Calling line managers in employee continuous professional development in South East Asia

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Abstract

Purpose: The paper aims to study the relationship of Line Managers' (LMs) Human Resource (HR) role and its facets within employee's Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Design/methodology/approach: A quantitative approach using 100 questionnaires were distributed to line managers in a South East Asia with a response rate of 87%.

Findings: Results depict that LMs are actively involved in Strategic Partner, Employee Champion, and Change Agent roles. Study also shows that these three HR roles correlate with employee CPD. LMs' are neither involved in Administrative Expert role, nor it correlates with employee Continuous Professional Development.

Research limitations: Inability of the line managers to be fully involved with the four HR roles constraints the process of line manager deployment of HR roles specifically to employee CPD.

Practical implications: Argues that the importance of strategic partner, employee champion, and change agent roles are the most important barrier and enabler of employee CPD, thus indirectly promoting organizational success and productivity.

Social implications: Highlights the difficulties of managing organisations by getting the line managers directly involve in the development of employee CPD. Many line managers have to be made and given opportunities to develop their capabilities on this platform. Contends that HR can help an organization to succeed, provided that all line managers understand their roles, work together and take responsibility for their contribution. In addition is the adoption of the HR roles for the smooth delivery of HR functions which aligns with the overall organizational success.

Originality/value: Specific HR roles are significant importance to the development of employee CPD within the setting of this South East Asian organization.

Keywords: human resource, line manager, continuous professional development, initiatives, employee development

Jel Codes: M1

1. Introduction

Most of the discussion regarding Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has inclined to focus on either the needs of the individual professional or the interests of the professional bodies (Šiugždinien, 2008). There are other stakeholders who could have an interest in the effective management of CPD. In fact, Line Managers (LMs) may play a bigger role in management of CPD. Usually; conflicts exist between individual and the organizational needs. In addition, it is the manager's responsibility to ensure that work can be performed by the employees' and resources available (Cossham & Fields, 2007).

LM is seen as the source of professional knowledge for developmental purposes (Jones & Robinson, 1997). The Human Resource (HR) department may still have the authority to approve employee CPD. However, in most cases, the arrangements would have been referred, discussed and agreed between the HR specialists and LMs before remitting it to the HR department. The purpose of CPD is not only confined to individual needs, but also the organizational. The LMs, who have in-depth knowledge about the learner as well as the organization, would be the best person to seek reference.

Therefore, LMs are the most suitable person to authorize and approve CPD activities within the structure of organization's general business activity LMs (Jones & Robinson, 1997) are seen as the most appropriate person for assessing the short term as well as long term improvements in employee's outcome. This is due to the fact that they are usually the employee's immediate supervisor and have daily basis contact with the employees.

Furthermore, a manager has the responsibility to provide support in ensuring CPD is implemented effectively (The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 2003). This includes providing financial and HR needs for the individuals undergoing CPD. Other than that, to create a lifelong learning environment, LMs have the liability to promote a supportive CPD culture. A commitment to learning will facilitate the development of this culture by encouraging and motivating the individual employee.

Other than formal CPD, a LM could act as a mentor or coach to ensure that employees learn from each other to develop their skills and knowledge. Sharing of knowledge, peer support, mentoring, time for reflection on daily practice should be fostered to support employees in the workplace. Naturally, a LM is anticipated to encourage the individual or team to take accountability for how they will handle their own learning and development Šiugždinien (2008). Leading has always been a part of a manager's job. Therefore, rather than forced training, CPD is usually initiated by the employee, and is supported by LM. This leads to the following research question: i) which HR roles are LMs involved in? and ii) does a relationship exist between HR roles and employees' CPD?

2. Literature review

Concept of CPD

CPD is an initiative to update professional knowledge throughout employment Bowell (2000). This initiative requires not only self-management by employee, but also management of development opportunities by the organization. The author also argues that despite its name, CPD could not be regarded as exclusively limited to professionals or corporate members. Now, more than ever, it is only relevant that all members of organizations to manage their learning, indirectly contributing to higher performance.

LM's HR Role

Dave Ulrich has proposed the four key HR roles that HR champions must fulfil to make a business partnership a reality (Ulrich & Brockbank, 1997; Choi & Wan Ismail, 2008). Ulrich explains that both LMs and HR professionals are HR champions. The author recognizes that HR is no longer the sole responsibility of the HR department, but it involves a firm's broader 'HR community (refer to Figure 1). The HR community consists of those individuals throughout the organization who are dedicated to leveraging HR practices to devise and integrate organizational capabilities that create value and deliver results. From the literature review, the main and null hypotheses that can be developed by the reviews are that the LMs involvement in HR roles correlates with employees CPD.

Ha -The more the LMs participated in HR roles, the more it correlates with their involvement in employees CPD.

H0 - There is no significant relationship between the LMs involvement in HR roles with employee's CPD initiatives.
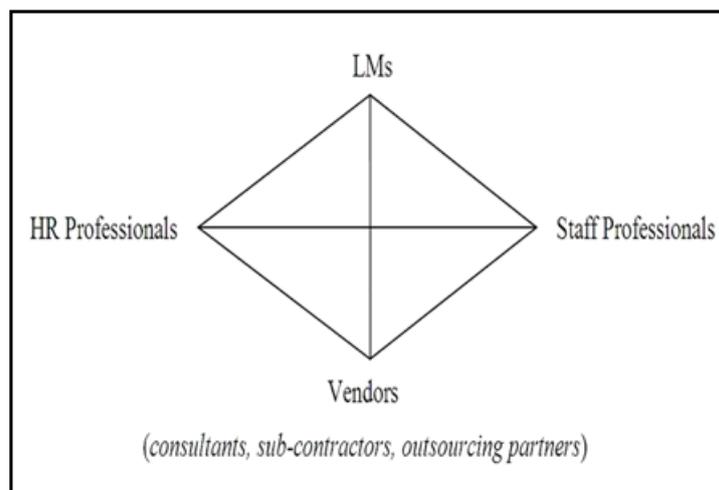

Figure 1. HR Community – A series of partnership. (Ulrich, 1997)

Ulrich explains in "HR Champions", that the emerging HR community is based in multiple partnerships. LMs bring authority, power and sponsorship. At the same time, they have overall responsibility for the HR community. HR professionals bring HR or subject-matter expertise, organization wide. Meanwhile, staff professionals bring technical expertise respective to their functional areas. Vendors, on the other hand, offer advice or perform routine standardized work. Collectively, the HR community defines and deliver value. According to Kandula (2005), the HR

professionals must play multiple roles as described to add value and to champion in whatever they do.

To clarify the roles that LMs play in HR, it is important to understand the multiple-roles models. As fig. 1 illustrates the four key stakeholders in HR, Figure 2 depicts the roles they are involved in. Ulrich suggests that a HR champion (or HR stakeholder) is involved in four key roles as depicted in Figure 2. The two axes represent the HR champion's focus and activities. Focus ranges from long-term/strategic to short term/operational. Activities range from managing processes (HR tools and systems) to managing people.
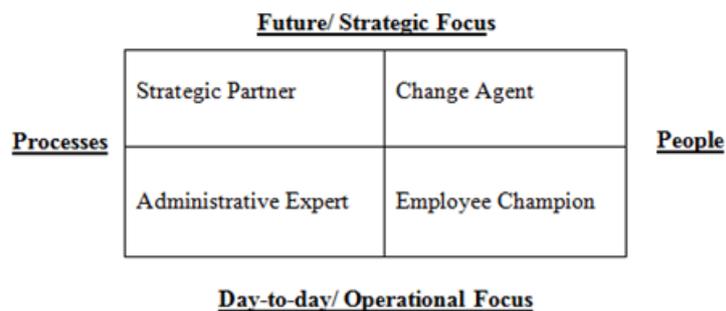

Figure 2. Multiple-Roles Model for HR Management. (Ulrich, 1997)

Strategic Partner

The strategic role focuses on aligning HR strategies and practices with business strategies. The LMs acts as a strategic partner in ensuring the success of the business strategies. By fulfilling this role, a LM increases the ability of a business to implement its strategies. Strategic HR is "owned, directed, and used by LMs to make effective HR strategies happen" Choi and Wan Ismail (2008). This is actually an implication from increasing involvement of LMs in the HR decision-making process.

The notion of 'ownership' was build upon partnering with HR professionals, to decide and to give opinion on HR matters, rather than taking orders. As partners, the theory is, they share totally in designing policies as well as implementing it. Mutually, the partners expect, and are expected to contribute their skill and knowledge in discussion. This concept also depicts that each partner is a professional and thus, They will not be expected to be of the same opinion with everything that the LM or HR specialists recommends, or expected to agree to something when their professional expertise tells them it is wrong to do so Larsen and Brewster (2003).

Consequently, this role is based on the outcome that the organisation should be able to execute its intended corporate strategies through the HR function cooperating with both senior and LMs in focusing on how to ensure the overall needs of the organisation (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005). Furthermore, few authors have embarked on the idea that the devolution of HRM functions to LMs has been believed as a way of making people management more strategic, allowing HR managers time to focus on more strategic issues and fostering greater business relevance for HRM through the engagement with (Rasmussen et al., 2010). This presents differing views. Some authors advocate on the role of LM as strategic partner, who are involved and contributed in developing policies and procedures as well as executing the policies. On the other hand, some authors believed that giving LM responsibility in creating policies is naïve because of the less level of knowledge of HR policies and theories. This discussion led to the first sub-hypothesis:

Ha1-The higher participation of LMs in strategic partner role results in higher involvement in employees CPD.

Administrative Expert

Creating an organizational infrastructure has been a traditional HR role. The second role, the administrative expert or functional expert is constructed around the task of ensuring that traditional HR processes such as staffing and training are carried out efficiently and effectively. Some HR practices are delivered through administrative efficiency (i.e. technology), and others through policies, menus, and interventions, expanding the "functional expert" role. Ulrich (1997) further explained that an administrative expert ferret out unnecessary costs, improve efficiency and constantly find new ways to do things better. According to the author, LMs play a limited role in management of firm infrastructure. The LM can play a role in supporting HR reengineering and value-creation efforts such as understanding as well as investing in reengineering all work process.

HR reengineering is assessing how work is performed and how processes can be improved. The processes that have the greatest potential for improvement and cost savings need to be identified (Holbeche, 2009). Nevertheless, technology plays a very big part in HR transformation, especially in the role of management of firm infrastructure. It is not surprising that organisations nowadays need to develop strategies and support systems that ensure that HR activities are performed effectively (Kulik & Bainbridge, 2006). This might explain why LMs are considered as playing a limited role in this aspect. A case study done in Hewlett-Packard using

the application of the multiple-roles model revealed that the ownership of management of the firm infrastructure by the LMs is relatively low (5%) in comparison with HR department (95%).

On the contradictory, however, some authors disagree with the notion that the LMs have decreasing role in managing the firm infrastructure. For example, some argued that the utilization of organisational intranets and the internet enables LMs to handle some HR work without the assistance of the HR department (Renwick & MacNeil, 2002). In addition, it is easier for LMs to get involved in the area of recruitment, selection, employee benefits, and other HR functions because of the sophisticated HR information systems (HRIS) can offer exceptional services in those areas. Consequently, organizations tend to substitute HR administrative personnel with new technologies, taking advantage of the cost benefits from diminution in personnel. This in turn, results to more need for involvement of LMs to make sure the technologies are utilised well (Papalexandris & Panayotopoulou, 2005).

The contradictory notion uncovers a research gap that requires attention. The initial presentation by Ulrich (1997) has derided the LM's contribution scale in this administrative assistant role. This is because only HR specialists are assumed to have the required HR or subject-matter expertise to deal with HR functions such as recruitment, staffing, and performance appraisal. But the emergence of technology seems to facilitate the devolution of administrative expertise from HR specialist to the LMs. This led to the second sub-hypothesis:

Ha2 -The higher participation of LMs in administrative expert role results in higher involvement in employees CPD.

Employee Champion

Ulrich (1997) described employee contribution role for HR champions are those encompassing their involvement in the day-to-day problem, concerns, and needs of employees. The metaphor for this HR role is 'employee champion'. These champions personally spend time with employees, train and encourage managers in the other departments to do the same. Later, Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) has revised these roles and split this role into two, which are employee advocate and HR developer. Employee advocate role focuses on the needs of today's employees through listening, understanding, and emphasizing. On the other hand, a human capital developer role centred on managing and developing human capital (individuals and teams), and focuses on preparing employee to be successful in the future.

The change of terms does not denote that HR professionals are more in charge on management of employee contribution (Reilly & Williams, 2006). Rather, the authors explain that it has always been the role of LMs. The LMs has prime responsibility in engaging with employee and that HR cannot champion, advocate, represent or even sponsor employees. Thus, championing employee has always been a part of LM's job. The initial term "employee champion" is more suitable than the latter two because the term itself encompasses the essence present in both "employee advocate" and "human capital developer".

Some authors preferred to use the term "Employee Champion" when explaining LM's role in their book, "HR Business Partners" (Hunter & Saunders, 2006) According to the authors, it is the role of employee champion that is potentially in the area, in which the LMs can make the greatest contribution. This is due to the close relationship the LMs have with their employees. Not only that, the level of day-to-day contact between both parties provides the potential for deep understanding of employee attitudes. This led to the next sub-hypothesis:

Ha3 -The higher participation of LMs in employee champion role results in higher involvement in employees CPD.

Change Agent

The fourth HR role is based on a strategic focus on people and aims at managing transformation and change faced by companies. The role of change agent subsequently directs focus to the requirement of ensuring that the organisation has the competence to handle change by assisting employees in their attempts to embrace and execute change (Ulrich, 1997).

Change agents are accountable for the deliverance of organisational transformation and culture change, and this role, in turn creates value by ensuring that the whole organisation is able to change according to the circumstances by building the capability to change into its core competences Lemmergaard (2008). The author also explains that the thought is that HR should function as a kind of promoter for change and as such should instigate change and make sure that the change capacity is high.

LMs play a vital role in the management of transformation and change. This is because LMs have, for all time been responsible on enabling, implementing and enacting HR policies to be embedded in the workplace (Hutchison & Purcell, 2003). Hence, being a change agent, the LM must play a key role in implementing and

managing organization change, assessing potential, sources of resistance to change, and collaborating with HR managers to overcome these barriers (Inyang, 2010). Logically, as firms undergo transformation, the LMs, as change agents, assist employees to let go of the past and adapt to the new culture. This requires a high degree of trust by employees. As LMs are closely associated with the employees, naturally, they are expected to fulfil this HR role. The final hypothesis is stated as:

Ha4 - The higher participation of LMs in change agent role results in higher involvement in employees CPD.

LMs and Employee CPD

The notion of LM as developers (LMADs) can be associated with LMs role in employee CPD (Gibb, 2003). According to the authors, the emerging role of LMs in the development of employees brings many perspectives to light. Referring to Figure 3, LMs role can be interpreted in few ways. There are two positive perspective of LM assuming the role of developers and there are two sceptical perspectives.
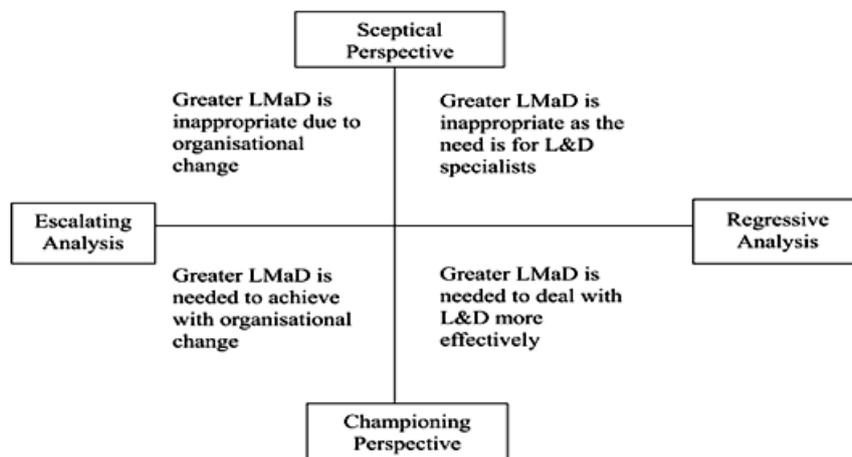

Figure 3. Mapping Perspectives of LM as Developers. (Gibb, 2003)

In fact, the idea that the greater LMs involvement in development is needed to achieve organizational change reveals that it is essential for a line manage to be as a coach or mentor, to cope with organizational change. When there is organizational support, learning culture, LMs involvement and employees trust, this perspective could be cultivated to benefit the employee in CPD. Logically the essential nature of the LMs role must increase in importance as organizations

continue to experience unrelenting, turbulent change McNeil (2003). Therefore, LMs as developer role is more important in environment that endures rapid change.

Big K (knowledge)-based organization refers to organizations that have K-informed workers and LMs. This type of organization promotes creativity and stimulates thinking ability for both LMs and employees. According to Gibb (2003), when explaining the championing perspective, the author argued that in order to cope with unpredictable changes and turbulent environment, creative thinkers are more needed than ever. To do that, LMs should include a gap analysis of big K (knowledge) in their strategy development, and how to bridge that gap. It is believed that LMs are mentor or coach in fostering lifelong learning at work, as well as to align employees with the big K strategy. The role of information and communications technology (ICT) and human networks is to share and use the big K that is extracted from individuals; LMs organise this and pass it on. They help set new goals, aspirations, and efforts. They provide leadership through supporting learning in these ways.

However, the sceptical perspective entails when the LMs does not understand his/her role in employee's CPD and perceives that learning and development specialist or HR specialist are the ones responsible to meeting the employee development needs. There are also instances when the LMs believe that rapid organizational change makes employee's skills and competencies obsolete, therefore developing them would be considered a waste of time and money.

In that case, as explained by the authors, the factors of unpredictable changes and turbulent environment means that it is important to adapt and innovate. This in turn depends on more than science and research for identifying and using big K. Simply said, a person who adapt to the changes is seen as more effective than a person who tried to challenge the changes by being a creative thinker. The implication is that people should learn how to deal with the daily realities of working in such conditions; using good reasoning, using small knowledge, or small K.

Certainly, the discussion of LM's involvement in the development of employee or CPD; specifically brings upon many appealing views. Many authors explain or rather, gives instruction regarding what the LMs are supposed to do in the deployment or employee CPD. But Gibb (2003) views on LMs as developer shed a light in wider outlook on LM's perspective. This creates a unique point for research; to research on the reality of LMs role in employee's CPD. Based on the following review, the proposed objectives for this research study are:

- to identify which HR roles are LMs involved in

- to examine the relationship of LMs HR roles and employees' CPD

Table 1 shows LM's HR roles and the supporting authors.

a) Dimension : Strategic Partner			
Sub-Parts	**Item**	**Total Items**	**Supporting authors**
Organizational Awareness	1	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Ramussen et al. (2010)
Systems Thinking	2	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003)
Innovation/Creativity	3	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Larsen and Brewster, (2003)
Link HR to Mission	4	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Choi and Wan Ismail (2008)
b) Dimension: Administrative Expert			
HR Law and Policies	5	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003)
Diversity	6	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003)
Applying Information Technology to HR	7	1	Ulrich (1997), Renwick and McNeil (2002), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Lemmergaard (2008)
Measure Effectiveness	8	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Holbeche (2009)
c) Dimension: Employee Champion			
Building Trust/Integrity/Ethical Behavior	9	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Reilly and Williams (2006)
Communication	10	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Reilly and Williams (2006)
Team Work	11	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Hunter and Saunders (2006)
Conflict Resolution	12	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003)
d) Dimension: Change Agent			
Design and Implement Change	13	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Lemmergaard (2008)
Consensus/Consultation	14	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Inyang (2010)
Influencing Others to Act	15	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Inyang (2010)
Organizational Development & HR Theories and Principles	16	1	Ulrich (1997), Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003), Hutchison and Purcell (2007)

Table 1: LM's HR roles

3. Methodology

Data for this research will be collected using primary data (quantitative method) by distributing questionnaires to the LMs. A questionnaire is an instrument that the researcher will be using to obtain information about LMs HR roles and its relationship with employees' CPD. The questionnaire is divided into three sections as follow:

Part 1: Demographic Characteristics - Part 1 in this questionnaire consist of questions regarding demographic characteristics such as gender, race, age, marital

status, education level, number of years working in the organization and department. There are seven multiple choice questions which require a "tick" in the appropriate box provided.

Part 2: LMs HR Roles - The items in this part are divided into four groups which describes the HR role as introduced by Ulrich (1997). Those groups are strategic partner, administrative expert, employee champion and change agent. These roles were also discussed in Brockbank and Ulrich's (2003) HR competency survey. The questions contained a five-point Likert Scale to mark their level of agreement.

Part 3: Employee Continuous Professional Development (CPD) - The items in this section were modified from CISI CPD tracker survey: Trends in CPD, by Chartered Institute for Security and Investment (2010). There are 12 general questions that seek to assess the LM's involvement in employees CPD.

4. Findings

Research question 1: Which HR roles are LMs involved in?

Four vignettes are analyzed. Those are Strategic Partner, Administrative Expert, Employee Champion and Change Agent. To answer this research question, mean value is calculated for each of the vignettes. The results are depicted in Table 2, 3, 4, 5 and figure 4.

Items	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Implementing HR activities which support culture of the organization	3.33	3.00	4.00	0.817
Considering all external and internal environment factors when providing ideas to organization	3.45	3.00	3.00	0.745
Presenting new insights and innovative approaches supporting organizational development	3.55	4.00	3.00	0.728
Linking HR activities to support the organizational mission and culture	3.49	4.00	4.00	0.861
Overall Value for Strategic Partner Role	*3.46*	*3.50*	*3.00*	*0.699*

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic Analysis for the Strategic Partner Role

Items	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Using quantitative and qualitative data to analyze organizational information	3.21	3.00	3.00	0.891
Having knowledge of HR laws and practices	3.15	3.00	3.00	0.883
Encourage diversity in the workplace	3.46	4.00	4.00	0.818
Having knowledge of current and emerging information technologies to improve HRM efficiency and effectiveness	3.41	4.00	4.00	0.770
Overall Value for Administrative Expert Role	*3.30*	*3.50*	*3.00*	*0.700*

Table 3. Descriptive Statistic Analysis for the Administrative Expert Role

Items	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Demonstrating professional behavior to gain the trust and confidence of your subordinates	3.83	4.00	4.00	0.554
Expressing ideas and exchange information clearly, avoiding HR technical jargon	3.78	4.00	4.00	0.559
Working effectively in a team	3.90	4.00	4.00	0.676
Using negotiation and conflict resolution techniques	3.63	4.00	4.00	0.667
Overall Value for Employee Champion Role	*3.80*	*4.00*	*4.00*	*0.515*

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Employee Champion Role

Items	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Designing and implementing change	3.57	4.00	4.00	0.816
Building consensus and providing consultation	3.85	4.00	4.00	0.814
Leading others	3.70	4.00	4.00	0.764
Applying HR management theories to improve organizational performance	3.70	4.00	4.00	0.649
Overall Value for Change Agent Role	*3.71*	*3.75*	*4.00*	*0.685*

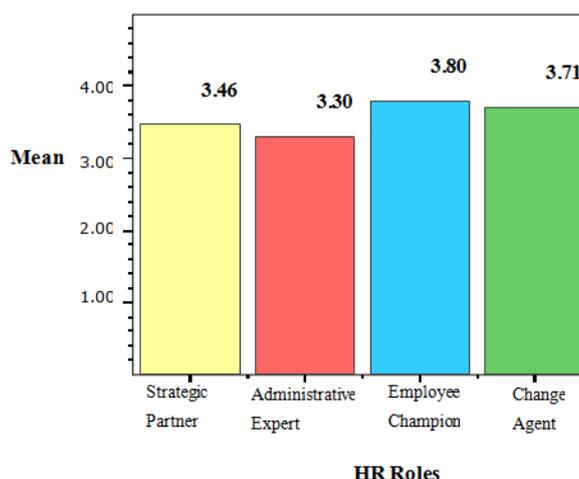Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for the Change Agent Role

Figure 4. Mean for HR Roles

Figure 4 shows that all four roles' means are not high in variance. It could be concluded that LMs were involved moderately in all four roles. However, HR Role 3, which is Employee Champion, has highest mean value (3.80) among the four, indicating that LMs were most actively involved in this role compared to the other three. LMs contributed lowest to HR Role 2, which is Administrative Expert. The other two HR Roles, which are Strategic Partner and Change Agent, have mean values of 3.46 and 3.71 respectively.

Research question 2: Is there a relationship between HR roles and employee's CPD?

To analyze the relationship between HR Roles and Employees' CPD, Pearson Correlation Analysis was utilized and depicted in Table 6. Table 7 shows relationship

between HR roles amongst themselves. Among the four HR roles that were analyzed, three HR roles are significantly correlated. Strategic Partner, Employee Champion, and Change Agent roles are significantly related with employees' CPD. Pearson correlation r-value for those three variables is 0.372, 0.311 and 0.191 respectively. Administrative expert role had no association with employees' CPD.

Items	Pearson Correlation with CPD
Implementing HR activities which support culture of the organization	.203
Considering all external and internal environment factors when providing ideas to organization	.420(**)
Presenting new insights and innovative approaches supporting organizational development	.282(*)
Linking HR activities to support the organizational mission and culture	.153
Overall Pearson Correlation for Strategic Partner Role	**.372(**)**
Demonstrating professional behavior to gain the trust and confidence of your subordinates	.232(*)
Expressing ideas and exchange information clearly, avoiding HR technical jargon	.139
Working effectively in a team	.111
Using negotiation and conflict resolution techniques	-.092
Overall Pearson Correlation for Employee Champion Role	**.131**
Demonstrating professional behavior to gain the trust and confidence of your subordinates	.183
Expressing ideas and exchange information clearly, avoiding HR technical jargon	-.120
Working effectively in a team	.482(**)
Overall Pearson Correlation for Employee Champion Role	**.311(**)**
Designing and implementing change	.204
Building consensus and providing consultation	.134
Leading others	.131
Applying HR management theories to improve organizational performance	.074
Overall Pearson Correlation for Change Agent Role	**.191(*)**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

Table 6. Pearson Correlation between HR Roles and Employee Continuous Professional Development

While Table 6 shows the correlation between HR roles and Employee CPD specifically, Table 7 shows the correlation between all the other HR roles.

	Strategic Partner	Administrative Expert	Change Agent	Employee Champion
Strategic Partner	1	.608**	.562**	.449**
Administrative Expert	.608**	1	.587**	.404**
Change Agent	.562**	.587**	1	.851**
Employee Champion	.449**	.404**	.851**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

Table 7. Pearson Correlation between HR Roles

Summary of findings

Table 8 summarizes the findings of the research based on the following proposed hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Hypotheses	Results
Ha	The more the LMs participated in HR roles, the more it correlates with their involvement in employees CPD.	Supported
Ha1	The higher participation of LMs in strategic partner role results in higher involvement in employees CPD.	Supported
Ha2	The higher participation of LMs in administrative expert role results in higher involvement in employees CPD.	Not supported
Ha3	The higher participation of LMs in employee champion role results in higher involvement in employees CPD.	Supported
Ha4	The higher participation of LMs in change agent role results in higher involvement in employees CPD	Supported
H0	There is no significant relationship between the LMs involvement in HR roles with employee's CPD initiatives.	Rejected

Table 8. Hypotheses findings

5. Discussion

This section is concerned on the findings that can contribute to the organization. There are four independent variables, i.e. Strategic Partner, Administrative Expert, Employee Champion and Change Agent and one dependent variable, employees' CPD, being tested in the study.

Through objective one, To Identify Which HR Roles are LMs Involve In- All the four factors' mean values are not high in variance. They range from 3.30, 3.46, 3.71 and 3.8 respectively. As a result, LMs of Texas Instrument are involved in all four HR roles moderately. Mode value is measured to assess the range of scale that is chosen by majority of respondents. The mode value for Strategic Partner, Administrative Expert, Employee Champion and Change Agent are 3.00, 3.50, 4.00 and 4.00 respectively. It seems that LMs in Texas Instruments perceive themselves as more dedicated to Employee Champion and Change Agent role compared to the other roles. This can be explained due to the "people-oriented" nature of LMs. As portrayed in Figure 5, Employee Champion and Change Agent are both roles that require dealing with people. The only difference is that, Change Agent role focus on the future while Employee Champion role is more concerned towards day-to-day functions.

Future/ Strategic Focus

	Strategic Partner	Change Agent	
Processes	Administrative Expert	Employee Champion	**People**

Day-to-day/ Operational Focus

Figure 5. Multiple-Roles Model for HR Management. (Ulrich, 1997)

This is because LMs have prime responsibility in engaging with employee and that HR cannot champion, advocate, represent, or even sponsor employees. Thus, championing employees has always been a part of LM's job (Reilly & Williams, 2006; Hunter & Saunders, 2006). Due to the changing nature of manufacturing firms, Change Agent role is important for LMs in Texas Instruments. Previous authors have agreed that as a change agent, LMs are given the responsibility to instigate those changes amongst employee, especially during organization's transformation (Inyang, 2010; Lemmergaard, 2008; Hutchison & Purcell, 2003).

One of the vital notions to note here is that the findings of the study did not truly support Hunter and Saunders (2006) explanation about Strategic Partner. According to the author, LMs and HR department should work in partnership, whereby, LMs have to contribute more in this role than other three. Mutually, the partners expect, and are expected to contribute their skill and knowledge in discussion Larsen and Brewster (2003). In Texas Instrument, LMs are less involved in Strategic Partner role compared to the other three. This is proven on the lower value of mean at 3.30 compared to Administrative Expert, Employee Champion, and Change Agent roles.

In Malaysian context, the LMs are found to be more accommodating Lim Im Tee and Syed Aziz Wafa (1997). Malaysians are generally group-oriented Lim Im Tee and Syed Aziz Wafa (1997); Hofstede (1983); Asma Abdullah (1992). Therefore, the spirit of collectivism is more important than that of individualism, and they tend to focus on relationships more than the task. The reported higher need for affiliation and lower need for autonomy were therefore in line with the influence of Malaysian culture and values. Generally, Malaysian LMs are more inclined to follow order, than taking autonomous decision.

In objective two - to examine the relationship of LMs' HR roles and employee's CPD, Administrative Expert role do not have a significant contribution towards

employees' CPD. This may be mainly because of the nature of administrative expertise itself. Administrative Expert is more task and process oriented, unlike Employee Champion and Change Agent roles which are people oriented. Overall, the LMs in Texas Instruments are involved moderately in their employees' CPD.

6. Conclusion

Nearly all the hypotheses were supported and the proposed framework of the present study was able to demonstrate strong explanatory power. Notably, this study provides evidence for the direct effect of HR roles and employee CPD as suggested by the literature. The overall study shows the importance of the involvement of HR managers in employee CPD. It is the concern of many organisations that proper roll out of HR roles are deployed accordingly to LMs'. In addition, this study is hoped to shed lights towards the deployment of HR roles in employee CPD in a South East Asia organisation. The study unveils that not only HR specialists, but LMs also has to be involved in managing employee's CPD to ensure its successful implementation. The implications of this research to both industry and education are forwarded with reservation, as the authors' are aware of the limitations of the research being based in one organisation. Extended work within manufacturing organisation, encompassing employee as well as HR specialists' perspectives, would add a further dimension to understanding line managers' involvement in HR initiatives. Moreover, research across a range of organisations and countries would provide a comparative element to this research.

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