

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Key role of strategic human resource management (SHRM) in advancing the degree of team learning**

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**Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is the main concern of the managers who are expanding their business at global level. It provides new avenues for the promotion of team learning in the organization. The significance of SHRM in advancement of team learning behaviour is still to be emphasized by scholars and academicians. Less emphasis is laid on the analysis of key role of SHRM in advancing degree of team learning in the globalized business world. The main purpose of this article is to explore literary facts pertaining to this key area. On the basis of review of literature on SHRM, its importance for nurturing the team learning behaviour among the diverse workforce of global business organizations to develop learning organizations and sustaining emotionally intelligent knowledge workers is presented and analyzed.**

**Key words:** Strategic human resource management (SHRM), cultural differences, team learning, team effectiveness, learning organization, knowledge workers, emotional intelligence.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the current business scenario, human resource management (HRM) policies and practices are essential, to be integrated optimally and to become successful in global business environment. The wave of globalization has revolutionized the trends and challenges of HRM, which are required to be handled effectively for managing diverse workforce. Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is one of the most important aspects of HRM practices that facilitates implementation of effective HR policies to meet the requirements of employees, while proceeding ahead to accomplish the organizational goals (Mathis and Jackson, 2008).

Another key aspect that is essential to be emphasized by the HR professionals in the globalized business world is related to team learning and development. It is due to this reason that integrated and skilled workforce leads an organization towards gaining assurance for long term success of business organizations in the global market

place. Since globalization has an influence on the HRM practices of the organizations, so it is essential to homogenize the strategies and processes of the organizations. In this concern, the practice of SHRM is beneficial for the organizations to take proactive measures for improving the efficiency of the employees and encouraging the feeling of collaboration among them (Deb, 2006). Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to explore the role of SHRM in the advancement of the degree of team learning among employees. With respect to this, different literary sources will be analyzed. It has been observed that today's business environment needs the establishment of strategies approach to the management of HRM for coping with the global forces and sustaining highly committed workforce.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The method review of historical studies is taken into account for assessment of the role of SHRM in advancing team learning among the diverse workforce in the global business environment. The significance of SHRM in

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globalized market is analyzed to emphasize the need of team development and learning for the organizations. With the advent of globalization, it has been adopted as a prominent strategy by the organizations to ensure growth and expansion of their presence in new markets. SHRM practices are helpful for the managers with the global orientation to manage diverse workforce, align them into one unit and comply with the new trends. The wave of globalization has opened up opportunities for the HR managers to adopt the strategic approach to HRM, so that diverse workforce across the world can be integrated optimally (Brewster et al., 2005). Further, pertinent information about the diverse aspects of SHRM and their role in enhancing the motive of team learning are analyzed.

### **SHRM and challenges in globalized world**

Human factor is important and taken into account by the businesses for sustaining their growth in the new era of globalization. Cesyniene (2008) emphasizes that HRM is an essential segment of business to be managed with great care while adopting the expansion strategy in the operations. In this concern, it is vital to establish an effective association between the strategy framework and HRM that is applicable at both the national and international level. Key issues, which are confronted by the organizations in global marketplace, are related to the size and cultural differences that are required to be considered for making investment in the human resource development (Festing, 1997).

Global competitiveness has to be improved and employees are required to be empowered by making centralization of the HR practices. Some issues are related to the staffing policies and training of employees for stimulating creativity and innovation in the business operations. The challenges that have to be recognized by the HR professionals while working in global market are related to the consideration of performance appraisals, compensation packages, training and development, and labour relations in accordance with the employment rules and regulations (Gachoka, 2008).

SHRM is a proactive approach to manage diverse workforce that has a significant influence on the corporate strategy of the multinational corporations. It basically emphasizes on the integration and adaptation across the defined hierarchy levels. Effective HR measures have to be adopted by the organizations for coping in the competitive business environment (Kim, 1999). The approach of SHRM is an inherent segment of the organizations success in attaining the defined mission and business strategy. This practice is aimed at establishing a link between the key workforce and strategic goals, which are important for sustaining improvements in the business performance and establishment of culture that promotes the drive for innovation and flexibility (Inyang, 2010).

In the framework of SHRM, human resource is recognized as strategic associates of the organization, which

play an important role in the definition of the corporate strategies and HR strategies. It is essential that SHRM should be focused towards performing the environmental scanning, availability of competitive workforce and assessing the impact of skills of employees on the capability of the organization (Krninska, 2002). SHRM practices are related to the assessment of the organizational performance and the extent of alignment between the workforce and organizational strategy, so that competitive edge can be gained (Pablos and Lytras, 2008).

### **Implications of SHRM practices for team learning**

With an aim of strengthening the significance of teamwork, business organizations are adopting the SHRM practices by taking keen interest in integrating teams. In the present scenario, many organizations recognize teams as their key work units, which are the basic drivers for effective functioning and success. It has transformed the orientation of the HR professionals towards the adoption of SHRM practices for the definition of the degree to which team learning and effectiveness are essential to be enhanced. In this concern, cultural diversity has to be adopted within the business operations to manage and lead the people in an organized manner. Cross-cultural dimensions of the functional aspects of HRM are also significant for meeting the emerging requirements of the key workforce (Jackson and Seo, 2010).

SHRM practices are vital for the alignment and integration of the diverse workforce acquired through the expansion of business globally. A blended framework of traditional and discretionary SHRM practices is helpful for the HR professionals in aligning the skills of the employees in accordance with the organizational goals. SHRM practices comprising of recruitment, selection and training, are aimed at promoting efficiency alignment to establish best fit between the skills and capabilities of the individuals included in teams and requirements of the organization (Ijose, 2010).

It also aims at encouraging the discretionary performance of the team members by taking into account the employee development and empowerment programs, incentive compensation and career advancement aspects. With the assistance of the adoption of SHRM practices, the skills and professional competence of the employees as a team get developed. It is helpful in addressing the complex nature of the management of people on the basis of the consideration of valuable resource (Schuler, 2000).

Some of the external factors that are considered through SHRM policies are industry characteristics, nature of competitors, country/ regional environment and technology. These aspects are helpful in aligning the strategies to manage diverse workforce in terms of the social, cultural and legal norms of the target market. Some of the internal factors that are emphasized on the basis of SHRM practices are organizational structure,

competitive strategy, global experience and global orientation. With the assistance of analysis of these factors, business and HR strategy can be formulated and implemented accordingly. SHRM approach has transformed the orientation of the organizations towards the utilization of key workforce for the management of the business transactions at global level (Holton and Yamkovenko, 2008). Team learning behaviour acts as the key driver for enhancing team effectiveness on the basis of the SHRM practices. These practices are highly significant in concern to the promotion of team learning to attain positive outcomes in favour of the organizational goals and objectives with respect to the sustenance of adaptable workforce towards change, high level of understanding among employees, accompanied by improved performance. It can be stimulated by seeking feedback, mutual approach to solve problems, sharing of information and promotion of healthy interaction among the team members (Lockwood, 2007).

These practices are highly important for the enhancement of the fit between the managers and team members, which has a positive impact on the improvement of the team effectiveness. It contributes towards the engagement of highly skilled and talented workforce that provides productive performance. Through SHRM framework, work practices based on high involvement can be adopted by the HR managers in the global business environment, which are helpful in enhancing the overall performance of the organization. High involvement can be considered in terms of the defined aspects, such as opportunistic job design, relative framework of skills base and well structure incentive policy (Collins and Clark, 2003).

### **Role of SHRM in developing a learning organization**

SHRM practices are also important to the improvement of the organizational learning. The focus of the HR policies and processes remain on the assessment of the roles and responsibilities, which are essential to be aligned for performing the duties optimally. It fosters the degree of transfer of knowledge among the diverse team members. Interpersonal processes also get positively related to the team performance through the engagement of teams in performing long term responsibilities to ensure success and growth. Team behaviours and positive learning aspects are stimulated within the organization by considering well defined framework of SHRM practices (Jackson et al., 2008).

An integrated learning organization model can be sustained by the companies to stimulate positive development of the employees on the basis of better and faster learning. The role of learning is emphasized by the HR managers for developing the effectiveness of the organization and constructive structuring of the HR policies. A learning organization requires knowledge workers to

develop and reflect the trust based relations accompanied by high level of commitment. Teamwork and learning are important criteria for the development of legitimate learning organization (Schuler and Jackson, 2007).

In order to sustain skilled and knowledge workers, it is essential for managers to intensely focus on the establishment of relations and management of the individual, as well as, collective performance. SHRM oriented policy framework is helpful in defining collective processes to recognize their performance and providing incentives for representing positive learning. It facilitates a wide range of opportunities for organizational learning and rewards are helpful in the extension of career advancement status. It is also helpful in encouraging the stimulation of leadership competencies among the employees working at different hierarchical levels (Bratton and Gold, 2001).

Knowledge development is profitable for organizations in terms of the creation of strong base of social relations and sharing their perspective with others. Through this, feedback mechanism can also be effectively aligned to ensure self and independent evaluations. The framework of SHRM policies plays a vital role in fostering the knowledge base of individuals and teams that emphasizes on the establishment of collaborative working practices. It stimulates the drive for harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies that that is important for the sustenance of learning communities and strengthening the identity of the organization.

Knowledge workers are the key resources for the business organizations that are trained and developed through formal education and training, so that the drive for the application of theoretical and analytical knowledge can be stimulated efficiently. Highly motivated and satisfied employees are considered as fastest growing resources of the organization that uses teams to perform the allocated tasks in an optimal way. Another key aspect of knowledge workers that have an influence on the effectiveness of the organization and output of individuals and teams is organizational commitment and stability of the work based behaviour of the knowledge workers need to be analyzed to get ready for adapting change (Schuler, 2000).

Learning based culture is essential to be sustained by the organizations to transform the behaviour of the employees and reflecting new insights for retaining key talent. Collaborative HR policies and culture are sustained through the development of SHRM framework and striving for positive change in the organizational turnover. Organizational learning oriented work culture is important for ensuring a high level of organizational commitment and transferring competent skills and knowledge to the employees. The key requirements to establish learning organization, which are collaboration, teamwork, knowledge process and creativity, are effectively fulfilled by the implementation of SHRM policies (Joo, 2010).

Structuring and allocation of work across self-management teams is the key towards improving the functional dimensions of the organization and developing supportive leadership for considering the significance of coaching and mentoring to sustain learning culture. The key purpose of extensive learning is to cover the wide range of individual needs, desires and identity for maximizing their potential as intelligent and innovative workers. Sometimes, dominating role of managers create problems related to the intention of the individuals towards the health and status of the organization. Individual learners have to reflect on the learning process and attaining feedback from one another, so that the difference between the role of managers and their perception level can be minimized.

Now, another concept of developing knowledge workers is based on the retention of emotionally intelligent (EI) workforce. In the current business scenario, EI has become an apparent concept for ensuring the success of the individuals, leaders and teams working within the organization. Employee diversity is an enriching criterion for the expansion of the capabilities of the organization with respect to the response given to the key customers and stakeholders. New and innovative solutions are offered to them for getting engaged in diverse intellects and cultural positions within the organization. Level of EI is helpful for managers and leaders in developing and sustaining social relations to work with higher level of organizational performance (Gardenswartz et al., 2010).

EI covers interrelated skills based competencies that are essential to be acquired by the knowledge workers for becoming responsive and self-aware towards one another. SHRM based policies and practices are helpful for individuals and managers in increasing their responsiveness towards interpersonal relations, co-workers interference in performance and reduce the probability of counterproductive conflicts among them.

Emotional intelligence level of knowledge workers is important in relation to the resolution of the unproductive tensions and interpreting the interaction between the co-workers that diversifies the challenge to accomplish high performance levels with increased organizational potential (Hassan and Yaqub, 2010).

SHRM practices provide assistance to the HR professionals in establishing the base for the efficient learning organization that supports and facilitates the development of knowledge workers. It is a long term process, which is vital for the accomplishment of competitive advantage and sustaining committed management attention to retain knowledge workers. For instance, by adapting the key requirements of a learning organization, Sony, Harley-Davidson, British Petroleum, Shell, Wal-Mart and GE have maximized their competitive position in the global market place. Clarity based organizational policies and culture is helpful for the transfer of knowledge among the individual and work teams that has a direct influence on the learning prospects of the

organization.

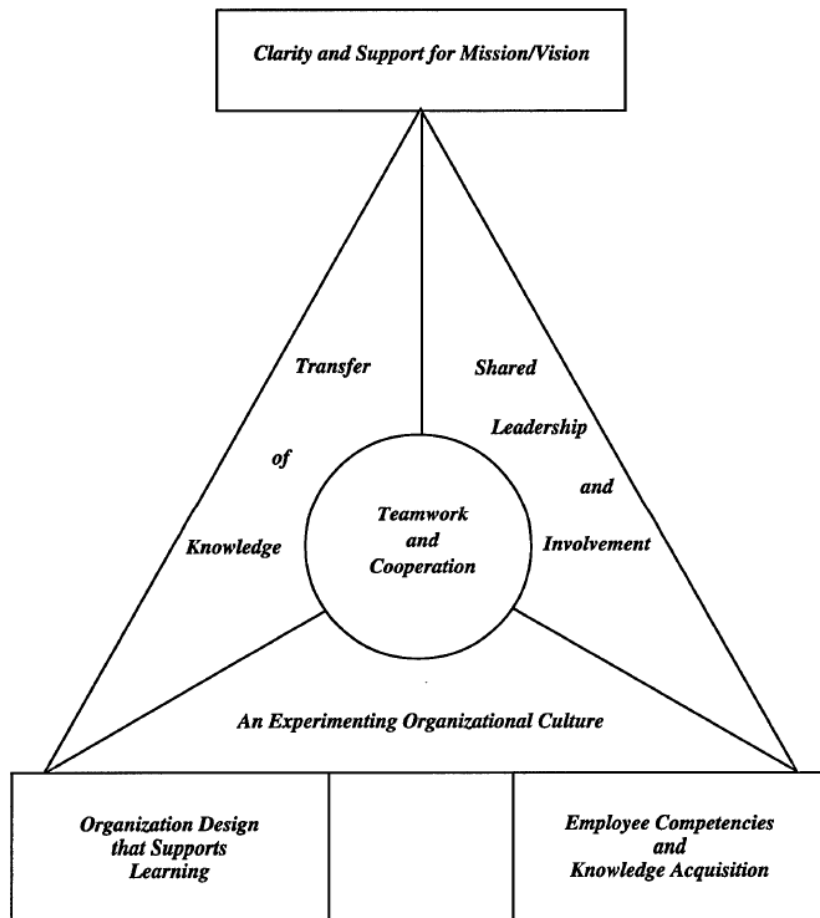
A new model comprising of clear mission and strategy, leadership aimed at empowering employees, experimentation based culture, knowledge sharing from internal and external environment, and greater emphasis on collaborative approach to solve problems and work teams is essential to be sustained by the organizations. (Figure 1). This model is helpful in integrating the diverse HR practices and retaining knowledge workers in a consistent manner. SHRM practices grouped with this model will prove to be beneficial in developing a strong learning organization followed by the sustenance of emotionally intelligent knowledge workers that value customer social responsibility and follow the ethical conduct of business (Goh, 1998). Diversity based SHRM practices pave way for the organization to attain productive performance and sustain its competitive position in the global market place.

## RESULTS

Business aspects of the organizations are highly influenced by globalization and diversity in cultural setting. The key challenge in front of the HR managers to organize and integrate international operations is related to the harmonization of the organizational policies for making significant contribution towards the improvements in the team effectiveness and collaboration among the diverse team members. The aspect of team learning is highly dependent on the collective efforts of the individual team members and the level of interaction among them (Collins and Clark, 2003).

With the assistance of the SHRM practices, more emphasis is laid on the implementation of value-added business responsibilities, so that the best fit, as well as, alignment between the business strategy and HR practices can be established. It is a systematic approach for adding value to the strength of the human capital by recognizing the importance of organizational performance as compared to the individual outcomes. These practices are supportive for nurturing individual behaviour oriented towards team learning and sustaining the level of HR competence within the global business organizations. SHRM framework is also contributively towards the elimination of the barriers that obstruct the progress of team learning to acquire requisite competencies (Holton and Yamkovenko, 2008).

Strategic architecture based organizational policies are inspiring for the managers and employees to follow clear and valued practices to develop a learning organization. Distinctive set of managerial practices and organizational policies is helpful for the organizations in establishing themselves as most prominent learning organizations, having high potential for growth and development to sustain diverse workforce as knowledge workers. Team work oriented organizational culture is the strategic building block for sustaining the position as a learning

*Strategic and Foundation Building Blocks of a Learning Organization*

**Figure 1.** New organizational model (Goh, 1998).

organization. The reason behind this is that strategic HR policies increases the commitment and job satisfaction level of the employees, which is helpful in driving them to work in teams (Pablos and Lytras, 2008).

Collective skills, knowledge and efforts of the employees working in teams are helpful in developing and proposing innovative ideas for the business organization. It is followed by the sharing of emotional intelligence to improve the team output followed by the overall productivity of the organization. Honda is an appropriate example to analyze the significance of teamwork and collaboration by forming cross-functional teams. The probability of interpersonal issues gets reduced through this, which is helpful in promoting group based problem solving behaviour among the knowledge workers. Key focus and orientation of the employees and managers in a learning organization get attentive towards maximizing the profits of the organization and fulfilling social responsibility for the major stakeholder in an ethical manner.

## DISCUSSION

SHRM practices are highly advantageous for the business organizations in gaining accession to well aligned and committed workforce. Knowledge transfer among the diverse workforce is helpful for the HR managers in emphasizing on the core business processes and formulation of strategies relationships with the employees. It has been emphasized by many scholars that SHRM policies and practices are vital for engaging the diverse workforce towards performing integrated roles and responsibilities. Along with this, discretionary performance of the teams and their effectiveness is also improved through the well defined approach of SHRM (Schuler, 2000).

It is essential for the HR managers of multinational corporations to demonstrate their competence for managing the challenges of globalization. It can be implied from the analysis of the literary sources that the level of team learning behaviour in the business organizations

gets nurtured with the assistance of the inclusion of team involvement based HR practices. These are also helpful in emphasizing on the core competencies of the business followed by the integration of diversified workforce. In the current era of globalization, it is necessary for the business organizations to emphasize on the human factor, so that long term success and growth can be ensured (Pablos and Lytras, 2008).

Another key aspect that is to be emphasized by the HR professionals, while implementing SHRM practices, is related to the establishment of foundation for strategic blocks of success. Employee skills and competencies can be developed through the application of integrated training and coaching programs that emphasizes on the common experience and team work based behaviour. These aspects are also beneficial in relation to the alignment of the employee learning to sustain a balanced and emotionally intelligent workforce. The proposed SHRM model is helpful for promoting the development of ultimate organization with distinctive policies and practices to retain knowledgeable workforce. In order to develop a balanced workforce, it is essential to focus on the alignment of EI workers into work teams and valuing shared perspective for the promotion of the organizational effectiveness and sustenance of competitive position in the market (Brewster et al., 2005).

## Conclusion

It can be inferred from the ongoing discussion that recognition of the value of the human capital is essential for the business organizations to approach their operations in the global marketplace. HR managers have to lay emphasis on the integration and alignment of the diverse workforce on the basis of the consideration of their needs and cultural differences. Strategic approach to HRM is beneficial for the managers in valuing the growth prospects of the organizations and sustaining competitive workforce to increase the competence level of the organization at global level. The major aspects of team learning and effectiveness are emphasized by the HR managers through the consideration of SHRM approach, which lead to the integration and advancement of the diverse workforce that focuses on having common interest and sharing of knowledge.

On the basis of the analysis of diverse aspects of SHRM practices, it can be inferred that the key strategic factors for the development of balanced workforce aimed at working in teams are helpful in retaining competent workforce. Learning organizations can be developed and sustained through congenial HR practices and developing adaptable work culture, as well as, skills based. It is highly supportive in developing a workforce of knowledgeable workers that is comfortable in working as a team in favour of the organizational growth and

development. The framework of SHRM practices is helpful for the organizations in sustaining balanced and integrated workforce to lead organizational success.

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