The Role of Human Resource Development Professionals in Accelerating Growth in Contemporary Organizations

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Abstract : Human resource development is a framework for managing, enhancing, and maximizing employee skills, capabilities, and proficiencies within an organization. These roles are performed by HRD professionals or practitioners in order to elevate contemporary organizations to a higher pedestal where they have the capability to meet global standards and also survive competition to remain solvent and profitable. This paper looks at the role of HRD professionals in accelerating growth in contemporary organizations. It further discusses the various definitions of HRD, components of HRD, functions of HRD, HRD practices and interventions, role of HRD in organizational growth and the challenges HRD professionals face. Findings from extant studies consulted revealed that HRD interventions and practices in organizations have a direct impact on building of employee skills, which is very instrumental in enhancing organizational effectiveness. This review paper possesses the potential to aid HR managers and other decision makers in contemporary companies to develop techniques and also strategize to enable them to improve employee competency. It will further serve as a resource in formulating effective and efficient HRD interventions to help improve the ability of employees to the attainment of targeted goals in an organization.

Keywords: Human Resource Development Professionals, Contemporary Organizations, Employee skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations of yesteryears differ considerably in form and structure from contemporary organizations, as these current organizations are encumbered with a lot of issues, which make Human Resource (HR) managers to deal with a lot of complexities within the organization and among the human capital engaged by these business outfits. Almost all contemporary organizations are competing for market domination, profitability and solvency. As a result of these, HR managers are always developing ways of equipping the most important asset in every organization – human resource, to enable them to get better returns on investment (ROI) (Portnuru & Sahoo, 2016).

Financially sound organizations are often more likely to be successful in recruiting and keeping a staff that is in good physical, mental, and emotional health (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Harter et al, 2003). The financial stability and profitability of these businesses are influenced by how these affect employee health and well-being (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Barrick & Mount, 2012; Das & Baruah, 2013). It also highlights the effectiveness of different intervention tactics in lowering employee stress and how these strategies further affect organizational procedures and human resource management policies (Cooper et al., 1994 cited in Gopinath & Shibu, 2014)). A wide range of factors had been discovered to influence how a country and an individual define Human Resource Development (HRD). The most widespread are the United States (US) definitions which have an impact on meanings worldwide, but the context in which they initially emerged also has an impact (McLean & McLean, 2001). Swanson (2007) defined HRD as "a process for developing and unleashing human expertise through training and development, and organizational development for the purpose of improving performance". HRD can also be seen as any intervention or programme introduced in an

organization with the sole purpose of enhancing and improving employee skill set and promotion of overall organizational growth. Leonard Nadler also defined HRD as "those learning experiences which are organized for a specific time, and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioural change". A comprehensive, all-embracing definition of HRD concept was however given by Hamlin & Stewart (2011) as "HRD encompasses planned activities, processes and/or interventions, designed to have an impact upon and enhance organizational and individual learning, to develop human potential to improve or maximize effectiveness and performance at either the individual, group/team and/or organizational level, and/or to bring about effective, beneficial personal or organizational behaviour change, and improvement within, across and beyond the boundaries (or borders) of private sector (for profit), public sector/governmental or third voluntary sector (not-for-profit) organizations, entities or any type of personal-based, work based, community-based, society-based, culture-based, political-based or nation-based host system".

All business organizations are very dynamic in the manner they conduct their businesses. In the quest to attain globalization and profitability, amidst the desire to remain solvent, business outfits have relied on HRD intervention. Human resource development is the most important factor in a company's success. It is no surprise that modern companies have HR departments that manage and optimize this valuable strategic resource which is important for role of human resource development. Sharma (2019) listed the following reasons as the main ones necessitating HRD in organizations in the world today. They include: changes in economic policies, changing job requirements, need for multi skilled human resources, need for multi skilled human resources, organizational viability and transformation resources, technological advances, organizational complexity and human relations.

2. COMPONENTS OF HRD

Human Resource Development (HRD) holds a very valuable position in any contemporary organization that would like to adapt to the changing trends in the global market to remain solvent and competitive. HRD consists of four basic components: personal development, professional development, performance management and organizational development (Caruso, 2011). Gibb (2013a) argued that HRD as a process transcends beyond the position of training modules in a work environment, but rather incorporates the process of observation, planning, action and review to manage the affairs of the organization involved. The level of importance attached to each HRD component differ, as the corporate culture, strategic objectives and goals vary across organizations worldwide. Personal development and professional components of HRD concentrate solely on growth and development of workers. Whereas performance management and organizational development focus on the whole system method to the effectiveness and efficiency of the entirety of the organization (Caruso, 2011).

3. FUNCTIONS OF HRD IN ORGANIZATIONS

Human resource development is a framework for managing, developing, and optimizing employee skills, competencies and competencies (Andrew, 2022). A key goal of human resource development is to enhance the performance in a company by optimizing the efficiency and productivity of human resources (Ashmond et al, 2022). Human Resource Development plays a major role in creating and sustaining capabilities, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of the company (2022). This strategic framework increases organization effectiveness by improving employee performance and skills. Human resource development equips the workforce by promoting career development and employee training to them to enhance their skills, abilities and boost performance in all departments in the organization. Pat McLagan conducted an American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) sponsored study in 1989 that identified the HRD roles and competencies required for an effective HRD function. This ASTD study documented a shift away from traditional training and development topics, and rather toward a function that also addressed career development and organizational development issues. The relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) and HRD functions was depicted as a "human resource wheel" in the study. McLagan's original HRD wheel identified three primary HRD functions: (1) training and development, (2) organizational development, and (3) career development. The effectiveness of organizations is accelerated by this strategic framework by improving employee performance and skills. Human resource development advances the manpower by boosting career development and employee training (Andrew, 2022). Gibbs (2013b) also posited effective HRD was measured by three items namely, the comprehensiveness, excellence and equity of HRD activities.

BasuMallick (2020) also identified five key HRD functions in HR departments in contemporary organizations. These functions include:

a. Strategic talent sourcing and acquisition

The first step in enhancing human capital is finding and integrating the right talents. The most qualified or experienced candidates are not always the best candidates. However, they might enhance the company's culture in a positive way. A careful balance of soft skills, personality, and potential will determine the efficacy of human resource development. From the time an employee joins the company until the end of their employment, HR begins setting them up for success.

b. Education – oriented employee benefits

Sponsorships for adult education, financial aid for tuition, flexible hours for those continuing their education outside of college, and other benefits are all part of a benefits package centered on human resource development. Most organizations cover tuition for particular courses for their workers. Most tertiary institutions for instance have educational provisions like study leave with or without pay, in-service training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses for their workers, to the extent of offering Sabbatical leave package for research scientists up to a maximum of two years.

c. Performance measurement and management

The core of human resource development is performance management. A strength-focused performance management model comes into play because employees might not always be able to take time off for training sessions and online courses.
Regular performance reviews are conducted by managers, who also provide motivating and coaching feedback. Then, as they gradually develop their skills, employees focus on boosting performance. To be effective, such a structure must be adaptable.

d. Formal learning and development programs

To assist managers in their efforts, learning and development sessions can be organized to close specific skill gaps. The requirements of the business and the employee's individual objectives must be taken into account in this. For instance, a worker with leadership potential who is passionate about the marketing sector can be considered and groomed through these programmes. A learning path would have to be established to enhance both of these skill sets and help the employee to gradually transition into the marketing department, where they can gain the necessary expertise before taking on the leadership role as well.

e. Internal mobility and succession planning

A potent human resource development program will ensure that every employee is placed in the best-fitting position within the organization. HRD occurs informally, such as through informal mentorships and on-the-job collaboration. A structured, measurable programme, on the other hand, is critical to the success of a human resources development programme.

4. HRD PRACTICES AND INTERVENTIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS

According to Heathfield (2016) cited in Obeng (2021), HRD practices refer to all practices an organization undertakes towards the creation of a conducive atmosphere under which quality leadership, total workforce participation, personal employee growth and organizational growth are enhanced. Human Resource Development (HRD) interventions and programmes have been designed to cater for the challenges HR professionals face in dealing with the daily task of managing human capital in the organizations of today. Lassi (2015) asserted that most HRD interventions are inspired from the top of the hierarchy down; therefore, HRD professionals need to identify the goals, visions, aspirations, and ambitions of the management first. Then determine the short and long-term goals, and later align them with the current delivery team through proper talent assessments, training, and churning. In furtherance, HRD intervention can be seen as any intervention designed to improve employee abilities and contribute to overall organizational growth. HRD tools, instruments, and interventions can be designed in a variety of ways to develop human capabilities and proficiencies on the job within an organization (Jacobs & Park, 2009). Findings from study conducted by Otoo et al (2019) revealed that HRD practices greatly impact organizational performance through their influence on employee performance. The study further indicated that employee performance mediates the association between HRD practices and organizational

performance. According to Uraon (2018), HRD practices in used in contemporary organizations today include:

        a. HR planning and recruitment;
        b. training and learning;
        c. reward and recognition;
        d. potential appraisal and promotion;
        e. performance appraisal and development;
        f. career planning and development.

5. ROLES OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

The roles of HRD in organizational growth and development can be diverse, depending on the type of organization. Human resource development (HRD) was developed and implemented in Western countries more than 30 years ago, but it is a brand new trend in developing countries, and they are only now becoming acquainted with it. HRD Professionals were previously limited to roles such as HRD Executive/Manager or HRD Practitioner (Rehnuma, 2013). The most critical aspect in a company's success is the development of its human resources. It should not come as a surprise that HR departments in contemporary businesses manage and maximize this important strategic resource, which is crucial towards the role of human resource development (Andrew, 2022).

Kolachi (2014) proposed parameters to evaluate roles of HRD to deliver Organizational Development (OD) to business organizations. This consists of four steps including:

    a. Organizational standards;
    b. Organizational professionalism;
    c. Organizational productivity; and
    d. Organizational longevity.

Following the parameters sequentially, as it was proposed to evaluate the role of HRD that is required in OD process, it can be seen that the first parameter maintains standards, second parameter encourages professionalism, third parameter enhances productivity and the fourth parameter will ensure longevity of an organization. All four steps are the required parameters for HRD role towards OD process that can be implemented by good and efficient organizations.

Rehnuma (2013) posited that HRD Executive or Manager was usually in charge of executive development and frequently advised the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other executives. This role resulted in long-term plans and strategies, policies, and budget allocation schedules. Human resource development practitioners, on the other hand, were primarily in charge of direct employee development through the promotion of learning in individuals, groups, or the organization as a whole. However, HRD professionals' roles have evolved significantly in response to changes in the organizational environment, global economy, technology, and labor force. The HRD professionals are currently responsible for the following roles as opined by Rehnuma (2013).

a. **Strategic Advisor:** HRD professionals operate within organizations to provide advisory services to management and other decision makers on strategic issues pertaining to the development and growth of the organization. Human resource development is the most important factor in a company's success. It is no surprise that modern companies have HR departments that manage and optimize this valuable strategic resource which is important for role of human resource development.

b. **Administrator:** Practitioners of HRD perform administrative role by rendering support services for the implementation of HRD programmes and services like performance appraisal and training and development in organizations.

c. **Evaluator:** This role is performed by HRD specialists by identifying the impact of HRD programmes and interventions on the productivity of workers and organizational efficiency as a whole.

d. **HR systems developer:** Experts in the field of HRD aid HR management in designing frameworks and parameters for HR machinery of the organization to function smoothly and boost employee performance.

e. **Needs analysts: The** HRD professionals also play the role of needs analysts to determine the training needs of workers in order to design a training and development programme for them suitable for them taking cognizance of their skill gaps.

f. **Organizational change agents:** The HRD practitioners acting as change agents in an organization assist management in the development and implementation of change strategies to transform the organization. As a result, work teams are more efficient, intervention strategies are more effective,

and quality management and change reports are produced.

g. **Organizational design consultants:** The HRD experts serving as consultants in organizations design and advise management on the design of work systems and the effective use of available human resources to increase the profitability and efficiency of the organization.

h. **Instructional designer:** This role is performed by HRD experts by determining employee needs and designing of the necessary learning programs. They also develop materials and other learning aids for these programmes to be undertaken in modern organizations.

i. **Career counselors:** Individual employees are aided to assess their personal competencies, values, and goals, as well as to identify, plan, and carry out development and realistic career actions. Employees are also encouraged to pursue development programmes and learning that will give them a boost in terms of career progression.

j. **Performance consultants:** Line managers are advised on the most effective intervention to improve the performance of a group or an individual.

k. **Researchers:** As researchers, HRD experts are in charge of creating and testing new information (theory, research, concepts, technology and models) as well as reviewing human resource development measures and policies to establish their effectiveness using suitable analytical procedures to provide feedback to top management.

6. CHALLENGES FACING HRD PROFESSIONALS

Challenges HRD professionals are currently facing by managing contemporary organizations are diverse and fast changing due to the dynamism currently in most organizations. The geographical dynamics, corporate culture and organizational structure are some of the factors that are responsible for the volatile nature of challenges in the work place. Werner and DeSimone (2012) reiterated in their book the following as challenges facing the field of HRD. They consisted of:

a. competing in a global economy.
b. eliminating the skills gap.
c. increasing workforce diversity.

d. meeting the need for life long individual learning.
e. facilitating organizational learning.,
f. addressing ethical issues and dilemmas in a proactive and effective manner.

7. CONCLUSION

It is worthy to remember that human resource development programmes are not carved in stone. In summary, HRD practitioners' feedback, program realignment based on performance and learning analytics, and finally, acceptance of global HR trends will pave the way for a successful HRD program. The HRD professionals nonetheless play pivotal functions in making sure contemporary organizations experience accelerated growth and development in the global space.

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