ORGANIZATION CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODELS AND HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY DELIVERY

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Abstract:

Amplifying the nexus between organisational change management and Human Resources Strategy (HR) execution has always been an intriguing area for scholarship in HR theory, research and practice. Organizational development (OD) models provide tools and approaches to generate data to diagnose a "case for change" to design, execute and evaluate HR Strategy for an organization. This research builds on our earlier work (Coleman, 2018), which examined the application of the Burke-Litwin (BL) model to conduct an organisational diagnosis. In this present work, we look at the remaining components of organization change management, namely design, execute and evaluate and argue that the integration of organization change model with HR theory provides a useful construct to deliver HR strategy in an organisation. The study concludes that when HR strategies are designed with data generated from the diagnosis, they are grounded in both theory and applied research that can be replicated to design, execute and evaluate HR strategies in organisations. Using qualitative and quantitative data, the case study is drawn from one global development organization with a presence in Africa.

Keywords: human resources strategy, organisation change management, organisational diagnosis

1. Introduction

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI), economic challenges and changes in the global geo-political eco-system and relatively youthful growth have triggered a renewed focus on how organizations intentionally apply a strategic approach in managing human resources to respond to changes in their business environment (Benito *et al.*, 2022; Coleman, 2018). Transforming HR practices via a coherent HR strategy requires a rigorous data and insights process to facilitate a turnaround to ensure improved organisational and staff wellbeing outcomes and impact. There are many approaches to

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developing HR strategies, and in the same vein, there are many organizational models for diagnosing a case for HR transformation.

Purpose For purposes of this research, we will look at the full "change management value chain" components of diagnose, design, execute and evaluate and argue that the integration of Tichy's Technical Political Culture, Burke- Litwin (BL) and Change management model provides a useful construct to deliver HR strategy in an organisation. We will also use Brockbank and Ulrich's Model of the Four Flows of HR practices to analyse the various HR Strategic initiatives that were executed and evaluated.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Understanding Organization Change Model

There are many organizational development (OD) diagnostic models to frame a change management process (Porras & Silvers, 1991 & 1992; Weick, 2001). A model is a representation of an organization that more often than not is metaphorical in nature (Burke, 2011). An organizational model can help to categorize data, activities and behavior in an organization. It also helps to enhance our understanding of an organization in order to diagnose problems requiring corrective action. Burke (2011). An organizational model can help to guide action for change. However, Morgan (1997) has argued that using an organizational model as a metaphor is inherently paradoxical since it can create a powerful insight that also becomes distortions as the way of seeing created in the same vein can become a way of 'not seeing'.

2.2 Burke-Litwin Model

In this research, we included the Burke-Litwin model as one of the organisation change models for the study since we felt it was relatively comprehensive to guide data-driven diagnosis of the case for change. The Burke-Litwin Mode (1992) defines twelve factors that help to diagnose the case for change as well as the overall change processes, namely external environment, mission & strategy, leadership, organizational culture, structure, systems, management practices, work unit climate, tasks and skills, individual values and needs and individual and overall organizational performance.

- **External Environment:** The key forces or variables outside the organization that influence organizational performance. E.g. customer behavior and satisfaction, market place conditions, political circumstances, regulations, changing technology, etc.
- **Mission and Strategy:** mission concerns what the organization is all about, its purpose and primary goals. Strategy focuses on how the mission is to be executed as defined by senior leadership.
- **Leadership:** this is concerned with behavior of senior executives and how they provide direction, influence, visioning. We extend this to include the definition of decision space and decision mandate.

- **Organizational Culture:** values, i.e. espoused and in- use, explicit as well as the implied rules, regulations, customs, principles, practices, symbols, artifacts, rituals that influence the interaction of staff and the organization.
- **Structure:** responsibility, authority, communication, decision making and control structure that exists between the people of the organization.
- **Systems:** Systems include all types of policies, procedures and business processes with regard to both the people and the operations of the organization.
- **Management Practices:** ways of work that deliver the organization's strategy and ensure management of resources.
- **Work Unit Climate:** refers to how the employees think, feel, and the kind of relationships the employees share with their team members and members of other teams.
- **Tasks and Skills:** refers to what a specific job position demands and the kind of skills and knowledge that an employee must have in order to fulfill the task responsibilities of that job position. It helps to see how well jobs and employees have been matched.
- **Individual Values and Needs:** This refers to an employee's opinion about their work so as to identify the quality factors that will result in job enrichment and better job satisfaction.
- **Motivation Level:** refers to the motivation level of the employees and their willingness to put in extra effort to achieve organizational goals.
- **Individual and Organisational Performance:** This dimension takes into account the level of performance, on individual and organizational levels, in key areas like productivity, quality, efficiency, budget and customer satisfaction, etc.

2.3 Tichy Technical Political Cultural Model

Tichy considers technical, political and cultural systems for understanding organisations in general and organisation change in particular (Burke, 2011). The technical system is based on science and hard data and represents a highly rational perspective. The political system is based on power dynamics and the fact that in organisations, some groups and individuals are more powerful than others. With respect to change, the primary behavior representing this perspective is negotiation. The cultural system concerns shared values and norms, or cognitive schemes. These schemes are what link people together and constitute the organisation's culture. Culture change occurs by developing new norms and values. All three systems must be realigned for successful change. The three systems are connected and must be managed together to ensure successful change.

Tichy argues that these systems must be aligned within a system and between systems. We extend it to mean the Technical Political Cultural model helps to diagnose the political, technical and cultural dynamics within organizations and their effect on framing a coherent HR strategy and how support or resistance for a new HR strategy takes place by interest groups. The technical dynamics are those aspects of the organization which are knowledgeable, such as available technical tools and expertise. The political dynamics are the views of dominant groups, including bargaining by

powerful organizational groups. The cultural dynamics constitute the shared symbols and values which make up the organizational culture. He argues that the three strands must be managed together or realigned for organizational effectiveness. There are limitations to the TPC model. For example, the people component in the model is not visible, and Tichy acknowledged that he did not consider the psychological aspects of change.

We submit that by combining the TPC model with the Burke-Litwin model and connecting it to the Ulrich model, it provides a frame to diagnose, design, execute and measure specific HR strategies to drive organisational impact and performance. Following from that, it can be argued that the cultural and political systems in the TPC model do inherently address people's issues as the interaction of people produces outcomes that can be analysed from the three components of the model, and this will still be applicable to analyse HR strategies. There are inherent organisational politics dynamics during a change management process to transform HR practices with effective HR strategies. This is indeed at the heart of organisational change to transform HR practices and culture.

2.4 Human Resources Strategy

A HR strategy refers to a firm's deliberate use of human resources to help it gain or maintain an edge against its competitors in the marketplace (Armstrong, 2006; Arthur & Boyles, 2007; Hendry & Pettigrew, 1986). A strategy is a course of action chosen with a view to achieving certain objectives. Sanz-Valle *et al.*, 1999), Bratton, 2007). All HR strategies need to be aligned with organisational strategies and plans. Sheehan *et al.*, 2016; Guest, 2011).

Gunnigle & Moore (1994), Kuipers and Giurge (2016), Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (1988) and Schuler and Jackson (1987) have investigated the relationship between human resources (HR) strategy and competitive strategy and its impact on performance. They focused mainly on reporting types of HRM strategies (Bird and Beechler, 1995; Huang, 2001) or describing the target behaviour or best practices according to each competitive strategy (Delery & Doty, 1996; Schuler & Jackson, 1987); in other words, they analyse strategic alignment in terms of the practices, tools or actions chosen in the delivery of HR strategy. An effective HR strategy also contributes to organisational performance, and studies have shown the impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. (Huselid, 1995; Lee *et al.*, 2010; Lepak & Snell, 2002; Smith & Reece, 1999; Wang & Shyu, 2008; Wright & Mcmahan, 2001).

2.5 Delivering HR Strategy Via HR Flows Model

HR strategies have to be reduced into coherent HR practices to deliver value and enable organisational strategy. According to Brockbank & Ulrich (2005), the HR function creates value for investors, customers, line managers and employees through four key practices. Flow of people refers to how the organization manages its key asset – its people – including how people move in, through, up and out of the organization. Proper attention

to people flows ensures the availability of the talent the organization needs to accomplish its strategy. With this role, HR facilitates the acquisition, nurturing, retention and disengagement of the knowledge, skills, and intellect that individuals bring into the organization until they are separated. This role also enables HR to ensure the acquisition and socialization of talent who will fit with the culture of the organization.

Flow of performance refers to what links people to work – the standards and measures, financial and non-financial rewards and feedback that reflect stakeholder interests. Proper attention to this flow promotes accountability for performance by defining, documenting and rewarding it and penalizing its absence. With this role, HR facilitates the measurement of how individual employees contribute towards the realization of the strategic intent of the organization for impact, influence, income and organizational sustainability. Managing the flow of performance enables the process of demonstrating, measuring and documenting the application of knowledge to ensure organizational effectiveness. The outcome of this process ensures that HR is able to facilitate the measurement of the application of knowledge that reinforces the culture of the organization.

Flow of information refers to what keeps people aware of the organization and their collective knowledge resources. Proper attention to information flow ensures people know what is happening and why, and can apply themselves to what needs to be done to create value (Brockbank & Ulrich, 2005). To be successful, organizations must manage the flow of information from outside, to inside and across horizontal and vertical boundaries. HR facilitates choices around establishing a communication strategy that allows for the management of knowledge and information generated within organizations. HR leadership in this role requires helping organizational leadership to establish a clear vision for communication, the purpose of communication and how it aligns with the company's overall culture and philosophy. This role enables HR to ensure integration and alignment as HR practices have a communication, information and knowledge component when people are selected, rewarded, promoted or separated. The information and knowledge that HR generates from the measurement of these HR processes and outcomes help to reinforce the right organizational culture. Gathering, processing and documenting best practice or project models that demonstrate operational excellence, as well as individual and team performance that result in improved business performance, facilitates knowledge management that contributes to reinforcing the right organizational culture for organizational effectiveness (Coleman, 2018).

According to Brockbank & Ulrich (2005), HR can build substantive value by facilitating joint interaction with customers through research and development efforts and shared learning and development programs. HR can also provide leadership to help identify and create organizational capabilities through the gathering, processing and documentation of knowledge that directly support brand promise to drive competitive advantage. HR also facilitates the hierarchical movement of knowledge processes, outputs, and outcomes through the flow of information. HR can add substantive value by leveraging business opportunities across units and by creating systems and practices

that facilitate the horizontal flow of knowledge through the selection of talent for cross-functional project teams, acting roles, job enrichment, documenting and packaging best project models, business processes and outcomes for replication to reinforce alignment to organizational culture and strategic aspirations (Coleman, 2018).

Flow of work refers to three aspects, namely, who does the work? How is the work done? Where is the work done? HR facilitates knowledge on how suitable organizational models can be defined to clarify these three aspects. According to Brockbank &Ulrich (2005), HR plays a role in helping company leadership to determine the level of integration, differentiation, as well as the number of layers, headcount, and location, which facilitates the development of the right business operating model. These processes inform decisions and choices around differentiation, product and services portfolio choices, product structures, market structures, technology-based structures, functional structures, matrix structures, etc. These processes and outcomes help to generate knowledge to reinforce the type of organizational cultures in line with the Competing Values Framework CVF (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). As raw materials, ideas and knowledge are transformed into business outputs and outcomes to meet multiple stakeholders' (investor, customer, line manager, employee) expectations, HR plays a key role in facilitating the selection of interaction patterns that produce the knowledge required for optimal results. In view of the above, we argue that HR strategy execution is enhanced by the knowledge generated from the diagnosis, execution, monitoring, evaluation and learning phases.

2.6 HRM And Organisational Diagnosis - Systems View

An open system is a set of neatly interrelated elements that form a unit with a specific goal and that interact with other elements outside the system (Benito *et al.*, 2022). HRM can be understood as an open system, composed of objectives, practices and capabilities (achievements), and related to other external elements such as competitive strategy and organizational performance. The specific goal is to contribute to the improvement of performance through the implementation of the competitive strategy (Benito *et al.*, 2022). The use of the open system concept to include the different HR elements lies at the heart of many studies in Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) (Kepes & Delery, 2007; Lepak & Snell, 1999; Posthuma *et al.*, 2013). They collectively posit that research in SHRM must be situated within the organisational context.

The purpose of HR diagnosis is to gather insights to provide feedback to senior leadership on strengths and weaknesses in relation to its HR systems and practices. This helps to design appropriate interventions for execution, monitoring and evaluation. HR systems and practices diagnosis can be conducted either as a routine periodic assessment or when specific problems affect organizational functioning. The HR diagnostic models used typically fall into a hybrid of open and closed systems categories. The open systems model looks at the entire HR system as a sub-system of the overall organisational architecture, which connects to other factors such as the wider business environment (stakeholders, e.g. clients, regulatory players, laws, general public, etc.). Related to the open system is the closed system models, which focus on internal components such as
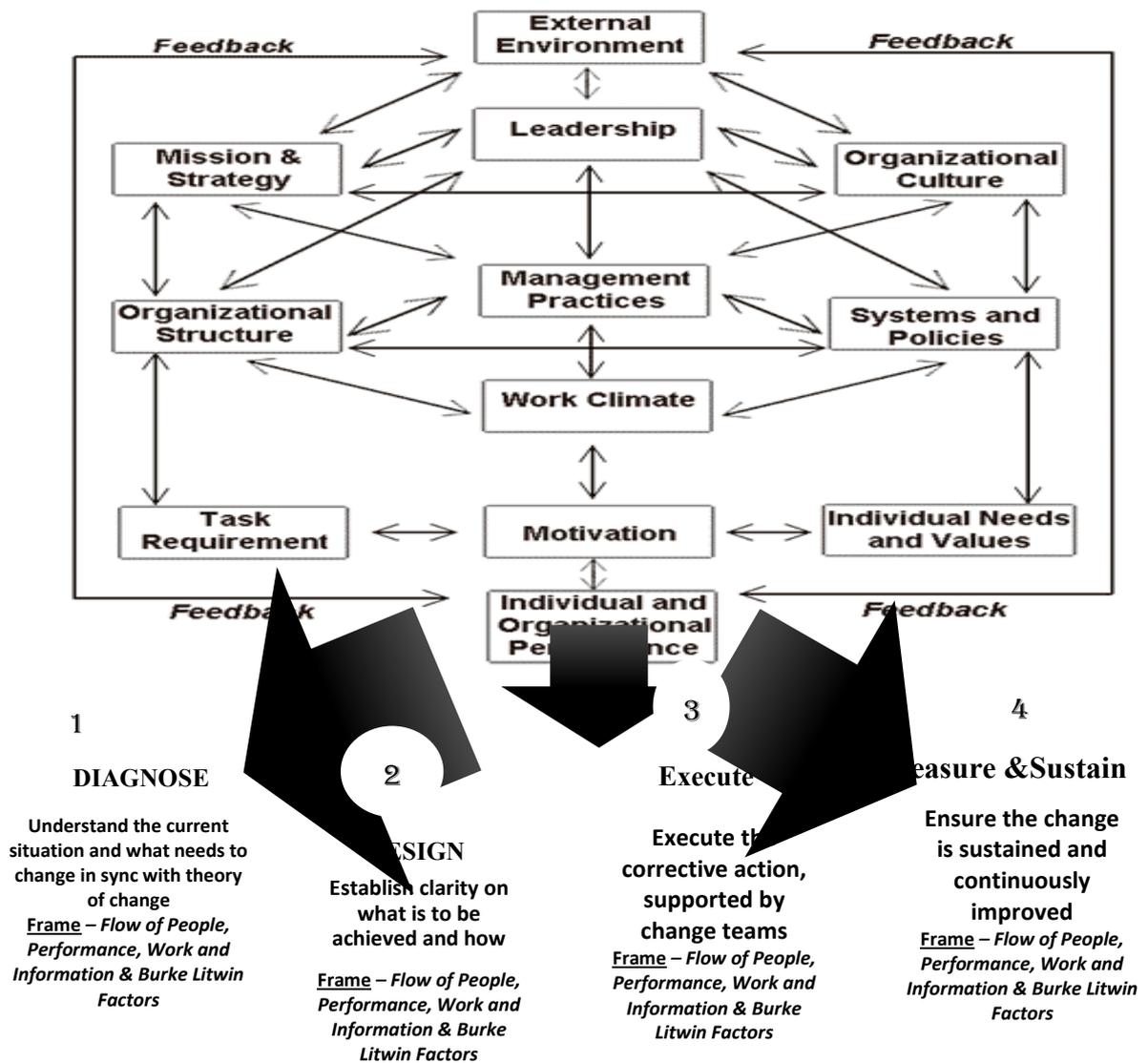
leadership, structure, performance, individual needs and motivation, etc., as interrelated. As espoused by Burke-Litwin, we assert that this hybrid model incorporates external and internal environmental factors and promotes a constant feedback loop throughout the process.

Organizational diagnosis serves as a key change management function. Weisbord (1976) Organisational diagnosis provides data and insights to facilitate HR strategy design, execution and evaluation and enables HR practitioners to systematically examine organizational components, thereby creating a foundation for evidence-based decision making and targeted interventions. Organisational diagnosis amplifies the nexus between organisational development, change management and HR strategy design, execution and measurement. The significance of organizational diagnosis in HR stems from several critical factors. First, it establishes alignment between HR strategies and broader business objectives, ensuring that all HR initiatives- from talent acquisition to retention programs—directly support the organisation's strategic goals. Through systematic data and insights-driven analysis, HR professionals gain insights into structural components and processes, identifying both strengths that can be leveraged and weaknesses requiring attention. Organizational characteristics also serve as predictors of human resources practices (Jackson *et al.*, 1989).

Organizational diagnosis plays a decisive role in HR strategy design initiatives. It serves as an important process in conceptualising the entire HR transformation change project. Without rigorous diagnostic processes, organisational and HR leaders risk focusing on irrelevant issues or designing unsuitable corrective actions. From an HR operational excellence perspective, organizational diagnosis assists HR in improving efficiency by identifying process inefficiencies. The HR diagnostic process itself contributes meaningfully to organisational well-being and effectiveness by enabling accountability. When HR systems and practices share diagnostic data with relevant stakeholders, it creates opportunities for ownership in decision-making. They must be anchored on an organizational culture of openness that values data, insights, evidence, continuous learning and knowledge management. It also enables fit and flexibility during the process and enhances the outcomes (Wright & Snell, 1988).

3. Integrating All the Frameworks

The figure below captures the integration of the organisation change management model and HR flow model, which depict how an HR strategy process and outcome should be conceptualised. The linkages between the diagnosis, design, and execution, including monitoring and evaluation, are anchored in the four HR flows, which help capture key factors in systems, practices, structure, leadership, etc., that are components of diagnosing change within organisations.

External Environment

Leadership

Mission & Strategy

Organizational Culture

Management Practices

Organizational Structure

Systems and Policies

Work Climate

Task Requirement

Motivation

Individual Needs and Values

Individual and Organizational Performance

Feedback

1

DIAGNOSE

Understand the current situation and what needs to change in sync with theory of change
Frame – *Flow of People, Performance, Work and Information & Burke Litwin Factors*

2

DESIGN

Establish clarity on what is to be achieved and how

Frame – *Flow of People, Performance, Work and Information & Burke Litwin Factors*

3

Execute

Execute the corrective action, supported by change teams
Frame – *Flow of People, Performance, Work and Information & Burke Litwin Factors*

4

Measure &Sustain

Ensure the change is sustained and continuously improved
Frame – *Flow of People, Performance, Work and Information & Burke Litwin Factors*

4. Hypothesis

1) The integration of organization change models with the HR Flows Model provides a useful construct to enable HR strategy execution in an organisation.

2) When HR strategies are designed with data generated from data and insights-driven diagnosis, they are grounded in both theory and applied research that can be replicated to design, execute and evaluate HR strategies in organisations.

3) Measures of effect following from the delivery of the HR strategy can then be tracked to assess the contribution of HR strategy execution to improve organisational and employee performance outcomes.

5. The Case Study Organisation

The organization is a global relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. It serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. It has been present in Africa since 2000, implementing relief, development and advocacy interventions for the well-being of communities. It employs over five thousand employees across Eighteen countries in Africa. In 2020, it developed the organizational global strategy entitled *Our Resolve 2030*, which set a direction looking towards 2030. Five strategic imperatives were identified. These were to deepen commitment to the most vulnerable communities, focus on operational excellence during delivery for greater impact, collaborate and advocate for greater impact and deliver high quality, sustainable funding and become an employer of choice in its labour market in international development.

All offices were expected to align their strategies with the *Our Resolve 2030* strategy. In order to be able to deliver on its new strategy, the organization decided to strengthen its Human Resources Management capabilities and management systems that will enable it to implement its programmes. Senior leadership had agreed that having an effective Human Resources (HR) department would be key to building core organizational capabilities:

1) strengthen the ability to deliver, measure and communicate impact,
2) focus technical capability for excellence in transformational development,
3) develop the capability to partner and collaborate,
4) adopt and scale innovation.
    In addition, its management systems must:
1) operationalize strategy, cascading priorities through all levels of the organization,
2) ensure resources are allocated according to organizational priorities,
3) bring visibility to key issues affecting execution and provide space for reflection and discussion
4) provide feedback on the results and the impact of the strategy, facilitating decision making and follow-through,
5) Translate organizational priorities into individual objectives.
    The case study organization raises 55% of its funding from unrestricted funding and 45% from donors in Europe and Asia.

6. Methodology

Many social science research methodologies exist for conducting a review of an organisation's HR systems and practices, each offering merits and demerits depending on the specific objectives and organizational context. We used purposive sampling for the study. These were staff in senior leadership, operations, administration and HR teams. The overall methodology used to generate data to inform the diagnosis, design, execution and evaluation of the HR strategy included interviews with staff, analysis of questionnaires, testing of evidence of existence or otherwise of internal controls,

observations and review of documents. A total of 30 out of a targeted sample of 40 were interviewed, which represents 75%. response rate and was a strong statistical sample to make generalizations of the purposively sampled respondents' perceptions and comments on the questions/factors that were analysed. In terms of gender diversity of staff, 40% were males and 60% were females.

6.1 Questionnaires

The data were gathered using an online questionnaire addressed to the respondents through the SurveyMonkey platform. The survey took place in June 2025 and resulted in 29 complete responses. We used diagnostic questionnaires as quantitative tools to collect data from teams within the case study organization. This was to ensure we had data that could be compared across teams and also tracked over time. It served as a survey-feedback instruments to determine areas that would benefit from the organisation's HR systems and practices transformative initiatives.

6.2 Interviews

In addition to the questionnaires, between June and July 2025, we also conducted remote interviews using Teams, Google Meet, and Zoom to reveal data and insights that quantitative data alone cannot capture. We used structured interviews following predetermined questions, which were aligned with the SurveyMonkey tool questionnaires but varied slightly to guide conversations. We organised respondents into groups of 4-5 participants. Despite requiring more effort to analyze than questionnaires, the interviews provided insights into organizational culture, information and communication patterns, and decision-making processes with respect to human resources management.

6.3 Secondary Documentary Analysis

We examined existing organizational records, the organisations's strategy (Our Resolve, 2030), management reports, operations management manuals, internal control policies, HR policies and practices, and internal communications documents. This approach provided the research with data about key HR operations, systems and practices and helped us to validate findings from the other diagnostic methods we applied above.

6.4 Workshops and Focus Groups

We also organised two workshops at the onset and at the end of the research to share key findings with the organisation. The workshops brought together diverse teams and individual members. Given that the research covered a five-year period, e.g. 2020 to 2025, we also partnered with the senior and middle management team to form joint task forces between our team and the organisation to investigate specific topics over the research period. This helped to validate trends and patterns of measures of effect as a result of the corrective actions to address the gaps identified from the diagnosis.

7. Findings

In this section, we present the findings of the study.

Phase 1: Data from Diagnosis (interviews, questionnaires, and focused group discussions)

In line with the Burke-Litwin Model and HR Flows Model, 90 factors were assessed covering Flow of People, i.e. 49 factors (54%), Flow of performance, i.e. 9 factors (10%), Flow of information, i.e. 15 factors (17%), and Flow of work, i.e. 6 factors (7%). Other areas covered included general aspects, i.e. integration of values and mission with HRM systems, i.e. 8 factors (9%) and HR Function delivery model factors (3%).

a. Analysis of Responses from HR Team

In all, 10 staff members working in human resources administration, fundraising operations and legal participated in the research.

- **Flow of People**

- **Strength:** Staff showed commitment to organisational mission and values. (**BL factor: Mission & Strategy)**
- **Weakness:** values not integrated across HRM systems, HR strategic framework, equitable standards for workforce engagement **(BL factors: Systems & Management Practices)**

- **Hiring/Buy**

- **Strengths:** tracking of applications, longlisting, shortlisting, review of contracts by legal advisor, etc. (**BL factor: Management Practices)**
- **To be strengthened:** need for recruitment policy reinforced with measurable process& outcome standards aligned with core values & principles. **(BL factors: Organisational Culture, Structure)**
- **Weakness:** no graduate recruitment policy, no internship policy, no diversity & inclusivity policy to guide recruitments, no formal end of probation form/report, etc. **(BL factors: Structure, Systems, Management Practices)**
- **Overall summary:** needs to be strengthened.

- **Hiring/Induction**

- **To be strengthened:** need to validate the effectiveness of onboarding in a measurable manner **(BL factor: Organisational culture)**
- **Weakness:** no formal report from the new joiner **(BL factor: Organisational Culture)**
- **Overall summary:** needs to be strengthened

- **Bind**

- **Weakness:** no evidence of well-defined/documented compensation philosophy, there are components of total rewards in place, e.g. job bands and salary review processes.

These will have to be anchored on a clear compensation philosophy aligned with a clear employment value proposition and reinforced by a cohesive policy that structures and aligns philosophy to the other elements, i.e. job grading, benchmarking, pay scales, corrective action and overarching HR strategy. **(BL factors: Leadership, External Environment, Organisational Culture, Individual Values and Needs, Motivation)**

- **Boost**

- Weakness: no learning and development policy, plan & processes, no evidence of structured career development (job enrichment, professional development, job rotation, peer reviews, acting, etc. **(BL factors: Individual and Organisational Performance, Systems, Management Practices, etc).**

- **Bounce**

- Mixed: no exit interviews& undefined separation periods.
- Weak: no redundancy policy & standard process for handing over **(BL factors: Management Practices, Organisational Culture, Systems)**

- **Flow of Performance**

- Weakness: No documented performance management policy, values not integrated & measured as part of performance culture, no talent management strategy and process for assessing leadership potential, no succession planning framework, etc. **(BL factors: Individual and Organisational Performance, Motivation, Work Unit Climate, Systems)**

- **Flow of Information**

- Weakness: no internal communication strategy, no safeguarding policy (harassment, bullying, discrimination), no culture of regular employee engagement surveys to measure impact of communication, flow and understanding of information and information around network wellbeing, etc. No evidence of measurement of key organizational factors, i.e. agility, effectiveness, culture, leadership, wellbeing, identity, etc. No policy& guidelines for handling staff grievance/disciplinary issues. **(BL Factors: Organisational Culture, Work Unit Climate, Management Practices, Systems, etc.)**
- Overall: weakness

- **Flow of Work**

Lack of a job evaluation framework to define jobs, determine grading, and compensation structure. **(BL factors: Leadership, Structure, Systems)**
- Overall: needs to be strengthened.

- **HR Function Delivery Model**

- Weakness: no evidence of a programme to support continuous professional development of the HR team & no culture/tool for measuring the contribution of HR function to the strategic priorities of the organisation. **(BL factors: Individual Performance, Systems)**

b. Analysis of Senior Management Teams' Responses

In all, 20 out of 22 senior managers completed the questionnaire, which translates to 90% response rate, which is very high statistically. In terms of the content of the survey, 22 factors were assessed in all, covering flow of people 4 factors, 18%), flow of performance 8 factors, 36%), flow of information 4 factors, 18%), flow of work 6 factors, 27%).

Measurement Scale: A = agree, SA = strongly agree, NS = not sure, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree

- **Flow of People**

- Values & Behaviors assessed during hiring & onboarding: 63.7% (A, SA), 36% (NS). **(BL factors: Culture, Systems, Management Practices, Organisational Culture)**
- Clear compensation philosophy: 81.8%(SD) 18.2%(NS). **(BL factor: Motivation)**
- Ops excellence: Hiring process standards/accountabilityc54.5%(SD), 18.2%(NS), 27.3%A). **BL factors: Leadership, Organisational Culture)**
- ICT: leveraging ICT to facilitate hiring – 9.1%(SD), 63.6%(D), 27.3%NS) **(BL factor: Systems)**

- **Flow of Performance**

(BL factors: Individual and Organisational Performance, Systems, Management Practices, Organisational Culture, Leadership, Structure)
- Performance management policy: 36.4%(SD), 54.5(D), 9%(NS)
- Performance measures what & how: 18.2%(SD), 54.5%(D), 27.3%(NS)
- Talent growth & potential standards in performance management: 27.3%(SD), 72.7%(D)
- Learning & development policy and process: 45.5%(SD), 54.5%(D)
- Workload helps to avoid perpetual overtime: 9.1%(SD), 72.7%(D), 9.1%(NS), 9.1%(A)
- Focus/resources on mental health: 9.1%(SD), 54.5%(D), 27.3%(NS), 9.1%(A)
- Mental health is openly discussed: 9.1%(SD), 18.2%(D), 27.3%(NS), 45.5%(A)
- Offering of specialist psycho-social support on a voluntary basis: 63.6%(SD), 18.2%(D), 9.1%(NS), 9.1%(A).

- **Flow of Information (BL factors: Organisational Culture, Work Unit Climate, Leadership, Structure)**

- Clearly documented internal communications strategy; consistent messaging: 9.1%(SD), 54.5%(D), 27.3%(NS), 9.1%(A)
- Clarity on information management and flow: 27.3%(SD), 45.5%(D), 27.3%(NS)
- Team bonding &effective communications: 9.1%(SD), 18.2%(D), 18.2%(NS), 54.5%(A)
- Collaborative tools (slab, intra-net, teams, asana, slack, zoom): 9.1%(SD), 63.6%(A), 27.3% (SA)

- **Flow of Work**

- HR Operational excellence (process/tools to grade jobs): 9.1%(SD), 63.6(D), 27.3%(NS). **BL factors: Management Practices, Systems)**

- HR Operations excellence (pay scales): 27.3%(SD), 54.5%(D), 18.2% (NS). **BL factors: individual motivation, external environment)**

- HR Operations excellence (evaluating HR contributions): 36.4%(SD),54.5%(D), 9.1%(NS). **BL factors: Management Practices and Systems)**

- HR operational excellence (job scope & KRA – creativity/innovation): 9.1%(SD), 90.9%(D). **BL factors: Management Practices and Systems)**

- Our work/business process reinforces values & behaviors: 9.1%(SD), 18.2%(D), 36.4%(NS), 36.4%(A). **BL factors: Systems and Management Practices)**

- Our work/business process and work life balance: 27.3%(D), 54.5(NS), 18.2(A). **BL factors: Systems, Individual Values and Needs, Motivation Level and Management Practices).**

Phase 2: Design of HR Strategy
a. HR Strategy
Following the presentation of the findings of Phase 1, a five-year HR strategy was approved by Senior Leadership. The strategy defined the employment value proposition, compensation philosophy and seven strategic pillars. Each strategic pillar has a theory of change, key result areas, outputs, outcomes, activities and success indicators. The strategic pillars were:

- **Talent Management:** (recruitment and selection policy, key result areas and KPIs, Onboarding framework, e.g. standards around curriculum of content, processes and feedback, etc.).
- **Knowledge Management:** (performance management, learning and development policy, learning management platform, in-house academy of structured course models that include co-creating modules, etc.).
- **Engagement:** (compensation policy, job evaluation tools, total rewards benchmarking, employee wellbeing and employee engagement surveys supported by KPIs on all the sub-strategies).
- **Talent Justice:** (standard people policies including health and safety in English, French and Spanish, with supporting policy toolkits on all aspects of employment relations).
- **Succession Planning:** assessment and development centre toolkits, vertical and horizontal promotion pathways framework, processes and KPIs, etc.
- **Agile HR systems:** adoption of Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) that integrates with financial management systems, with manager, employee self-service, etc.
- **Professionalised HR function:** e. g., professional development of HR staff, e.g., certification programmes, executive education, specialised academic programmes, active participation in HR communities of practices etc.

Phase Three: Execution of HR Strategy

a. Flow of People

Three months after the diagnosis, the senior management team approved a new headcount for the hiring of an experienced Chief HR Officer (CHRO) who was immediately appointed to the senior management team. After the hiring of the CHRO and within a three months period, he built the HR team and hired specialists in talent acquisition to focus on professionalising "buy" approaches, specialists in compensation to focus on "bind" approaches, specialists in learning and development to focus on "build" approach, specialists in hybrid occupational health, employee wellbeing and safety to focus on compliance related to telework and working at designated physical locations. In addition, geographically facing HR Business partners were also hired to provide frontline HR services to staff based in eighteen countries across the four geographic regions in Africa.

Some of the specific flow of people (bind) outputs implemented included a compensation philosophy, a compensation policy, the adoption of the Hay Job Evaluation Tool, the introduction of total rewards benchmarking every eighteen months and the adoption of the model of applied comparatio, which defined nine quantitative and qualitative indicators to determine the rate for every job. This was reinforced with regular training for staff and line managers. Using the BL model, these were outputs and outcomes related to leadership, structure, individual motivation, management practices, systems, etc.

b. Flow of Performance

In line with the findings from the diagnosis, a learning and development architecture was designed and executed. Within a 36-month period, some key interventions included building a performance management system with toolkits, supported by training for staff and line managers, and linking performance to compensation, learning and development, including promotions. In addition, a structured development pathway was implemented to identify staff who showed potential to undertake work of greater scale, complexity, and size. The assessment and development pathways had four types, ranging from short-term to long-term. This was reinforced with the establishment of an In-house Knowledge Management Academy, which created the organisation's first centralized Learning Management System (LMS). It provided the space to streamline onboarding for new hires, centralize organizational knowledge, and provide an accessible platform to cultivate a sustainable culture of self-directed continuous learning and teams' autonomy in creating content. In terms of impact, 120 Course modules were designed, including comprehensive Onboarding paths, People leading and nurturing Skills, and specific organisationally specific content. The LMS also scored an average monthly user utilisation of 45% of the organisation's five thousand plus employees. Satisfaction and content analysis indicated extremely high user satisfaction with the quality, relevance, and usability of the available knowledge management content. The moderately positive high user adoption and consistent platform engagement confirmed the Knowledge Management Academy's successful integration into all four flows of

people, performance, information and work. This could also be analysed as evidence of the organisation's collective investment in knowledge management and professional development. Using the BL factors, these outputs and outcomes were Individual and organisational performance, systems, management practices, organisational culture, leadership, and structure.

b. Flow of Work

The Hay Job Evaluation tool was adopted to redesign and evaluate all roles in order to clarify questions such as who was accountable for work, how work was done via workflows, business process mapping and the complexity of skills and competencies required. This became the basis to determine the problem-solving, technical know-how, accountability and location dimensions of all roles that informed job designs, team designs, talent acquisition and selection methods, assessment and development pathway standards. Decisions on cross-functional project initiatives and cross-functional project teams were aligned with the Hay Job Evaluation Tool, which also informed fundraising and donor outreach initiatives. There were at least five examples of "incubated projects" that were led by cross-functional teams and which helped to determine the level of integration, differentiation, as well as the number of layers, headcount, and location (remote, hybrid or office-based), which facilitated the development of the right business operating model for these incubated cross-functional projects. This approach to flow of work informed decisions and choices around value proposition differentiation and choices, technology-based structures, functional structures and matrix structures, given the size of the organisation. The organisation also began implementing a global work environment offering that included a global work environment policy, an occupational health and safety risk assessment, and a measurable action plan aligned with contemporary trends in remote work and labour market practices. This is still a work in progress. Using the BL factors, these outputs and outcomes were to improve leadership, structure, systems, etc.

c. Flow of Information

In line with the diagnosis and to keep all key stakeholders aware of the implementation actions, the senior management team, with the CHRO as a member, provided regular updates on the process. Specific outputs implemented under the Flow of Information included the development of a communication strategy. This was to help establish a clear vision and purpose for internal communication within the organisation. This helped to align with the organisation's overall culture and philosophy. In addition, senior management approved the hiring of a Change Communication Specialist who reported to the CHRO. The Change Communication Specialist, the CHRO, and senior management collaborated to approve key talent justice policies, including grievance, disciplinary, code of ethics, and whistleblowing policies. This was reinforced by "monthly drop-in sessions" for the suite of talent justice policies. In addition, an extensive internal change communication system was introduced that streamlined the use of communication tools such as Slack, intranet, Google, as well as regular updates to staff

on the HR transformation initiative. The CHRO also provided regular quarterly reports called Talent and Culture Measures that provided information on all four HR flows. This was further reinforced with updates to the entire staff every six months, as well as high-level updates to the HR Committee of the Board of Directors of the organisation.

Using the BL factors, these outputs and outcomes were to improve organisational culture, work unit climate, leadership, structure, management practices and systems.

Phase 4: Evaluation & Learning

Our research conducted a purposive sampling of progress made during the period under review. We examined the period between the diagnosis and execution, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. We gathered a few interesting data points and insights between 2022 and 2025. These are mean scores over the three-year period.

A. Talent Management: HR Strategy Pillar and connected to the Flow of People.

- time to fill roles -from 15 weeks to 11.5 weeks (advert to when offer is accepted)
- employment offer acceptance rate averages from 75% to 96.5%
- voluntary turnover - from 10.5 % to 2.96% and 3.86% in 2025
- Global benchmarking was conducted for two successive years in 2022 and 2024 across eighteen labour markets.
- In 2022, the average comparatio positioning of staff was 92% or 0.92. This was on average 8 percentage points below the market median. In 2024, results showed an average comparatio positioning of staff in line with organisation's compensation philosophy and policy was 103% or 1.03%. 1.0 is the 100% percentile; this means staff were averagely remunerated at 3% above the middle of the compensation structure.

B. Knowledge Management: HR Strategy Pillar and connected to Flow of People and Performance

- In-house company academy established with over 50 modules on topics identified as mission-critical needs by staff
- In-house company academy active users average of 40%, KPI 25%
- Knowledge contribution rates, e.g., courses created by staff 70, KPI was 40
- Knowledge Hub Net Promoter Score (quantitative course feedback). KPI 80% average 88%
- Average performance appraisal completion rates of 85%
- Average staff with individual development plans 65%

C. Engagement: HR Strategic Pillar and connected to Flow of Information & Work

- Launch of staff engagement survey - key indicators, e.g. intent to stay, behavioral and rational commitment, staff engagement scores averaged 4.2 using the Likert scale for three consecutive years.
- Perception of HR function as a strategic innovator by senior leadership was rated at 3.8 on the Likert scale for three consecutive years.

- Staff perception of HR policies availability, accessibility and utilisation was rated at 4.1 on the Likert scale.
- Perception of organisation's duty of care for remote-based staff 3.7, hybrid staff 3.9, office-based staff 4.2, using the Likert scale.

D. Agile HR systems
- Implementation of Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) that integrated recruitment and selection, performance management, learning and development, employee engagement and employee relations.
- User satisfaction surveys: Manager service - 2023 rated 3.5, 2024 rated 4.2 and 2025 rated 4.1 using the Likert scale.
- Employee self-service - rated 3.3, 3.8 and 4.3 respectively in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

At the end of 2025, two management reports confirmed that the HR strategy execution had helped to lay the foundation to build core organizational capabilities, and this had strengthened its ability to deliver, measure and communicate impact. Significant investments in staff learning and development, compensation management, and development pathways for high-potential staff had enhanced technical capability for excellence in the implementation of their development programmes.

The organisation's learning management system had facilitated employees and partner staff to develop the capability to partner and collaborate. Three new donors invested in replicating "incubated innovative" projects that had made an impact in the field and whose technical approaches and project models needed to be brought to scale. In addition, the learning management system provided a knowledge management space for senior leadership and thematic leads to operationalize strategy, cascading priorities through all levels of the organization. This had ensured that resources were allocated according to organizational priorities, brought visibility to key issues affecting execution and provided space for reflection and discussion. Senior leaders also introduced a culture of constructive feedback on the results of the HR strategy execution at least twice a year to the entire staff and the HR committee of the Board of Trustees.

7.2 Organisational Politics
The CHRO confirmed that at the beginning of his tenure, he had to deal with three types of actors with competing interests. There was an early adopters' group in senior leadership who constituted about 25% of the entire leadership team and overwhelmingly supported the intent and theory of change around the new HR strategy. Another group of leaders, who constituted about 35% of the leadership team, were very opposed to the HR strategy as they felt this was going to result in a loss of decision space on HR related matters. The remaining group of leaders, who constituted 40%, were neutral as they saw both the opportunities and risks and wanted a more flexible approach towards the implementation of the recommended HR technical models and orthodoxies. Following a series of engagements with the senior leadership team, a critical mass of the neutral group moved over to the early adopters' group, and the immediate outcome was to agree to implement low-cost high impact low hanging "deliverables" to lay the foundation for

getting wider leadership buy-in. One approach which worked was to appoint some of the senior leaders as Workstream Owners of specific HR strategic pillars, and this helped to drive leadership and staff engagement of the process.

8. Findings

This study chose a combination of specific content-based approaches by considering the *ends*—that is, what senior leadership, line managers, and operations staff considered as important in their HR strategy execution, as well as the means for achieving them using organisation change management models and the four HR flows model. Our findings confirm that the integrated use of OD models, e.g. Burke Litwin, Tichy Technical, Political Cultural and HR flows to frame the change management process, i.e. diagnosis, *design, execution, monitoring and evaluation,* enables HR strategy delivery.

Our findings show that all 90 factors that were assessed could be analysed using all three integrated models. This provides a very rigorous scientific lens to any HR change management process and outcomes. In effect, using the 3 integrated models, we can confidently say that what is diagnosed to address HR strategic and practice gaps is linked to what is executed, monitored and evaluated through the specific HR strategic initiatives.

A strong nexus between OD and HR models in guiding HR strategy execution enables organisational and employee wellbeing outcomes, organisational performance and impact.

The study has shown that when an integrated approach is applied to design HR strategy, it helps to align with the broader organisational strategic priorities.

Finally, a coherent execution, monitoring and evaluation of a clear HR strategy facilitates improved organisational performance and employee wellbeing outcomes.

9. Conclusion

Firstly, we aver that an HR strategy can be designed in the light of organisational strategic priorities. Secondly, the design must be anchored on a clear transformative change management process using organisational development, change management and HR models and tools. Thirdly, this approach helps to define an HR Strategy's theory of change, key strategic pillars, key results areas, key activities, outputs, processes, outcomes and what success looks like. Fourthly, the data generated from the diagnosis helps to design, execute, measure and evaluate specific HR strategies that then build transformative organisational capabilities to drive organisational impact and performance, which leads to improved levels of organisational and employee wellbeing outcomes. This leads to high staff engagement. Fifthly, the impact of the HR strategic initiatives implemented as a result of the diagnosis is moderated by effective senior leadership's political commitment to own the transformative HR strategy. Sixthly and finally, organisational politics is at the heart of all HR strategy design and delivery

initiatives, as actors within the organisation have competing interests to navigate gains and losses of power as a result of the implementation of a new HR strategy.

9.1 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to only one global organisation and therefore cannot be generalised across the board; however, it provides insights for further studies to replicate the findings of this work. It adds additional knowledge to studies that connect organisational diagnosis, organization change management and HR strategy delivery.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no conflicts of interest or competing interests in the study.

About the author

Casely Ato Coleman is a Senior Fellow of the leading African think tank, IMANI Center for Policy Education. Casely has over 30 years of experience in International Development, Human Resources and Organisational Leadership. He has worked in senior leadership roles for global organisations such as World Vision International, Plan International, European Climate Foundation, Meliore Foundation, and with the UNFPA. He has almost 18 years of experience teaching as a Visiting Professor of HR Strategy & Organisational Behavior at the Institute Superieur de Management (ISM), Senegal and was also a part-time lecturer in HR and organisational behavior at the University of Ghana Business School. Casely brings a practitioner scholarship lens to his work. His key areas of consulting and research include HR strategy execution, knowledge management, organisational culture, compensation, the politics of industrial relations, organisational redesign, restructuring, change management, and leadership in complex humanitarian contexts. He has degrees from the University of Ghana, the University of Bergen, Norway and the London School of Economics, UK.

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