategically focused. According to Long and Khairuzzaman (2010), the development of quality and speed within an organization normally demands significant transformations in the way human capital is improved and applied. The researchers argue that the quality of programmes of most organizations lay emphasis on training, the development of employees and a transformation in various systems as well as features in the designs of the organization. The researchers noted that HR plays more strategic partner role when this item becomes an essential agenda in organizations (Long and Khairuzzaman, 2010).

Yulizada, (2012) argues that transformation centered on competency and knowledge management, will provoke a greater achievement of the strategic partner role of HR. The researcher further argues that the effects of transformation prospects relate to the outcomes for strategic efforts, stressing that competency and knowledge management should be viewed as a critical HR function. Consequently, Krishna and Prasad (2012) argue that for any organization to enhance competency and knowledge, they would depend on HR for the implementation of the strategy. The researchers stressed further that for HR to influence strategy, competency and knowledge transformation concept is critical. They also argue that it is vital for HR to
show that competency and knowledge transformation concepts have the capacity of enhancing strategic service delivery and organizational performance (Krishna and Prasad, 2012).

2.3 Human Resource Information Systems and HR Strategic Partner Role

The need to save time in the operation of organizations is key in the relationship between HR information systems and the strategic partner role of HR. De Alwis (2010) argues that the introduction of electronic HR operating systems for human resource transactions is imperative, asserting that most of the HR transactional functions will engender self-service operations, which will ensure the efficient utilization of information technology that will strengthen the strategic partner role of HR in adding value to organizations. Consequently, the application of HRIS affords HR the ease of strategic data gathering and analysis that will ensure their contribution to developing and implementing organizational strategies (De Alwis, 2010).

In their study, Uya and Deniz (2012) underscores the relationship existing between the application of HR information systems with the level at which HR plays a strategic partner role. The researchers argue that the strategic partner role of HR will become efficient when a totally integrated HRIS becomes operational. The researchers, however, stressed that the existence of a totally integrated HRIS will not guarantee an HR strategic partner role. They also indicated that in most of the organizations with totally integrated HR information systems that HR was yet to play a strategic partner role. They further argue that results from their study show that HR have not been able to play any strategic partner role, even among the 18 percent of the organizations that have a totally integrated HRIS, but equally added that HR believes it is playing strategic partner role in various organizations that are partly automated (Uya and Deniz, 2012).

2.4 Proficiency of HR

Several studies (Ulrich et al., 2009; Lemmergaard, 2009 and Yuliza, 2012) have revealed that a significant relationship exists between HR strategic partner role the proficiency of HR organizations. These studies measured the proficiency of HR organizations using questionnaires to evaluate various areas of HR efficiency. Results from the surveys consistently showed that HR’s strategic partner role is linked to its efficiency in performing requisite HR functions. They also added that the proficiency of HR in the development of organizational strategies is also associated with its strategic partner role. The researchers further argue that perceptibly, it will be difficult for HR to be efficient in the development of organizational strategy if not allowed to play a strategic partner role. Consequently, HR’s efficient performance in the development of organizational skills and capabilities, as well as transformation management are dependent on its strategic partnership role (Amstrong, 2009). If HR is not given the opportunity to play a strategic partner role, they may not have access to the information that will ensure they influence decisions that are
credible regarding the development of capabilities, skills as well as transformation in an organization (Younger et al., 2011).

In organizations where HR is playing strategic partner roles, it has become easy to efficiently adapt HR practices to suit corporate needs that help structure sustainable service relationships (Kim and Sung-Choon, 2011). Remarkably, HR’s ability to provide efficient services, as well as championing the cause of employees, underpinning the fact that conventional HR efforts are rarely positioned as an organization as well as playing the strategic partner roles. This fact supports previous results, which show the organizational methods as distinct to strategic partner role, nevertheless this may free up funds to operate other strategic activities (Krishna and Prasad, 2012).

2.5 Progression in HR Strategic Partner Role

To determine the progress of HR strategic partner role in organizations, the need to consider the amount of time invested in the delivery of diverse activities of the HR function is vital (Long and Khairuzzaman, 2010). Obviously, to play a strategic partner role, the functions of HR need to be more than just service delivery, records keeping, assessment, appraisal and benefits, HR must contribute in making management decisions, engaging in strategic HR planning, contributing to organizational design, development of strategies, as well as being involved in strategic transformation (Lemmergaard, 2009).

In spite of HR’s prodigious desire in the transformation of its function within an organization, as well as its level of visible transformation in a corporate environment, it is amazing to discover that not much has been done in achieving this earnest desire of management (Uya and Deniz, 2012). However, the anticipated advancement in the strategic partnership role of HR is not replicated in the literature. It therefore appears that rather than reacting to the demands for transformation, the situation remains the same (Bates, 2011).

Nevertheless, the obvious fact remains that HR are being requested to partake in more strategic discussions as well as playing strategic partner roles in organizations, except that the situation occurs without adequate transformations in the general distribution of time in the HR function that enables them play this expected role adequately (Abdullah and Sentosa, 2012). From literature, HR organization's strategic partner role suggests that there is amply opportunity for development with regards to the improvement of HR organizations as strategic partners (Almamun, 2009).
2.6 The Relationship between Strategic Partner Role and Organizational Performance

According to Wright et al., (2005), the weak relationship existing between strategic partner role and organizational performance has been attributed to the gap between intended and implemented HR strategies by researchers. The integration of HR functions into strategic management can proceed through two phases they emphasized: strategy formulation and implementation. They stressed that for strategy formulation, HR functions should provide insight into the type of employee knowledge, skills and abilities that can be mobilized to create competitive advantage, while for the implementing a strategy, HR functions should organize and manage HR competencies and behaviours in alignment with the strategy (Kim & Sung-Choon, 2011).

Bhatnagar and Sharma, (2005) also argued that only few specific studies have tried to elucidate how the HR roles operate in achieving organizational performance improvement. In the views of Wright et al., (2001) researchers in the area of strategic human resource management (SHRM) have progressively trusted on the resource-based view (RBV) of the organization in explaining the role of HR practices in organizational performance.

Menefee, Parnell, and Ziemnowicz (2006) in their study discovered evidence for the hypothesis that HR strategies are significantly related to organizational performance. Consequently, Som (2002) in an investigation conducted on fifty-four organizations in India report that HR department’s role is positively correlated with organizational performance, and that the HR department plays a significant role in adopting ‘best practices’ in organizations. However, Robinson (2007) argued that when in the strategic partnership role, consultant partners with the organization's leaders define, design, and implement people initiatives that optimize organization capacity and business results.

Bharnagar and Sharma (2005) in their study attempted to examine whether a positive relationship existed amid strategic partner role and organizational learning. Which is the predictor of organizational performance. The researchers employed Ulrich’s HR role model in the study and discovered that strategic human resource roles and the capability of organizational learning were related positively, and that HR business partner role also related positively with capability of learning among the samples. However, in Becker et al., (2001) theory of HR competencies, which corresponds to Ulrich’s (1998), Ulrich and
Brockbank (2005) strategic partner role, proposed that specific business-related HR competencies as enablers of alignment had the greatest performance impact followed by professional HR competencies.

2.7 Impediments of HR Strategic Partnership Contribution to Organizational Performance

Greenberg et al., (2011) argues that the fundamental challenges underlying HR’s strategic partnership inefficiency in contributing to organizational performance are based on their inability to discover and realize the prospects of what seems to be the glitches on their way to becoming reliable strategic partners. Undeniably, the fundamental challenges that HR faces in the process of changing the existing mindset set in their organizations could be discussed as follows:

3.0 Lack of Creativity

Researchers (Reilly, 2012; Greenberg et al., 2011) argue that as long as HR continues to carry out their responsibilities in the same manner they will continue to ignore the opportunities that are out of your focus. They emphasized that HR can only see the opportunities by shifting their perspectives from the traditional HR activities, thereby transforming the issues in a creative way. Reilly (2012) also argues that organization’s chief executives perceive HR as a police or astonishingly implements and not as strategic partners that manage the organization's most critical assets, which is their human capital. However, HR leaders must change the prescription in the lenses of their own glasses, so as to grasp the opportunities. These opportunities Greenberg et al., (2011) noted can only be observed by changing the lenses and the assumptions through which HR experience that which organization executives view their function.

Consequently, organization CEO’s encounter exactly the same challenge in the discovery and realization of opportunities that are far away from their focus, as such, they initially appear as glitches, which reveals that both HR and organization executive’s have a significant fundamentally related issues. Reilly, (2012) added that while HR may view organization chief executives as challenges, chief executives may not even perceive HR to be in the role of a strategic partner. However, an understanding of this challenge will help in the empowerment of HR in navigating through their functions.

3.1 Leading and Influencing Up

According to Porter and Kramer (2011), part of the challenges HR also encounters in the discharge of their function is that of leading and influencing organization executives, in relation to:

- Coaching the leadership in their organization to understand the concept that executives are human capital, a vital asset and why,
- Communicating in financial terms and metrics, the value of the organization’s executive assets, which is its human capital.
This scenario, they argue entails the development of HR’s ability in communicating the regional and global economics of the talent crunch, which is determined by the dramatic changes in the demographics of the population and the transformation taking place in the information economy, which is limiting the life of meaningful knowledge. However, they added, that since knowledge is rapidly changing, information has become progressively delicate. Thus, Srikant Datar et al., (2010) opines that continuous education has become imperative, otherwise executives’ knowledge will become obsolete and irrelevant. Stressing that at the same time, business challenges are increasing in their intricacy and hence there is a need for executives to develop their competencies in handling intricacies, if the organizations must be competitive. When organization executives understand these fundamentals, they will more readily perceive the role of HR as a strategic partner (Srikant Datar et al., 2010).

3.2 Lack of Confidence
HR must perceive itself as a partner, thinking about the business challenges the organization encounters from the perspective of total and complete responsibility as a partner will do (Hansen, 2002). If HR can not take on the part or even perceive of itself in the desired role, no one else will, nor will HR be able to thrive in it.

3.3 Poor Credibility
Researchers (Yusliza, 2012; Reilly, 2012; Younger et al., 2011, Ulrich et al., 2009) argue that in the face of the economic milieu, HR must prepare itself for business partnerships, preparing themselves to be credible in that role of strategic partnerships by developing the quality of HR’s own thoughts as well as their business thinking ability. There are three aspects of this area of challenge as postulated by Srikant Datar et al (2010) and Reilly, (2012):

- HR requires deep understanding of not merely the organization's business, but also the broad regional and global business environment. The need for the study of psychology, human dynamics, organizational development and liberal arts in MBA programs, as well as the need for HR executives obtaining MBAs is vital, though costly and often out of reach for many, yet the degree is not the necessity but rather it is the learning that is requisite. Cross disciplines are truly needed in executives, if a business must compete globally.
- The development of the habit of /discipline of continuous education is requisite for growth. To do this, one must develop a reading discipline and one that includes:
  - Respected business publications such as the Economist
  - Leading business school periodicals and journals such as those from Wharton, Harvard and other respected institutions.
Loading books on business, not only those focused on HR or OD issues.

The websites of think tanks such as national centers for strategy and international studies and those of great academic institutions worldwide. Learning about the topics that are under discussion and being current with every publication on the latest issues.

The internet delivers to us the library of the world and access to courses from all over the globe. Since 2003 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has been putting all of their courses on the internet for free! The challenge is no longer about access; it is whether we will use the resources that has been made available (Srikant Datar et al., 2010).

HR needs to practice wearing the thinking hats of CEO's, board members', shareholders' and other stakeholders'. They need to put it on and review the issues from those perspectives, literally, playing the role in your mind. Ruminating on how the developments and issues will affect their organization's future, in each of its various business channels, and in the short, medium and longer terms (Reilly, 2012).

3.4 Communication

Hertog et al., (2010) emphasized the need for HR to learn to prepare itself for the partnership role as well as begin to communicate their newly gained depth of understanding and insight to the organization executives, stating that HR undoubtedly would have gained confidence along the way. They argue that the challenge will be that of staying alert for opportunities, especially those moments in which they could make a contribution with a quality thought or insight, whether in meetings or at the corridors. They stressed that once HR finds those opportunities, their colleagues and the top executives will begin to notice the quality of their thoughts and the depth of your understanding, as such, their credibility will begin to take hold and their CEO’s will possibly be able to hear them better because they would have learned his language. Then HR will be in a position from which coaching up can really be effective (Hertog et al., 2010).

3.5 Performance

Another challenge facing HR, may be that of getting enough time with their CEO’s to communicate their proficiency (Hansen, 2002), he however argues that this being the case, the need for HR to build credibility with and the coaching of those around them is imperative, adding that the moment HR and the organization executives have established both ways that HR is proficient, and they begin to view them as strategic partners, their organization may begin to experience an unbeatable competitive advantage.

Conversely, Porter and Kramer, (2011) argues that there is no guarantee that organization executives will change their mindset to the expectation of HR, nevertheless, HR would have developed their personal impact and credibility and built a reputation with others in the organization as being prepared for the
strategic business partner role. The researchers opine that after coaching, influencing and leading up, if the organization executives are not up to leading a collaborative intelligent learning organization, then HR may decide to look further into joining other organizations where they can indeed make a difference. Especially where their capabilities will be much sought after (This reference is not listed >> Porter and Kramer, 2011).

4. Methodology

Dube and Pare (2003) principles of the inductive categorization technique were adopted in this study to ensure a systematic analysis of the relevant literature that were reviewed from prior studies as retrieved from online databases. We therefore observed the following processes:

- Careful assortment of the articles that are relevant to the area of research from online databases, which includes: Science Direct, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Proquest, Scopus, and Emerald.
- An identification of relevant keywords in the relevant publications for review.
- Classification of the selected articles for review.
- Evaluation of the relevant articles based on the classification.
- The current trend in the area of study.
- The development of the findings.

5. Conclusion

In this literature, the social data is utilized to collect women and children data with less complexity but with high accuracy. In order to perform Advocacy monitoring, a search based approach is used for efficient gathering of women and children health data from the social media (Facebook and Twitter using API). These data are classified using Decision tree C4.5 and SVM for better performance. The data are then utilized to compile statistical report on women and children health in the selected region. Experimental results show that the SVM based technique has efficient performance than the Decision tree algorithm C4.5 in terms of accuracy, precision and recall.

The concord in the literature of human resources shows HR departments that are of most efficiency as the ones that have added value to their organizations by playing a strategic partner role. Results reveal that the highest profits of HR functions transpire when HR plays a strategic partner role in its total participation in developing and implementing organizational strategies.

Adding Knowledge economy, to the proliferated corporations which depend on competitive policies that are knowledge based, provides HR departments the prospect of basically modifying their role in the organization that will enable them to play a strategic partner role that adds value to their organization. The improvement in technology has the capacity to ease transactional responsibilities, and releasing HR
professionals to perform more roles that add value. Significantly, technological advancement has provided HR the prospects of a systematic process of gathering and analyzing data that produces knowledge concerning the efficiency of diverse methods of HR as well as the practicality of the numerous routes strategic given to organizations human capital.

Enhancing the HR strategic partner role entails that more concentration on strategic planning, organization designs, and improvement in the HR function. More organizational methodology is needed where results have revealed that the imposition of line managers over HR administration has the capability of hindering HR’s strategic partnership role. Consequently, it is obvious that strategic HR function requires the input of great minds; and we believe that HR is capable of delivering that function, as the relevance of HR is determined by the amount of strategic partner role it plays in the addition of value to its organization to achieving competitive advantage.

References


