# Unraveling the Connection:
# HR Roles and Employee Satisfaction

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**Abstract-**

A major breakthrough in the field of human resource management (HRM) has led to the paradigm shift away from the traditional tactics of workforce management and towards the newer and modern methods and practices. The HRM strategy which were made previously focused on how fulfilling the HR duties helps HR personnels be efficient and productive. The dialogue on Employee satisfaction is more significant in modern business due to the widening role that HR plays in dynamic business world. Hence, the aim of this paper is to create a conceptual framework for the connection between the four HR Roles proposed by Dave Ulrich and Employee Satisfaction. Here, it is proposed that effective HR role implementation will have a positive connection with employee satisfaction. This research, which is rooted in the review of the literature, adds by intensifying the part of the literature on Human Resources roles that explores the relationship between HR roles and employee satisfaction.

**Keywords-**

HR roles; Employee Satisfaction, Change Agent, Strategic Partners, Employee Champions, Administrative Expert

**Introduction**

Strong dynamic mobility in the labour market globally, and the internationalisation of overseeing businesses, has caused difficulty managing a workforce which is quite diverse (Michailova et al. 2009). The focus and debt of human resource (HR) activities have expanded consistently over the past few decades as a result of today's shifting business necessities. The HR tasks in old times were chiefly administrative in nature, but as time passed, the importance of the employee and their growth increased. Employees are now considered a company's most precious resource. (Beer et al. 1884)

The need for human resources activities that have a tactical approach is growing in response to the emerging concerns, such as the shift in the demographics and the lack of skills. This calls for the HR efforts to be more judiciously oriented is not new (Wright & Snell et al.1991). The employees and the operating system that are present in organisations as a result of humans having brought the functioning system into existence and having an effect on it are the two main elements when we discuss implementing management. (Hanushek, 1997) thus, it is accurate to say that human resources are the most fundamental component of organisations. (Fulmer & Ployhart et al. 2014).

Since the competition in the business is evolving, it is now necessary to be competitive in order to meet the challenges that are standing ahead. Globalization is a particularly difficult challenge for which appropriate solutions are required. These changes in the dynamic business environment show how the new competitive reality is forcing organizations to develop competencies that will help them stand out from their competitors (Ulrich, 1997). Since a long time, HRM has been seen as an administrative job and a source of expense for the organisation's staff management (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). The Human resources field has undergone a considerable change in previous decades too, the HRM advocates are recognising the critical role that human resources plays in a company's success and managing it strategically (Azmi, 2011).

The contemporary academics are increasingly taking these evident changes into consideration and seeing effective HRM as the addition of value to the business through running employee programmes towards the success of business. (Jahanian et al. 2012). Being one of the key player in the organisation, Human resource roles is expected to do a dynamic and influential role in the sourcing and selection of its workforce, giving them the right roles and responsibilities, enhancing their professional development, and addressing their needs and wants with a view to gain the strategic business purpose of the organisation. In order to establish and maintain extensile and adaptable workforce, HR professionals must have the sharp competencies (Geimer et at. 2017)

Employee satisfaction levels are greatly influenced by roles that are played by human resources professionals, the function that is in charge of managing people, hiring workforce, training, and employee relations (Mitchell et al., 2013). With the idea to shed light on the key elements that contribute to employee satisfaction with HR roles, Human resource's role in enhancing it, and the resulting impact on organisational performance, this literature review aims to give an overview of the existing research on HR roles and its impact on employee satisfaction. In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion regarding the requirement for HR professionals to play a strategic role in the field of HRM.

## Dave Ulrich's "The Four-Roles Model of HR Management"

The establishment of the four-role model is among Dave Ulrich's most concrete contributions to the field of human resources. Ulrich proposed that HR practitioners should fulfil four different roles and those are of a Strategic Partner, Administrative experts, employee champions, and change agents in his book "HR Champions" which was published in 1997. This model has evolved into a fundamental framework for embrace the functions of HR in contemporary organisations (Ulrich, 1997).

The Strategic Partner and also the Change Agent reflect the strategic focus areas of the HR work. The most critical role for a strategic partner are to build a human resource strategy and align HR practises with the business's goals; in contrast, a change agent's tasks are people-focused and centre on an organization's adaptability. The two jobs that make up the operational domain of HR activities are administrative expert and Employee champion. The administrative expert guarantees that the HR processes are effectively designed and delivered. The employee Champion, on the other hand, is focused on employee needs and day-to-day issues (Ulrich et al. 2009). This HR role model provides a useful categorization of modern HR practises. When compared to the previously stated practices, the unambiguous depiction in four dimensions especially give a significant study benefit.

The concept of the four HR Management responsibilities was developed by Conner in and later it got promoted by Ulrich in 1997. The conceptual framework of the HR four-role model has two chief components. While the first continuum depicts the shift in focus from the operational to strategic characteristics, the second continuum depicts the dynamic demands between people and the process aspects. According to Ulrich 1997, HR should deliver organisational excellence by carrying out these four HR roles proactively. The four HR roles are depicted which can make a contribution to the organization by ensuring employee satisfaction.
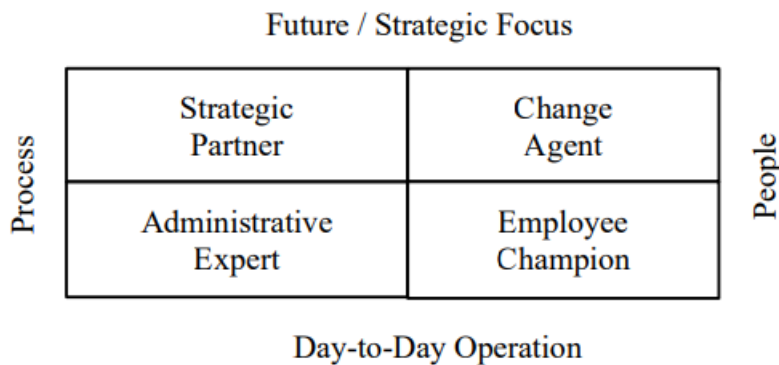


Fig. 1. HR Multiple-Roles Model (Ulrich, 1997: 24)

**Strategic Partner Role**- Ulrich proposed that human resources professionals need to function as the strategic partners who match HR practises with the purpose of an organisation. They must participate in the decision-making process and have a concrete understanding of the business. Ulrich also emphasised how critical it is for HR specialists to act as the "business partners" in order to promote organisational success (Ulrich, 1997). HR strategic partner's key responsibility is to collaborate with senior leadership and the management on the building, establishment, implementation, and communication

of overall HR initiatives that support the organization's overall strategy. They also manage and help in employee training to keep the workforce engaged and engaged.

**Administrative Expert Role-** In the field of human resources management, the administrative expert role is crucial. The Administrative Expert is charged with tracking, improving HR procedures, streamlining rules, and systems as a crucial part of Dave Ulrich's HR Model. As a result, the organization's general efficiency is improved, and a well-structured HR function is established. The chief purpose of the Administrative Expert is to add value to the company while also reducing expenses and raising employee happiness. In this role, the Administrative Expert is in charge of making sure that HR policies and procedures adhere to industry standards and regulatory requirements. HR professionals are expected to possess an administrative expertise in addition to their strategic tasks.

**Employee Champion Role-** Ulrich advocated for human resources specialists to represent workers inside the company. They ought to foster a supportive work atmosphere, attend to employee grievances, and encourage professional growth. The employee champion role underscores how crucial employee happiness and engagement are. (Ulrich, 1997). The Role of Employee Champion act as a voice for the needs and interests of employees. They are in charge of establishing an environment at work that encourages engagement, fulfilment, and employee retention. To earn the respect and credibility of employees, HR professionals must possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills. To guarantee that workers are treated fairly and equally, they should also be informed on employee rights, labour laws, and workplace practises. HR may improve the performance of the company by advocating for employees and fostering a culture of inclusivity and trust.

**Change Agent Role-** As change agents, HR professionals are responsible for promoting and fostering smooth organisational change and aiding in adaptive responses to various situations. Ulrich emphasised that HR must be proactive in identifying and resolving problems that have an impact on the company's capacity to adapt and innovate (Ulrich, 1997). HR professionals play a pivotal role in promoting and assisting organisational transformation because they act as change agents. They ensure that the organization's human capital is prepared to adapt to these changes and assist the organisation in navigating transitions like mergers, acquisitions, or restructuring. As they are in charge of organising and carrying out change initiatives, HR change agents must possess good problem-solving, communication, and project management skills. They must also be skilled at handling opposition to change and promoting an environment that is flexible and resilient.

Strategic partner, change agent, employee champion, and administrative specialist are four allegories for HR that Dave Ulrich plotted along with their respective functions. These roles include their relevant tasks, which are then followed by a list of outputs that apply to both the function and the business

## Employee Satisfaction

A satisfied workforce is essential to an organization's success since it is associated with improved job performance, higher rates of employee retention, and overall superior organisational performance. (Judge et al., 2001; Spector, 1997). Employee satisfaction is a sophisticated idea that involves how people working for an organisation feels and thinks about their company, their workplace environment, and the organisation as a whole (Locke, 1969).

 The employee satisfaction concept encompasses multiple components, including commitment to the organisation, work-life balance, and job satisfaction (Meyer et al. 1991). Numerous factors act on to what degree satisfied employees are with HR personnels doing their respective HR roles. The effectiveness of communications from the HR, transparency, fairness, and competency has all been pointed up as major determinants by research (De Vos et al., 2017; Marler & Boudreau, 2017). The magnitude of fairness felt by employees in human resources processes like appraisals, performance reviews and compensation have a big impact on their inner satisfaction (Fang et al. 2012). Trust and transparency are fostered bigtime through effective HR-employee communication, which promotes satisfaction (Collins et al. 2006).

## Relationship between HR Roles and Employee Satisfaction

Establishing and designing initiatives, regulations, policies, and targeted programs for improving employee happiness is a critical work for HR departments. Campaigns on balancing work life, employee appreciation programs, and other HR practises have been found to have a positive impact on the employee satisfaction (Guest, 2017). A varied workforce is more likely to be satisfied when HR actively promotes inclusion and diversity in the workplace. (Jackson et at. 1999).  There is positive correlation between employee happiness and HR's responsibility to ensure fairness in pay and promotions (Cropanzano et al. 2017)

In Ulrich's HR Model, the administration expert can be likened to a genuine specialist in "document management." Ulrich states the administration asserts that role of the HR involves aiding in assisting the organisation in adaption so that it continues to be consistent with the laws by monitoring the alterations in legislation, regulation, work-related health and safety standards, and other types of labour and trade laws.

The overall job happiness and HR's role in fostering employee voice, transparency, and trust are positively correlated (Guest et al. (2012) A statistically significant positive association between overall job satisfaction and employees' satisfaction with HR practises. Employees were more content with their work specifically when they had more positive encounters with HR functions, such as efficient onboarding and performance evaluations. (Johnson et al. 2019). Coordinating HR initiatives and activities with the broader company strategy is the role of HR Management and HR company Partners.

The position's responsibilities and roles include communicating with "internal clients" that are the employees. The strategic partner acts as these individuals' chief point of contact for HR, making it the primary channel for internal employees of a business to engage, get involved with a human resources department. Among other things, a strategic business partner gives employees constructive feedback on the quality of their involvement, ranks and helps in development of top talent within the company, assists in talent acquisition, career management, shares HR objectives with employees to ensure they are carried out throughout the company, and promotes general productivity and teamwork in the workplace.

Change is the only constant, and demographic, diversity, and inclusion changes have made it so practical that everyone must become accustomed to, accept, and embrace them. A strong and positive correlation between HR's efforts to promote inclusion and employee satisfaction, with organisations that displayed more inclusive behaviours reporting greater levels of employee satisfaction (Garcia et al. 2020). A study found a link between employees' happiness with their jobs and how committed HR is to Diversity and Inclusion. Employees' levels of job satisfaction were greater when they felt that HR actively promoted diversity and inclusion activities within the company. (Lee et al. 2020). Without change, no business or organisation could achieve its purpose and goals. The only way to accomplish the goal is through change management, which is also maybe the subject that gets the most attention when it comes to how changes in life affect companies. When a company wants to expand, adapt, or otherwise change its goals or objectives, the Human Resources position that communicates such organisational changes internally is the change agent. This person or division plans and develops training opportunities to give employees the new knowledge they need to adjust to changing company goals or job responsibilities, or it adjusts job descriptions to reflect those changed roles. In essence, the change agent aids the organisation in making necessary adjustments for the next phase of growth or evolution. In this way by playing the role of a Change agent HR drives a great impact on employee satisfaction (Smith, J et al 2014). By creating a work environment that prioritises employee development, engagement, and well-being, the role of HR, which entails matching HR strategies with organisational goals, can favourably impact employee happiness and satisfaction. By ensuring that workers are well-equipped to thrive in their professions and have newer opportunities for growth, effective career developments, onboarding, training, and transparent performance management practises can further more improve employee satisfaction.
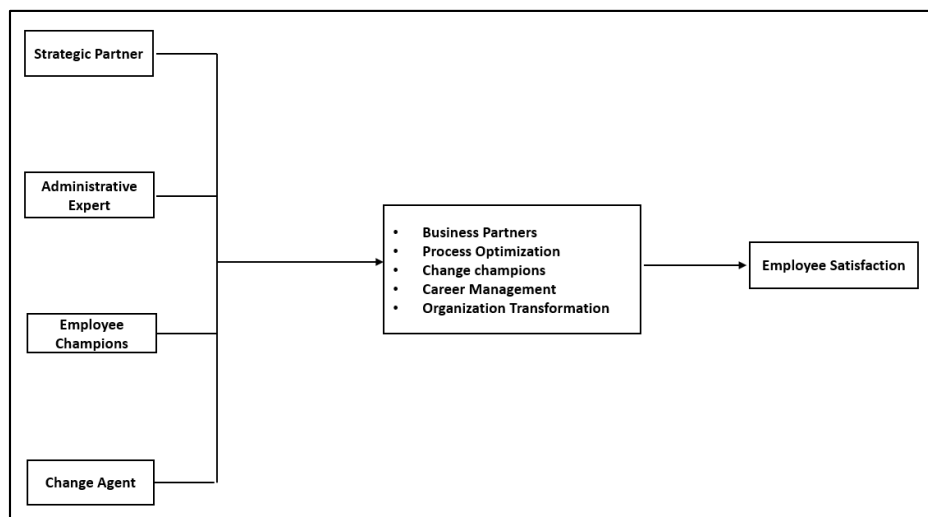


Fig. 2. Conceptual Framework

## Research Propositions and Conceptual Framework

The aim of the present study is to establish a conceptual review based on prior research regarding the relationship between employee satisfaction and the HR roles developed by Ulrich (1997). The conceptual model created by the authors' shows how four HR roles—strategic partner, employee champion, administrative expert, and change agent—are related to employee satisfaction. This study also examines these relationships. The following claims are made in light of the analysis of prior literature:

Proposition 1: Strategic partner role of HR professionals positively affects to Employee Satisfaction

Proposition 2: Employee champion role of HR professional positively affects the Employee Satisfaction

Proposition 3: Administrative expert role of HR professionals positively affects the Employee Satisfaction

Proposition 4: Change agent role of HR professionals positively affects the Employee Satisfaction

## Research Limitations and Recommendations

Given that this is a conceptual paper, several restrictions must be taken into consideration. The authors gave all of the literature support based on the results of earlier studies but did not offer empirical information to back up the literature that was used in this research, which was an important constraint. Furthermore, while this research focused on the function of HR professionals in HR to increase employee satisfaction, this study did not precisely clarify the role of HR stakeholders.

There is no doubt on the fact that line managers are an important partner and stakeholder in HR (Mierlo, Bondarouk, & Sanders, 2018; Woodrow & Guest, 2014); hence, evaluating their function in HR will contribute to the literature. Future researchers are advised to undertake research on the relationship between HR stakeholders' roles in HR and HR effectiveness after taking the aforementioned constraints into consideration.

## Conclusion

Transparency, proper policies and process, growth partner and HR expertise are just a few of the many variables that affect employee satisfaction with HR roles. Through efficient practises and policies, HR departments play a significant influence in raising employee happiness. Employee satisfaction also contributes to increased organisational performance. Organisations can prioritise HR procedures that boost overall success by emphasising the significance of employee satisfaction with HR functions. It's crucial to recognise that HR positions are not without difficulties. Continuous efforts are needed to build the requisite competencies and match HR practises with organisational goals in order for HR to become a strategic partner. In order to meet employee requirements and sustain satisfaction, HR has both opportunities and problems as a result of technical improvements and changes in work arrangements, such as remote work. Organisation's Human Resources (HR) departments have a big and varied impact on how satisfied their employees are. HR personnel have the ability to either improve or hamper employees' overall job satisfaction through a variety of HR tasks and positions.

In conclusion, many HR roles like as hiring, change management, training, performance monitoring  and diversity and inclusion efforts have an impact on employee satisfaction. These HR tasks have a major impact on employees' beliefs, experiences, and overall job satisfaction. For the purpose of boosting the workforce engagement, establishing a positive work environment, and attaining organisational success, HR roles must be used to comprehend and improve employee satisfaction. Further research will look at how changing technologies and trends affect the association between HR roles and employee satisfaction as the field of human resources progresses.

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