

Human Resource Competency Models: Changing Evolutionary Trends

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ABSTRACT

The study on Human resource (HR) models/frameworks is an interesting area that is gaining a wide interest globally. From HR models, it has evolved into HR competency-based models. The descriptive, analytical, and normative HR models provide the basic framework of human resource management (HRM). During the initial years of its inception in the late 1970s and 1980s, HRM was still in its quest for its form and the HR models established were somewhat academic in nature. Over time especially in the late 1980s, 1990s, and the twenty first century, the direction was towards the establishment of competency-based HR models that were somewhat more practical. However most of the HR models/frameworks are developed in the USA and Europe. The development of HR competency models continue to be an area of interest to practitioners, researchers, academicians, employers, and consultants. A number of organizations have primarily developed HR competency models/frameworks for their own organizations in Malaysia. However, most of those are carried out through qualitative studies. There appears to be a scarcity of empirical studies carried in developing competency models/frameworks for the HR practitioners. New HR models are necessary because the business world is changing at an unprecedented rate. Since HR activities directly impact on an organization's ability to compete, HR competency models need to be continually researched and updated.

Keywords: *human resource management, human resource models/frameworks, human resource competency-based models*

1. INTRODUCTION

World wide socio-economic developments such as globalization, increasing speed towards a service economy, shorter product life cycles, changes in workforce demographics, focus on customer loyalty, the increasing *war on talent*, and emphasis on financial performance challenges the human resource (HR) function in its role for creating added value to the organizations (Brockbank *et al.*, 2002; and Bucknall and Ohtaki, 2005).

The intensity of globalization has somewhat forced the HR professionals to re-examine their practices and change accordingly to suit to the changing needs and challenges. Organizations today are operating in a much more complex, competitive, and challenging environment. HR departments today are expected to operate more strategically and proactively. Ulrich *et al.* (2009) asserts that the competencies that all the HR practitioners once needed are no longer sufficient in the new world of HR challenges. Today, the function of HRM is more strategic as the human resource (HR) plans and strategies are developed on a long term basis, considering likely changes in the society, industrial relations systems, economic conditions, legislation, global, and technological issues as well as new directions in business operations (Compton, 2009).

According to Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003), as more organizations are recognizing the importance of human resource and knowledge management with respect to competitive success, it is reasonable to expect that HR professionals would be at the forefront of organizational leadership. Yet, to the contrary, the importance of activities performed by HRM seems to be losing ground in a majority of organizations, while other functional areas (for example, information technology, operations, finance, and marketing) gain greater and greater influence. In most cases, HRM appears to be playing a secondary role at a time when

the ability to harness a firm's human resource should be more in demand and more valued than ever before.

The concept of HRM continues to be debated in the academic literature. The concept was initially coined in the USA in 1960s and 1970s and since then, it has been adapted increasingly around the world (Brewster, 1995). In the struggle to think of new approaches to HRM, many private businesses and government entities are moving towards competencies and competency-based systems as the answer to meeting organizational needs. Competencies can be used to facilitate change in human resource. There is recognition that the role of HRM is moving from an emphasis on rules to focus on results and deliverables. To help facilitate the paradigm shift, both public and private organizations recognize the importance of identifying new competencies (NAPA, 1996).

A great deal has been written on the evolving role of human resource and the shift from a more transactional to strategic, or transformational role by authors including Boudreau and Ramstead (2007), Compton (2009), Flamholtz (2005), Phillips (2005), Nankervis *et al.*(1999), and Ulrich and Brockbank (2005). The authors, too, compared the traditional role of human resource with an emerging need for a more strategic function. Traditionally, the role of human resource has included a fair percentage of administration work, which in many organizations has now been outsourced, substituted for advanced information technology programs or in some way reorganized within the overall structure of human resource.

According to Becker and Huselid (2006), the strategic role of HR leaders in their organizations has changed considerably, especially during the past five years. Senior managers continue to struggle with how to redesign and expand the role of HR function and the system of workforce management practices to enhance the value. Ulrich *et al.* (2009) asserts that as business challenges become more complex, HRM must transform to contribute to the changing demands. This include the organization of HR departments and the design of the HR practices in relation to business requirements.

McDaniel *et al.* (1998) suggests that competency models /frameworks can be used for the following reasons: developing individual development plans; developing training curriculum; supporting in staffing decisions such as hiring, transfers, and promotions; carrying out succession planning; conducting performance appraisals; and developing job descriptions.

New models are necessary because the business world is changing at an unprecedented rate. Since HR activities directly impact on an organization's ability to compete, competency models need to be continually researched and updated. With global economic uncertainty, technological change, customer demands, demographic transitions, and industry convergences, HR issues are more important to leaders now than ever before (Brockbank and Ulrich, 2003). Caldwell (2010) argues on the effectiveness of the competency models. According to Caldwell (2010), competency models are perceived to be broadly effective in selecting business partners, but are less effective in developing business partners or linking HR strategy with business strategy.

2. HUMAN RESOURCE MODELS

One way to advance knowledge of what happens in organizations is to create models of varieties of personnel functions that are based on behaviors, actions, roles, and relationships (Tyson, 1995). Tyson (1995) sets out three models of HRM namely the descriptive, analytical, and normative models. Each type of model examines human resource at a different level of analysis. These are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. HRM seen from the Perspective of Different Models (Tyson, 1995)

	Principle of unification		
	<i>Description of HR work</i>	<i>Analytical of HR causes</i>	<i>Normative content/ purpose</i>
Dynamic Structure	How work changes with different settings and contexts	How HR people are able to perform a role and why	What HR people should do
Ordering principle 1. <i>Level of analysis</i>	Organization	Organization and society	Company management
2. <i>Activities described</i>	Work of HR people	Reasons for the work	Contribution of HR to organizations
3. <i>Purpose</i>	To elucidate what happens	To discover why HR work occurs and how it interacts	To improve organizational performance and to help management
Examples	Tyson and Fell (1986)	Ackermann (1986)	Armstrong (1992)

The descriptive model is all about how work changes with different settings and contexts. Studies show that three distinct models have emerged as a result of clustering of activities based on the three different dimensions in personnel management that include the levels of analysis, activities, and purpose. These range from a basic administrative model (termed as “clerk of works”), to a sophisticated, industrial-relations oriented, systems model (often called “contracts manager”) and a business oriented, strategically aware function, which designs the employment relationship (often called the “architect”).

The analytical models are all about the “how” and “why” of the roles of human resource people (Tyson, 1995). The contingency approach to understanding personnel management, since the work of Legge (1978) has seemed to offer the most fruitful line of enquiry. Tyson (1979) and Tyson and Fell (1986) assert that there are significant differences in the way HRM is carried out from the organizational perspectives. Many of the recent writings on HRM in the USA share concerns about the core notions of the earlier models of HRM, even if they have had less generally available data to draw upon (Brewster, 1995). Although these findings were reported in the 1980s, there is evidence that the models still accurately reflect present personnel practices (Monks, 1993). Winter (1966) argues that models typically follow three design principles. The principle of *unification* requires that they describe a distinct phenomenon, or address a particular question. They, too, require a dynamic structure, so that a model can be articulated, to show how it would change under different circumstances, or with a changing variable. Models, too, require some ordering principle, so that the information they contain is internally related in a consistent way allowing comparisons with different realities.

The Harvard Business School developed an influential model of HRM (Figure 1). The Harvard Framework or commonly referred to as “Harvard map” is based on an analytical approach and provides a broad causal depiction of the “determinants and the consequences of policies.” It shows human resource policies are influenced by significant considerations - situational factors in the outside business environment or within the firm and stakeholder interests including those of shareholders, management, employees, unions, community, and government (Beer *et al.*, 1984).

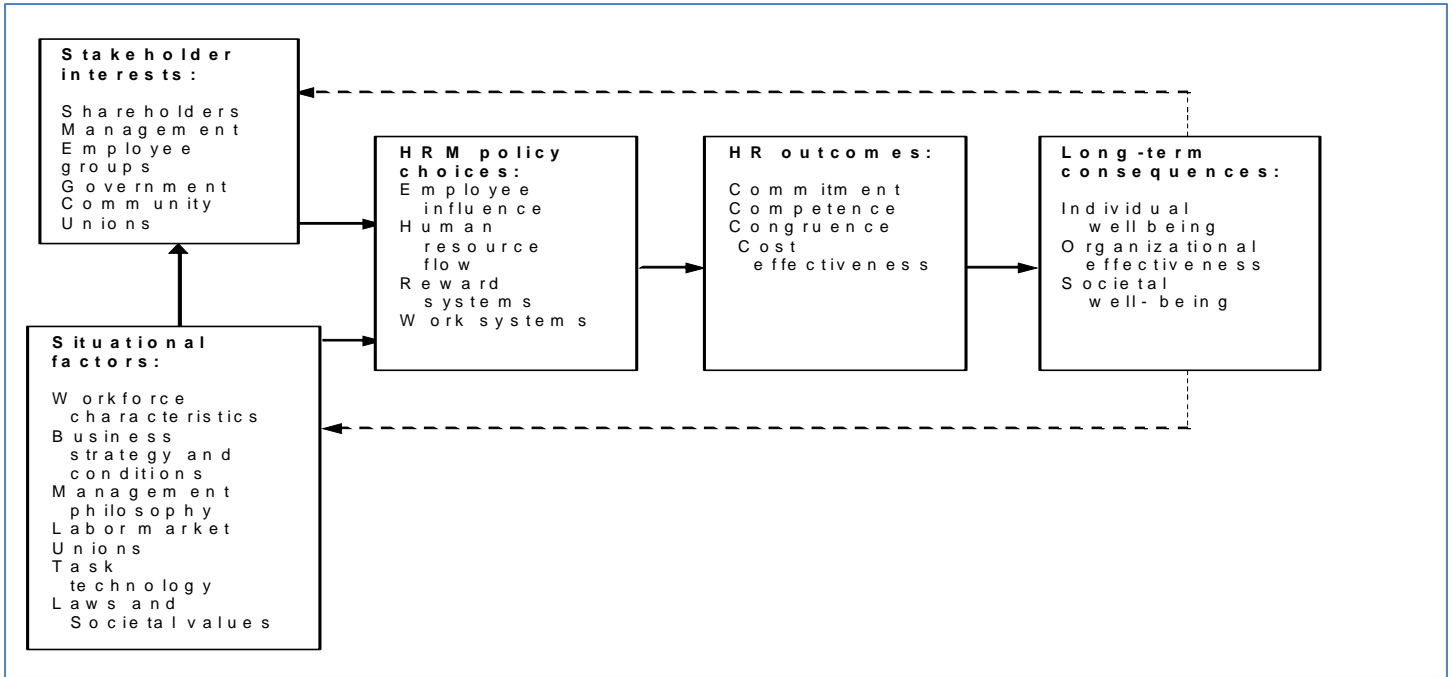


Figure 1. The Harvard Framework for Human Resource Management (Beer et al., 1984)

Hendry and Pettigrew (1990) in the model given in Figure 2 plays down the prescriptive element of the Harvard Framework and extends the analytical elements. According to Hendry and Pettigrew (1990), the prescriptive elements of the Harvard Framework are absent and there is a greater emphasis on the analytical approach to human resource strategy. The Harvard Framework gives full recognition to the external context of human resource strategy and also identifies a two-way rather than a one-way relationship with organizational strategy. There is also an important recognition of the impact of the role of the personal function on the human resource strategy content.

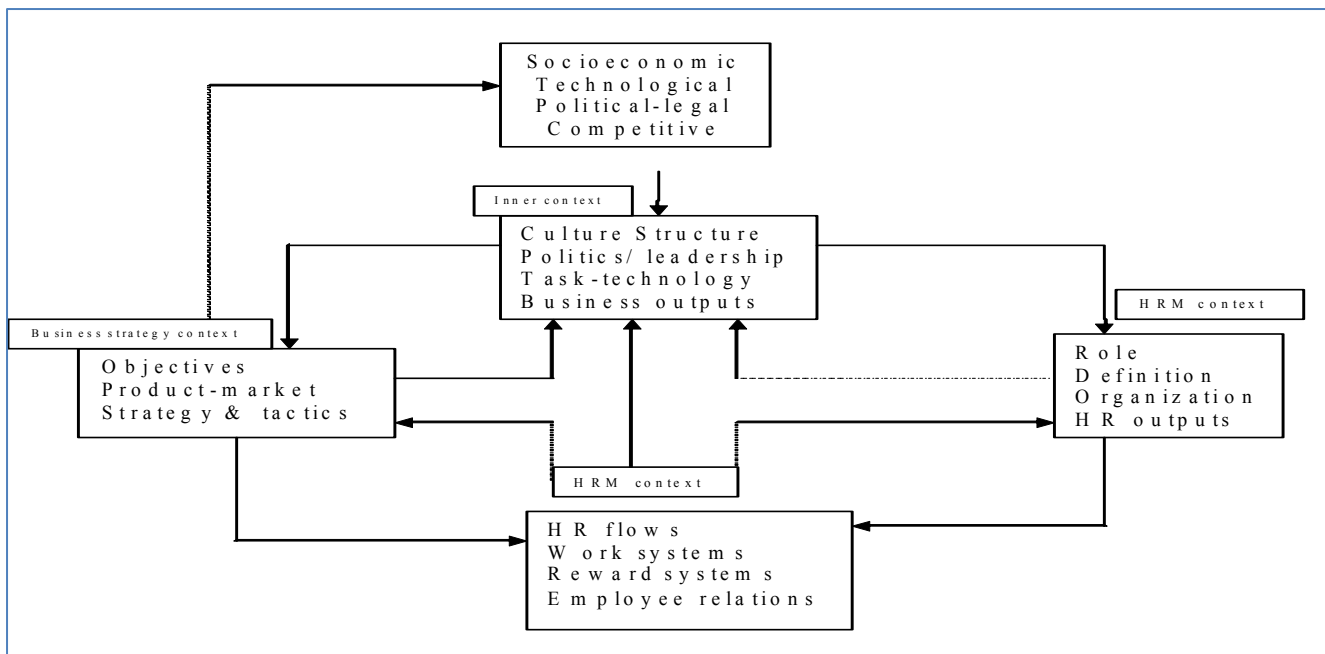


Figure 2. Model of Strategic Change and Human Resource Management (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990)

Ackermann (1986) provides a more detailed contingency model considering five influencing determinants on human resource strategies. These five determinants are: business strategies, environment, organizational structure, company size, and the availability of resources. Ackermann’s “model” or framework of human resource strategies is given in Figure 3.

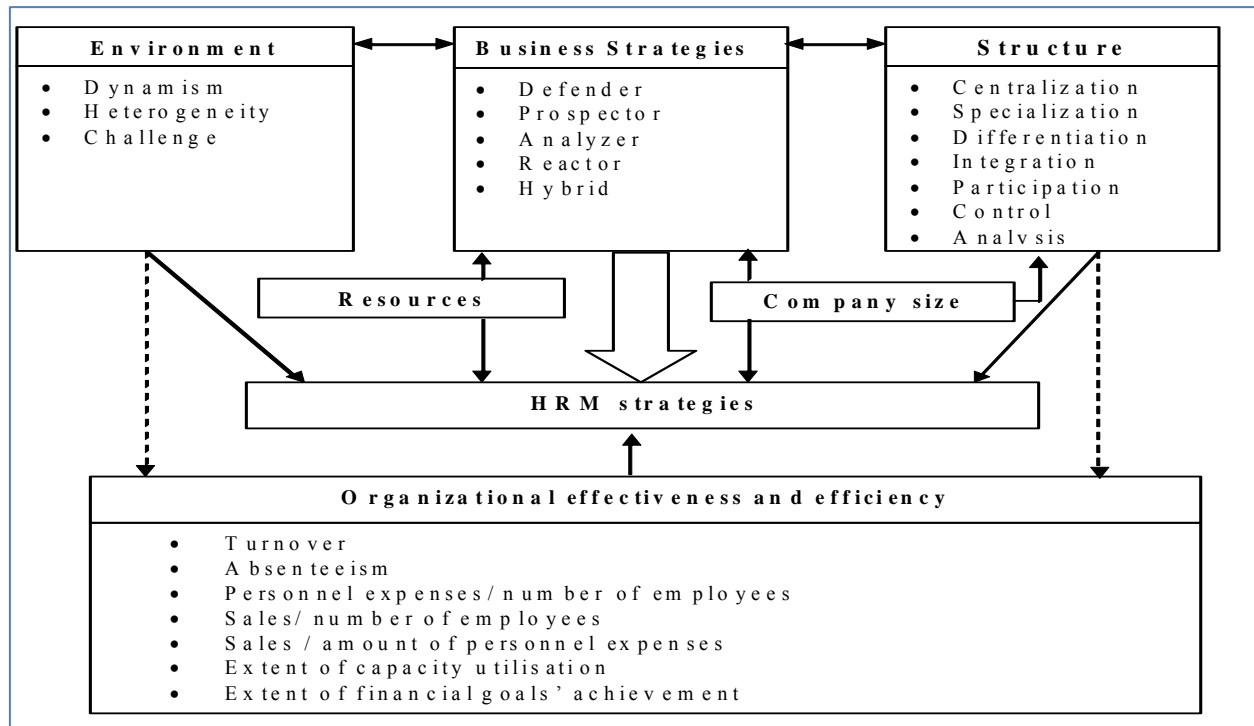


Figure 3. A Contingency Model for HRM Strategies (Ackermann, 1986)

Fombrun *et al.* (1984) identifies a five part Human Resource and this is given in Figure 4. The Human Resource Cycle identifies key areas for development of appropriate HR policies and systems. Those include selection of the most suitable people to meet business needs; performance in pursuit of business objectives i.e., appraisal, monitoring performance, and providing feedback to organization; employees rewards for appropriate performance; and development of the skills and knowledge required to meet business objectives. Different analyses of the concept have tended to emphasize different elements, giving extra weighting to “hard” approaches that emphasize the need to consider employees as a resource (Fombrun *et al.*, 1984), or to “soft” approaches as that stipulated by Beer *et al.* (1985).

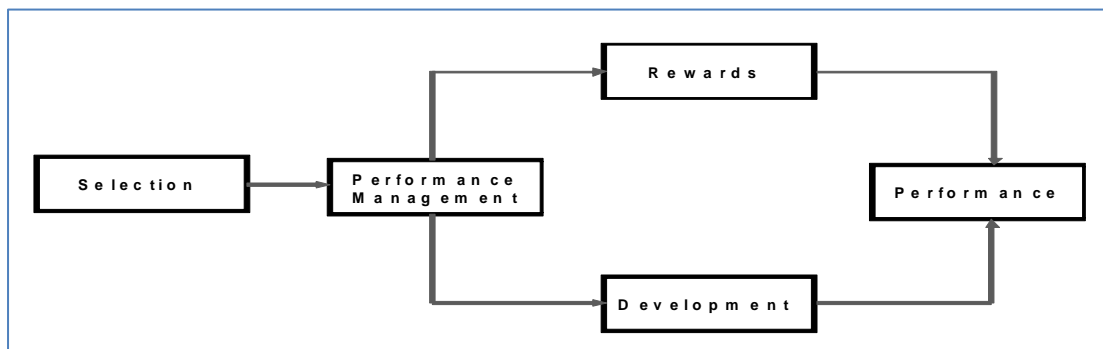


Figure 4. The Human Resource Cycle of the Michigan Model (Fombrun *et al.*, 1984)

Nankervis *et al.* (1999) argues that all HRM models are based upon assumptions; values and beliefs about the nature of relationships between the employers; their employees and unions; and all HR functions take place within the national, industry, and industrial contexts which shape them. Accordingly, a single model of HRM will not be appropriate for all environments. The type of models, too, will be influenced by either the “unitarist” or “pluralist” perception of the employment relationship. A “unitarist” approach assumes common interests between employers and employees, and attempts to encourage commitment by both inclusive (e.g., communication, consultation, rewards systems), and exclusive (e.g., discouragement of union membership) means. “Pluralism,” on the other hand, recognizes that employers and their employees will inevitably experience conflicts of interest, which HRM will need to negotiate and resolve in order to meet organizational goals.

3. COMPETENCIES AND ITS EVOLUTION

As the interest in measuring and predicting performance in the workplace has grown tremendously, the term “competency” appears to have become a staple part of an HR practitioner’s vocabulary. While it is among the most frequently used terms among the HR practitioners, it is also one of the least understood. The concept of “competency” was first brought about by Selznick (1957), and Mc Clelland (1973) thereafter used the term to illustrate the major key factor to affect individual learning. The term “competency” has been defined in the academic literature from several different points of view (Bowden and Masters, 1993). It was popularized in the management field through the work of Boyatzis (1982). Human resource managers’ view the concept as a technical tool to implement strategic direction through the tactics of recruitment, placement, training, assessment, promotion, rewards, and personnel planning (Hoffman, 1999). Strebler *et al.* (1997) asserts that the term has no widely accepted single definition. Competencies may be “expressed as behaviors that an individual needs to demonstrate,” or they may be “expressed as minimum standards of performance” (Strebler *et al.*, 1997). The term “competency” has been used to refer to the meaning expressed as behaviors, while the term “competences” has been used to refer to the meaning expressed as “standards.” Organizations in the private sector tend to use the term “competency model,” while those in the public sector use “competence model” (Strebler *et al.*, 1997).

A review of the literature shows three main positions are taken towards the definition of the term. Competencies were defined as either observable performance (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; and Bowden and Masters, 1993); the standard or quality of the outcome of the person’s performance (Rutherford, 1995; and Hager *et al.*, 1994); or the underlying attributes of a person (Boyatzis, 1982; and Sternberg and Kolligion, 1990). Boyatzis (1982) defines competency as an “underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job.” Boyatzis expands the definition to include “a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one’s self image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he/she uses.” Hager *et al.* (1994) defines competency as “the specification of knowledge and skills and the application of that knowledge and skills to the standard of performance required.” A well accepted definition of competency refers to the underlying attributes of a person such as their knowledge, skills, or abilities. The use of this definition creates a focus on the required inputs of individuals in order for them to produce competent performances (Hoffman, 1999). This means that the individuals must have prerequisite knowledge in order to perform competently.

Kanungo and Misra (1992) and Parry (1998) assert the term “skills” as task centered and it is best suited for routine or programmed tasks. Grzeda (2004) states that there is some evidence to indicate that knowledge and competency are highly synonymous terms. In the managerial competence literature, “knowledge” is often considered in relation to business school curriculum content (Albanese, 1989) and knowledge - based competencies are understood as knowledge of subject matter (McLagan, 1997), ranging from the more specific and concrete, to the broader, more general or more abstract. Spector (1997) further defines knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs). “Knowledge” is what a person knows that is relevant to the job. “Skill” is what a person is able to do on the job. “Ability” (mental, physical, and psychomotor) is the capacity to learn a skill, and “other characteristics” include attitudes, beliefs, personality characteristics, temperaments, and values.

Järvalt *et al.* (2002) recognizes the importance of the competency approach as it supports the strategic and integrated approach to developing strategic leadership. Although there are many ways of defining competencies, the approach of defining it as “an underlying characteristic of an employee which results in effective and /or superior performance

in a job” is broadly accepted (Boyatzis, 1982). Järvalt *et al.* (2002) stresses the importance of a competency framework or a model that provides measurement instrument by which competencies can be expressed and assessed.

4. COMPETENCY MODELS AND WORK PLACE COMPETENCIES

Competency models are created to illustrate how competencies lead to performance. The models illustrate personal and job related characteristics, the organizational context, and the interrelationship of those elements that result in performance in relation to the predetermined standards. Organizations generally use competency models for various purposes and the general reasons that remain valid across all users as given by Palan (2003) are to: provide a way in which the concept of competency can be applied to organizational needs; understand the variables determining performance and their correlation to it and enable the rapid deployment of competencies for use in an organization. The construct of the model in terms of components as well as data collection and analysis techniques will depend on the planned use. However according to Palan (2003), the model may define core requirements for all employees regardless of function or level; define requirements only for specific levels/functions and define requirements for each distinct role or job in an organization. Cooper (2000) defines a competency model as “collection of competencies and standards of performance establishing qualifications for a specific job position.”

According to Lucia and Lepsinger (1999), a competency model is “a descriptive tool that identifies the skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics as well as behaviors needed to perform a role effectively in an organization, and to help the business meet its strategic objectives.” A competency model can be used to clarify jobs and work expectations, hire the best available people, maximize productivity, enhance the 360 degree feedback process, adapt to change, and align behaviors with organizational strategies and values. Competency models identify the competencies that truly have an impact on results or deliverables. Not only are there many definitions of “competency” found in literature, there are also various approaches used in framing and understanding competencies (Berge *et al.*, 2002). McLagan (1996) identifies six approaches that can be used to defining and developing models of competency and these are job tasks, results of work effort, outputs, knowledge, skills and attitude (KSA), qualities of superior performances, and bundles of attributes.

Draganidis and Mentzas (2006) defines a competency model as “a list of competencies which are derived from observing satisfactory or exceptional employee performance for a specific occupation. It provides identification of the competencies employees need to develop in order to improve performance in current job or to prepare for other jobs.” The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed attempts to identify, define and draw up frameworks of key workplace competencies in Britain, Australia, and the USA. Development efforts in those countries were driven by similar concerns with the implications of workplace change and the consequent need to ensure the supply of essential generic skills that employers required (Kearns, 2001). The interest on generic skills needed at the workplace is possibly due to the emergence of an information society and knowledge-based new economy. Generic skills are defined as “those transferable skills, essential for employability which are relevant at different levels for most” (NSTF, 2000).

The United Nation’s Secretariat developed a competency model for the United Nations that adopts a broad approach which includes core competencies, core values, and managerial competencies. This is given in Figure 5. The United Nations Competency Model illustrates how progressive organizations are adopting a broad approach to generic skills which links core competencies and values with management competencies, and attributes which are required to give effect to the generic skills, and values in a high performance workplace (Kearns, 2001).

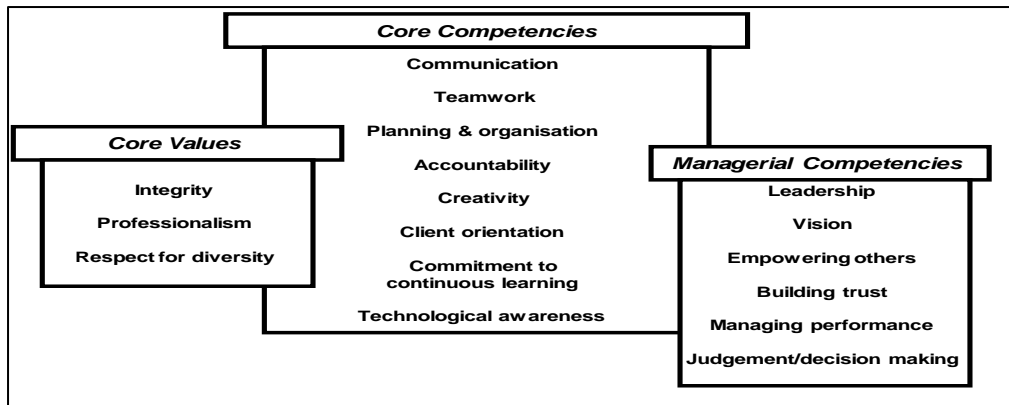


Figure 5. United Nations Competency Model (Kearns, 2001)

The American Society for Training and Development/Department of Labor (USA) (ASTD/DOL) study of workplace basics is a major empirical study undertaken in 1988 and the 16 skills emerging from the ASTD/DOL studies are given in Figure 6. Some of the important elements of the study include: the introduction of the foundation concepts focused on learning; creativity skills that are linked to the concept of adaptability; concept of personal development which include a range of personal attributes (self-esteem skills, motivation, and goal setting skills); and the inclusion of leadership skills (ASTD/DOL, 1988).

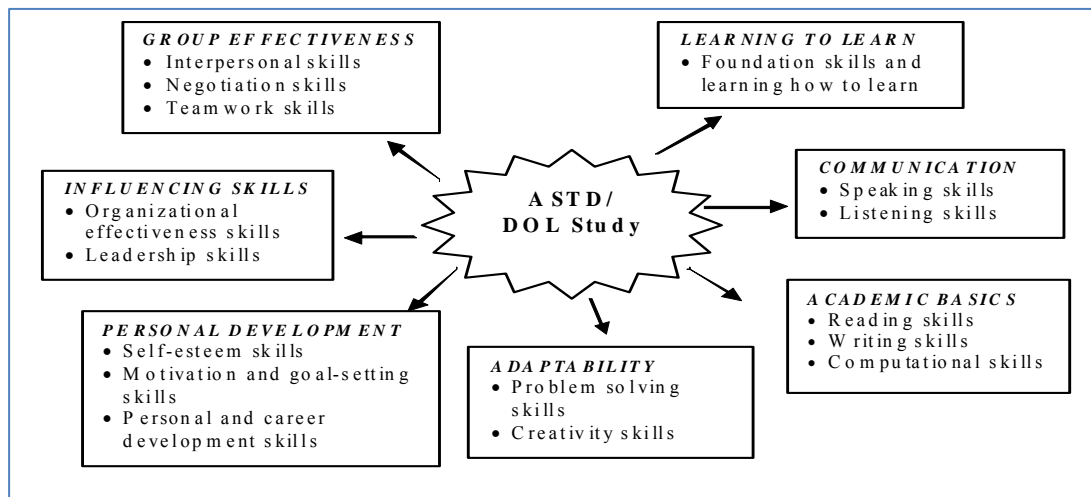


Figure 6. American Society for Training and Development /Department of Labor Model of “generic” Competencies (ASTD/DOL, 1988)

5. THE GLOBAL HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONER MODELS

Figure 7 outlines the evolution of the Human Resource Competency Studies carried out by University of Michigan’s Business School from 1987 to 2002. The four grounded HR Competency Models have been further studied by other researchers globally. The competencies given in all the HR Competency Models are actually competency domains (Ulrich *et al.*, 2008).

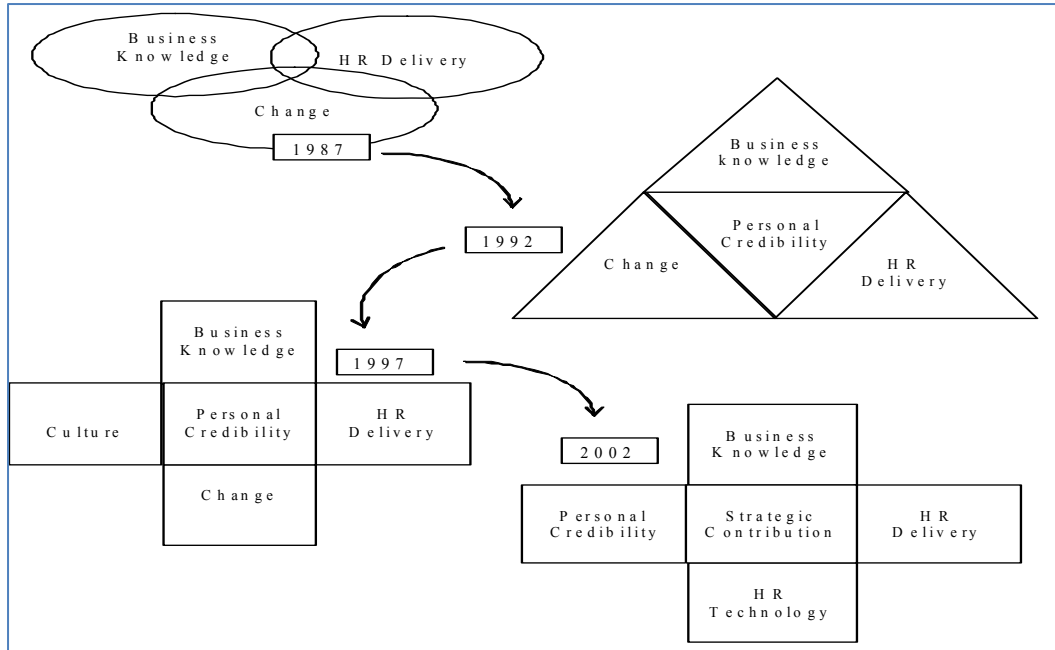


Figure 7. Evolution of HR Competency Models from 1987 to 2002 (Ulrich *et al.*, 2008)

Within the categories of competencies are competency domains. A competency domain research refers to an area comprising of clusters of competencies that have some primary relationship with one another. Spencer and Spencer (1993) refers to a competency cluster as “a group of distinguishing competencies” and this definition is used in this research. Each competency domain comprises of competency factors. According to Brockbank and Ulrich (2003), a competency factor is a variable that makes up the competency domain. In this research, a competency factor is a variable that makes up the competency domain and this is the smallest unit of competencies.

In 2007, the HR Competency study was further continued with its Round Five by the RBL Group and the University of Michigan’s Business School and it involved more than 10,000 HR professionals and line management employees in the USA, Canada, Latin America, Europe, China, Australia/Asia Pacific, and India. The findings as given in Figure 9 show that the HR professionals must be adept in six major competency areas that include credible activist; culture and change; talent manager/organization designer; strategy architect; operational executor; and business ally (Ulrich *et al.*, 2008).

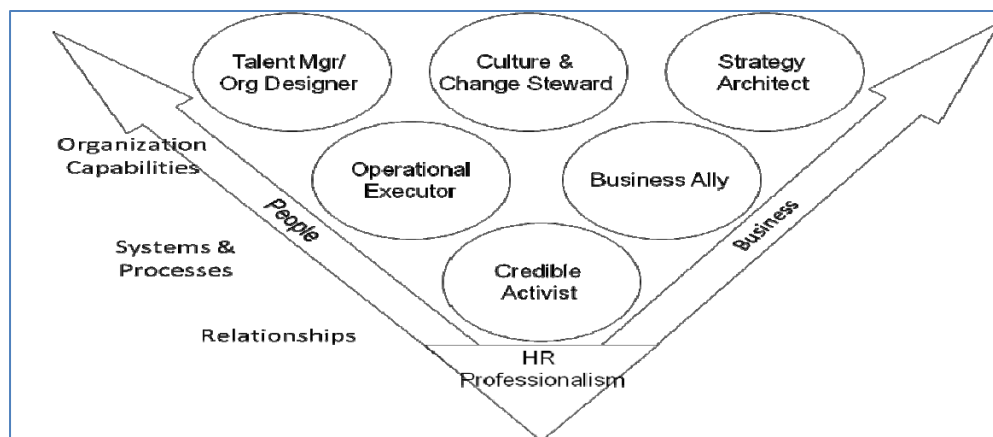


Figure 9. Human Resource Competency Model (Ulrich *et al.*, 2008)

Chen *et al.* (2005) using the competency groups of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) models for work place learning and performance researched the importance of the work place competencies for the HR practitioners in Taiwan. The competency factors that were studied in the six competency groups are given in Figure 10. The work place learning and performance competency groups that are important for the HR practitioners in Taiwan are: business competency, interpersonal competency, analytical competency, leadership competency, technological competency, and technical competency groups.

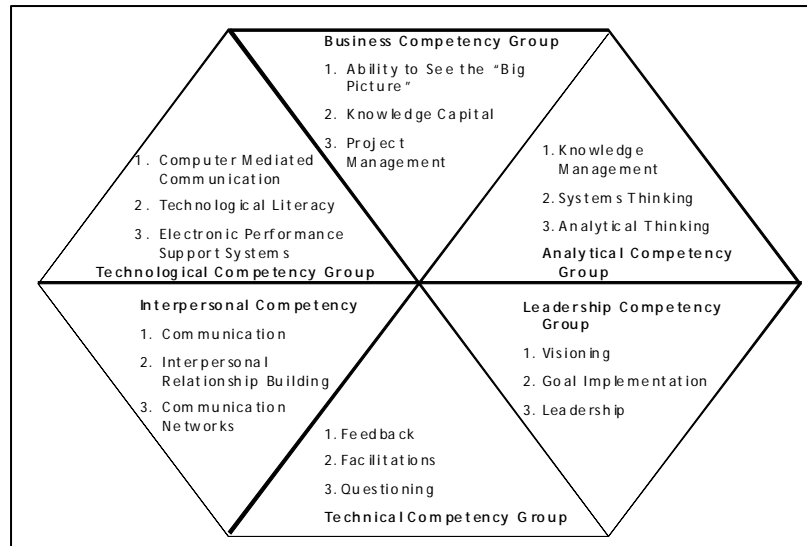


Figure 10. Workplace Learning Performance Competencies that are Important for Taiwan HR Practitioners (Chen *et al.*, 2005)

Boselie and Paauwe (2005) asserts that for the new future, HRM manager is expected to be an entrepreneur who is willing to take risks, is customer oriented, has business knowledge, and specific human resource knowledge. McLagan (1989) developed a model of HRD practices that was referred to as the "Human Resource Wheel." The wheel, as given in Figure 11 shows the various HRD and HRM functions.

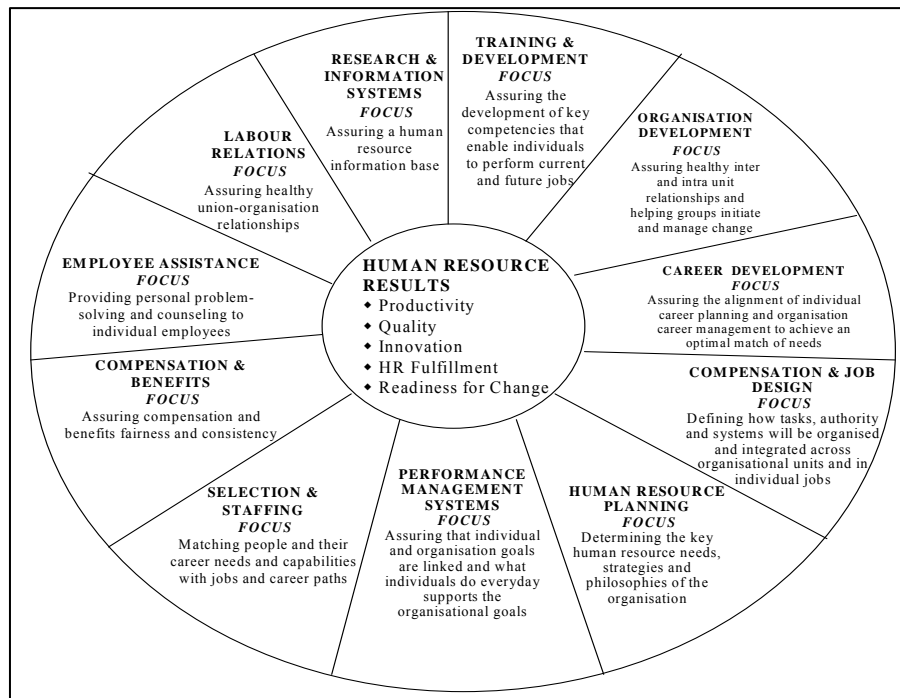


Figure 11. Human Resource Wheel (McLagan, 1989)

In McLagan's model, the primary HRM functions include HR research and information systems, union/labor relations, employee assistance, and compensation/benefits. HRD functions focus on improving and developing individual employees and the organization through training and development, and career development. Functions that support both HRM and HRD are selection and staffing, performance management systems, and human resource planning (DeSimone *et al.*, 2002). The "Human Resource Wheel" elaborates mainly the functional or technical competencies as required by the HR practitioners. This is important as the HR functions will support in developing the HR practitioner competency model. The central focus for HR management is to contribute to organizational success.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE COMPETENCY MODELS IN THE EAST

Selmer and Randy (2004) surveyed 3000 HR professionals, consultants, line executives, and academicians. The empirical study carried out in Hong Kong outlines that HR professionals should master both traditional and new skill areas including: HRM concepts and functional knowledge, communication, project management, international management, diversity management, market knowledge, international leadership, continuous change and innovation, strategic problem solving, community relations, business partnerships, employee involvement, employee champion, team development, empowerment, organization development, and global business knowledge.

Ramlall (2006) carried out a study on HR competencies and it was found that the most important competencies for the HR professionals were knowledge of business, HR delivery, and strategic contribution. Selmer and Randy (2004) asserts that in the study conducted by Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management and the University of Michigan's Business School in 1998, the competency "change agent" was the biggest challenge faced by the HR professionals. The study, too, observes that, as HRM responsibilities change from a function oriented to a process – oriented culture; HR managers need to initiate and coordinate business process or subsystems in order to offer services that contribute to organizational and business successes. Selmer and Randy (2004) observes that technical competencies which include knowledge and delivery of traditional HRM are still very important and relevant competencies in organizations.

Junaidah (2007) carried out an empirical study on the type and level of competencies possessed by the human resource managers from the top management perspective in Malaysia. This study was based on the Human Resource Competency Model developed by Ulrich, Brockbank, Yeung, and Lake (1995). The competency domains studied include: business mastery, human resource mastery, change mastery, organizational culture mastery, and personal credibility. Choi and Wan Khairuzzaman (2008) examined competencies and roles of HR professionals in the manufacturing companies in Malaysia. Based on the study, the top ranking competency factors are: personal communication, legal compliance, effective relationship, and performance management. In Malaysia, very little work appears to have been done with regards to the competency development for the HR practitioners. Organizations in isolation appoint consultants to undertake assignments in the development of competency frameworks for the various positions in the organizations. The assignments are generally conducted for the "core" (generic) competencies, although some in isolation may establish the role specific and functional competencies (Palan, 2003; and Abdul Hamid, 2004).

Khatri (1999) notes that in Singapore, "the state of HR function and competencies of HR managers is not satisfactory." Despite many theoretical and empirical studies in strategic HRM, no coherent theoretical framework has emerged in the discipline. An understanding of those issues would go a long way in developing a coherent body of knowledge in the field. A major limitation of prior work in the strategic HRM area according to Khatri is the lack of in-depth qualitative studies and this form of research is very much needed in strategic HRM in developing comprehensive and more valued models and framework. Most of the studies in strategic HRM field are based on the western context and there is relatively little research in the eastern context (Khatri, 1999). Boxall and Dowling (1990) notes that seminal HRM texts are all American and the most significant critical responses to date have been British. Conducting strategic HRM studies in other parts of the world especially in Asia, would help to meet the shortage of empirical work in the field in those parts of the world and also serve as a vehicle for comparative studies.

Hsu and Seat (2000) observes that in the academic literature, many of the prominent theoretical or analytical models of HRM and strategic HRM have been developed by American, or European researchers. Most of these models reflect the particular cultural characteristics of their country of origin and this

sometimes raises questions about the applicability of those western-oriented models in a different cultural and contextual environment (Hsu and Seat, 2000).

Rowley and Benson (2004) asserts that convergence of some HRM practices towards a more “western” model in eight different Asian countries (China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand) is taking place, specifically with respect to merit-based selection, performance-based pay, employment contracts, harmonized work conditions, and continuous in-house training. However at the policy level, strategic role of personnel managers, and line managers taking a more active interest in HR issues; less change was happening with respect to beliefs and assumptions. Zhu *et al.* (2007) in examining various studies carried out in China, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam posits that people-management system in those countries is of a “hybrid” model, combining aspects from the USA and European models with the prevailing practices. They, too, argue that the western models are likewise influenced by Asian ways of managing people.

The studies carried out by Sparrow *et al.* (1994), Rowley and Benson (2004), Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), Zhu *et al.* (2007), and Galang (2008) show that the HRM practices in the Asian countries are to some extent influenced by the local culture and diversity. Human resource management practices, too, are to some extent converging and the HR models/frameworks developed in the east are influenced by the models/frameworks developed in the west. As given above, very few empirically tested models have been developed in Asia, and particularly in Malaysia. There is a great need to develop an HR practitioner competency model for a developing country like Malaysia.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intensity of globalization has somewhat forced the HR professionals to re-examine their practices and change accordingly to suit to the changing needs and challenges. The HR competency-based models/frameworks developed by Ulrich *et al.* (2008), Brockbank and Ulrich (2003), McLagan (1989), Brewster *et al.* (2000), Bernthal *et al.* (2004), and others are somewhat practical and useful models. These models basically set out the activities that the HR practitioners must engage in to be successful in the HR profession. These models, too, are used by organizations to further map out their own HR models/frameworks.

However most of the models were developed and tested in the west and may not be suitable for application in the east including Malaysia. There appears to be a scarcity of research in the establishment and development of empirically tested local indigenous HR models/frameworks in the east. Boxall & Dowling (1990), Khatri (1999), and Hsu & Seat (2000) assert that more work needs to be carried out in the east.

The study carried out by Abdul Hamid (2010), *The Development of Human Resource Practitioner Competency Model Perceived by Malaysian Human Resource Practitioners and Consultants* will somewhat fill up the apparent gap in the area in Malaysia. This research is based on in depth analysis of previous notable studies carried out by Brewster *et al.* (2000); Brockbank and Ulrich (2003); Spencer and Spencer (1993); Mc Daniel (1998); Butteriss (1998); Schoonover (2003); Schweyer (2004); Chen *et al.* (2005); IPMA (2005); and Ulrich *et al.* (2008). The research compliments the studies carried out by other researchers globally. HRM is an organic field with great challenges and such studies must be carried out continuously to bring about a value in HRM.

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