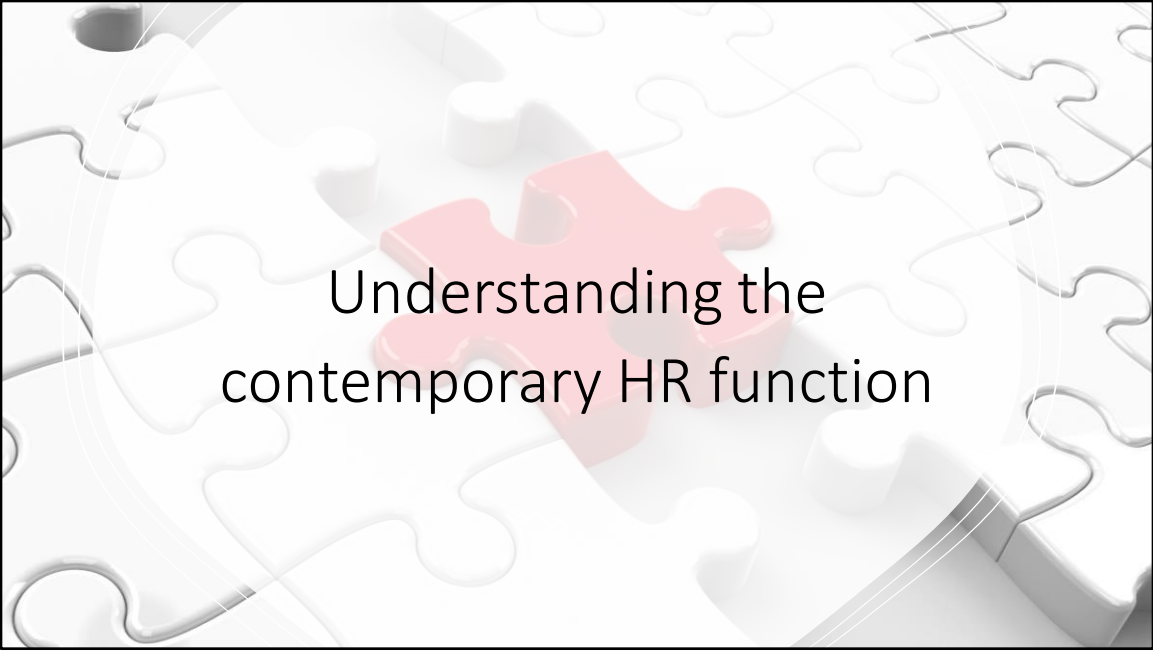


A 3D rendering of a puzzle with one red piece standing out among many white pieces. The red piece is in the center, and the white pieces are arranged around it, some of which are slightly raised or tilted, creating a sense of depth and movement. The background is a light gray with a subtle grid pattern.

Understanding the contemporary HR function

HR Function

- The role of the HR function is to support the organisation with it's strategy and objections through the effective management of people and performance.



HR Strategy

- An organisations HR strategy and all activities should be clearly aligned with the strategy and activities of the company.





HR Professionals

- Today HR is at the heart of business performance, they have an important role to drive decisions and enable businesses to prosper both long and short term.



History of the HR function

- Historically HR's main focus was to deliver fundamentals that was based on the employees lifecycle.
- Which included recruitment, induction and Salary administration.
- Supporting an organisations performance is now the core of HR professionals work.



HR Key components

- The CIPD carried out a survey in 2007 asking HR professionals what they felt the key objectives are, the top four were:
- 1.To recruit and retain key staff.
- 2.To develop employee's competencies.
- 3.To improve the management of people performance.
- 4.To maximize employee involvement and engagement.

- The same Key priorities always appear at the top of the list in surveys, reflecting that HRM is about attracting and retaining employees who are suitably skilled, offering development opportunities when they occur and maximising their performance and engagement in the company.



HR objectives in different organisations

- The HR function can be delivered in many ways and vary in different organisations.
- Small and medium organisations tend to have a sole HR practitioner, where as in larger organisations there tends to be a team or teams of HR professionals.
- HR employees will work closely to managers to deliver a people cantered agenda.



HR Roles

- HR generalists will have expertise and involvement of all areas of the HR function. Sole practitioners tend to be HR generalists, they will need to assist in all areas of HR, although occasionally a whole team can be made up of HR practitioners which will allow each employee to deal with all areas and activities. However some may have a particular area of focus.



HR Responsibilities and workloads

- The HR department will oversee the following activities:
 - Recruitment, resourcing and talent planning
 - Learning and talent development
 - Organisational development specialists
 - Employee Engagement specialists
 - Performance and Reward specialists



HR and Line Managers

- HR will work closely with Line managers to ensure compliance of employee records. Each employee will have a designated manager who will delegate tasks and monitor performance, the managers have regular contact with employees and are likely to be the first point of call.

- It is important that line managers and HR work together to support employees consistently and effectively.
- HR will ensure key policies and procedures are communicated to the manager who will pass this on to direct employees.
- HR should encourage managers to contact them should they need support or advice, particularly in complex situations, such as disciplinarys.
- If many operational people activities can be devolved to the line manager the more HR time can be devoted to strategy, which should result in an elevated status for the HR function within the organisation.



CIPD Survey HR and Line Managers

- According to the CIPD's Survey, HR related tasks are divided between the HR function and Line managers, although this can vary substantially in different organisations. However there appears to be general trends.
- Responsibilities such as pay, benefits, employee relations, training and development, redundancies seem to lie mainly with HR.
- Responsibilities for work organisation, recruitment and selection lie mainly with the manager.



HR in a global context

- Labour Markets will vary as a result of economic factors.
- Welfare provisions will be incompatible such as parents working or if it is more beneficial for them to stay home.
- Different standards of living will influence pay expectations.
- Different countries have different cultures which can influence employee expectation and behaviour in work.
- Employment Legislation will differ.
- Medical and tax arrangements will be different.



An Ethical Approach to HR management

- Kew and Stredwick (2010) refer to a definition of Ethics that has Three core elements,
 1. Fairness
 2. Deciding what is right from wrong
 3. Practice and rules which underpin responsible conduct.



Ethical approach and the HR function

- It is essential that the HR function, take an ethical approach in all tasks.
- HR professionals should maintain a standard of required ethical behaviour.



Why Ethical behaviour is important in an organisation

- Ethical behaviour is essential for positive developments of relationships with the workforce. The workforce need to trust in the HR function, this is only possible if the function acts adequately at all times.
- Ethical standards are key for an organisations success, if an organisation has positive ethical reviews then a person will be more likely to want to work for them. Ethics is a controversial subject in society.
- A business along with HR should practice what they preach to promote ethical behaviour.



Kew and Stredwick (2010) Study

- Kew and Stredwick (2010) cite a study conducted by the Institute of Ethics in 2003.
- The study compared a number of FTS-350 organisations that met certain ethical criteria, the companies who scored the highest on their ethical values established they had higher measures of financial performance.



How the HR function support an organisation

- McKinsey has recently conducted research on how a business can organise itself for the future.
- Research suggest that businesses share three characteristics:
 1. They know what they are and what they stand for.
 2. They operate with speed and simplicity.
 3. They grow by scaling up their ability to learn and innovate.
- HR can support this by facilitating positive change.



HR Contribution

- HR are an important part of a business, to help the business and it's employees thrive resulting in the company to achieve its goals.
- Managers face many obstacles such as staff retention, they will work with HR to Hire and retain relevant skilled staff. HR will focus on a strategic role.



The HR departments focus

- - Define Customers, the customers that HR will need to cater for are managers, employees, potential employees and all employees who fall under the corporate umbrella.
- Understand and optimise, HR will work on the companies value, Corporate culture, employee engagement, performance evaluation and operate efficiently.
- Measure the Value, it is important to know market value and the measure change by looking at progress and listening to feedback.
- Resource and budget, when HR have measured and understood impact of initiatives they will focus on expanding the actions to focus on a bigger return.
- Strategy and connect, every strategy begins with an important element, connection with people. A personal connection will create loyalty, motivation and employee engagement leading to a strong company culture.



Health care study and HR

- A study was published by the US national institute of health (2014) which states that HR have a positive outcome towards an organisation.
- The study shows that HR does more than increase the performance of an organisation, they contribute, financially, organisationally and for the employees.
- HR is important in the Healthcare sector for the organisations productivity.





HR and Perthyn

- Perthyn are a charity based organisation that support adults with learning disabilities.
- HR provide support to the organisation in many ways such as:
 - Employee engagement.
 - Employee performance.
 - Management support.
 - Employee recruitment and retention.



Understanding the Contemporary HR Function

Note pages

Sian Govier

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The HR Function

The Role of the HR Function is to support the organisation with its strategy and objectives through the effective management of people and performance. The HR strategy along with the activities should be made clear and should be aligned with the organisation. According to the CIPD the function and the professionals employed are a huge part of the organisation success. HR today, is at the heart of business performance, they have an important role to drive decisions and enable business to prosper both long and short term. Historically HR's focus was to deliver the fundamentals based on an employee's lifecycle, such as, recruitment, induction, and salary administration. Supporting an organisations performance is now the core of HR professional's work. It is important to recognise the business discipline in HR and for the HR professional to encourage managers to view business as a people discipline. The partnership between managers and HR professionals is vital within an organisation, which will allow maximum benefits and performance for the business. There is now an increased amount of members joining the CIPD, a greater amount of people specialising in HR globally.

The HR function assists in organisational development in the business environment, although it may evolve it does not change radically. The CIPD carried out a survey in 2007, 787 HR professionals in the UK took part, the question was, what they considered to be the major objectives of their function, the top four answers were:

1. To recruit and retain staff (cited by 70% of respondents)
2. To develop employees' competencies (cited by 62% of respondents)
3. To improve the management of people performance (cited by 61%)
4. To maximise employee involvement and engagement (cited by 59%).

The same key priorities always appear at the top of the list in surveys, reflecting that HRM is about attracting and retaining employees who are suitably skilled and offering development opportunities which will maximise their performance, involve and engage them in the activities and communication of the organisation.

How HR can support with the change process. (Orianne Perrin 2007)

According to Orianne Perrin in employee connect, change is what brings new ideas, solutions and growth to an organisation by moving away from the comfort zone which allows an organisation to progress and keep up with the competitive market. It is vital to remember that change can not take place without the relevant people being involved such as general management and an organisations HR department.

HR contribute to change by working closely with people such as managers and employees in general while taking the following in consideration:

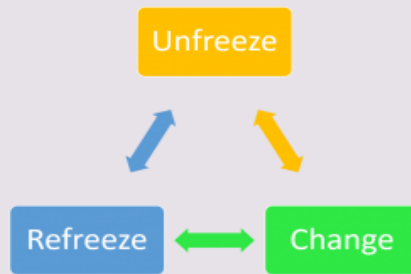
- A role of watchdog, the HR department take part by re-thinking the current style and pattern which will map out and facilitate the required change. HR leadership will ensure effective communication to allow the companies culture, integrity and morale to remain positive by monitoring the change throughout the whole process.
- Taking time to communicate, as HR gain expertise in business intelligence, it is key for them to share their visions with other departments such as finance and marketing. HR's central function in the management of people will allow the influence of change through strategic HR policies.

- Establish a change agenda, HR should recommend a time for the change and define specific milestones for each step of the change in order for the organisation along with their employees to reach their end goal. An organisations transformation can and should take time because if the change process is rushed this can result in negative results and financial burden, with small but effective steps in place employees are more likely to adhere to the required change.
- Anticipating emotional roadblocks, change can be a difficult occurrence for many people and create fear and reluctance, hence why it is important to plan ahead for any negative reactions.
- Training managers, it is important for the HR department to accompany and source the relevant training for managers, which should occur before the change happens, which will result in understanding and allowing managers to feel they are contributing to the change.
- Proposing adapted solutions, HR should be able to come in with a strategy that is suited to allow the organising to adapt with the competitive market and the changing world.

Communication is a key element for change, it is important to communicate with all employees, ensure to give them a voice and listen to any feedback provided. HR should ensure there is regular communication along with relevant resources that employees can access in relation to any support required, build rapport and allow for regular opportunities of engagement for all involved to share their views, either individually or in groups.

Change Management Model Lewin's

Kurt Lewin 3-Stage Change Model



<https://www.ciopages.com>

One of the most successful change management models is Lewis's 3 step change (1940). Lewin was interested in researching what factors or forces were influencing a situation at any given time.

Unfreeze, this phase is based on who will be affected by the change and status quo and will need to accept that change is imminent. It is key here to communicate and notice that the current situation and cannot continue.

Change, during this step, excellent communication and the simplicity of time is incorporated, during this stage, rumours are dispelled, and all employees are empowered to act on the required change.

Refreeze, lastly a refreezing phase must take place to allow the required changes initiated at the change stage to develop to ensure employees do not lapse in to old ways. Success is celebrated and communication and support remain key in order to enable the success of the change.

On occasions the labour market can be difficult which can affect employment levels in certain regions, resulting in a negative to employ staff with the relevant skills they need. Recruitment, retention, and development will naturally govern the HR agenda. However, when labour Markets are loose and the employers can recruit the staff, they need easier with the relevant skills, the attention of HR professionals may shift to performance management. Objectives that seem to be of a lower priority, can move up the ladder for the HR agenda. In recent years this is true when it comes to employee wellbeing, the need to grow and progress and maintain the organisations public reputation. The UK's record of economic growth and employment creation is rated excellent, although a lot more work is needed when it comes to productivity and efficiency (HM treasury 2015).

HR objectives may differ slightly in non-identical organisations. The HR function can be arranged in many different ways, in small to medium organisations they tend to have a sole HR practitioner and in larger organisations there tends to be a team or even teams of HR professionals, who will work closely with the managers to direct and deliver the people centered agenda.

HR generalists will have expertise and involvement of all areas of the HR function. Sole practitioners tend to be HR generalists, they will need to assist in all areas of HR on their own. Although occasionally a whole team can be made up of HR practitioners, which allows each employee to deal with all areas and activities, however some may have a particular area of focus. Such a structure can be beneficial when there are peaks in demand for a particular area of HR, such as recruitment or when the business operates around a 24/7 basis, this will allow each HR member to participate in the workload. The workload is likely to consist of a variety of tasks, such as:

- Working with managers, to determine people needs.
- Taking part in activities.
- Developing policies and procedures.
- Developing information systems.

The responsibilities and role of HR oversee the following topics and activities:

- Recruitment, resourcing and talent planning specialists are responsible for managing the people in the organisation in order for them to meet necessary organisational changes, while focusing on the company's long and short-term objectives. The skills needed will be to understand the changing markets, plan for demographics, supply and demand and staff turnover along with staff skills or potential employee skills. They will also need to plan and focus on recruiting or retaining staff who can support the organisations goals. Finally, they will need to plan develop processes across the organisation which will allow for succession.
- Learning and Talent planning development specialists, are responsible for ensuring the company has employees with the relevant skills and to allow development opportunities which the organisation may utilise in the future. They will do this to meet the organisations strategy by producing a learning and development strategy which will both align towards the overall strategy. While developing programmes and training events it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of all provisions.

- Organisational development specialists are responsible for ensuring the health of the business itself long term. It is widely acknowledged that businesses who prepare for rapid changes and agility cope with fast changing external environments efficiently. OD specialists have a crucial role in building this capability while working in the organisations culture, improving employee skills and potential or reforming the organisation for customer service or quality requirements.
- Employee engagement specialists are responsible for issues such as internal communications, employee relations and the employer brand. It is about motivating employees that go to work everyday and maybe to go the extra mile. Specialists will configure a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures to obtain information, analyse the results and develop action plans for improving engagement and to effectively deal with conflicts that may occur in the organisation.
- Performance and reward specialist are responsible for monitoring the employees and teams who contribute to the organisation and ensuring to monitor and develop performance when required. They will also focus on, skills, behaviour, salary, allowances, benefits and rewards, they must ensure the way rewards are managed are fair, market based and cosy effective.



Ulrich's 3-legged Stool Model can be used in the human resource function. According to Oxford Reference (no date). David Ulrich suggested in large organisation, the HR function should be divided in to three segments.

1. Shared service activities can be used in a call-centre environment to allow with basic support functions for the business.
2. Business partners, in contrast, are individuals or small teams who will work closely with the management of the business focusing on initiatives and change management.
3. Centres of expertise have a focus on key technological knowledge on areas such as, resourcing, reward and employment relations. They will also be able to develop policy while providing support to business units.

According to Ulrich, at the apex of this model, there should be a Corporate HR team that is responsible for the HR function as a whole and to provide strategic direction.

According to the CIPD (2015) the structure of the HR function will depend on its organisation's strategy, wider organisational structure, customer requirements and whom they are supporting will influence the function. These can be influenced by other factors such as the size and the maturity of the business. It is vital to understand evolving, operating HR models and structures of the HR function and to acknowledge and develop the capabilities and competencies in line with the type of business and strategy. There are several models that can be used such as David Ulrich's 3-legged stool as previously mentioned, although not all models are suited for delivering the HR function. It is important to utilise a model that is suited to the type of business, the structure and the organisation's strategy, as well as the requirements of the customers. Evolving technology can also play a part towards the function by using technology to improve processes and client experience.

According to Barry Fry and Antony Fishman's article in the CIPD (2015) HR has been transformed by Technology, some using Ulrich's 3-legged stool model as a basis and asking what comes next. Billions have been spent over the years in outsourcing consultants, advisors and technology. IT developments have made employee and manager self-service a reality, making some HR employees largely redundant in some personnel processes.

HR will work closely with line managers to ensure compliance of employee records, each employee should have a designated manager who will delegate tasks and monitor performance, the managers have regular contact with employees and are likely to be the first point of call. It is therefore vital that HR and line managers work closely together to manage people issues effectively and consistently. HR will ensure key policies and procedures are communicated to the manager who will then pass this on to direct employees, HR should encourage managers to contact them should they need support or advice, particularly in complex situations, such as disciplinaries. If many operational activities can be devolved to the line manager the more HR time can be devoted to strategy, which should result in an elevated status for the HR function within the organisation.

In CIPD surveys HR related tasks are divided between the HR function and line managers, although this can vary substantially in different organisations. However there appears to be general trends. Responsibilities such as pay, benefits, employee relations, training and development, redundancies seem to lie mainly with HR, while responsibilities for work organisation, recruitment and selection lie mainly with the manager.

While considering HR in a global context, there are several topics to remember, such as:

- Labour markets will vary as a result of economic factors, the markets may be tight or loose.
- Welfare provisions will be incompatible, such as parents working or if it would be more beneficial for them to stay at home.
- Different standards of living will influence pay expectations.
- Different countries have different cultures which can influence employee expectation and behaviour in work.
- Employment legislation will differ, UK immigration legislation is also a key issue.
- Different countries have different tax arrangements and medical provisions.

Cultural variations across national borders are particularly important for awareness, as they will have an impact on all aspects of HR tasks. A famous Author called Hofstede (1991) who focused on national culture, initially developed four main factors of culture differentiation.

1. Power distance which refers to the extent in which people believe that power should be distributed, equally or unequally.
2. Uncertainty avoidance which refers to the extent which people feel uncomfortable with ambiguous situations.
3. Individualism/ collectivism which refers to the extent of how people operate, on an individual basis or as part of a group.
4. Masculinity/ femininity which refers to the extent that people demonstrate traits that appear masculine or feminine.

Kew and Stredwick (2010) refer to a definition of ethics that has three core elements,

1. Fairness
2. Deciding what's right from wrong
3. Practice and rules which underpin responsible conduct.

It is absolutely vital that the HR function, takes an ethical approach in all tasks, HR should maintain a high standard of ethical behaviour. Ethical behaviour is important to an organisation, it is essential for positive developments of relationships with the workforce. The workforce needs to trust in the HR function, this is always only possible if the function acts adequately at all times. Ethical standards are key for an organisation's success, if an organisation has positive ethical reviews, then a person will be more likely to want to work for them. Ethics is a controversial subject in society in general and individuals are greatly considering ethical factors when they decide which company they want to apply to work for. It is clear that people want to work for organisations that have a positive reputation and working relationship around ethical values than those who work unethically. A business along with HR should always practice what they preach to promote ethical behaviour.

Kew and Sterdwick (2010) cite a Study conducted by the institute of ethics in 2003. The study compared a number of FTSE350 organisations that met certain ethical criteria, the companies who scored the highest on their ethical values established they had a higher measure of financial performance. Included in this study was those who had a long standard of ethics and those who scored highly on certain league tables.

Taylor (2011) notes the irony of HR taking the lead role in ethical issues; however, it is a paradox given the centrality of ethics in HR activities, which have tried to move away from their pink and fluffy welfare roots over the years. Since the 1980's it has been emphasized that HR has shed the image of just a management function. Instead, a very deliberate attempt has been made to highlight that HRM is 100% business focused, delivering key strategic objectives on behalf of the organisation, while increasing financial value. In the future HR may be faced with a reversal of the trend. HR managers will have to rediscover an interest in ethics and actively promote ethical behaviour while ensuring they apply an ethical approach towards the management of people in the organisation.

A study was completed by Kasfia Ameen (2020) of unethical behaviour in the workforce, the Volkswagen case, in which they faced two allegations, air pollutions and cheating on emissions tests (O'Dwyer, 2016). The case highlights the failure of ethical compliance, Volkswagen engineers altered engine operations to meet U.S emissions testing standards (Rogerson 2017). Volkswagen used defeat devices which ensured the emissions control would only be activated during regulatory tests (Troope & Ressler, 2016). Under normal driving conditions exhaust emissions were 40 times higher than the legal limit (VanSandt, 2016). This cheating continued for 10 years, until detected, the investigation found that 482,000 cars were using defeat devices (Plungis 2016). Volkswagen, initially lied to the Environmental Protection Agency and cited technical difficulties, eventually Volkswagen pleaded guilty in 2017 and settled to a 4.3 billion agreement, which is the highest ever criminal fine imposed on carmakers in America.

The Volkswagen emissions scandal represents the antithesis of ethical business conduct, having negative repercussions for both direct and indirect stakeholders (Mansouri, 2016). The case is cautionary due to legendary German automaker being considered a globally dependable organisation that proclaimed to be ethical and ecologist. (Adams 2015).

An example of ethical behaviour in the workplace is Starbucks, according to food news (no date), Starbucks comply with positive ethics by promoting a culture that is committed to ethical leadership and conducting business with integrity by providing resources to allow partners to make ethical decisions at work. In Starbucks, business ethics and compliance are a programme that supports their mission statement which is “to inspire and nurture the human spirit, one person, one cup and one neighbourhood at a time”. Starbucks has become a community hub, a place where anyone can sit without being required to spend money. Starbucks has been regularly voted one of the world’s most ethical company by the Ethical Institute since 2007. Starbucks has developed an employee handbook where they support global ethics and report for questionable behaviour. The CEO of Starbucks Kevin Johnson faced a leadership test when two black men were arrested in Philadelphia, however they did not purchase anything when they were there. Starbucks empowers all partners to make decisions, which leads back to each Starbucks adhering to the mission statement and acting ethically. An example of the first ethically positive decision, Starbucks was involved in, is the NGO and Fair trade coffee.

McKinsey (2012) has conducted research on how a business can organise itself for the future, as cited in Taylor and Woodham (2016), research suggests that businesses share three characteristics:

1. They know what they are and what they stand for.
2. They operate with speed and simplicity.
3. They grow by scaling up their ability to learn and innovate.

HR can support this by facilitating positive change, they are an important part of an organisation, to help the business and its goals. Managers face many obstacles such as staff retention, they will work with HR professionals to hire and retain relevant skilled staff, HR will focus on a strategic role.

The Entrepreneur Europe magazine (2018) looks at a structure that will help HRMs in organisations to add value, they highlight five important guidelines,

1. Define your customers, the customers that HR will need to cater for are managers, employees, potential employees, and all employees who fall under the corporate umbrella.
2. Understand and optimise, HR will work on the companies' values, corporate culture, employee engagement, performance evaluation and operate efficiently.
3. Measure the value, it is important to know market value and measure change by observing progress and listening to feedback from manager and employees or potential employees who leave feedback after applying or the interview stage.
4. Resource and budget, when HR have measured and understood the impact of initiatives, they will focus on expanding the actions to focus on a bigger return.
5. Strategy and connect, every strategy will begin with an important element, connection with people, such as managers and other employees. A personal connection will create loyalty, motivation and employee engagement leading to a strong company culture.

Traditionally HR evaluations focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of the range of practices operated by the function. A range of techniques are available for evaluating individual HR activities. As cited in Taylor and Woodham (2016).

The most common used evaluation tools include the following:

- HR Statistics, this refers to things like recruitment trends, number of job applicants, number of new recruits, absence figures, turn over levels, disciplinary and grievance statistics, training and development spend, training hours per employee. They may not tell the organisation much if gathered in isolation, however they can be very useful in terms of Bench marking.
- Key Performance indicators (KPI's) this refers to identifying the aspect of HR performance, that are most critical to for the achievement of business objectives.
- Balanced Scorecard, this is a document that logs an agreed set of performance measures in a series of tables along with a high level strategy map.

I have researched a health care study and its link to HR, the study was published by the US national institute of health (2014) which states that HR have a positive outcome towards an organisation. The study shows that HR professionals, do more than increase performance of the organisation, they contribute, financially, organisationally and as advocates for the employees. The view of organisational outcome and the hypothesis concerning the full mediating effect of job satisfaction are confirmed, in line with the view that employee attitudes are an important tick in the box between HRM and performance.

HR plays an important role in the health care sector by increasing the organisations productivity and wellbeing of employees as cited in Taylor and Woodham (2016). Job satisfaction in this study was measured by one item, "I enjoy going to work "the answers were never to always. it was documented that measuring job satisfaction was more efficient with a single item rather than multiple questions revolving around one topic, it is also more cost effective, contains more face validity and is best to measure changes in job satisfaction.

The organisation I work for a charity-based company that support individuals with learning disabilities. HR provide support to the organisation and many different ways such as:

- Employee engagement.
- Employee performance.
- Management support.
- Employee recruitment and retention.

Our HR department have strong links and work closely with payroll and the Learning and Development department.

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