



Human Resource Analytics for Partnering – A qualitative study

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Abstract

Researchers have shifted the focus on the vitality of HR Analytics. Nevertheless, the areas of competency of HR professionals, technology and role of business partnering have been a question mark. This research paper reflects these focal areas through case study and focuses group research design on analyzing the phenomenon. This paper is qualitative research based on 12 companies, MNCs and Local, and a focus group study. Research deliberates on using HR Analytics in a local context in such a changing environment and how analytics reshape HR's function. Findings support that HR Analytics will shape the future of HR, and the areas covered are in transition for increased individual and organizational capabilities. It helps identify the current HR analytics trend and represent a more informed Strategic HR in the boardroom through predictive analytics to drive business results. Qualitative results have been represented through tabular data to highlight the areas of further improvement.

Keywords: Human Analytics; Human Resource Business Partner; VUCA

Introduction

Technology has disrupted the status quo and impacted all the functions within the organizational setting. The trends shaping businesses are demanding HR to transform itself and deliver data-driven and actionable insights that assist business in driving results. This constant external pressure has done businesses to be agile. Consequently, in an environment filled with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, HR can no longer work in the traditional pattern (Accenture, 2014). A similar stance is found in another research (Chowdhury, 2016) that postulate. It is not just the HR requiring strategic element but the entire business. Six performance challenges elucidated are innovation, productivity, lean delivery, global capability, customer centricity and data-driven analytics. With the changing dynamics, business knowledge, widely use cross-functional teams and the structural designs shaping up, HR may disintegrate or diffuse (Chowdhury, 2016). Here, the driving force understands having meaningful and timely data interpretations to refine processes to impact the bottom line. Research (Fahey, 2009) articulates that HR Analytics' acts as a connection between organizational strategy and the strategic Hthat truly influences the people strategy for the organization, giving it the meaning of evidence-based. However, with researches like (Minbaeva, 2017; Angrave, Charlwood, Kirkpatrick, Lawrence, & Stuart, 2016; Janet & John, 2016), the issue persists about organizational readiness and capabilities.

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Since the connection of people and business performance is positively related, strategic partnering in HR becomes critical. Although the transition is visible in this business area over the number of years, understanding analytics and competency development to reflect on analytics are still missing (Harris, Elizabeth, & Henry, 2010). As talent management is the initiating activity of HR function and imperative for an organization's sustainable growth, moving from being a data-starter to function-expert becomes a must. This can only be possible by delivering evidence-based insights into HR initiatives and their outcomes (Slinger, 2015). The scientific evidence on HR Analytics is still limited in research (Janet & John, 2016). The paradox of skills and adoption has been highlighted in earlier research as areas of concern. This research is trying to identify these areas and the factors weakening HR's position as a Business Partner despite the availability of analytics tool.

The paper outlines the typologies of HR Analytics, the level of sophistication in the usage of HR Analytics, its connection with the competencies and technology and the role of Human Resource Business Partner in this dynamic environment. The research then presents findings of 12 in-depth interviews and a focus group study. Here the case companies have been studied to understand their perception towards HR Analytics, use of technological tools, the available competencies and whether these impact the business partnering role. The qualitative study has been summarized to epitomize a model framework integrating these four elements.

Theoretical Background

Over time, departments within the organization are more data-driven for decision making. Finance, Marketing has always been considered analytical; however, they never became evident for HR (Chahtalkhi, 2016). The data available with HR remains under-utilized for this reason. Companies focus only on reports of turnover and to overcome the reasons associated. What concerns here is that since most HR professionals are traditionally involved in policy matters or employee grievances, not much analytical competency is found among HR professionals that can derive the value from HR analytics (Snider, 2012). Initially, the focal point has been on historical data and descriptive analytics, where efficiency has been the core concern (Smith, 2013). With HR being in transitional mode and becoming more and more data-driven, the use of analytics for decision making becomes imperative. Organizations are demanding for leaner HR, and literature has established that HR to be a value-added function has to provide a dollar value to justify its ROI (Fink & Vickers, 2011).

HR Analytics

The idea of analytics is not new. It is a tool of statistical and quantitative analysis for decision making. Organizations are using it to take HR into the boardroom from the backroom. Companies focus on competing on their capabilities on analytics (Mondore, Spell, & Douthitt, 2016). The use of statistical analysis and complex mathematical tools will enhance decision-making, cascade it into operations, manage relationships with clientele, and assess the hiring of the right people. Evidence advocates that rather than intuition, the use of data and facts is more valuable in decision making (Davenport, 2009). This standpoint is also supported by other research such as (Falletta, 2013) where he articulates on evidence-based HR analytics and provides that HR analytics has a long way to go and becomes part of strategy formulation.

HR Analytics/People Analytics or Human Capital Analytics, whatever the name, there are several ways to approach it. The critical area that rose with the big data highlighted three core levels: descriptive, predictive, and Prescriptive Analytics. While the first approach was more focused to describe relationships and the historical and current data trends, the second related more to cause and effect scenario giving insights into the root cause. It uses techniques of modelling, data mining. The third approach goes beyond predictions and outlines decision outcomes (Fitz-Enz & Mattox II, 2014). Organizations like Google, IBM are already working



with sophisticated people measurement tools, whereas many others are still in the phase of starting their journey about such measurements (Rasmussen & Ulrich, 2015). Studies have consistently revealed that investments in human capital correlate with financial results for the organizations and reflect employees with better engagement and retention (Pease, Byerly, & Fitz-Enz, 2015). Currently, organizations have moved towards external benchmarking in practice, and awareness of predictive analytics is increasing. The literature explicates that strategy consultant has focused on the hypothesis-led approach and its feasibility (Slinger, 2015). We as HR have to move beyond facts and figures of analytics and focus on insights that flow from intuition to exploration to ingenious thinking (Henke, et al., 2016).

Level of Sophistication

Over the number of years, HR analytics is coming into the spotlight among HR professionals, consultants and researchers at large. It is believed (Lawler, Levenson, & Boudreau, 2004) that several steps have to be performed to reflect the link between organizational performance and HR practices. For a start, effective metrics are subsequently used with high-quality analytical models and appropriate company performance measures. None the less, researcher' (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015) are asking organizations to be prudent in using HR analytics and must not consider it as a means to an end. He articulates that it is better to measure what is right instead of what is easy; that is, the focus should be on the outcome of training rather than the number of training. Since it is imperative to keep simple measures that help in decision making, the level of use or the level of sophistication in HR analytics becomes crucial for organizations to consider (Fitz-Enz & Mattox II, 2014). Another term coined (Jeanne, Elizebath, & Henry, 2010) is 'analytical talent' that refers to the people at various levels that help convert data into informed business results. They further elaborate that such people use statistics and information modelling techniques to shape the decisions in business. This correlates with HR competencies and their level of sophistication in the use of analytics. Studies closely provide relationships with the internal and external factors that decide the application of HR analytics and organizations capability (Davenport, Jeanne, & Robert , 2010). The greater the maturity level of functionalities, the higher organizational embeddedness; the more significant the data collection and, therefore, the more sophisticated level of usage of HR analytics (Levenson, 2005).

Technology

The discussion of Analytics goes hand in hand with technology and competencies. A recent study defines HR as a technology proponent in the sphere of HR competency (Ulrich, Younger, Brockbank, & Ulrich, 2013). With the fast-changing business world, technology has enabled the flow of information rapidly across the world. Questions that HR professionals are asking are how do they respond to external changes? (Schiemann & Ulrich, 2017). The research (Angrave, Charlwood, Kirkpatrick, Lawrence, & Stuart, 2016) support that technology is the only key to utilising the Big Data available with HR. Since IBM, SAP, Google analytics has already in the market for practitioners. The academics need to connect with structural modelling techniques with practitioners to bring out the full utilization of Big Data and the approach towards Data Scientist. As the level of sophistication and technology will require specific competencies to perform the analytical tools, statistical and analytical skills become a critical component and a must for HR executives.

HR Competencies

Statistical techniques are deployed in HR analytics to derive simple to composite numerical equations (Kapoor & Sherif, 2012). In line with other business areas, Human Resource Management has evolved with globalization and the changing business dynamics;



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the development of competencies becomes a must for HR professionals. Competencies may not be just limited to technical knowledge of HR but also business acumen, analytical and statistical skills. This need has arisen with the increasing organizational demands and continuous scientific research by data scientists. Studies (Vicere, 1987) identified competencies in business knowledge, strategic management, consulting, HR planning and design, technical expert, leadership and management. Jackson & Schuler (2003) supports similar parameters, and recently (Ulrich & Uscher, 2015) has also defined six core competencies. Thus this area has gained significant attention over the years. However, research results oppose the theory. The theory provides various competencies to be ingrained in HR professionals, but HR professionals are missing the mark in practice. They lack skills and technological understanding. The Data Warehousing Institute's research showed that 24% are not very skilled, and 19% lacked technological drive. Furthermore, 21% are poor at the business case, while 30% with little or no comprehension of predictive analytics (Halper, 2014). Therefore for HR professionals to be value addition, they need to specialize in knowledge areas and particular skill sets.

Based on the given statistics, it is alarming to realize the role of HR as a strategic business partner in its real sense.

Strategic Business Partner Model

The concept of HR partnering had been pioneered by (Ulrich, 1998). Whether organizations are ready or not for the use of Ulrich' model will be applied sooner, somewhat later. HR has not only to provide cost-effective alternatives but also to be competitive (Goodge, 2005). A similar perspective is also supported by (Kapoor & Sherif, 2012) where he states that HR a Strategic Business Partner and Change age, which aligns human resource activities with overall business strategies. For this, HR has to develop expertise and skills and organize itself to reach the corporate level (Khan, 2014). For attaining the level of Strategic business, partner, HR needs to enable competencies related to metrics, analytics, organizational and business design. Studies provide that HR, to reflect the strategic worth, must leverage predictive HR analytics. The focus is to signify HR as more than just a cost centre and reveal its value creation in terms of paying off on its investments and as a source for employee engagement and as a Strategic Partner. Miranda, cited in (Span, 2014) concurs with financial gains and employee retention as directly proportional. This must develop a 'sticky' environment that makes employees remain with the organization. Employees look for more than just financial rewards. HR, therefore, has to shift from the reactive mode of Personnel Management to a proactive approach towards strategic alignment and create an environment to sustain talent.

As a result of the above debate, this research is looking forward to identifying gap areas of competency and technology in the implementation of HR Analytics to streamline the connection of HR as an investment centre in the bottom line. Since the debate is still ongoing for HR to become a true Strategic partner; this study examines factors that are the cause of hindrance for HR in becoming one. Multiple debates (Ulrich & Uscher, 2015) have reflected over the number of years by academic researchers and HR practitioners. However, the models have been unable to deliver the desired result, be it the use of HR Scorecard or the Strategic Business Partner Model. In continuation with earlier research, this research provides a simplistic connection with existing problem areas of competency, technology and an answer of where and how to apply HR Analytics to relate to strategic partnering role.

Methodology

The research study includes qualitative in-depth interviews of Senior HR Professionals involved in the role of strategizing HR. The epistemological approach taken for this research is interpretive to understand the meaning as perceived from different perspectives (Stake,

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1995). The researcher wants to examine the underlying theoretical framework in a real-life setting empirically. Therefore, the data collection approach is to understand meanings that participants have assigned to HR Analytics. The maturity level of Analytics (Fitz-Enz & Mattox II, 2014), the HRBP Model (Ulrich, 1998), Competency Framework (SHRM, 2016) assisted in giving the theoretical background to this research. The population chosen for this research includes both Local and Multinational organizations. Participants comprised 12 HR leads from various industries, as given in Table 1. The participants were emailed prior about the background of the research, and written consent was received to be part of this research. The interview date and time were confirmed a week before. The interviews lasted an hour to two, subject to the availability of participants and the details included during the discussion. To validate the interviews, the focus group was also conducted from different HR leads of both local and MNC' organisations, and 8 participants were included. Due to confidentiality concerns, the names of organizations have been kept anonymous.

Table 1: Target Sample List for Interviews

List of Companies	Type of Organization	Industry/Sector	Contact person	Interview Method
Company 1	MNC	Telecommunications	Regional Executive - South	HR Face to Face
Company 2	MNC	Gas and Engineering	Rewards Lead	Face to Face
Company 3	MNC	Pharmaceutical	Head of HR	Face to Face
Company 4	MNC	Utilities	Head of Talent Management	Telephonic
Company 5	Local	Chemical	Human Resource Business Partner	Telephonic
Company 6	Local	Telecommunications	Head of HR	Face to Face
Company 7	MNC	Freight Forwarding and SCM	Cluster HR Manager	Face to Face
Company 8	MNC	Pharmaceutical	Head of HR	Face to Face
Company 9	MNC	FMCG	Human Resource Business Partner	Face to Face
Company 10	MNC	Foods	Compensation Manager	Face to Face
Company 11	Local	Insurance	Head of HR	Face to Face
Company 12	MNC	Telecommunications	Senior Manager OD	Email

Table 2: Target Sample List for Focus Group

List of Companies	Type of Organization	Industry/Sector	Contact person
Company 1	MNC	Pharmaceutical	Head of HR
Company 2	Local	Confectionary	GM HR
Company 3	Local	Consultancy	HR Director



Company 4	Local	NGO	Head of Talent Management
Company 5	MNC	Consultancy	Lead Recruiter
Company 6	MNC	Advertising	HR Manager
Company 7	Local	Stationary Manufacturer	Head of HR
Company 8	Local	Marine Services	HR Manager

Findings

Transitional Role of HR

Firms were asked about the changing role of HR as a function and its shift towards being a quantitative function. With Analytics transition in different business functions, HR is also next to be impacted by it. The findings present, several firms have moved into dashboards and analysis, the trend is still slow. In all 12 case companies, they believe that analytics has paved its way already, and with the rapid changes, it becomes inevitable whether organizations are ready for it or not. The transition is slow because of multiple reasons. The initial one is that the constraint of acceptability of HR as a value-added function itself has been overcome, which was agreed by all 12 cases. Although the companies admit, it was not the same at the start. Case 6 and 7 articulates,

“We had to build trust by our actions”; “Our actions and work reflected positive results which developed trust amongst stakeholders”.

However, other cases (2, 3, 7, 8) did not have to go through the struggle of acceptance of HR as a function because of the global guidance shaping the role of HR. HR leads now feel that HR is being given the driving seat to make decisions and manage their budget, making it easier for HR to use analytics and help in improved performance.

Our focus group findings agree that, yes, HR has transitioned over the number of years, and the trend is moving towards People Managers rather than HR Managers being responsible for People Analytics.

Analytics, level of sophistication and technology

Moving forward with the analysis, the second part of the interview shifted to the use of HR Analytics and technological tools for its assistance. The findings provide, as discussed earlier, that the user has started through at basics. It can be easily illustrated that a limited number of companies have transitioned towards dashboard to utilize HR analytics data.

HR Analytics is the latest area of focus with the core attention towards managing big data in HR and making it evidence-based HR. Case 7 states that *“HR Analytics has received identity, and it is in its prime right now”*. Case 9 enlightens, *“Analytics is the lingo of business”*. Case 5 further clarifies that *“Analytics assist in two-fold ways to measure performance and improve performance”*.

Not only this, companies have realized the significance of technological tools. When the interviewed majority have a database managed by SAP, reporting and shifting to analytics is not far. Here case 8 emphasized specifically that *“Database has to be in a quantifiable manner”*. On the other hand Case, 3 and 7 explain the obstacles faced in using technology by asserting that the *“Only constraint is SAP, which is costly about the number of full-time employees, so the use of local software becomes a necessity to quantify HR”*.

This constraint is overcome by using different local and customized ERP systems, which the HR leads confirmed. When questioned on the level of HR Analytics deployment, an exciting stance was provided by Case 8 that *“Same statistics are available at country, regional and global level, so now we have to move to a certain level that is prevailing around the world and not to limit ourselves into basic levels”*.



Table 3: Technological Adaptation of HR Analytics

High	25%
Medium	33%
Low	42%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High – MNC’s have global guidance and structuring, so technology advancement is high in those companies. They have dashboards giving the global representation of each division and better analytical use of big data. ▪ Medium – These companies combine both local and MNC, but their level of technology is limited to the scope of work and size of business. However, they do focus on critical areas of talent management and retention. ▪ Low – These companies have technologies, but the use of technology for analytical reasons is limited. Their reporting is limited to excel based analysis. 	

Findings from the focus group shared interesting insights in terms that although most of them are not into high-end technological tools except the Pharma case where Work Day provides the analytical solutions that cover only 12% sample from the overall companies from the focus group. The discussion also provided that with Artificial Intelligence paving its way, organizations are shifting towards lean structuring and, therefore, down the line, people less environment will revamp the business functions.

Competencies amongst HR Professionals

Subsequently, technology is another capability generating area for HR as come up during discussion by Case 6,7,8,9 and 11, and with the rise in the level of sophistication over time along with technological advancement, the following interview area focused on competencies amongst HR professionals to utilize the big data. Table 4 summarizes the findings:

Must have competencies in HR professionals	Competency building programs/initiatives
1. Strategic Positioner	1. Virtual Academy
2. Capacity Builder	2. Working with Capacity building model
3. Credible Activist	3. Use of Competency Frameworks
4. Change Champion	4. Training and developmental programs aligned with KPIs.
5. HR Innovator and Integrator	5. Competency-based hiring
6. Technology Proponent	6. Future Leaders Program/Leaders of others/Leaders of Leaders

The core idea in building HR is to develop competencies in HR professionals to give value to stakeholders. The responses provided by HR Leads very much focus on not just the technical competencies but also behavioural competencies amongst HR professionals. When questioned how organizations are assisting in this regard, it was interesting to find out that they have established virtual academies’ with 25% cases to keep their workforce trained and updated in developing competencies and upgrading over time (Table 4). The major challenge that came out of the discussion was how to motivate HR professionals to utilize these resources in competency development. 20% associated it with performance management and rewards to make dependency on the learning through virtual programs. Not only this, HR Capability Frameworks are being used by the other 75% of cases to train and develop their right skills needed by these organizations. This is clear from the interview responses as well.



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Case 1 “*We have been sent for both local and international training to enhance our skills and learning*”.

Case 11 responded, “*We are working on Competency Framework 32.*”

Case 12 replied, “*Our organization is focused on capability and competency building, and various initiatives are being taken to ensure the same. We have a pervasive competency-based hiring mechanism. Same is applicable for career growth/promotions, leadership development etc.*”

The Focus group agreed on having the finance knowledge and need to have Business Acumen, be a Change Agent and a Strategic Thinker, which correlates with the above interview responses. This will automatically transition HR into Strategic Business Partnering role.

HR as Data Scientist

The findings from this study provide that so far, the level of competencies is varying from very low to very high depending upon the organizational dynamics. The exciting thing is that the term ‘Data Scientist’, being the buzz word in today’s research, has still not reached HR professionals. The cases vary on the agreement at this point. The case companies had to be explained about the concept initially to know their responses. Few others who had clearer idea reported as Case 8 shares that

“*Yes, I have hired Statistician in my previous organization in Compensation and Benefits to utilizing the Analytics skills, and the results provided by the employee was beyond what current HR professionals could have represented*”.

Case 7 elucidated

“*Statisticians and level of sophistication are dependent on the scope of work and size of the organization*”.

However, 50% feel that by becoming a data scientist, they will become a number-crunching person missing the human touch of this function. Case 5 stated

“*The role of data scientist has to be taken by Analytics Experts as we as Business Partners have to work on relationship management and strategies. We can provide our insight to data scientist on what we are looking for, but our focus cannot be solely on numbers*”.

Contradictory views were presented by other cases such as Case 12 agrees on HR becoming a Data Scientist and explains:

“*Definitely. The way HR is progressing and advancing, very soon, we should have to rely solely on data to improve our dynamics and increase competitiveness. HR is the main building block of any organization, so this area has to be very strong*”.

However, most cases believe that HR in no near future will require the statistical degrees or in-depth statistical competency to become a data scientist. However, yes, understanding business numbers and making inferences through technological tools is something they need to learn. This will enhance the impact of the partnering role of HR.

The Focus group had a similar issue on the lack of clarity on the role of a data scientist. However, the MNC’s have their data scientist in regions, and it is coming from there. However, data quality and external consultants have issues with data scientists, so the MNC’s get guideline from there.

Strategic Business Partnering

The transition To HR Business Partnering is still a debatable topic for HR, as brought out through findings. The research probed whether the partnering role is working in its true sense; again, the responses varied to different extremes. Case 3 stated

“*Not really, as I would rate HRBP on the scale of 1-10 at 4. As of right now, HR professionals are excited about the title itself. In our local context, we are still lagging. Am not saying*”



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everyone falls into this trend. You may find both local and global organizations in our context where you may find a partnering role in even up to 8 out of 10 scales”.

The senior HR leads believe that it has still not reached the business partner role if we look around the industry but just a title shift. The current transition of HR from a cost centre to cost-saving or profit centre is making its way, and HR is shaping to work as true business partners. However, there comes variation in this stance where only partial cases think it is beyond the cost centre. Others still consider it being a support function and will remain a cost centre. One case, on the contrary, disagreed with this entire concept of HRBP. He believes that *“This entire concept of HRBP is flawed”.*

Paradigm shift towards Predictive models

HRBP will take its time in reaching Prescriptive Analytics, where modelling will become a routine part of HR functioning. However, so far, they are in between the shift from Administrative to Descriptive Analytics and Predictive according to the findings. HR initiatives and its business impact reflect the significant value addition. However, leading it to the next level where HR ROI can be seen in the bottom line is still a far-fetched plan as suggested by findings.

Competencies as HRBP

When asked about competencies specifically in HRBP, all agreed to the Business Acumen or Commercial knowledge as vital where understanding business criticalities is crucial to provide business-related insights from the HR perspective. Case 8 stated

“Understanding market dynamics, the market trend is a must for HRBP role along with technical HR knowledge and business acumen. You need to know local, global entire business areas to support your role as HRBP”.

The interviewee believes that

“Where direction setting exists, in every business area specialists are needed, when working at country level, organizations might not need specialists rather generalist people in all functions including HR. Not only this,

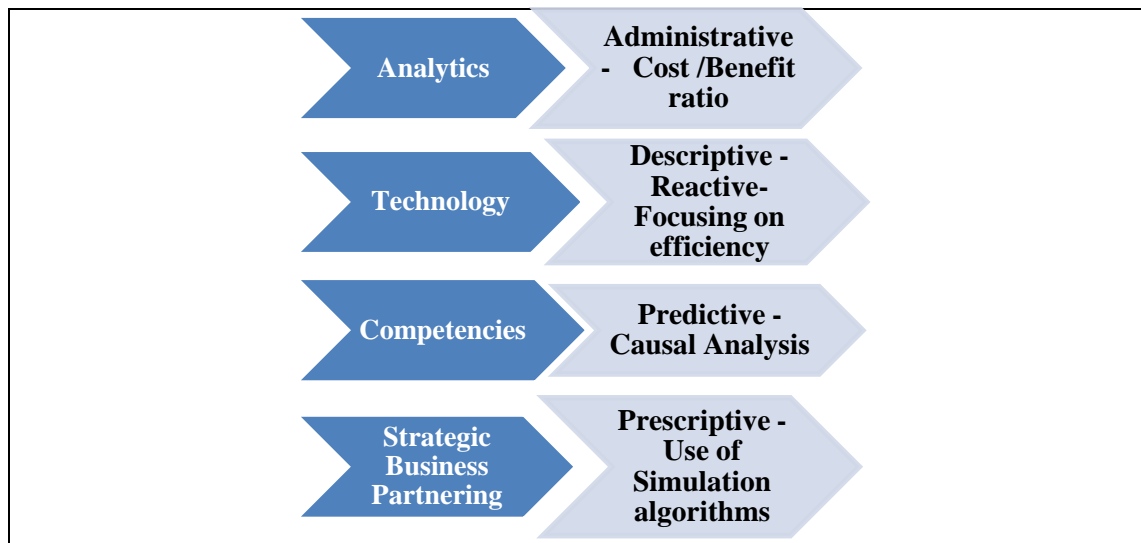
“HR has shifted to profit centre in our organization because we are developing our people and their capabilities and eventually that is developing our business. HR ROI is not tangible ROI. We can define it through investment in people through anything, be it time, building capability, or a strong pipeline of succession. This leads an organization to handle challenges, leading the business to grow, so that means directly ROI can be visible through these activities.

The summary of findings from these cases reflect a very agile HR that has transitioned as a value-added area within the organizational structure as Case 7 and 11 strongly reckon that

“In no time artificial intelligence will take the hype and cover the operational tasks of HR”.

Focus groups concluded top 2 analytics that can be the most significant for the current local context include Leadership Analytics and Corporate Culture Analytics. Another exciting thing is that HR is an art, not a science, as it deals with people behaviour; therefore, implementation is different and not standardized across the globe. The cultural boundaries very much impact it.

Therefore, our findings support the theoretical framework this study has established as per Figure 1; all three elements studied in literature form one integrated chain to shift into evidence-based HR.

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Discussions

The debate over the buzz of HR Analytics is settling down. With academics started focusing on the current status of HR analytics, their research is still limited (van den Heuvel, 2016; van den Heuvel & Bondarouk, 2016). Few critical players in HR academics have given a “critical outside perspective”. The findings provide the gap stated by (Angrave, Charlwood, Kirkpatrick, Lawrence, & Stuart, 2016) that academicians need to play their role to explain the praxis of HR Analytics. This study makes one such effort in defining the praxis and bridging the gap that practitioners have with academia. Findings convey several dimensions.

First and foremost, HR Analytics can become a powerful tool if we can develop different models to understand our workforce and their needs and then relate that with business needs. Second, the advancement of technology will enhance the level of sophistication of predictive models by HR. This is where HR has not yet shifted within our context but is in the process of assimilation of their data to bring meaningful business-driven results. Moreover, companies are focusing on technology concerning the findings. The study by (Angrave, Charlwood, Kirkpatrick, Lawrence, & Stuart, 2016) deliberates that IBM and SAP have developed these Artificial Intelligence tools in HR Analytics through dashboard representation of results.

Nevertheless, with the cost constraints within our context on the use of SAP and IBM tools, local and other software’s and dashboards can assist in bridging the gap which case companies have shifted to. Most of the cases are utilizing SAP for only database management. To what extent HR will shift into Artificial Intelligence is yet to be seen as a heavy investment again.

Meanwhile, technology is shaping up things. The era of business intelligence and robots thrives in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment; HR professionals have a need to adapt to their competency alignment with organizational needs. Here the focus group findings also deliberated that diversification in skills is much needed. Third, earlier research (Harris, Elizabeth, & Henry, 2010) represented that technological, analytical and statistical skills are still missing being one reason for reluctance in HR Analytics. This study establishes that the competencies have been worked upon to the extent required within the local context. Now HR professionals are moving towards Capability building concerning Table 4, and Line Managers are being given training for Competency-based interviewing as stated in a focus group. This is supported by the research (Minbaeva, 2017), which articulates individual and organizational capability building. Though with current results, statistical competency is not much focused on by HR leads. The academicians need to establish the need for Data Scientist



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and bring clarity to its underlying concept. Also, the role of stakeholders becomes very crucial in shaping the organizational culture and environment. As the changing business dynamics have changed the ways business work and the way management thinks.

Lastly, the mindsets have shifted from HR as simply a cost centre. Yes, the role has transitioned in various forms over the number of years, but the emphasis now is more on strategic partnering (McCracken, O'Kane, Brown, & McCrory, 2017). HR professionals are trying their hardest to meet management expectations by understanding the business and acquiring commercial knowledge to keep par with business needs. This has led to HR acceptability by stakeholders as a critical function, and the use of HR analytics in this regard is a supplemental tool giving an evidence-based HR (Denise & Eric, 2011).

To summarize our discussion, we have established that organizations have accepted the use of HR Analytics as a paradigm shift. Firstly the model framework suggested in Figure 1 can be combined to bring out the best from the earlier individual established earlier frameworks of Competency, HR Analytics and HRBP. Several studies have highlighted these models in different stances individually (Schiemann & Ulrich (2017); Ulrich & Dulebohn (2015); Denise & Eric (2011)).

This article has easily identified the areas that require attention for practitioners. Large local organizations can utilize the competency frameworks used by MNC's for capability building at an individual and organizational level. Cases still represent a considerable gap in practice on competency development in local organizations compared to MNC's. Secondly, technological adaptation is a must. Organizations still thinking twice about whether to invest in technology or not has to consider that HR Analytics requires the use of big data, which cannot be assimilated and utilized without technological tools. It does not have to be SAP or IBM software's, but local customized tools are readily available. Thirdly, HR analytics's adaptability is essential, and that mindset of acceptability to its needs is to be established by HR professionals amongst the stakeholders. They have to be convinced that only they can convince the top management, which is still slow as studied in the cases. Fourth, the well-established Human Resource Business Partnering model will automatically align itself within organizational structuring when the right competencies and technology are used. HRBP performs more predictive analysis representing the actual value of HR function. Organizations need to deploy HR Analytics in stages given in the framework above regardless of being small or large organizations. This will help them make effective decisions in managing people.

Conclusion

This study has reflected on the paradigm shift towards the use of HR Analytics within this era of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. The agility within the function has come due to the external market forces and the transition towards becoming an evidence-based HR. The initial issues of acceptability have been overcome. This emphasis on data-driven insights is shaping the role of HR and its perception amongst stakeholders. The emphasis on database management and conversion into meaningful information is commendable. Companies have realized the need for technology even into the HR and not just in core business areas. The trending use of dashboards to gauge performance takes place, shifting the analytics to a predictive approach. Focus on capability building will eventually assist in covering the other competency areas supplementing organizations in reaching their goals. As a result, HR is transforming into a business partnering role.

Recommendations and Future Implications

The study has a limited sample of 12 cases, hence limited generalizability though the focus group study did support the various dimensions and have a more identifiable issue of culture analytics to be worked on. The study has been a preliminary study within the local



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context as no secondary published data is available to understand the current standing. Few consulting firms are working; however, their research data is limited to their clients only. This research will, however, be able to highlight the changing role of HR through HR Analytics. The levels at which organizations have to reach to be at par with the global demands. Technology and competency go hand in hand and therefore have to be continually upgraded with the volatile demands of complex and ambiguous work setting. The framework will assist local organizations to know where they have to start from and how. The praxis of HR Analytics will be very much clear from this research. Hence, future research could be built on further developing complex models to align business needs with the help of academic research. An increase in empirical testing in this area by academicians, larger focus groups, and increased interview sample size aligns the econometric models as per business needs and practitioner demands.

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Appendix

Results from Focus Group Study

A. Competencies in HR Professionals						
1	Analytical Skills	Very Narrow		Moderate		Very Broad
				12.5%	50%	12.5%
2	Statistical Skills	Very Basic		Moderately Advanced		Highly Advanced
			12.5%	25%	37.5%	12.5%
3	HR Expertise	Very Little		Moderate		Very High
				25%	25%	37.5%
4	Non-HR Business Experience and Expertise	Very Little		Moderate		Very High
			12.5%	25%	37.5%	12.5%