

The Influence of the Role and Competencies of the Human Resource Manager in the Design of Human Resources Architecture

Track: Human Resource Management

Abstract

This study attempts to analyze whether the competencies and the role of the Human Resource (HR) Manager influence the adoption of HR architectures more or less adjusted to the model of Lepak & Snell (1999). To this end, 50 Colombian companies were studied, some national and others multinational with different countries of origin. 600 people were surveyed including Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), HR managers, and employees, generating measurements of adjustment to the model per employee and per company. The results obtained through the use of PLS-SEM modeling indicate that a more strategic role and a higher level of competence of the HR manager does not guarantee a higher level of adjustment to the Lepak & Snell (1999) model of HR architecture.

Keywords: Lepak and Snell model; human resource architecture; role and competencies

Introduction

HR function has experienced a big evolution in the last decades. An evolution that has been linked to the advance of Business Management and of the consideration of the human factor in the framework of organizations. Accordingly, substantial changes have occurred in its increasingly strategic role, and in its content, which have led to an expansion of the functions to be addressed and a sophistication of the practices used. This evolution expresses implications not only at the functional level but also at the organizational or strategic level, which emphasize the need to relate the policies and systems of HR practices with the strategic objectives of the company (Delery & Doty, 1996; Side & Wilson, 1994).

In the most relevant literature reviews on HR (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Boselie, Dietz & Boon, 2005; Lengnick-Hall; Lengnick-Hall, Andrade & Drake, 2009; Lepak & Shaw, 2008; Martin-Alcázar, Romero-Fernández & Sanchez-Gardey, 2008; Schuler & Jackson, 2005; Zeng, & Lamond, 2009), a main area of interest which stands out is the study of the most effective human resource management practices and systems because of their impact on the results in terms of both individual and organizational performance, which Batt & Banerjee (2012) call the *Human Resource Performance Link*.

Many of these investigations include, from a contingency perspective, the analysis of the effect of both internal and external factors (among which their own competitive strategy stands out) on said relationship. Some focus on the analysis of isolated practices or sets of practices without taking into account their potential interrelations, while others, from a configurational

perspective, analyze systems or configurations of practices, placing emphasis on the relationship and interdependencies among the different practices of HR.

Among all of them, this study highlights the proposal of HR architecture proposed by Lepak & Snell (1999, 2002) and subsequently developed by authors such as Kang, Morris & Snell (2007), Lepak, Takeuchi & Snell (2003), Lepak, Taylor, Tekleab, Marrone & Cohen (2007), Liu, Lepak, Takeuchi & Sims (2003); Melián-González & Verano-Tacoronte (2006) and Palthe & Kossek (2003). This proposal, based primarily on the contributions of resources and capabilities, human capital, and transaction cost theories, suggests that companies will perform better if they use differentiated human resources practices for different groups depending on the value these groups bring to the company and the uniqueness of their skills or abilities.

Despite the popularity of the papers by Lepak & Snell (1999, 2002) and the large number of citations they receive, a thorough review of the literature has revealed a relatively small amount of research based on their work or which in some way involves them in the analyses by using factors related to human capital and its employment mode, uniqueness and the value it brings to the organization.

On the other hand, there are also very few investigations focused on analyzing the influence of the role played by the HR manager in the strategic process or of their competence in the configuration of adopted HR practices and the results arising from their application.

Therefore, taking as a key reference the model of Lepak & Snell (1999) in this study an attempt is made to respond to the following questions: Does the more or less strategic role of the HR manager, in terms of their participation in the strategic process of the organization, affect the configuration of the architectures of human resources? and Do the competencies of the HR manager affect the configuration of the HR architectures?

To do this, in the first section, the theoretical framework is defined, reviewing the literature on good practices, the HR architecture model of Lepak & Snell (1999) and the literature on the role and competence of the HR manager, to then substantiate the hypotheses of the study. Next, the methodology section gives a description of the sample, followed by the details of the indicators and instruments of measurement of the relevant variables, the mode of collection of information and the analyses made. Subsequently, the results of the empirical work are detailed, showing that there is no clear relationship between the level of competence and the role of the HR manager and the adoption of the HR architecture model proposed as "ideal". To close the study, the most relevant findings and recommendations that are derived from the results obtained are presented, as well as the limitations of the study and future research lines.

Theoretical background

HR Practices

In the literature on Human Resources Management, human resource practices aimed to acquire, develop and stimulate the human talent needed to achieve success in their sphere of action, receive various denominations or, as noted by Oltra (2003), different labels with which reference is made to these "best practices": (a) "practices (or systems) of (high) commitment" (Arthur, 1992, 1994; Wood & De Menezes, 1998); (b) "practices of high performance" (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Becker & Gerhart et al., 1996; Huselid, 1995); (c) "systems of high investment in human resources" (Lepak, et al., 2007); (d) or simply "best practices" (Delery & Doty, 1996). There are even those who opt for the interchangeable use of various terms (Pfeffer, 1994, 1998).

However, as noted by Lertxundi (2010: 76) "the various approaches to this concept revolve around a common axis: improve the organizational outcomes through models of organization and personnel practices that promote the competencies, motivation and commitment of the people who form part of it".

For the purposes of this study, they are called practices of high performance, since the concept of performance is broader than that of production. The latter, more linked to objectively measurable results, can leave in the background qualitative aspects related to behavior that may have a very significant impact on the proper functioning and results of the organizations.

However, it should be noted that all reviews of investigations consulted to date have shown few matches as to what should be considered "best practices" of human resources. From the studies of Becker and Gerhart (1996) to other more recent research such as Batty and Banerjee (2012), Boselie et al. (2005), Oltra (2003), etc., all arrive, in this regard, at similar conclusions.

The multiple investigations that have taken as the object of their analysis the identification of these best practices have been carried out by following the Universalistic, the Contingency, the Configurational and the Contextual approaches. All of them mark an important conceptual and methodological development in this field of research. This evolution has been widely studied by authors such as Delery and Doty (1996), Martin-Alcazar et al. (2004 and 2005) and Oltra (2003).

Lepak and Snell's (1999, 2002) human resource architecture proposal is now reviewed as it is a key reference in this article, and criticizes (rightly, in our opinion) the inflexible view portrayed by the vast majority of the research on human resource best practices. The authors consider that it is far too simplistic to assume that one single model of employment relationship or a single bundle of human resource practices will work efficiently for all kinds of employees. Their model fits

a configurational approach, since it propounds the existence of 4 configurations of HR practices, and a contingency approach, in that it makes the configuration to be used dependent on the characteristics of the human capital involved.

The HR Architecture Model

Lepak and Snell's (1999, 2002) proposal takes as an initial key reference Miles and Snow's (1984) seminal work, as well as the studies of Baron, Davis-Blake and Bielby Davis-Blake (1986), and Uzzi (1993) and Stewart (1997) that relate the choice between employment internalization and externalization with differences in employees' competencies; and the studies of Matusik and Hill (1998), Rousseau (1995) and Tsui *et al.* (1995), that analyze the differences in the employment relationships that may exist in a firm.

Their essential theoretical foundations are provided by Transaction Cost Theory (Coase, 1937; Klein, Crawford and Alchian, 1978; Williamson, 1975 and 1981), Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964; Flamholtz and Lacey, 1981; Schultz, 1961) and Resource-Based View (RBV) (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1991; Peteraf; 1993). These three theories, applied to the field of Human Resource Management, highlight, directly or indirectly, the relevant role that employment modes, choices about internalization or externalization and human resource configurations can play in the development and sustainment of competitive advantages. Nevertheless, each one offers different arguments, to a great extent complementary, about how human capital should be managed.

Lepak and Snell (1999) analyze advantages and disadvantages of systems based on employment internalization and externalization, and develop a model that allows relating essential features of human capital (value and uniqueness) with four different employment modes. These employment modes are in turn linked to four different human resource configurations or, in other words, to different human resource practice systems (see figure 1). Ultimately, for the authors, the adequacy of human resource practices depends on the value human resources provides to the firm and the difficulties in recruiting, training and retaining personnel. Difficulties arise from the specificity and scarcity of the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to develop their tasks and responsibilities efficiently and effectively, that is, the uniqueness of their human capital.

The Theory of Resources and Capabilities suggests that resources are valuable when they enable a company to implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness, exploit market opportunities and/or neutralize real or potential threats (Barney, 1991; Ulrich and Lake, 1991; Wright and MacMahan, 1992). Consequently, the value of human capital or the value of the competencies the workers possess will depend directly on its potential to contribute to the development of core competencies and competitive advantages resulting from the same. This potential will vary depending on several factors, notable among which are the technology used, understood in its broadest sense, and the type of competitive advantages aimed to be developed as a competitive argument against the competition (Arthur, 1992; Snell and Dean, 1992).

The value of human capital, therefore, is defined as the ratio of the value generated thanks to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the human resources, in relation to the costs incurred in order to be able to count on such resources.

Lepak and Snell (1999) point out that the uniqueness of the competencies of employees can be due to different factors. On occasion, the development of these competencies requires processes of idiosyncratic organizational learning, and/or the use

of the competencies in the context of the organization requires tacit knowledge and experience understood as the domain of the expert.

Transaction cost theory establishes that the degree of uniqueness or specificity of the resources and capacities required to carry out a particular activity has an impact on the transaction costs and therefore will influence the decisions regarding internalization or outsourcing of the same (Joskow, Rose, Shepard, Meyer and Peltzman, 1993; Monteverde and Teece, 1982; Walker and Weber, 1984; Williamson, 1981, 1985). For its part, the Human Capital Theory states that the degree of specificity will impact heavily on the decisions on internalization or outsourcing of employment (Joskow, 1993; Monteverde and Teece, 1982; Walker and Weber, 1984; Williamson, 1975, 1981). Likewise, the Resource-based View (RBV) notes that the degree of specificity of the assets has a direct impact on their potential as a source of sustainable competitive advantage because it reduces the possibility of these competencies being duplicated or transferred to the competing companies (Barney, 1991; Snell *et al*, 1996; Wright and McMahan, 1992).

Taking into account the 4 possible combinations of value and uniqueness, Lepak and Snell (1999) propose a model of architecture in which they establish what type of relationship of employment and configuration of practices should be applied to each typology of HC:

Quadrant 1: Development of Human Capital. This corresponds to the unique and valuable human capital, i.e. the "set of employees who possess competencies that are both valuable and specific, can be considered as the core of employees that can serve as a source of competitive advantage (Atchinson, 1991; Barney, 1991; Stewart, 1997)" (Lepak and Snell, 1999, 36). In this way, the configuration of human resources that can support a relationship centered in the organization will be that of commitment (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995; Lawler et al., 1995; Pfeffer, 1994; Youndt, Snell, Dean and Lepak, 1996), as opposed to that of control.

Quadrant 2: Acquisition of human capital. This refers to the human capital that, while valuable, and providing an incentive for the internalization of employment (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994), due to its low specificity will be readily available in the labor market and carries the risk that the investments made for its internal development cannot be recovered. Thus, the human resources configurations will, in this case, be based on the market (buy system) according to the terminology proposed by Miles and Snow (1984). This type of configuration will emphasize the recruitment and selection of people who already possess the generic competencies required and will seek short-term benefits through the immediate use of the same.

Figure 1. Summary of Human Resource Architecture

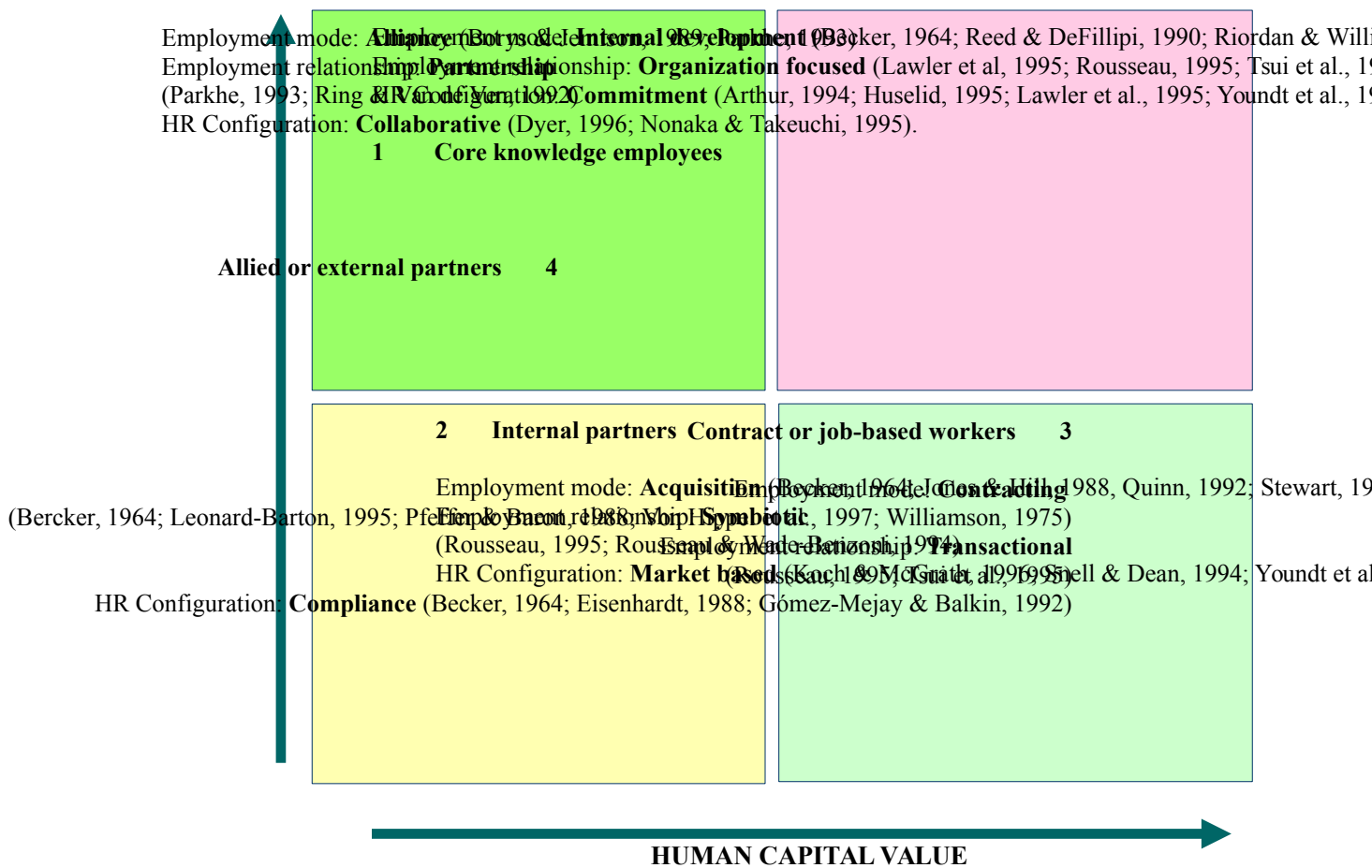
HUMAN CAPITAL uniqueness

Externalized Internalized

Transactional

Relational

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP



Quadrant 3: Recruitment of Human Capital. This corresponds to generic human capital which is of limited strategic value for the company. It is what Leonard-Barton (1995) describes as "public knowledge" or common knowledge and which, by its characteristics, is easily found in the labor market and can be treated, in essence, as a commodity. Therefore, the configuration of human resources is based on compliance. According to Lepak and Snell (1999) to ensure compliance, companies will focus on enforcing the rules and regulations, on the defense of specific provisions on work protocols, and on ensuring compliance with set standards.

Quadrant 4: Building Partnerships of human capital. This contains the idiosyncratic human capital but with little strategic value. From the perspective of the TCT, by the specific nature of the competencies required, enterprises should internalize them to reduce the transaction costs (Ouchi, 1980; Williamson, 1975, 1979). However, according to the RBV, it is argued that the limited potential for value creation of this human capital, minimizes the benefits that can be obtained from the internalization of the same and therefore outsourcing is recommended. Therefore, an "intermediate form of governance", the alliance, is chosen and a configuration of collaborative human resources is oriented to foment the collaboration and to share information among the employees of the "partners".

The role and competencies of the HR Manager and their influence on the architecture of HR

The strategic approach of HR management, directs this function toward the search for optimization of the human resources, through the relevant actions in the field of recruitment, training and motivation, assuming an anticipatory and proactive attitude, as well as a much more participative style of management, seeking its strategic contribution to competitiveness and to the achievement of the objectives of the company (Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Gris  et al., 1997).

Now, the role played by the HR Manager, and the competencies required of them to assume that role effectively, will vary depending on the level of integration between Human Resources Management (HRM) and the management of the company, and therefore, on the degree of involvement of the HR manager in the strategic framework process. In this way, they will have a strategic role to the extent that they are able to facilitate the progress of the company in terms of the people when asked to make important decisions for the company, when their role is valued as peers of the company are valued, when invited to board meetings and allowed to make proposals when changes are needed, and to make organizational decisions (Ulrich, 2012).

In those organizations that adopt a strategic approach to human resources, the HR manager is present on the Management Committee and actively collaborates as a member of the same (Roger, 2002). Also, being involved in the business, the Director of the Human Resources functions can provide solutions which anticipate needs, becoming, therefore, a strategic partner (Bournois and Derr, 1994).

To the extent that directors of human resources are no longer playing only an operative role in the implementation of their functions but are becoming engines of change within companies and assuming an increasingly strategic role (Ulrich, 1994; Jiang and Lepak, 2012), their competencies must evolve.

In this regard, on the basis of the five-year survey performed by the Business School of the University of Michigan with HR professionals, customers and managers, Brockbank and Ulrich (2006) propose five key competencies for the performance of responsibilities related to Human Resources functions that make a difference in the areas of HR. They are strategic contribution, personal credibility, knowledge of the business, technology of human resources and delivery of human resources.

In their proposal, the strategic role of the management of Human Resources is integrated as an entity that can contribute to the results and gives rise to the discussion of how, through specialized practices, the human resources staff can contribute to the strategic objectives of the company. In this way, HR managers must be able to understand how the practices of HR can contribute to improving the competitiveness of organizations, developing competitive advantages on the basis of human capital.

Development of Hypotheses

In accordance with the revision of the specialized literature, at the time of designing and implementing an adequate system of human resource management practices, it is of vital importance that the HR manager has the appropriate competencies and, on the other hand, plays a strategic role in the organization.

With regard to the role of the director of HR, if they do not actively participate at the first level in the process of strategic direction of the organization, it is unlikely that the aspects relating to human resources will be taken into consideration from the initial stages of the formulation of the strategy, in providing key elements for the development of future competitive advantages and defining the restrictions that the configuration of the current template can impose on the implementation of certain strategic options.

However, if the architecture model of HR Lepak and Snell (1999, 2002) is taken as the "ideal" or correct option, the HR manager will be better disposed to define and execute it if their role in the company is more strategic. It is necessary to add that the aforementioned model can defend itself from a competitive point of view to the extent that it simultaneously takes into consideration issues related both to costs and to the achievement of competitive advantages.

On the other hand, Murphy and Southey (2003) point out that the political influence of the person responsible for the function is a key element in the introduction of innovative models of human resource management practices, which always involve the assumption of risk. Said ability to exert political influence in the organization depends on different indicators, some of which are tied to the performance of a strategic role. Thus, for example, the hierarchical position occupied and participation in the Strategic Committee constitute important elements for exerting this political influence. An influence that is going to be key, not only to having their proposals accepted by the Strategic Committee or the senior management of the

company but also to obtaining the collaboration of the chain of command without which effective implementation of the proposals will be impossible. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. The more strategic the role played by the HR Manager is, the higher will be the level of adjustment between the characteristics of the human capital (value and uniqueness) and configurations of HR practices applied.

On the other hand, the competence of the HR manager is key, both to identifying the need to apply the configurations of different practices to different types of human capital, and to choosing the systems of practices suitable for each one of the differentiated groups that constitute the company, and deploy them effectively and efficiently. There is a need for an in-depth knowledge of research and trends in the field of human resources, and the capacity to integrate innovative HR practices in internally consistent and externally congruent configurations (horizontal and vertical adjustment), and the capacity to promote and manage the change needed in designing and implementing an HR architecture such as that proposed by Lepak and Snell (1999, 2002).

To this must be added that if the model of Lepak and Snell (1999, 2002) really delivers what in some way it promises, i.e. a better performance, to choose this would be the most logical choice on the part of a competent HR manager. This choice would not leave the businesses which implement it without a margin of differentiation, to the extent that significant differences may exist between some companies and others in terms of how this architecture is laid out and as to the shape and direction in which the human capital of the company is intended to evolve.

A high level of competency is relevant to achieving an adequate implementation, not only because of the difficulties that can be posed at the technical level but because this competency is another source of influence of the HR manager. This influence derives from the manager's ability to create networks, and their credibility, which is, in turn, related to their knowledge, experience, and the ability to cultivate "a perception within the organization of the essential and inherently valuable contribution made by the human resources function" (Murphy and Southey, 2003: 77).

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. The higher the level of competence of the HR manager is, the higher will be the level of adjustment between the characteristics of the human capital (value and uniqueness) and configurations of HR practices applied.

Methodology

Sample

The sample is composed of 50 companies, 20 national Colombian companies, 10 Colombian multinationals, 10 American multinationals and 10 Spanish multinationals, domiciled in the city of Cali, in the department of Valle del Cauca, Colombia.

The companies were selected and contacted through the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE)¹ and

¹ National Administrative Department of Statistics (Colombia)

the Asociación Colombiana de Recursos Humanos y de Personal (ACRIP)². Of the 50 contacted, 50 agreed to answer the survey. Consequently, the response rate is 100%. Of these companies 52% (26) are service companies and 48% (24) are industrial. Their average age is 52.86 years. With regard to their size in terms of average number of employees, this ranges between a minimum of 100 employees and a maximum of 71,199, with an average of 4,493 employees. There are no significant differences in terms of size and age between industrial and service enterprises, or when comparing national Colombian, multinational Colombian, multinational Spanish and multinational American companies.

Measurements and Data Collection

For this study, three different questionnaires were designed to obtain data from a different source of information in each one of the companies: CEOs, HR managers, and employees. In addition, interviews were carried out subsequent to the application of the questionnaires to delve into the casuistry specific to some companies of special interest and also to facilitate the understanding and interpretation of some of the results obtained.

Table 1. Indicators of Role and Competence of the HR manager

Role Indicators	Indicators of Competence
<p>The person responsible for the human resources function of our organization and/or subsidiary...</p> <p>...participates actively in the definition of strategic objectives, in close collaboration with the general management and managers of the various departments</p> <p>...propels change and is able to give direction to the same in topics concerning human resources</p> <p>...is listened to in the strategic meetings of the organization</p> <p>...plays so strategic a role as to be able to advise on restructuring, linkages, replacements, development and staff movements</p> <p>...occupies a position in the hierarchy comparable to those in charge of the other key functions of the enterprise (production, marketing, etc.)</p> <p>...is responsible for defining HR strategies, explicit and written, integrated with the organizational strategy and ensures continued conformity to it.</p> <p>...constitutes an authoritative and respected voice within the framework of the administrative council of the company or similar</p> <p>...is responsible for defining HR strategy, explicit and written, integrated with the organizational strategy and ensures its implementation.</p>	<p>The person responsible for the human resources function of our organization and/or subsidiary</p> <p>...has a wide experience in personnel/HR departments in the sector</p> <p>...has high credibility and a good reputation among the managers and employees of the different departments</p> <p>...can be regarded as an effective leader who knows how to motivate their team members toward the achievement of the objectives</p> <p>...is highly committed to the achievement of the objectives of the organization</p> <p>...has a high technical capacity to coordinate such a role adequately</p> <p>...has extensive knowledge of the business to which the organization is dedicated and makes good use of that knowledge</p> <p>...is capable of providing ideas and solutions that, from an HR approach will help the organization to solve problems</p> <p>...is able to promote the transmission of values of the organization with the objective of strengthening the corporate culture</p> <p>...relates easily with others and communicates appropriately with them.</p> <p>...is capable of generating new practices in relation to the work performed for the target groups of the organization</p> <p>...uses technology to influence the performance of human resources</p> <p>...is capable of handling the internal and external changes and adjust them to ensure the proper functioning of the structure, processes, and people</p> <p>...is capable of generating actions to expand the level of capacity of the organization and builds respect for its <i>stakeholders</i> or interest groups</p>

A first questionnaire, applied to the 50 CEOs, obtained key information about the company and assessed the role and competencies of the HR manager. The measurement scales were developed by the authors after an exhaustive review of the literature (see table 1). These indicators have been valued by means of a Likert scale of 5 points that ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The level of competence and the extent of the strategic role of the HR manager were determined by adding together the values of the corresponding indicators.

² Colombian Association of Human Resources and Staff

A second questionnaire, applied to the 50 HR managers, was dedicated to measuring the value and uniqueness of the human capital in 10 job positions in the organization. These positions were previously selected with the help of the interviewee as representative of the variety of existing positions, trying to collect the maximum possible differences in value and uniqueness without making explicit reference to the same to the interviewee. Directors and non-managerial staff, different departments and functions, professional/qualified and non-qualified, etc. were included. The questionnaire included 12 indicators (see table 2), defined on the basis of the scales used by Lepak and Snell (2002), which used Likert scales of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with 12 items to measure the value of the positions and another 10 to measure their level of uniqueness. The number of items was reduced to 12 in total, 6 to evaluate each of the dimensions quoted, trying to maintain the ability to discriminate between positions of high/low value and uniqueness. Using the original questionnaire could significantly reduce the likelihood of obtaining responses and the quality of the same owing to fatigue of the interviewee.

Table 2. Indicators of Value and/or Uniqueness of Employee Competencies

Value Indicators	Singularity Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of value for the Client/Consumer • Minimizing costs • Importance for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization • Responsiveness to changes in the environment and demand • Contribution to the development of new products, services, and processes • Importance for competitiveness in prices, products, and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability in the labor market • Distinctiveness in relation to the competition • Level of customization to the needs • Substitutability • Development in own job • Difficulty to be developed by competitors

A third questionnaire was applied to 500 employees, ten per company, and devoted to identifying the configurations of HR practices applied to each particular case. To do this, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) the extent to which 56 items constituting the questionnaire, described the practices of human resources used with them.

The scale is an adaptation of that used by Lepak and Snell (2002), which was translated, expanded and adapted in different aspects which are now enumerated. In the first place, the extensive review of the literature, predominantly on modes of employment and systems of human resource management practices (Arthur, 1994; Delany & Huselid, 1996; Dyer, 1996; Gómez-Mejay & Balkin, 1992; Kang, Morris & Snell, 2007; Parkhe, 1993; Pfeffer & Baron, 1988; Rousseau, 1995; Snell & Dean, 1994; Tsui et al., 1995 and 1997; Youndt, & Snell, 2004), suggested the inclusion of some items not considered by the aforementioned authors. This allowed, among other things, achievement of a better balance in the number of items that are characteristic of each configuration of practices, which should enable a more adequate assessment of the same. Secondly, some of the original items were merged as they referred to the same type of issues. Finally, the items were

translated, adapting them to the language used in the geographical area of application of the empirical study, so as to facilitate understanding on the part of the employees. In this sense, a pre-test also indicated where the initial wording could be improved by enabling detection of items that respondents found more difficult to understand.

On the basis of the scores obtained in the 56 items, 4 indicators were calculated, one for each configuration of practices. Following the example of Lepak & Snell (2002), Lepak et al (2003), MacDuffie (1995) and Youndt et al. (1996) each configuration is operationalized as an additive index of HR practices. These four indexes, one for each mode of employment, are calculated by taking the average value of the items that correspond to each of the configurations. The average value is used due to the fact that the indicators do not have the same number of items (21, 17, 11 and 11 respectively). The 56 items of the questionnaire were grouped as shown in table 3.³

Table 3. Indicators of the Configurations of HR Practices and Number of Corresponding Items

Indicators	No. of Items
• Concerning the characteristics of the job performed	10
• Concerning practices of recruitment and selection	11
• Concerning practices of training and development	10
• Concerning practices of performance evaluation	10
• Concerning reward systems used by the company.	15

For the level of adjustment between HR practices and type of human capital considered, the results of the questionnaires aimed to measure the value and uniqueness of the human capital in each position have been assessed together with the perception of the employee (which is what will affect their behavior and hence the results) in relation to the configurations of the HR practices applied. To check whether the variation in the way each position is assigned to its corresponding quadrant and the variation in the adjustment measure affected the results, different criteria were used in allocating a quadrant to each position as well as different measurements of adjustment to the model. For the first, the cut-off point to identify the high or low value and uniqueness was: (a) half the range of score (18 points); (b) the global average; and c) the average per company. To measure the level of individual adjustment, a stricter definition of adjustment was used to start with than that proposed by Lepak & Snell (2002). The configuration of HR practices which are theoretically congruent with the characteristics of value and uniqueness of each position/individual should obtain a higher score than the other configurations. This condition for considering the adjustment fades into the different indicators listed in table 4. The global adjustment per company is calculated as the sum of the individual adjustments for the 10 employees of the same included in the sample. Therefore their value ranges between 0 and 10. By using different measurement criteria a multitude of models were generated but with little difference between them. The most representative are given in the results section.

³ To access the full questionnaire refer to the authors. It has not been included because of space constraints.

Table 4. Summary of Adjustment Indicators per Company

Dichotomous adjustments by Company: the sum of the 10 individual dichotomous adjustments: strict adjustment, i.e. when the score of the configuration congruent with the quadrant in which the position is located is greater than the others. The value of the individual adjustment is 1 if the congruent configuration has the highest score, 0 in the other cases.
Adjustments 1 by degrees per Company: Sum of the 10 adjustments for individual degrees: strict adjustment, i.e. when the score of the configuration congruent with the quadrant in which the position is located is greater than the others. The value of the individual adjustment is 1 if the congruent configuration has the highest score, 0.5 if a partially congruent configuration is highest, 0 if the most incongruent is highest.
Adjustments 2 and 3 by degrees per Company: Sum of the 10 adjustments for individual degrees. The conditions for considering that there is adjustment are less restrictive. It is enough that the configuration congruent with the quadrant that corresponds to the position on the basis of its value and uniqueness scores above the average for all positions. The scores of the remaining adjustments might be even higher than this and adjustment still exists. The value of the individual adjustment varies between 1 and 0 according to which configurations scored above average in each case.

For the analysis of the relationship between competence and the role of the HR manager and level of adjustment at the enterprise level, various structural equation models were postulated using the Smart-PLS software. Given that for these analyses, the unit of analysis is the company, there are 50 cases. Competence and role are considered latent variables, each one of them measured through the observable variables mentioned previously. The relationship between the latent variables and their indicators is posed, a priori, as a reflexive relationship, although this was later contrasted in the analysis of the resulting models. The variable adjustment, which constitutes the dependent variable, has been measured in each model by a single indicator of those defined in Table 4.

Validation of the Measurement Models

The evaluation of the measurement model in this partial least squares method leads to the evaluation of the internal consistency or reliability of the scale, the reliability of the indicators, the convergent validity and the divergent validity (Aldas, 2013; Chin, 1998; Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014). The internal consistency was evaluated by means of Cronbach's Alpha and the reliability index. The convergent validity was evaluated by analyzing the factorial loads (outer loadings) ensuring loadings which would be significant and higher than (or at least close to) 0.707. The average variance extracted (AVE) was also ensured to be at least 50%. Finally, the discriminant or divergent validity was evaluated by comparing the root of the AVE of each latent variable with the values of its correlations with the other variables.

Validation of the structural models

To assess the predictive ability of the structural model, the percentage of variance explained by the model was analyzed, i.e. R². The size and significance of the coefficients β_{ij} that relate each independent variable i with the dependent j were also reviewed. The higher its size, the greater the influence of the first one on the second, hence its utility in predicting its value, a specially relevant fact when this influence is statistically significant. The analysis procedure known as *bootstrapping* offered by the PLS program reveals, on giving the values of the T statistic, not only the extent to which

these coefficients β_{ij} are significant but whether the factorial loads (*outer loadings*) are too. The most relevant at the time of validating the measurement model is that it allows analysis of the significance of the structural relations, i.e. between latent variables.

To complete the validation of the structural model, authors such as Aldás (2013) and Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2014), recommend analysis of the relevance or predictive ability of the model that gives Stone-Geisser's Q2 value. To calculate Q2, Smart-PLS performs a procedure of reuse of samples called *blindfolding*, which was used in the present work. The most relevant results are reviewed below.

Results

Validation of the Measurement Models

Firstly, the model that relates the competence and strategic role of the HR manager was validated with the level of dichotomous adjustment to the model of Lepak and Snell (1999), taking values above or below 18 in value and uniqueness as a criterion for classification in the different quadrants of the model.

After creating a first version of the model with all indicators of competence and role, all those indicators whose load factor did not reach the 0.707 were eliminated. Specifically, the first two indicators of the Role variable listed in table 1 were eliminated.

The resulting model gives values of simple reliability and composite reliability above 0.9, which situates them well above the acceptable threshold of 0.7, outer loadings with values between 0.79 and 0.93, therefore higher than 0.707, and the AVE values of 0.76 for competence and 0.79 for role, which is well above the threshold of 0.5. Therefore, the results in terms of convergent validity are also suitable. Lastly, with regard to the results of discriminant validity, in table 5 it can be seen that these are also satisfactory. This is because the values of the square root of the AVE are higher than the values of the correlations of each latent variable with the rest. In addition, the cross loadings are in all cases lower than the outer loadings.

The same procedure was repeated using different criteria for the classification of positions in the quadrants of the model (taking as cut-off points values above or below the global average or per company, for both value and uniqueness) with almost identical results.

Table 5. Validation of the Measurement Model. Discriminant validity on the Role and Competence of the HR Manager

	S adjust dic a	Compet RDRH	Rol Est RDRH
S adjust dic a	1		
Compet RDRH	0.15	0.87	
Rol Est RDRH	-0,36	0.29	0.89

Note: The values of \sqrt{AVE} are gathered in the main diagonal

Subsequently, new models were created using in this case adjustment measures by degrees, which assign intermediate scores when the configuration that is applied with more intensity in the positions of a quadrant is partially congruent. Just as in the case of the use of dichotomous adjustment, after having created a first version of the model with all indicators of competence and role, the same role indicators were removed as they showed factorial loads of less than 0.707 and were virtually identical for both latent variables. Both the values of simple reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and composite reliability were again higher than 0.9; factorial loads (*outer loadings*) varied between 0.71 and 0.96, and the AVE values were 0.74 for competence and 0.78 for role. Therefore, the results in terms of reliability and convergent validity were, again, satisfactory. Finally, the results in terms of the discriminant validity of the model are also satisfactory to the extent that the root of the AVE is always superior to the correlations between the latent variable considered in each case and all others (Table 6). With regard to the factorial cross-loadings, in all cases they are inferior to the outer loadings.

Table 6. Validation of the model of measurement. Discriminant validity. Model 1 CR-AG

	S_adjust_1_degrees_b	Compet_RDRH	Role_IS_RDRH
S_adjust_1_degrees_b	1.00		
Compet_RDRH	0.22	0.86	
Role_IS_RDRH	-0.27	0.30	0.88

Note: The values of \sqrt{AVE} are gathered in the main diagonal.

Again, on repeating the procedure using different criteria for the classification of positions in the quadrants of the model of Lepak and Snell (1999) and other indicators of adjustment by degrees with different assessments of intermediate congruence, very similar results were obtained. The results of the validation of the structural models needed to validate the hypotheses raised are analyzed below.

Validation of the Structural Models

In regard to the validation of the assumptions using dichotomous adjustment measures, very similar results were obtained in all three models created. The evidence is given below with detailed comments on the first of them, as with the validation of the measurement model.

In regard to the predictive ability of the model, Table 7 shows that R² is 20%, so this is satisfactory. In addition, Q² is greater than zero, which means that the model also has predictive relevance.

The obtained results show, in the first place, a negative influence of the strategic role on the level of adjustment, which is contrary to what was expected (H1), and a positive influence, as expected (H2), of the level of competition on the level of

adjustment. Taking into account that the first relationship is significant (t-value 3.83 > 1.96), but the influence is opposite to that expected, and that the second relationship is not significant (t-value 1.06 < 1.96), it can be stated that the hypotheses proposed are not fulfilled.

Table 7. Structural Model 1 Validation Competence and Role Relationship with Adjustment

Hypothesis	Descriptive	B	T-value
H1	The performance of a strategic role on the part of the HR manager positively influences the level of adjustment to the model of Lepak and Snell (1999)	-0.44**	3.83
H2	The degree of competence of the HR manager positively influences the level of adjustment of the model of Lepak and Snell (1999)	0.27	1.06
R2 (S_adjust_dic_a): 0.20 Q2 (S_adjust_dic_a): 0,2491			

Note: * p < 0.01

When they are used as criteria for the classification of positions values above or below the global average in value and uniqueness, the results are repeated, though the values of R2 and Q2 (0.12 and 0.19 respectively) are somewhat lower and the significant relationship between role and adjustment is 5%. Where the criterion for the classification of positions takes as cut-off points the average of each company in value and singularity, the signs of the relationship do not change but the negative relationship between role and adjustment ceases to be significant and the values of R2 and Q2 are situated between 0.16 and 0.17 respectively. In short, none of the models validate the hypotheses raised.

In regard to the validation of the assumptions using adjustment measures by degrees very similar results to the above were obtained. The results are presented in Table 8.

In this case, the predictive capacity of the model can be considered quite satisfactory because the percentage of explained variance of the endogenous variable or dependent, is 17.03%. With regard to the predictive relevance of the model, it should be noted that the value of Q2 is greater than 0 so that the model itself has predictive validity with respect to the variable *s_adjust_1_degrees_b*.

Table 8. Structural Model Validation

Hypothesis	Descriptive	β	T-value
H1	The performance of a strategic role on the part of the HR manager positively influences the level of adjustment to the model of Lepak and Snell (1999)	-0.37*	2.00
H2	The degree of competence of the HR manager positively influences the level of adjustment to the model of Lepak and Snell (1999)	0.33	1.06
R2 (S_adjust_1_degrees_b): 0.17		Q2 (S_adjust_1_degrees_b): 0.18	

Note: * p < 0.05

Additionally, the β_i coefficients indicate again a negative influence, contrary to what was expected, in the case of strategic role, and a positive influence of the degree of competence on the level of adjustment. As deduced from the *bootstrap analysis* the first of these relationships is meaningful for a level of 5% and the second is not. Consequently, no evidence is provided in favor of either proposed hypotheses H1 or H2.

The results obtained from other models using different criteria for the classification of positions in the quadrants of the model of Lepak and Snell (1999) and other indicators of adjustment by degrees with different assessments of intermediate congruence, were quite similar. When using as the cut-off point values above or below the average of each company for value and uniqueness when classifying positions, the relationships maintained the same sign, but the relationship between role and adjustment 1 by degrees ceased to be significant. The values of R2 and Q2 were very similar (0.13 and 0.18). Only when using the adjustment indicator 3 by degrees, using values above and below the average in value and uniqueness for classifying positions, significantly different results were obtained, but neither do they provide evidence in favor of the validation of the hypothesis raised.

Finally, note that in the study other models of adjustment for degrees were raised using other indicators different to those given in Table 4. However, they have not been included, either because the validation of the measurement model gave unsatisfactory results, or because the results were redundant and brought nothing new.

Conclusions

Based on the results, and taking into consideration the initial questions, it can be concluded that the level of competence of the HR manager does not seem to have a significant influence on the degree of adjustment of the system of practices used by the company to the architecture of the model of Lepak and Snell (1999). That is to say, whether or not the HR manager was more or less competent, practices and modes of employment have been adjusted in accordance with what was said in the model to the value and uniqueness of the human capital in question.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that the more strategic the role played by the HR manager, the lower the level of adjustment to the model, i.e. greater homogeneity in the practices used with all employees. No significant differences are evident in the various groups permeated by the role of the HR manager.

In this regard, the interpretations that can be obtained from these results are of diverse nature. In the first place, it can be asked whether, despite certain differences between firms in the score that assesses to what extent the role of the HR manager is more or less strategic, they continue, in general, to play a secondary role. That is, a role with little capacity to influence (an executor of policies rather than a designer and implementer of processes and strategic contribution), with limited resources and limited capacity for maneuver when the time comes to propose innovative human resource practices and more complex architectures of human resources.

In this same vein, it is questionable whether in playing a strategic role, HR managers identify another type of priorities, think in more strategic and less functional terms, and/or come to the conclusion that the systems that give the best results are those that are more egalitarian and consistent with the strategy.

Secondly, it is important for the discussion, to take into account the so-called "inertias" that exist in the history of practices in organizations and which make it difficult to change the dynamics of the same. Practices that over time and because of different traditions and managements, have been carried out and have yielded results in the company and make it difficult to introduce substantial changes, at least in a short space of time. In this regard, another indicator to be taken into account is the fact that, on occasions, there are practices that are "institutionalized", i.e., they are considered as the correct way to proceed and to do so in a different way, would imply assuming a greater risk.

Now, if the results are analyzed descriptively and in detail to try to infer with greater precision the multiple interpretations that can be given to them, it is found that the means are very high in terms of level of competencies, and significantly lower in regard to the strategic role. In the median, more frequent values between a 4 or 5 are observed, meaning that all the interviewed managers say that those responsible for human resources in their organization are competent (more than 40% are perceived as highly competent by the CEO). On the other hand, approximately 20% have a maximum score as they have a more strategic role. However, there is a much higher percentage of HR managers that do not adopt such a strategic role but are focused on their function and have a secondary management role.

Thus, it can be concluded that for the managers of the companies interviewed in the city of Cali, Colombia, those responsible for HR are indeed competent, but in their work, in most cases, they do not have the opportunity to participate in strategic decisions and do not have the power or sufficient influence to introduce changes regarding reward, retention and developing their people. Therefore, it can be said that in the scope of this study, the city of Cali, Colombia, the role of the HR manager is still not given the rank and the power to influence strategically at the organizational level. That is, even if the HR managers are competent in strategic intervention, they play a functional and operational role, where the possibility of influencing to strategically modify the systems of HR practices is very low and in some cases null.

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Tengo algunos comentarios al respecto:

Por favor revisen que las tablas y gráficas estén bien, ya que al abrirlos y grabarlos nuevamente pueden sufrir cambios en el formato. De todas formas seguramente van a tener que hacerle cambios al formato del artículo según el estilo requerido por el journal, que también puede afectar las tablas.

Cuando han citado directamente de algún artículo en inglés, deben verificar que la citación este exactamente igual al original. Como yo no tengo acceso a las referencias, no las puedo verificar. Son estos:

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as noted by Oltra (2003), different labels with which reference is made to these "best practices": (a) "practices (or systems) of (high) commitment" (Arthur, 1992, 1994; Wood & De Menezes, 1998); (b) "practices of high performance" (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Becker & Gerhart et al., 1996; Huselid, 1995); (c) "systems of high investment in human resources" (Lepak, et al., 2007); (d) or simply "best practices" (Delery & Doty, 1996). There are even those who opt for the interchangeable use of various terms (Pfeffer, 1994, 1998).

However, as noted by Lertxundi (2010: 76) "the various approaches to this concept revolve around a common axis: improve the organizational outcomes through models of organization and personnel practices that promote the competencies, motivation and commitment of the people who form part of it".

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"set of employees who possess competencies that are both valuable and specific, can be considered as the core of employees that can serve as a source of competitive advantage (Atchinson, 1991; Barney, 1991; Stewart, 1997)" (Lepak and Snell, 1999, 36).

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minimizes the benefits that can be obtained from the internalization of the same and therefore outsourcing is recommended. Therefore, an "intermediate form of governance", the alliance, is chosen and a configuration of collaborative human resources is oriented to

foment the collaboration and to share information among the employees of the "partners".

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the ability to cultivate "a perception within the organization of the essential and inherently valuable contribution made by the human resources function" (Murphy and Southey, 2003: 77).

De acuerdo a lo que hemos aprendido con la publicaciones postuladas a journals Q1 y A por Ricardo es que los artículos no se deben escribir en primera persona. Por lo tanto, cambié las oraciones que estaban en primera persona a tercera persona.

Deben tener en cuenta que escritos en inglés son mucho mas directos y sencillos, sin tanta verbosidad como en español. Por ello, la traducción al inglés de un articulo en español no se pueden hacer tan textualmente y debe ser adaptado a la forma correcta en la cual la idea se expresa en inglés. Pienso que muchas de las secciones deberían ser re-escritas en un inglés mas académico. Esto lo he hecho en la sección de la revisión de la literatura, sin embargo, en la sección de estadísticas no me atreví a parafrasear porque no manejo estadísticas y tenía temor de cambiar el sentido.

Si desean, Ricardo les podría revisar (sin costo) la sección estadística para que el lenguaje sea coherente.

De todas formas, cualquier comentario o sugerencia, si ven algo que piensan que esté mal, por favor me lo hacen saber para corregirlo.

De acuerdo a lo que habíamos hablado, el documento que me enviaron, sin contar las hojas de referencias, tenia 8522 palabras, o sea que el costo es de \$639.000. El dinero se puede entregar a Ricardo.