PEOPLE IMPORTANCE AND SHRD PRACTICES AT ABC MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTACT

Strategic Human Resource Development (SHRD) has been highly signified of escalating organizations 'competitiveness because of its contribution in optimizing business expertises. However, the lack of understanding in its process such as the characteristics and roles of SHRD impede the relevancy of its strategic value onto business functions and strategies. It has been argued that HRD serves a vital role in shaping strategy because partnering with multi-stakeholders shall propel the greater assurance of SHRD. This research integrates Garavan (1991) and McCracken and Wallace (2000) SHRD model into the framework of the study. The purpose of this study is to identify the HRD practitioners' perceptions onto people importance following with the actual and future of SHRD practices lastly, effects of people importance upon SHRD in ABC multinational organization. The research adopts the quantitative method. There were 58 questionnaires obtained from the respondents and was analyzed using descriptive analysis, mean and ANOVA, paired sample t-test and simple linear regression. Statistical tests show that the perception of HRD practitioners over people importance is at medium level and revealed to have significant difference among the four formal positions. In this case, the result found that the Vice President groups have showed the highest mean as compared to other group. Statistical tests show that the actual SHRD is moderately being practiced by practitioners. The analysis found that there were significant differences in most of all characteristics except for strategic partnership with line management. The result in this characteristic has indicated as the highest mean score in the current practice compared to the future state. The results also reveals that of all eight variables on the findings, there are two best predictors among eight SHRD characteristics effected which explain the variance in HRD strategies, plans and policies of ($r^2 = 26.6\%$) followed by variance in top management leadership of ($r^2 = 24.1\%$). The variance of shaping organizational mission and goals of ($r^2 = 19.5\%$) also dictate a thriving predictor. The SHRD is not being placed much emphasis on learning and development in this research yet it is developing though far too little practices were found.

ABSTRAK

Strategik pembangunan sumber manusia (SHRD) telah lama dikenali sebagai pemangkin kepada peningkatan kompetitif sesebuah organisasi kerana sumbangannya dalam mengoptimumkan kepakaran pekerja. Akan tetapi, kekurangan pemahaman terhadap proses seperti cirri-ciri dan peranan SHRD telah menghalang perkaitan nilai strategic ke atas fungsi dan strategi sesebuah perniagaan. Ada yang menghujahkan bahawa HRD mempunyai peranan yang penting dalam membentuk strategi kerana perkongsian bersama pelbagai pihak perkepentingan akan mendorong jaminan yang lebih jitu terhadap SHRD. Kajian ini juga menggabungkan penggunaan SHRD model oleh Garavan dan McCracken and Wallace di dalam satu kerangka kajian. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti perspesi pengamal HRD terhadap kepentingan pekerja diikuti dengan pengamalan SHRD dimasa kini dan hadapan, akhir sekali kesan SHRD keatas kepentingan para pekerja. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah quantitatif. Sejumlah 58 kaji selidik telah diterima dari reponden organisasi ABC, iaitu sebuah perbankkan antarabangsa dari perusahaan multinasional dan ia dianalisis menggunakan statistic deskriptif, min dan ANOVA, ijian sampel berpasangan dan regresi linear mudah. Ujian statistik menunjukkan persepsi pengamal HRD terhadap kepentingan pekerja berlaku pada tahap sederhana dan ujian menggambarkan terdapat perbezaan signifikasi di kalangan empat kedudukan rasmi pengamal HRD. Di dalam hal ini, kumpulan naib presiden telah didapati menunjukkan kumpulan yang mempunyai skor min tertinggi berbanding kumpulan lain. Ujian statistik mendedahkan kapaktrisan SHRD sebenar berlaku pada tahap sederhana oleh peramal HRD. Ujian statistik juga mendapati terdapat perbezaan di setiap peringkat kecuali untuk perkongsian strategik bersama pengurusan lini. Kajian juga menunjukkan skor min tertinggi pada keadaan sebenar berbanding masa akan datang. Ia juga menggambarkan di antara kelapan pempbolehubah SHRD, dua di antaranya dilihat sebagai peramal terbaik yang mana menjelaskan varians strategi, polisi dan pelan HRD ($r^2 = 26.6\%$), diikuti dengan varians pengurusan kepimpinan atasan ($r^2 = 24.1\%$). Varians pembentukkan misi dan matlamat organisasi juga dilihat sebagai pemangkin kepada kajian. Meskipun SHRD tidak diberi penekanan di dalam pembelajaran dan pembangunan dalam kajian ini, namun ia tetap berkembang walaupun amalan-amalannya jauh kelihatan.

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

ANOVA	-	Analysis Of Variance
CIPD	-	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
GLC	-	Government Linked Companies
HR	-	Human Resource
HRD	-	Human Resource Development
HRM	-	Human Resource Management
HOD	-	Head of Department
IIP	-	Investors in People
L&D	-	Learning and Development
LSI	-	Large Scale Industries
MNC	-	Multinational Company
SHRD	-	Strategic Human Resource Development
SHRM	-	Strategic Human Resource Management
SME	-	Small Medium-Enterprise
SMI	-	Small Medium-Scale Industries
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Science
SWOT	-	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat
T&D	-	Training and Development
UTM	-	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
VP	-	Vice President

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Human Resource Development (HRD) has been highly signified of escalating organizations 'competitiveness and successful agendas by providing optimal development in producing business expertise (Shuck *et al.,* 2011). This is bound up with several phenomenon; velocity of internalization and globalization demands, organizational structures, works and contents which all pressured by the volumes of information technology. For these reasons, the traffic of how information technology integrated into business virtually across busies in manufacturing until service process from transmitting data to crucial decision makings had represented the effective utilization of people's capacity in maximizing performance (Toracco and Swanson, 1995). This means organizations' capability can contribute to that advantage which is knowledge. Therefore, responding to be at the strategic position has demanded HRD to be tactically utilized within the business frameworks which may foster the environment of SHRD to emerge (Swain and George, 2007).

Therefore, the alignment of specific organization's knowledge of people on the adoption of strategic their value of HRD cannot be ignored or undervalued (Shanahan *et al.*, 2012).

However, not much empirical based research could be found on the relevance of strategic value of HRD (SHRD) in organizations. Therefore, this thesis is intended to determine the pivotal SHRD elements by paying closer attention in people importance especially in the context of a foreign banking industry organization operating in Malaysia. Furthermore, it is to believe that the development human capital of an organization depends from many influences. For example, the close cooperation between HRD specialist and other practitioners, treating HRD in a systemic approach along with partnering with numerous stakeholders for greater results of strategic assurance. In this way, contribution of the SHRD approaches is aspired to be seen. Hence, this chapter discusses the background of the study and problem statement. It is also focuses on research questions, research objectives as well as the conceptual framework. At the end of the chapter, the conceptual and operational definitions are explained, covering people importance and SHRD practice.

1.2   Background of Research

In the age of digital economy coupled with the risen of new global powers, coordination between external environment and internal substances is imperatively challenging for organizations to survive and thrive at own sustainable competitive turfs (Jackson, 2010). Because of this, the key source of knowledge, skills and competencies (capabilities and attitudes) in coping with the centrality of skills gap, ageing but expertise people are extensively important to be invested (Erasmus *et al.,*

2010). It is fitting to the point that people has a great tendency in neutralizing business threats, capitalizing on opportunities and increasing profit when they are deliberately treated appropriately with certain values. However, the matter of fact is how serious is these entities are attended to invest on the value of people? The data from International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2014 report shows that great volumes of organizations are committed in training and development investment and over 36 hours of training were spent in large organizations compared to past years (Miller, 2014).

In South Korea and Singapore for instance, the experience of people investment has never been underscored which they are persistent producing higher quality human capital besides attracting foreign direct investments (FDIs) from multinationals (Negara, 2014). Evidence has proven that attraction of FDI and continuous arrival of MNCs in India for instance, has produced a fruitful outcome due to its educated workforce with highly specific skills embodied (Rao, 2004). Meanwhile in Australia and New Zealand, the investment on development into learning and development is found to be as a trajectory to develop future leaders and high potential people (McGraw and Peretz, 2011). In line with this, the emphasis on utilizing human capital (knowledge, skills and abilities) are necessary to meet business goals, later responding to nation's growth. It is essential to recognized that in concern for collective knowledge and learning outputs, the ability to develop people is relatively influenced by organization leaders or also known as multi-stakeholder (Pause, 2004). In reflection to what Alagaraja (2013) refers are the HRD professionals, top management and line managers; owners, investors, line managers and employee including working with HRD professionals, while Garavan (2007) refers to line managers, senior managers and owners, customers and suppliers. In other words, the manipulation of actions and perceptions of these multi-stakeholders could enable to facilitate business productivity hence profitability in a long term environment. It is due to the fact that too weak to be politically responsible for people's development will be responded to the creation of low also insignificant status for people as a source of competitive advantage for organization (Long and Wan Ismail, 2008). Therefore, a major steps to be taken if only strategy is treated at emergent process. This means integral access to optimize leaders' competencies

regardless of difference in degree of involvement (Long, 2013), names and roles (Valkeavaara, 1997), experiences and abilities (Zhu *et al*., 2013) interacts an important pre-requisite adoption of HRD in a strategic emphasis for people's development to be served.

Beforehand it is important not to ignore that the diverse terms and interdisciplinary of HRD have made the field apprehension which this is have led such debatable voices from scholars (Garavan and Carbery, 2012; Lee, 2010; McGuire, 2011; McLean and McLean, 2001; Ruona, 2000; Sambrook, 2000; Weinberger, 1998) in term of purpose HRD should serve, outcome of utilizing HRD or attributes of HRD in offering strategic values. It is clear that lacking clarity over definitional boundaries and confusion over purposes, locations and languages of HRD have addressed huge barrier for HRD to well-understood in practice (McGuire, 2011). Studies on HRD domains reveal that ambiguity is a room to embrace interpretations for both, theoretical and practical purposes, however, the situation has contributed to provoke HRD to be overlapped with other field and body of practices thus leaving HRD to practiced indirectly, silo or unintentionally with other functions (Abdullah, 2009; Devadas *et al*., 2012; Hamlin and Stewart, 2011; McGuire, 2011; Trehan, 2004). For example, Middle East survey data from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2015) indicate that three-quarter of the regions' learning and development managers believe that recruitment and selection has been emerged as the top HR priorities that is well-aligned with organizational strategy compared to learning and development priority and others. While in Indian banks survey, rather than promoting the significant of HRD within business strategy, most of the banks have been treated HRD for granted by utilizing traditional HRD approach of training and development as their key medium to cater most of their business processes and claiming that mechanism as their confidence in developing a "healthy HRD climate" (Singh, 2013).

Inconsistent understanding of HRD roles between organization and practitioners has also contributed by the disparity of HRD field (McGuire, 2011; Weil and Woodall, 2005). This is closely related to the issue of unclear and unaware

vital roles vested in HRD within job descriptions (Anderson, 2009; Horwitz, 1999; Pederson, 2000; Weil and Woodall, 2005). In reflection on the breadth to understand and utilize HRD efforts, the alliance of top-level managers and practitioners in business process yet remain to be in dilemma since majority of them were not sure how HRD could assist to organization priorities (Anderson, 2009). Alongside lacking clarity of HRD roles, the paucity of organizations to look HRD as the central characteristics in attempts of people's development has also coined by the poor leadership support (McGuire and Cseh, 2006), sufficient power also ownership and control (Garavan, 1995). Undoubtedly powerful organizations are emerging, but responding to the poorly traditional HRD has somehow questioned the leaders about their power and responsibilities (Trehan and Riggs, 2011). Equally critical, Hassan (2007) asserts that having little efforts made by to integrate development of people has put down the developments to operationalize ineffectively.

It is worth noting that in recognizing business expertise resides within people (Torraco and Swanson, 1995), revising simultaneously their competencies and potentials by practitioners is greatly demanded (Ardichivili, 2011; Luo, 2004; Jackson, 1999; Jensen, 2000; Tomé, 2011). For example, large volume of researches have accumulated over years concerning HR focused-outcomes on job satisfaction (Edman, 2008), performance management (Adhakari, 2010; Welbourne *et al.*, 1998), career success (Janasz *et al.*, 2003), better decision making process (Amaruand and Chhetri, 2013) coupled with building social learning network (Borgoin, 2012), but mostly fail to address the evolving of HR investments in the nature of HRD outputs. In fact, Marimuthu *et al.*, (2009) highlights that proactive and dynamic employees' involvement are crucial to sense internal and external environment, yet, practitioners are likely to neglect their contributions.

Even though many practitioners claim to explain the importance of people as organization stakeholders, they are nevertheless being treated in marginality and isolated from the strategic formulation and planning, tended their value of performance to be exploited for the benefits of productions hence leaving their development for balance sheet and profit margins (Adhikari, 2010; Ardichivili,

2011; McCarthy et al., 2003; Nafukho et al., 2004). To be specific, organizations that ignored to unleash practitioners' potentials by aiding appropriate competencies is one of several root reasons why this matter happen taking place the old conventional doubt of cost and benefits (Abdullah, 2012). Recent evidence has proven that nearly forty percent of large multinational service corporation mentioned that managers' disability to engage and develop employees acted as barrier to propel HRD efforts (Shuck *et al*., 2011), whereas other contexts mentioned HR Department in manufacturing sector (Abdullah, 2012), lack of adequate funds (Swain and George, 2007), practitioners' reluctance (Hamlin *et al*., 2008) and rapid technological changes (Koornneef *et al*., 2005). These in turn present another challenge for HRD to be practiced legitimately in organizations (McGuire, 2011; Weil and Woodall, 2005).

Though it is the case, the segmented, and incomplete of HRD can be looked in a positive view about how HRD works in variation of focus, purposes, goals and directions (Wang and McLean, 2007). For instance the needs of cooperation of mental partnering among practitioners which should be taken for granted (Harrison, 2005). Recent development of people as intellectual capital has heightened the strategic direction for people's expertise (Adhikari, 2010; Alagaraja, 2013; Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2005; Long, 2013; Wan, 2007). Eventually, renegotiating the role of among practitioners and HRD specialists in a strategic contents has demanded them not only to articulate organizational values and objectives but also defining to which developments works well for individuals regardless of practitioners' job roles (Koornneef *et al*., 2005). In response to the demands, aggressive approaches to a systemic approach of emergent and planned strategies with key stakeholders, particularly people will help practitioners to engage, motivate and bond with one another besides lessen the ambiguity and breaking down the top-down communication of HRD (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2005).

Therefore commitment to move this concern to the top business agenda simultaneously indicate the strategic partnership of top management and practitioners for both, formulation and implementation of HRD in a strategic way

(Garavan, 1991; Garavan et al., 1999; Torraco and Swanson, 1995; Walton, 1999). However, even it has been widely discussed conceptually, there are still inadequate empirical evidences to confirm the significance of SHRD demonstrated by practitioners which related to people's development (Koornneef *et al*., 2005). For example, evidence on SHRD indicates that though SHRD is about developing people and organization, the dysfunctional of focusing on people has undermine the strategic position of practitioners; what is more practicing traditional HRD tasks like a decade ago (MacKenzie *et al*., 2014). Ideally, they acknowledge the implementation of SHRD, while majority proclaim the practices of SHRD, however, in reality, the way they practice is still lag of clarity (Weil and Woodall, 2005) also reactive (Koornneef *et al*., 2005). In fact, it is arguable that there are loopholes recognized underpinnings to what does being 'strategic' means (Alagaraja, 2013; McCracken and Wallace, 2000).

1.3 Problem Statement

As highlighted by the speech of Malaysia Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib Bin Tun Abdul Razak in the Tenth Malaysia Plan, total skilled human capital is much lower compared to other developed countries and it shows that the human capital development is absolutely critical (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). Thornton International Business Report revealed that with the figure of 23% skilled human capital in year 2011, target to have 37% of skilled workforce in year 2015 has provoked Malaysia in critical environment which it might need to revise its focuses on acquiring and developing talents extensively (Wong, 2013). As highlighted in the HRD/HRM survey analysis by the Working Group on Human Resource Development (WGHRD) in 2008 for example, found that the scarcity of talented and knowledge workers has not received a proper attention from organization especially the by top managements (International Communication Union Development Bureau

(ITUD), 2009). Specifically in Malaysia development scenario, one of the current aims of development in human capital is to propel wide-range of people's development capacity with the competences like knowledge, skills and abilities that would enable them to be near to the top agenda of organization's discussions of strategic priorities. However, the latest findings of the Human Capital Index 2013 regarding the development of human capital are incongruent with this aim (PricewaterhouseCoopers Malaysia, 2013).

In particular, other report found that one of the occurrence happened is because that top managements in any way were less effective to scrutinize people planning to bring towards at corporate stages (PricewaterhouseCoopers Malaysia, 2013). In addition to the weaknesses reported, a survey analysis by Schwartz and Bersin (2014) who implemented a global Human Capital 2013 survey based on data over 2532 business in 94 participated countries had surprisingly showed that organizations who struggled to build their people had encountered slight improvement of 34% from 37% where it resemble the "adequate" phase with C-minus in contrast to D-plus last year of building competitive people. The detail data revealed that readiness and capabilities of people have not only being undervalued by top managements, but they were also majorly being used for cost and management purposes.

The scenario also impacted to Malaysia since many private organizations failed to keep up with the demands of skilled and talented human capital by ignoring the longer term development rather than focusing on ad-hoc training schemes although it was proven partnership among HRD practitioners existed in the element of sharing roles and responsibilities of HRD (Abdullah *et al.,* 2007). In contrary, it was found that several talented employees with high skills are insufficient and they did not given a proper room of understanding of what foundation of business needs and supports that organizations should acquired for (Marimuthu *et al*., 2009). Hence, lacking efforts in developing people's intellectual and emotional capacities remain challenging (Memon, 2014).

It was to believe that wide and longstanding issue of lacking consensus in concern to meaning and values of HRD are the deep-rooted perception among these levels. For instances, excluding, ignoring or undervaluing HRD could adversely impact on organization effectiveness when one malfunction viewing HRD as training cost rather than investment (Hooi, 2010; Pederson, 2000; Weil and Woodall, 2005), coupled with the disengagement time of top managements and HRD practitioners to perform HRD roles within their current job scopes and working hours (Alagaraja, 2013; Baum and Shivas, 2008). Consequently, it is relatively a failure of not fully utilizing people's competences.

In other complex situations, unqualified and unprepared HRD practitioners have been urged to run the HRD roles in a more strategic mode and this way influenced the outcome of the HRD insights in the SHRD area (McGuire, 2011). However, due to the discrepancy between what is promoted to practitioners in providing support for organizational strategies and what is practiced in the organizations arised, (McKenzie et al., 2014). This situation will form a complicated distortion of SHRD because there are number of practitioners who misunderstand the importance of HRD in total strategic ways given by the reality of vague understanding and lack of knowledge on what is "strategic" means in HRD (Torraco and Swanson, 1995; Weil and Woodall, 2005) despite of overt awareness responded for people's development (Keeble-Ramsey and Armitage, 2015).

Besides, Keeble-Ramsey and Armitage (2015) claimed that while most of them hectically spending their time on own jobs, failing to focus on "their (HRD) job" have further prohibit the managerial to be fully responsible on the development of people in organization. Furthermore, to date there have been scant attempts made conceptually or empirically which present the engagement of HRD practitioners in concerns for people other than being capitalistic or silenced in taking development initiatives towards people management (Anderson, 2009; Garavan, et al., 1998; Garavan, et al., 1999; Keeble-Ramsey and Armitage, 2015; Koornneef et al., 2005; MacKenzie et al., 2012; MacKenzie et al., 2014; McCarthy et al., 2003).

Additionally, one of key criticism of development in SHRD is that in par of facing foreign competitions, much of HRD works are highly based on training by prevailing the role of HRD which turned to impact on employee retentions, incentives, staffing and turnover rate (Ghazawi, 2012) and not extensively to facilitate shared visions, mental partnering or system thinking of what SHRD promoted (Holton and Yamkovenko, 2008). It is critical when HRD has been displayed as an instrument for organizations led by short-term utilization whilst people's development is passively formalized into organization's strategies and goals (MacKenzie et al., 2012). Certainly, this situation has directed to call low integration manifested in HRD practitioners" understanding about HRD what is more SHRD (Holton and Yamkovenko, 2008; Wang et al., 2009). From the perspective of SHRD perceptions, a research by Abdullah (2009) revealed that excluding one of Malaysia large company of oil and gas, majority of private organizations in Malaysia is comfortable of having fewer HRD practitioners to perform HRD functions. Along with the perception that HRD should not be excessively carry out by many managers, this notion may situate it in jeopardy towards strategic implementation in organizations. In this sense, Alagaraja (2013) and Garavan (2007) stated that for SHRD to be the domain focus in organization, a dynamic insight of cooperation between HRD practitioners and people as "stakeholder" of the organization is necessary if not SHRD will be in a weaker position coupled with acclamation of HRD as the provider of training rather than strategic partner (Walton, 1999, Yorks, 2005).

Another issue that intrigue to SHRD practice and leverage the researcher in analyzing the situation is the effect of SHRD in the lens of people importance through practitioners' perceptions. There are ongoing discussions of the impressive role of SHRD given the fundamental alignment of HRD with business objectives and strategies. As proven by many researches (Garavan, 1991; Garavan, 2007; Garavan et al., 1995; Hassan and Yaqub, 2010; Holton and Yamkovenko, 2008; Horwitz, 1999; McCracken and Wallace, 2000; Tseng and McLean, 2008; Wang *et al.*, 2009), SHRD practices are the most significant approach for the development of capabilities among pooling people in the production of strategic outcomes to any organizations. To date however, scholars (Garavan *et al.,* 1995; McCarthy *et al.,*

2003; McGuire, 2011) posit the contentions when many organizations often ignore the important key that led to phenomenal growth and success of organization which is the alliance (Memon, 2014). Difficulties arise, when multiple top-levels of organizations including HRD practitioners, HRD specialists and top management fail to inculcate mutual association among them in identifying and developing HRD, particularly at strategic level (Hassan and Yaqub, 2010).

Meanwhile in the case of Hassard et al. (2009) work, they claimed that in general, HRD in the United Kingdom is undertaken by HRD practitioners mostly have the intensification of power within their positions. However, at once failed to succumb people's needs to negotiate in resolving organizational challenges which resulted to incline the power imbalance which that translated the people-focus to be in invisible. These views are consistent to one of the crucial critic of a literature on HRD who claims that implementing HRD agendas by demobilising other key stakeholders, particularly through people to engage in SHRD effectiveness. As such misperception of top leaders who often perceived "*only well-educated employees are worth developing as knowledge workers*" (Cooke, 2013: p.145) remains challenging. In fact, as what had been reported by Ringo and MacDonald (2008) from IBM Global Human Capital Study 2008, despite the fact that HRM/D contributes to employee development in several organizations, still it does not demonstrate inputs strategically. It is believed that lack understanding on the perceptions of HRD plans and policies has made the disengagement of both organization and people growth and potentials, which at once retard the strategic of both performances (Wang et al., 2009).

In conclusion, although the linkage between HRD roles such as people-related development and responsibilities of HRD practitioners have been articulated extensively, minimal efforts has been paid in the area of practitioners' commitment and involvement in the development of people (Alagaraja, 2012). In addition, with the role still reserved as strategic partner, there is little scope that is being highlighted to what extent practitioners are consistently contribute to the development of HRD. A recent research by Lawless *et al*. (2012) revealed that given

that HRD roles dealt with disappointment and undermined due to short-term managerial thinking, the role has adversely questioned the crucial function of HRD practitioners whether practitioners are committed to SHRD consistently coupled with the potentialities of dealing with conflict of own role, wider duties in organization and power imbalances. As a result, this issue has translated a narrow set of perception to be responded by practitioners. Therefore, this study is one step to underline the practice of SHRD that concern on the perceptions of practitioners in efforts to develop people by emphasizing the SHRD in a strategic way.

Hence, identifying the real-life reason of SHRD to be embraced at strategic way is the focus. In this case, the research will be conducted in a large multinational company operating in Malaysia which represented the best leading multinational banking company incorporating to the commercial and personal banking service. Finally, consistent with the lacking evidence to support research about HRD practitioners stimulating people's development; this research is attempted to disclose the effects of practitioners' positions and practices constituting their efforts in promoting SHRD collectively for the sake of people importance.

1.4   Research Questions

1) What are the HRD practitioners' perceptions on people importance towards the development of HRD (according to formal position) in ABC?
2) What are the actual and future practices of HRD strategically (SHRD) in ABC?
3) What are the effects of HRD practitioners' perceptions on people importance over SHRD practice?

1.5   Research Objectives

1) To identify HRD practitioners perceptions on people importance towards the development of HRD according to their formal positions in ABC.
2) To identify the actual and future practices of SHRD in ABC.
3) To determine the effects of HRD practitioners perceptions on people importance over SHRD practice.

1.6   Scope of Research

The scope of research is confined to one of multinational financial company in Malaysia which located at the central city of Kuala Lumpur. The company has been chosen due to the status of Asian best leading multinational banking company that incorporated to the commercial and personal banking service. Based on a quantitative approach, a survey is employed as the research instrument to collect data, particularly on the people importance, the current SHRD practices in organization alongside HRD practitioners' perceptions over these two issues. The research involved multi-stakeholders at top managerial positions of the organization, namely vice presidents and head of departments also senior managerial such as senior executives and line managers.

The variables of this study are formulated within the perspectives of SHRD. With regards to people importance, it is being referred to commitment, planning, action and evaluation of HRD practitioners over people's development as the components were benchmarked based on the Investors in People (IIP) principles.

Though the items did not mention exactly the word "SHRD", they were still reasonable to resemble the seriousness of people-centred that aligns employer and employee requirements over developmental practices. In SHRD for instance, HRD practitioner perception on people importance such as organization's business strategy, management effectiveness, people management, learning and development are among vital elements that facilitate their sensitivity to invest and develop.

Meanwhile for SHRD practice, the SHRD model induced by Garavan (1991) and enhanced version introduced by McCracken and Wallace (2000) are used as the research foundation in relation to determine HRD practitioners' practice over SHRD characteristics. It comprises of eight characteristics in place namely shaping organizational missions and goals, top management leadership, environmental scanning by senior management, HRD strategies, policies and plan, strategic partnership with HRM and also with line management, trainer as organizational change agent and ability to influence corporate culture. It is measured by using precede questions asked in previous studies with some modifications. It is crucial that investing and developing people are both act as an approach of strategic alignment that direct organization. It is to believed that kind of developmental could effects on the perceptions of building and unleash people's potentials. Despite of that, the magnitude of these relationships is not being quantified in this research. It is the dominant scope of this research which is meant to identify and determine the practice of SHRD at strategic point due to the current practice besides raising the importance of SHRD at future state. Finally, the last scope of this research is the emphasis on the effects of people importance to the SHRD practice that is essential in determining their maturity practice of handling and treating SHRD.

1.7   Significance of Research

The present research has several significant contributions to the body of knowledge of HRD field comprising the importance of people development issues and its value over SHRD practice to the multinational finance organization. Firstly, the research posits empirical findings pertaining to the perspectives of HRD practitioners valuing their people in the developmental sphere like involvement, empowerment and engagement elements. As discussed earlier, people's competences are pivotal to be attached with the organizational top agendas. However, far too little attention has been made in academic enquiry to recognize the consensus of people as organizational noteworthy value at corporate tables. In addition, there were only little discussions to explain the resourcefulness displayed by people in becoming a strategic resource to organizations. In addition, there are number of studies in HRD which position HRD practitioners to the attention of facilitating the development of learning and development culture but most of the studies employ practitioners with insufficient evidence to display HRD within their job scope whilst some studies confined the people-centric isolated to the HRD department per se.

Secondly, the research has served a base for SHRD research model that aim to facilitate organization competitive advantage by best developing people and prompting the mutual dependant perspectives to take charge in developmental interests. It is assumed that strategic partnership is importance yet it is likely that fostering close cooperation between multi-stakeholders is insufficient. For the reason, SHRD posits the influence on practitioners' perceptions and actions which it is crucial because it portrays a strategic way to share knowledge and skills in a dispersed range of different managers' position. Furthermore, the long-term priorities of organizations and HRD have grown to be key feature to enhance the functions of senior management in providing solutions of business problems and challenges. In respect to this, the concept of SHRD characteristics is regarded as one of prominent approach to foster the holistic coalition of HRD practitioners, people and organizational environment at the same time endure business continuity.

Another significant aspect of the research is the additional evidence with respect to the implementation of SHRD approach that underlines the relationship between people importance and SHRD characteristics. It is to be understood that SHRD able to stimulate organizational capabilities and performance. The approach is widely employed at international setting especially in U.S and European regions but less likely to be adopted in Malaysia setting extensively. Hence, one can conclude that the research gives a recent overview of HRD practices in a new scope which is finance and banking sector rather than manufacturing per se is considerable to determine the ways of HRD practitioners stimulate and manage people's development in organization; attached by the means of using SHRD characteristics.

Lastly, empirical findings of the research shall create notable contributions to the practicality of SHRD practice in Malaysia. These findings present crucial information pertaining to the concerted efforts and commitments among top and senior managerial practitioners to promote hand-to-hand development interests that heighten by the strategic characteristics of SHRD enforcement. Therefore, the findings will offer signs and information to other multinational even other large organizations to incorporate reciprocal issues in mission to enhance, upgrade or change better treatment of HRD towards SHRD.

1.8   Limitations of Research

The findings of the research are subjected as below:

1) Firstly, the current investigation is confined by the lack of SHRD empirical evidence at Malaysia setting such as relevant statistics and reports in determining proper HRD practices at strategic level. Even so there were extensive literatures on HRD and SHRD, yet most of them were conceptually

written while several of them were superficially detected the practice of SHRD. Though the field is evolving time to time, still it is a new practice to Malaysia's environment.

2) Secondly, the limitation is based on cross sectional design via questionnaire as the instrument of collecting data.

3) Thirdly, the current research had to deal with the number of respondents involved in the research. Though researcher has sent the permission to conduct the research to multiple branches in Kuala Lumpur via emails and by hand, big numbers of branches were unwilling to participate in the research due to the reason of clashes business routines, unavailable candidate to be potential respondents, rigid schedules while outnumbering of them were concern to maintain company's confidentialities besides poor feedback.

4) Fourth is the subject of the study participated has been focused merely to HRD practitioners at all level without including employees and/or trade unions or worker representatives (externally).

5) The final limitation of the research is the generalizability issue of the research. It is due to the sample design choose which is purposive sampling which consists of smaller sample size that niche only to practitioners involved. In this case, the research is cannot be generalized to all.

1.9   Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Terms

1.9.1   People Importance

a. Conceptual Definition

Ruona (2000) remarks that incorporation to knowledge era people have taken the position as "the value adder". It is predominantly influence the stakeholder's involvement that refers to value and relationships held by people as among members of organization who have legitimate interests to participate in the business setting (Achoui, 2009). People importance is concerned with the needs of to be invested and developed by assimilated with other stakeholders to run HRD functions well (Garavan, 1995). People importance emerged from commitment triggered by great involvements in organization directions through roles and leadership efforts in favour to heighten competitiveness to a sustainable level (Alagaraja, 2013; Freeman et al., 2004).

b. Operational Definition

Throughout the research, the term people importance will be used to refer to commitment and attachment of top managerial in investment and development of people that is being promoted and enforced by an organization in leading both, people and managers who are vital resources to utilize HRD for strategic value creation. All of indicators are measured using national UK Investors in People (IIP) standard frameworks introduced in

1991. There are four principles involved namely commitment, planning, action and evaluation correspondingly to the value of people.

1.9.2 HRD Practitioner

a. Conceptual Definition

HRD practitioners constitute its influential role in managing and developing work in organizations. They can be viewed as individuals who are responsible to engage in HR functions regardless training, development or learning environment per se (Valkeavaara, 1998). To be specific, HRD practitioners are considered as a group among multiple stakeholders which their role mainly demands corporate accountability to revitalize HRD on improving performance rather than providing training events (Torraco and Swanson, 1995). According to Bing et al (2003), HRD practitioners posit vital functions as an expertise, provided with experiences and knowledge to influence and delivery HRD efforts in maximizing learning, education and human behaviour. It has been highlighted that their responsibilities onto HRD are inter-related to the know-how and know-what competencies. In other words, they are focal groups who assembled as key players in aligning ways of developing organizational strategy with business productivity also company welfare (Barney et al., 2010). It is obvious that one of attempt to promote strategic role of HRD will be systematically raised under strategic business partnership inside organization (Clardy, 2008).

b. Operational Definition

In this research, the HRD practitioners are one of stakeholder groups in the organization who prioritize a great degree of HRD roles within their job scope in order to influence people's productivity, knowledge and skills enhancement besides company's performance. Their emphasis is not only accessible on any developmental events related to people's development directly but indirectly regardless of their positions, backgrounds and/or experiences as long they have subordinates who report under them. In this context, HRD practitioners are referring to individuals like director or first president, second vice presidents, head of department and senior executives.

1.9.3 SHRD Practices

a. Conceptual Definition

HRD is a longstanding concept yet relatively new term used to foster long term development that related to learning capacity where it is not merely concern to training events for improving performance per se (Hui Lien and McLean, 2004). The fundamental of HRD as a facilitative role is identified as the process of expanding learning experiences at multiple levels by serving development of both, individuals and the system (Ruona, 2000). It is done by furthering the missions and goals of organizations into something more than the sum of supportive to strategy named SHRD (Clardy, 2008; Torraco and Swanson, 1995). It is believed that contribution of SHRD in profound and

strategic ways can clearly shaped from result-oriented through closer integration of management and development of people in organization's strategic decisions for policies and creation of practices, coupled with expanding HRD emphasis by top management guidance and partnerships of line managers (Wang et al., 2009). Consequently, potential SHRD at once can emerge if strong consensuses to inventory people's development yield better performance which these offer greater HRD value throughout organization.

b. Operational Definition

In this research, SHRD practices refer to a strategic emphasis of organization efforts that is not only limiting HRD to training and development events or perspectives per se for the purpose of improving performance. It is pointed to address the influential stakeholders comprising people and HRD practitioners besides highlight the prominence of HRD application run by HRD practitioners in determining people's development subsequently promoting such SHRD environment in the organization. It is measured by addressing nine characteristics of SHRD proposed by Garavan (1991) besides working towards the enhanced version of new SHRD characteristics offered by McCracken and Wallace (2000).

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