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**Human resource management
reform and
organisational effectiveness:
perspectives of human resource
professionals in UK Higher Education
institutions**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

Keele University, UK

September 2011

Abstract

The starting point of this thesis is the idea in the literature that the main objective of NPM is to apply strategic direction to public organizations (Truss, 2006) that could help to achieve economic and cost-cutting objectives (Boyne, *ibid.*). Achieving these objectives is, in part, based on applying management reform (Hood, 1995) through a focus on performance management, the setting of quality standards, the adoption of a philosophy of enhancing value for money and the replacement of the allegedly traditional bureaucratic structure of management based on satisfying organizational members' interests and demands a more market- or competition-based set of arrangements.

In UK higher education institutions (HEIs), human resource management (HRM) has had a major influence by orchestrating these changes to achieve organizational effectiveness (Brown, 2008). Thus human resource professionals *must* address these changes when planning and carrying out their roles and programmes.

This thesis proposes that there are two models that can be adapted to public sector organizations, such as universities: Stakeholder Satisfaction (SS) model and Instrumental Rationality (IR) model.

Stakeholder Satisfaction model is concerned with balancing the demands and interests of different stakeholders and members. It is related to political, social and communicative forms of rationality as a base to achieve Organizational Effectiveness (OC). The HRM role in this model seems to focus on operations

and people to satisfying members' interests (Employee Champion role) and to perform administrative activities (Administrative Expert role).

Instrumental Rationality model is seeking to achieve economic goals. The OE perspective under this model is related to technical and economic rationality. HRM within this model is concerned with achieving strategic orientation in an organization (Business Partner role). I argue that applying New Public Management (NPM) may influence public sector organizations to move from the Stakeholder Satisfaction model to the Instrumental Rationality model. Similarly, this might well be accompanied by HRM departments in universities shifting their main focus from the role of 'Employee Champion' to that of 'Business Partner'.

Conference papers presented from this thesis

- Mansour, H., (2011), 'Organisational Culture and Human resource Management Refrom: Evidence from the UK Higher Educational Institutions', Dilemmas 15th International Research Conference.
- Mansour, H., (2011), 'HRM Reform and Organizational Culture: Theoretical Background', Keele Graduate Research Conference, Keele University.
- Mansour, H., (2011), 'My research project and NVivo', Paper Presented to Keele M.Sc. students..
- Mansour, H., Heath, G., (2010), 'Organisational Effectiveness and the Role of the HRM Function in Higher Educational Institutions', Dilemmas for Human Services 2010, Changes and new directions in Human Services,14th International Research Conference, Luleå University of Technology.
- Mansour, H., (2009), 'An Evaluation of the Impact of Information Technology on Human Resource Management in Academic Sector in UK' , Dilemmas for Human Services, papers from the 12th International Research Conference (2008), University of East London, UK (ISBN 978- 1- 905858 -17- 0).
- Mansour, H., (2009), 'NPM and the role of HRM in UK Universities', Keele Graduate Research Symposium, Keele University.
- Mansour, H., (2008), 'HRM and Information Technology: Theoretical Paper', Keele Graduate Research Symposium, Keele University.

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Acknowledgements

This research would not have been continued or been completed without the invaluable help of the following people. First and foremost, my thanks go to my supervisor, Dr Matthew Brannan, for his patience, support and impeccable advice. Matthew, thanks for protecting my interests and thanks for all of the knowledge that you have given to me.

Many thanks go to my second supervisor, Geoff Heath, for his support and great patience. Geoff, many thanks for everything. You made this thesis possible.

I would also like to thank Dr Joan Lockyer for her supervision in the early part of this thesis. Joan, your contribution has been valuable in this research.

Thanks also go to my husband (Mohamed) and my daughters (Salma and Janah) for their encouragement, support and patience.

Mohamed, you are great and a very kind husband. I love you all.

Many thanks as well to my family (Mum, my sisters (Dalal and Gehan) and my brother (Mohamed) for their support.

I would also like to thank my family and friends in Egypt for their support and love (Mohamed Mansour, Allaa Mansour, Wasfy Mansour, Mostafa Saeudy, Ahmed Saeudy, Madeha Saeudy, Faten Saeudy, Aya Mohamed, Ahmad Eid, Rabab Mahmoud, Magdy Ragab, Ezzat Farouk, Omar Eid, Mervat Esmail, Tamer Elsharnouby and Suzan Eltawel).

Many thanks too to all my friends in the UK who have supported me and encouraged me to go forward (Jenny (Amina), Jo Perry, Wendy Sharp, Gary Toner, Tracy Wood, Rudaina Deen, Teresa Oultram, Stephanie Russell, Lydia Martens and Caroline Miller).

I would like to thank Bev Sykes for proofreading this thesis.

Finally, many thanks for my country, **Egypt**, for everything. Egypt, I really owe you.

To my Dad, I wish that you were with me now to see what I did for you. I love you and miss you so much.

Useful Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| CVCP | Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals |
| DES | Department of Education and Science |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEIs | Higher Education Institutions |
| HEQC | Higher Education Quality Council |
| HESA | Higher Education Statistic Agency |
| HR | Human Resource |
| HRP | Human Resource Professional |
| HRM | Human Resource Management |
| IR Model | Instrumental Rationality Model |
| LEA | Local Education Authority |
| NPM | New Public Management |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OC | Organizational Culture |
| OE | Organizational Effectiveness |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education |
| RAE | Research Assessment Exercise |
| SS Model | Stakeholder Satisfaction Model |
| CIPD | The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development |
| TQM | Total Quality Management |
| UFC | Universities Funding Council |
| UUK | Universities UK |
| UGC | University Grants Committee |

Chapter One:

General Approach and Thesis Structure

1. Introduction

The environment for public service provision is being reshaped (Brown, 2008). It has been claimed that public sector organizations have been improving service quality, maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of provision and directing strategy and practices to be more business orientated, technologically based and customer orientated (Boyne, 2002).

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) argue that currently there is management reform of the public sector through the application of New Public Management (NPM) which aims to achieve high quality services, to make the operations of the public organizations more efficient and to make savings in public expenditure.

UK higher education institutions (HEIs) are facing changes in structures, systems and processes that have intensified in recent years (Shattock, 2006a). Calls for higher education (HE) management reform significantly started in 1985 with the Jarratt Report, compiled by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principles (CVCP) (McLintock, 1990).

The Jarratt Report indicates that *'It is in the planning and use of resources that universities have the greatest opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness'* (The Jarratt Report, 1985:16). The report states as well that *'measures of input are better developed than measures of output.....it is agreed that far more work needs to be done on measures of output'* (The Jarratt Report, *ibid.*:19).

This means that The Jarratt Report argued that HEIs are required to make more use of management systems which have followed up more demands for

accountability and performance indicators. I argue that this is the first time that 'efficiency' has really come into focus for HE in terms of formal calling from the government to universities to apply management reform.

These changes imply radically new challenges for human resource management (HRM) professionals (Truss, 2008), and gives rise to basic questions about what HRM professionals' perspectives are regarding HRM reform and its relationship with organizational effectiveness. Specifically, what role the HRM function needs to adopt to cope with these changes in competitive environment and how does it address the main strategies in terms of skills development and functional adaptation needed to succeed in this reform?

This chapter attempts to provide an overview of the research background, research methods and the thesis structure.

2. Research background and framework

A review of the relevant literature indicates that during the 1980s policy makers argued that UK HEIs had broad institutional autonomy and academic freedom and were relatively well funded from the public purse (Jarratt Report, 1985, McLintock 1990, Jackson, 1999). The Jarratt report (1985) called for the application of management reform in UK HEIs to help achieve economic and management objectives connected to the delivery of services through efficiency. It also notes the importance of improving the strategic direction of UK HEIs through developing performance indicators and quality standards and having a greater awareness of costs saving to achieve organizational effectiveness (Jarratt Report, *ibid.*).

In this thesis, the concept of 'organizational effectiveness' (OE) will be based on rationality perspective. I argue that the objective of higher education reform is to achieve organizational effectiveness in terms of the cost – effectiveness relationship. The organizational effectiveness (OE) perspective in this context can achieve a transformation from building social relationships with members and stakeholders through communicative and social rationality to achieve economic and financial objectives based on economic and technical rationality.

The above-mentioned changes in UK HEIs led to more calls from researchers for investigating the role of HRM in UK HEIs in relation to these changes. So, it is important to note that the contribution that HRM may make to adapt and achieve public reform and organizational effectiveness in HEIs and this is main interest of this thesis.

This thesis explores HRM's role in HEIs reform based on Ulrich's model of HRM. Ulrich (1997) indicates that HRM functions could provide a number of organizational roles: as Administrative Expert, Employee Champion, Change Agent or Strategic Partner. The Administrative Expert role focuses on re-engineering organization processes to be more adaptable to change. The Employee Champion role is concerns listening and responding to employees and providing resources to them. The Change Agent role concerned with managing transformation for change. The Strategic Partner role facilitates change toward achieving strategic objectives to make sure that an organization makes the best use of its people abilities.

In 2007, the HR survey report of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), '*The changing HR function*', indicates the increasing strategic role of HRM in organizations, it states:

'HR business partner present in 38 % of organizations. A number of benefits were observed in having business partners, the most common of which is that HR is becoming a more strategic contributor. Other common benefits are that HR is more business-focused, people management issues are given more importance'.
(CIPD HR Survey Report, 2007: 2)

Moreover, Francis and Keegan (2006) argue that there has been a 'shrinking' of Employee Champion role in organizations. They conclude that '*Employee Champion role is not perceived to be a potential career route for HR practitioners*' (ibid.: 12). They further explain that this is because of the increasing attention from HR professionals to apply Business Partner role and they argue that there is evidence from their findings that Business Partner role supports the power and identity of management in organizations through applying performance management, quality standards and targets.

Based on my review of the literature, this thesis proposes two models of management in UK HEIs: the Stakeholder Satisfaction (SS) model and the Instrumental Rationality (IR) model.

The Stakeholder Satisfaction model is intended to achieve organizational effectiveness in terms of social and communicative forms of rationality through satisfying and responding to organizational members' interests (Employee Champion role).

The argument presented here is that under the influence of New Public Management, universities are increasingly moving toward the adoption of an Instrumental Rationality model. This model seeks to achieve economic goals and given objectives under resource constraint. OE under this model is based on technical and economic rationality, with the role of HRM concerned with achieving strategic orientation in an organization (Business Partner role).

The literature review indicates that HRM staff's perspectives on HR reform in UK HEIs are not well covered as most of the literature gives more consideration to academic views on changes in HEIs. This thesis, therefore, will try to contribute to the literature by investigating HR professionals' perspectives about the movement from the SS model to the IR model; it will then go on to explore the role of HRM in this change. I argue that exploring the perspective of HR professionals is important because they are the drivers of HRM reform and they are the decision makers concerned with using people abilities to apply this reform. HR professionals are responsible for setting strategies, policies and functions to achieve reform objectives. So, this thesis is working to give close investigation on how HR professionals perceive and apply HR reform in practice.

3. Research methods

In order to find out about the perspectives of HRM professionals in UK HEIs toward changes in HRM, the methodological structure of this study follows the interpretive paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) and it uses case study research (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

According to Orum et al. (1991), case study research is an in-depth, multifaceted investigation of a single phenomenon using qualitative research methods. The case study design is also normally employed to gain an understanding of a given phenomenon, rather than to test a certain set of variables (Merriam, 1998). Case study research is the study of a social phenomenon, in a natural environment, using multiple data sources to describe multiple perspectives (Yin, 1994). Case study research has been selected for this thesis because it is particularly useful when research is focused on understanding HRM professionals' perspectives on changes in HRM strategy and functions and its relationship with organizational effectiveness.

This thesis draws on two sources of data: in-depth semi-structured interviews with HRM professionals in UK HEIs and documentary analysis of HRM strategies in these universities. NVivo software has been used in sorting, coding and analysing interviews and HRM strategies. NVivo is used as project management software also; it helped in the literature review and facilitates easy recall of quotes in the literature from the main sources.

4. Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter has explained the general approach and rationale for my investigation. In chapter two the theoretical foundation of my thesis will be set out in terms of outlining the features and characteristics of New Public Management (NPM). It begins with a description of NPM definitions, models and objectives. The purpose of chapter two is to establish the main theoretical

framework for this thesis, based on an analysis of NPM literature, and it is intended to provide the foundation for the following chapters.

Chapter three provides some theoretical background to HRM's role and its development in the public sector. This chapter also sets out how changes in the public sector have affected the shaping of HRM's role; so attention is also given to the role of HRM in the UK's higher education institutions.

Chapter four concentrates on organizational effectiveness (OE) and its relationship with organizational rationality. This chapter attempts to set out, in accordance with the literature, the theoretical background related to applying OE in UK HEIs using different perspectives of rationality. The chapter then moves on to the growing focus and contradictions from each perspective.

Chapter five attempts to explore the role of organizational culture (OC) as a key factor in HRM reform. It sets out two perspectives of managing organizational culture in the public sector. This chapter will also explore attempts at managing OC in UK HEIs.

Chapter six sets out the methodological approach and why it has been chosen. It stems from the analysis of interviews with HR professionals and from the documentary analysis of HRM strategy in UK HEIs. The qualitative nature of this research is based on case studies utilizing methods designed to access qualitative data in the form of respondents' beliefs, attitudes and actions through semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis.

Chapters seven, eight and nine will highlight my empirical data through focus on the analysis of the HRM professionals' perspectives and through the

documentary analysis of HRM's strategies in UK HEIs. These chapters will consider the key themes of the analysis of HRM reform at the strategic, operational and individual levels.

Chapter ten will summarize the main findings and locate them within the theoretical framework. The chapter ends with some questions and suggests that these could be used as starting points for further research.

Chapter Two:

New Public Management

1. Introduction

It has been argued that management of public sector organizations has undergone a substantial change, and a key component of this change has been the adoption of managerial practices in the public sector, which is often called 'New Public Management' (NPM) (Boyne, 2002). Hood (1991) presents the concept of NPM as a management philosophy which focuses on encouraging public organizations to be more business-like.

Hood (ibid.) indicates that the basic 'premises' of NPM are: the employment of professional managers; movement to put explicit standards and measures of performance in place; greater emphasis on consistency of services; decentralization; more emphasis on private sector management styles and increased accountability and effectiveness in resource use. I argue that professional managers are playing a key role in achieving NPM objectives.

The main purpose of NPM has been to make organizations more efficient, effective, and more quality and results orientated (Boyne, ibid.). This has involved an increasing realisation that NPM consists of ideas imported from the private sector to public sector organizations. Examples are: quality management, customer satisfaction measurement, decentralization of management authority, creation of market mechanisms and cost control (Power, 1997). I argue here that applying these ideas should consider that public sector is not unique to private sector in terms of culture and objectives and here the role of professional managers is crucial.

Similarly, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) conclude that management reform of the public sector aims for high quality services, making the operations of the

state more efficient and making savings in public expenditure. Hughes (1994), investigating NPM models, concludes that management under the NPM model involves the application of physical, financial and human resources to realize state and organizational objectives. Hughes (ibid.:1) concludes that NPM as a new model of public management is argued to be more flexible and market-based form than previous models of management. This means that there is changing objectives in public sector from satisfying and responding to stakeholders' demands (Stakeholder Satisfaction model) to be more concerns with achieving economic outputs through applying management reform (Instrumental Rationality model).

Critical to this argument is not just that NPM supports the replacement of traditional methods of public sector management by new ones from the private sector and this has impacted upon the role of human resource management (Boyne et al., 1999:407), but from this perspective HRM *should* work to deliver key aspects of public reform and should actively contribute in achieving reform's objectives. This argument will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

This chapter attempts to present a review of the literature related to NPM, together with an overview of its origin and development, its role in the organization and its contribution to public management and public services, with special reference to UK higher education (HE).

2. New Public Management

2.1. Definition

Hood (1991:4) indicates that New Public Management (NPM) has been a reform agenda in many of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD*) group of countries from the late 1970s onwards.

He indicates that NPM is concerned to achieve two objectives: to help to generate a set of administrative reform ideas built on accountability, user choice and transparency, and to set a collection of practices of a business type or 'managerialism' in the public sector (Hood, 1991). Similarly, McCourt (2002:228) indicates that key NPM elements are: developing authority; providing flexibility; ensuring performance, control and accountability; developing competition; optimizing information technology; improving the quality of services; and improving the management of human resources. All these objectives aim to contribute in achieving the effectiveness of organizations' activities and functions.

Moreover, Dawson and Dargie (2002) define NPM as a movement that builds on a set of ideological beliefs that the public sector was inefficient and often ineffective; this led to a call for cost reduction policies. They argue that to solve these problems, politicians turned to private sector 'know-how' to apply changes in the public sector and to achieve cost reduction, public support and

* The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development was established in 1960 to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment together with a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, thus contributing to the development of the world economy.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), website: www.oecd.com (Accessed March 2008)

performance improvement goals. So concerns to management in private sector have been spotted in order to apply in public sector.

NPM also implies a different way of looking at the provision of state-led services; Savoï (1999) for example, argues that NPM is increasingly driven by commercial operations and is focused on a new mind-set and new management techniques to shift from 'process' to 'performance' and to achieve radical or transformational change in public sector management (Savoï, *ibid.*). This could be interpreted in terms of a movement from management that concerned with people (SS model) to management that concerned with outputs (IR model).

Moreover, Hood (1995:96) associates NPM with the shift toward greater attention on saving and cost-effectiveness by separating costs for each unit in a public organization to identify the relationship between cost and performance effectiveness of each unit. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) argue that this will help to identify specific objectives for each unit with more attention on economic effectiveness. At the same time they criticize the idea that the unique organizational identity for each unit may conflict with the whole organization's culture and identity. This *could* put more challenges for managers to manage organizational culture in public sector. Further discussion of the relationship between NPM and managing organizational culture will be presented in chapter five.

So, NPM encourages movement towards more explicit and measurable standards of performance and places more emphasis on output controls, particularly the focus on performance management, for public sector

organizations (IR model)(Osborne et al., 1995; Boyne, 1999). Following on from this, Boyne (ibid.) argues that public sector management reform is a result of government pressures for cost cutting. Similarly, the OECD report (1995) indicates that one of the main features of public organizations is that they are subject to political rather than market controls. This political control is manifest in the state pressures on public sector organizations to achieve cost-effectiveness. Based on the previous arguments, Osborne and McLaughlin (2002:10) suggest another dimension to NPM that crucially involves the separation of political decision making from the direct management of public services.

Similarly, Hood's definition of NPM explains that the central features of this reform involve '*...lessening or removing differences between the public and the private sector and shifting the emphasis from process accountability towards a greater element of accountability in terms of results*' (Hood 1995:94). This means that NPM involves pressures to achieve cost cutting and to improve value for money of the services being offered to achieve end goals. It could be argued that this represents a movement toward the IR model

Based on the previous discussion, NPM attempts to reduce differences between the public and private sectors through applying management practices to achieve effectiveness in terms of cost- effectiveness. I argued that could represent a significant change in universities and it raises questions regarding: Does it succeed? Should it? What is the role of HRM in achieving effectiveness?

Further discussion and reflections concerning this argument about organizational effectiveness will be set out in chapter four.

2.2. Development

McLaughlin and Osborne (2002:1) present a four-stage model of public service development in the UK's public sector. The historical development of the provision of public services is to be found in the late nineteenth century when the charitable sector was responsible for providing most public sector services. With the increasing needs of public sector users, the government increasingly contributed to the charitable sector for providing public sector services. (McLaughlin and Osborne, *ibid.*:2).

The second stage of public management development in the early twentieth century was characterized as an 'unequal partnership' between the government and the charitable and private sectors where the charitable sector was providing most of the public services and the government provided a minimum level of public sector services. At this stage, the public sector was looking for more flexibility in providing public sector services with more concern for individual needs. Therefore, the third stage relates to the development of the welfare state, where the government began to manage and meet all public service needs (McLaughlin and Osborne, *ibid.*:3).

The final stage from the 1970s shows evidence of growing dissatisfaction with the services of the welfare state because public users had an increasing demand for greater choices and delivery of the service and, at the same time, government was looking for more focus on achieving cost cutting and economic objectives in public sector organizations (McLaughlin and Osborne

(ibid.). In response to this situation, there is a challenge for public sector's managers in terms of balancing public users' needs and achieving economic objectives and reducing cost.

Similarly, Brown (2008) indicates that management of the public sector was focused on the 'traditional model' characterised by bureaucratic employment policies and administrative systems and resource allocation. In this setting, the employment system is highly centralized and inflexible. He argues that there were demands for a new approach in management allowing greater flexibility in dealing with staff and greater responsiveness to users' requirements. He concludes that NPM means the transforming of 'administration' into 'management' as a broad strategy to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and quality of public services and to increase the ability of public administration to achieve economic, efficient and effective public services (Hughes, 1994).

Moreover, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) indicate that the main objective of NPM development is to achieve decisions that should be 'feasible' according to the economic, legal and change resistance obstacles. They argue that the economic factors and the political and administrative systems represent the main pressures of change in the public sector (Pollitt and Bouckaert, ibid.)

The above discussion of NPM development indicates that there are many challenges in the application of NPM in the public sector. Parston (1989) indicates that the NPM concept requires more than theoretical work; it requires a development of a value-based conception in the public sector and this therefore implies changing elements of organizational culture. So

managing organizational culture represents one of the challenges associated with the application of NPM in public sector organizations and particularly in universities (Jung et al., 2009). Further discussion on managing organizational culture in HE will be presented in chapter five.

Noblet et al. (2006) state that NPM requires special management skills that could predict employees' outcomes, apply job control and identify performance management programmes. Similarly, Osborne and McLaughlin (2002) argue that changes are required to the way public managers think and how they turn this thinking into practice.

In conclusion, the development of NPM affects the structure and system and the responsibilities of management. Achieving cost- effectiveness is one of NPM development objectives. As indicated before, managers have a great responsibility to set NPM objectives and to create the suitable environment for applying public reform. They are facing a set of challenges in terms of achieving the balance between the cost – effectiveness goal on one hand and satisfying organization members' and public service users' interests on the other. The argument from the above discussion is that human resource management (HRM), as a part of the management team, *should* play an important and active role as a key driver of these changes. HR professionals' role *should* be more concerned with the effective use of human abilities to achieve reform objectives; a discussion of HRM under NPM will be presented in the following chapter.

3. NPM in the UK's public sector

The UK has played a pivotal role in the development of the NPM paradigm (Osborne and McLaughlin, 2002:1). Shattock (2008) argues that the UK government's model for public service reform is a principle that forms the basis of a government model for public service reform. He suggests that this model represents the government's approach to public service reform. The UK's public reform model has four elements (Cabinet Office website, 2007): pressure from the government to apply top-down performance management; measurement of the capability and capacity of public servants and local government to deliver improved public services; encouragement of public service users to shape the service; and finally provision of market incentives to increase the efficiency and quality of public services.



Chart A: The UK Government's Model of Public Service Reform – A Self-Improving System

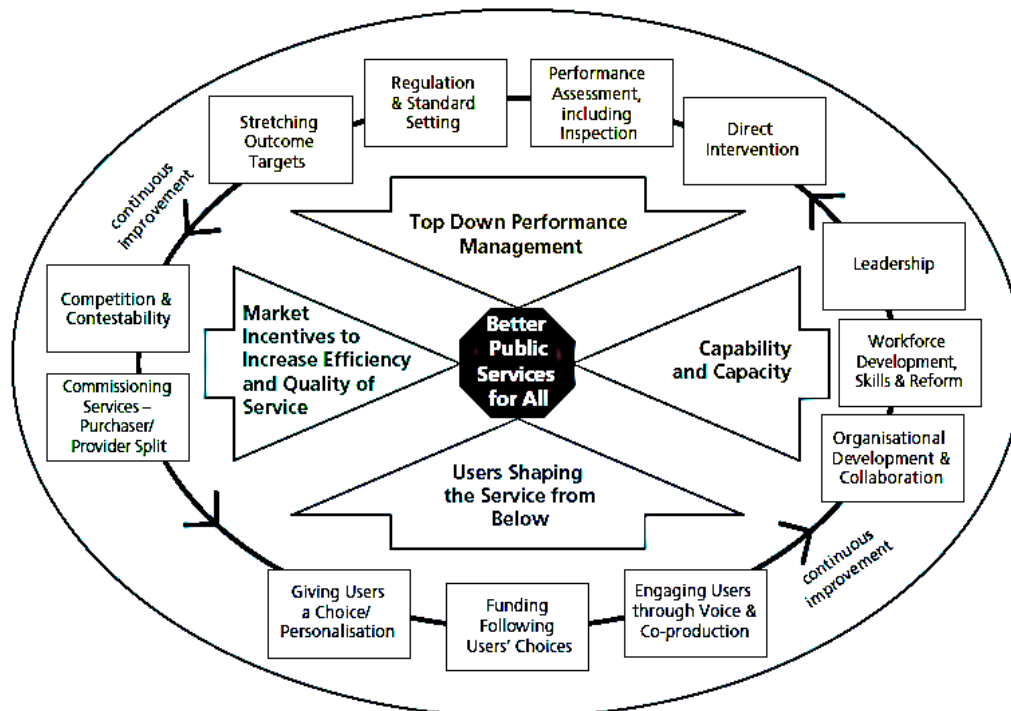


Figure 1: The UK Government's Approach to Public Service Reform

Source: The UK Government's Approach to Public Service Reform – A Discussion Paper, Cabinet Office website. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

The above model of the UK government's public service reform indicates that applying the above elements requires an application of sub-elements, for example: the introduction of greater competition and contestability in the provision of public services; the introduction of greater pressure from citizens asking for more choices and more opportunities to voice their opinion; leadership and organizational development; and having outcome targets and performance assessment activities. At the same time, Shattock (ibid.) indicates that applying this model requires management reform and requires different management perspectives in different UK public organizations, according to the situation and objectives of these organizations. For example, in the UK health sector, reform is based on giving greater attention to collaboration and partnership as management styles and this highlights the importance of giving attention to setting standards and measuring performance in this sector (Dawson and Dargie, 2002). Further applications of NPM on HE will be presented later.

Similarly, Ackroyd et al. (2007) focus on a comparison of management reform in three areas of services in the UK: Social Services Departments (SSDs), NHS hospitals and housing organizations. They examine the restructuring of each sector, new management practices and the effectiveness of the reform. While the study mentions the similarities in the nature of reform in all three sectors in terms of achieving economic objectives and end goals, it also highlights differences in the implementation of these changes. Ackroyd et al. (ibid.) argue that these differences depend on different management roles,

functions and capabilities in each of the sectors, which affect public reform. They also conclude that change in culture and values represent a core reason for these differences.

Truss (2008) concludes that public reform in the UK started with administrative reform which was associated with a Weberian, centralized, hierarchical model of public service. She notes that the role of central government is crucial in determining and implementing public reform. Truss (ibid.) goes on to argue that the main characteristic in public sector reform is the movement to apply 'strategic reform' with more focus on achieving performance targets. This argument could support the proposition of this thesis that there is a movement toward applying Instrumental Rationality model that mainly focused on achieving strategic and economic goals.

To conclude, public sector reform is implemented to achieve economic objectives for public activities (e.g. health care, education) as a base to achieve strategic objectives with more focus on performance-based activities, decentralization and flexibility (Truss, ibid.).

The role of managers is crucial in applying these strategic objectives and particularly HR managers in that they have the responsibility for effectively achieving reform objectives through the 'best use' of human resources. Moreover, they have an important role in managing organizational culture to accept the movement toward achieving strategic goals. Detailed discussion about this point will be presented in chapter 5.

4. NPM in UK Higher Education Institutions

The analysis of the impact of NPM on UK higher education institutions (HEIs) is presented in two sections. The first section will illustrate the origins of UK HEIs to highlight the nature and characteristics of this sector. The second section will review the literature that is concerned with the nature of the changes that have been planned in UK HEIs and the role of NPM in these changes, to investigate how these universities have dealt with NPM.

4.1. UK universities (origins and management)

Dent et al. (2004:1) hold that:

'NPM is in practice not one unified set of practices but a theme which has distinct variations within the different sectors (e.g. health, education, social services): it varies across sectors, it varies within sectors and it varies according to the outcomes of specific management- professional settlements'

Based on this argument, Ackroyd et al. (2007) contend that to evaluate and assess NPM reform, it is helpful to discuss the origins and character of the institutions to be considered.

In UK HEIs' history, there is a debate about when a university can be said to have been established. Many universities can trace their roots back to ancient colleges or institutions which did not go by the title of 'university' when they were founded. The first universities were set up by the church, and later on by an Act of Parliament or Royal Charter, or, as is the case of the post-1992 institutions, by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which allowed

polytechnics to change their title to university (UUK* annual report, 2006-2007).

The oldest universities, Oxford and Cambridge, were both founded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries within the traditions of the Christian church. In Scotland, St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen universities were founded by enactments from Rome in the fifteenth century, and Edinburgh University was founded in the late sixteenth century by the City fathers (Higher Education Funding Council for England (hefce)).

In 1826, the University of London was established. This was closely followed in 1837 by the University of Durham. From 1882 to 1909, universities were established in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield. These universities were supported by the local industries. For example, in Leeds there was support from the Clothworkers Company; in Sheffield there were ties with the steel industry; and in Manchester with the wool industry (UUK annual report, *ibid*).

The University of Wales was established in 1916, and between 1926 and 1957 six colleges which had been affiliated to the University of London became independent universities. These were Reading (1926), Nottingham (1948), Southampton (1952), Hull (1954), Exeter (1955) and Leicester (1957). The University College of North Staffordshire was established in 1949 and became the University of Keele in 1962 (UUK annual Report, *ibid*).

* Universities UK (UUK) is the major representative body and membership organization for the higher education sector. It has 133 members; they are the executive heads of UK universities. Within it are the England and Northern Ireland Council, Universities Scotland and Higher Education Wales (HEW).

The Universities UK website www.ukuniversities.ac.uk

In the 1960s, seven universities were created *ab initio* in England and one in Scotland. These are usually called the 'plate glass' universities and comprise East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Lancaster, Stirling, Sussex, Warwick and York. There were also eight existing advanced technological institutions which received university status in England in that period (Aston, Bath, Bradford, Brunel, City, Loughborough, Salford and Surrey) and two in Scotland (Heriot-Watt and Strathclyde). The University of Ulster, which has a somewhat complicated history, is also generally regarded as originating at that time. In addition, Newcastle University separated from Durham and the Open University was created in that decade.

In 1992, 31 polytechnics, five Scottish central institutions and two colleges of HE became universities, bringing the total up to 93. The majority of these new universities* had been under Local Education Authority (LEA) control, and their finance systems had been linked to the LEA systems (Shattock, 1970a). From 1990s onwards there has been considerable expansion of the UK HE sector. By 2010, there were 168 higher education institutions in UK contribute with approximately £27bn in national income compared with £21bn in 2007. The number of students studying at universities has increased dramatically with approximately 2.5 million students in HEIs (11% up in 2010 compared to 2007) (The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)).

Shattock (2006b) explains how universities' funding had been managed through the University Grants Committee (UGC). The UGC had worked

* Prior to 1992 a binary system operated in UK higher education, a distinction being made between universities and polytechnics. When the system was ended, polytechnics became universities. For analytical purposes, the literature has retained the binary distinctions, referring to 'old' and 'new' universities.

closely with the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Universities of the United Kingdom (CVCP) (later Universities UK) and with officials in the Treasury and, later, with the Department of Education and Science (DES).

Shattock (2006a) explores how political pressures affected HE reform. He notes that in 1974 there was advice from the Prime Minister to impose the government's policies on higher education and this decision was rejected in defence of university autonomy. Following the arrival of the Thatcher government in 1979, the UGC became a formal planning (Shattock, 1994). It had been criticized by the university community and was replaced first by a Universities Funding Council (UFC) and then, when the polytechnics became universities in 1992, by the Higher Education Funding Councils for England, Wales and Scotland (Shattock, 2008).

Shattock (ibid.) summarizes change in UK higher education (HE) as moving from being 'privately' governed to being 'publicly' governed. This means that the government became the source of key policy for higher education and this led to that policy changing from being internally designed to being derived from a set of public policies designed for the reform of the public sector. He concludes that reform of UK higher education focuses on achieving close control, budget cutting, and increasing value for money. He argues that achieving these objectives will be through increasing the internal competition of HEIs, introducing monitoring mechanisms, key performance indicators and regulations (Shattock, 2008). So, the main argument from the previous discussion suggests that cost and budget were always important in HE reform

and this reflects the importance of management as a key tool to set and achieve these economic objectives.

To examine the implementation of the UK government's model of public service reform on HEIs (Figure 1), Shattock (ibid.) discusses how the implementation of the model faced difficulties in identifying higher education policies. For example, the 'top down performance management' in higher education includes many aspects such as student number targets, Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) results, quality assessment and efficiency savings. He discusses how the UK HE sector tries to achieve improvement of 'capacity and capability' in the one hand and 'market incentives and competition' on the other. He concludes that HRM is playing an important role in setting the reform's objective and implementing it. It could be argued that applying the UK government's model of public service reform on HEIs is facing many challenges. Competition, political factors and managing academic culture are some examples of these challenges (Shattock, 2008). So, HR professionals should understand that applying NPM on HEIs creates '*Pressures to achieve a closer alignment between the work of academics and the priorities of the funding councils*' (Willmott, 2003: 25) and this means special treatment for the academic status in HEIs to achieve economic saving objectives as a result of political pressures on universities. Achieving these objectives requires more concern in terms of dealing with academics and improving their skills which is the main challenge of the movement toward the IR model. The following section will illustrate the main changes that face the UK HEIs.

4.2. Public reform in UK HEIs

In 1985, there was a government call to encourage the HE sector to develop performance through the Green Paper on Higher Education that indicates:

'The government believes that it is vital for our higher education to contribute more effectively to the improvement of the performance of the economy' (DES, 1985).

Based on the literature, significant and formal public reform of UK HEIs was initiated by the Jarratt Report. This was an inquiry into UK HEIs, published in 1985. It was delivered by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP). The Jarratt Report (1985) argues that there is a need for change in UK HEIs and universities should seek to achieve more efficiency and effectiveness objectives through introducing new management techniques. It suggests that having performance indicators may help managers to achieve reform objectives and may help academics to expand their knowledge. The report indicates that the role of managers is crucial for making changes in HEIs. The main argument from the Jarratt Report is that academic autonomy is being replaced by managerial expediency and the report was really the significant first formal report that focuses explicitly upon the management by HR rather than academics.

The emphasis for UK HEIs is increasingly to maintain 'the three E's' of efficiency, effectiveness and economy, by adopting private sector managerial techniques' (Allen and Fifield 1999:2). This means that HEIs are more focus on achieving economic objectives as a base of the IR model. In light of this, UK HEIs are faced with a number of changes. This research will attempt to classify these changes into three categories based on the literature review:

changes in the role and mission of universities; changes in management skills and practices; and finally changes in cultures and values.

4.2.1. Changes in the mission and role for HEIs

The literature indicates that there has been a change in the government's definition of the role and mission of HEIs (Charles, 2003:7). The main driving force in these changes is governmental power and influence. McLintock (1990:3) points out that government Acts and reports have worked to bring about change in UK HEIs, for example the Education Reform Act of 1988, and the Jarratt Report of 1985 '*can perhaps all be loosely described as bringing a more business-like style to higher education management in response to government wishes*'. This means that there are government pressures on HEIs to change their management styles accordingly with 'commercialization' of the HE.

The adaption of new ideas and methodologies from the business sector highlights the question of how professionals in HEIs are adopting or adapting their missions and roles according to these changes. This process, following Stuart and Keith (1996) is termed '*business managerialism*'.

As indicated earlier, the Jarratt Report placed more emphasis on the role of the management team in HE reform. The report notes that the need for reform in higher education institutions raises the need to *re-profile* the management staff by giving them a more strategic and more active role to achieve reform objectives (Jarratt Report, *ibid.*). Within this context, Jackson (1999) concludes that there is a movement towards strategic change in UK universities and the role of management in this reform is crucial.

According to the UUK annual reports (2008:22), there are many challenges facing universities in achieving their objectives and attracting students, for example, changes in funding and increased competition over the next 10–20 years and how this will affect the running and staffing profiles of these institutions are examples of these challenges. Another challenge is the growth of private providers of UK universities which require management reform (re-profiling) in public universities to be more focus on providing high quality education to students, encouraging increased social inclusion and undertaking high quality research. The UUK annual report (ibid.) also indicates that government regulations encourage the use of performance indicators for university finance, management, teaching and research by measuring and monitoring quality audits of teaching and The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE^{*}).

The conclusion is that managerialism represents the approach in UK HEIs by focusing on performance targets, total quality management (TQM) and increased attention to accountability as examples of the governmental strategies to improve educational standards in UK HEIs (Cullen et al., 2003). It could be argued that HEIs are moving to be more focus on achieving strategic objectives to face competition and government regulations. This requires more effort from managers and particularly HR professionals to adapt their strategies and functions toward achieving the cost-effectiveness objectives (IR model).

* The Research Assessment Exercise rates the quality of the research output of UK universities, www.ukuniversities.ac.uk

Brown (2011) indicates that from 2012 there will be main changes in the UK HEIs represent in the reduction of direct public funding of teaching and the introduction of higher fees. He argues that these changes will impact on management in HE to be more 'marketization' style that could help in achieving objectives of reform. This leads to a question regarding the availability and credibility of professional managers who can understand and perceive these changes and its effects on management on HE.

Finally, there is an argument that one of the challenges that HEIs are facing is that government regulations that encourage the application of NPM to achieve cost-effectiveness. This argument highlights a debate about how management teams in HEIs can adapt to the changing role and mission of universities and particularly how human resource management plays a key role in this reform (Stuart and Keith, 1996).

This thesis will investigate the perspectives of HRM professionals, as part of the management team in UK HEIs, toward HRM reform and its contribution to the aim of achieving organizational effectiveness.

4.2.2. An increasing demand for new management skills and practices

Based on the literature review, there is evidence that in response to increasing competition from the global economy and the changing role of UK HEIs there is an increasing demand for new management skills and knowledge for HEI managers (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003). Meister (2005) explains the complexity of change in universities in relation to budget

constraints and effective management as means to achieve change objectives.

'To sum it up, as universities belong to different and contradictory societal systems, they must apply a diversity of effective means of regulation and control if they are to cope with future challenges' (Meister, 2005:96)

He concludes that managers in universities should work with different tools to set up and control their work due to the unique status of higher education. This requires from professional managers to perceive challenges they will face in HE reform.

Jackson (1999) argues that the shift to a more customer-focused and market-orientated system in UK universities and application of new terms such as flexibility, quality and performance management requires more attention to identify the conceptual framework of skills and knowledge needed when applying NPM, thus *'.... Managing universities (and organizational change) is a complex and difficult task. It has required strengthening of managerial and administrative systems and the construction of more comprehensive and explicit regulatory controls...'* (1999:167).

The literature in the area of management styles in universities thus tends to concentrate on the concepts of 'managerialism' (Holmes and McElwee, 1995). Kogan and Hanney (2000) see the Jarratt Report as a fundamental turning point in the introduction of the new managerialism. They define managerialism in the HE sector as:

'The shift in power from senior academics and their departments to the central institution and the dominance of systems over academic values'.

(Kogan and Hanney, 2000:186)

Similarly, Harvey (1995) defines managerialism in higher education as:

'The tendency in higher education for professional managers to play a much more significant role in decision making in higher education'.

He refers to:

'Decision making that has a profound effect on academic processes and quality but which is based on non-academic criteria- often financial criteria or as the result of managerial theory'. (Harvey, *ibid.*:43)

Deem (1998:47) identifies managerialism as referring to the adaption of public sector organizations to the organizational forms, technologies, management practices and values more commonly found in the private sector. In the same vein, Brunetto (2001) views 'managerialism' as the adoption of private sector management tools within public sector organizations. Managerialism includes emphasizing the primacy of management above all other activities; monitoring employee performance; the attainment of financial targets; and applying quality standards in public service delivery (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993).

Moreover, Willmott (2003) illustrates the relationship between developments in higher education in UK and control of academic labour process. He concludes that there is a progressive level of managerial control on academic work as a result of political-economic pressures.

Jackson (2001) indicates that there is a difference in management style between the old and new universities. The old universities had a traditional model in dealing with their employees relying on social relations and

academic freedom. He indicates that the relationship between academics and universities has traditionally involved a high level of trust so there is little need to assess or monitor staff performance. In contrast, in new universities there is a need for a new management style driven by quality standards in teaching, with clear control of staff performance. This could support the argument that there is a movement from SS model to IR model where academics are treated like employees and their freedom represented a constraint for managers to go forward IR model.

The above discussion indicates that there are changes in management practices in UK HEIs to cope with public reform. These changes require more focus on management activities, for example, performance management and service quality. So, it could be argued that movement toward managerialism means movement toward achieving economic objectives, supporting the management power and influence in the organization and more pressures on academics to accept reform objectives. This means that managers should be more focus on managing organizational culture is one of the reform challenges in HEIs.

4.2.3. New patterns of values and a culture change

Based on the above discussion, Charles (2003:7) argues that managing change in UK HEIs is therefore about culture and values management as well as putting strategies and policies in place. He explains that change in a university's role and mission and change in management skills and knowledge require more focus on applying a new pattern of values and culture in HEIs.

Similarly, Koch (1999) holds that a successful change in management in the public sector can only occur when change filters through to the behavioural and cultural levels of the organization and when HRM plays a significant role in training and in managing performance. Further and more detailed discussion about managing organizational culture in the public sector and in HEIs will be provided in chapter five.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed some of the literature on New Public Management (NPM) to help understand its definition, development, NPM in UK public sector and NPM in UK HEIs.

To conclude, and in the light of the literature review, it can be seen that NPM is looking for management reform to achieve strategic direction in organizations in terms of achieving economic and cost-cutting objectives. Achieving these objectives in HEIs is challenging specifically because of the special status of academic freedom and autonomy which will be discuss in details in chapter 5.

At the theoretical level, this chapter has outlined the main features of changes in HEIs: change in mission and role of HEIs, changes in management skills and managers' roles and changes in the set of culture and values in HE sector.

Linked to this, HRM represents a key tool that could help in achieving these objectives and moving toward achieving strategic directions. HRM, therefore, as part of the management team and decision making process, *is not just*

affected by these changes but HRM *may* be implicated in and actively driving these changes. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter Three:

Human Resource Management Reform

1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) is defined as *'a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets- the people working there- who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives* (Armstrong, 2006: 3). Storey (2007: 4) believes that HRM can be regarded as a *'set of interrelated policies with an ideological and philosophical underpinning'*

He indicates that the main aspects of HRM are: a set of beliefs, values and assumptions in terms of the management of people; a set of strategic decisions which direct the ways in which HRM intends to go; HR guidelines or policies in relation to strategies and how they should be applied in HR areas; formal procedures and methods to put HR strategic plans in place; HR practices that include formal as well as informal approaches to managing people and HR programmes which enable HR strategy, policies and practices to be implemented.

HRM aims to create a 'great place' (Storey,ibid.:10) to work through setting a strategic view for organizations, based on the belief that people should be treated as a valuable assets to gain their commitment as a main way to achieve organizational objectives. Increasing interest in HRM is due to the assumption that the way people are managed is crucial to success and can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Lado and Wilson, 1994; Barney and Wright, 1998).

As indicated in the previous chapter, the main change and challenge that faces UK HEIs may be seen as moving forward to achieve NPM's objectives.

The role of the management team would then be crucial to adapt and adopt the NPM philosophy.

Brown (2008:2) indicates that HRM has a major influence on organizational change in the public sector. He argues that the particularity of a public sector, with a focus on public interest outcomes, rather than private interests may add a complexity that does not easily fit with HRM as a strategic partner in achieving organizational effectiveness and business outcomes. Brown (ibid.:3) concludes that:

'While changes to the public sector over the past two decades have had a significant impact on employees of public sector organizations and the conditions under which people work, there has been an attention afforded to the specific field of HRM research and academic inquiry in relation to public sector'

With regard to achieving public sector objectives of modernization and effectiveness, the effective management of people has received increasing attention and, therefore, HRM represents a key driver in the application of NPM. This chapter attempts to identify changes in the role of HRM in UK HEIs; through a discussion of HRM's role and of HRM in public management reform, with special reference to HRM reform in the academic sector.

2. Professional HRM

This section attempts to raise the status of HRM managers and to understand the development of HRM professionalism, starting by defining three concepts which have been used extensively in the literature: profession, professionalization and professionalism.

The concept of profession represents a *'distinct and generic category of occupational work'* (Evetts, 2011:4). Grey (1998) argues that the status of profession indicates the ability to exercise a high level of particular skills which are economically and socially valued. He suggests that successful professions always define and redefine the task they perform in order to extend them, with any relevant changes, inside or outside the organization.

The concept of professionalization refers to the process of achieving the status of profession. Evetts (2011) argues that professionalization is *'the process to pursue, develop and maintain the closure of the occupational group in order to maintain practitioners' own occupational self-interests in terms of their salary, status and power as well as the monopoly protection of the occupational jurisdiction'* (Evetts, 20011:5). The professionalization process has been described as fundamental to increasing occupational identity, status, standards and control through establishing a body of knowledge which could be shared among members of the profession (Farndale and Brewster, 2005).

The third concept is professionalism, which is interpreted as *'an occupational or normative value'* (Evetts, 2011:5) that represents a framework for an organization and for workers as well. In a broad sense, professionalism is about providing an efficient service, meeting customer needs and contributing positively to organizational goals (Farndale, 2005). Achieving these objectives requires the creation of a body of knowledge among the profession's members which is difficult to achieve due to culture variations among members and with organization.

The definitions of the previous terms (professional, professionalization and professionalism) indicate that the tasks that are performed by professionals can be described as unpredictable and changeable tasks as well as complex in terms of the need of knowledge, skills and practices to support performing these tasks.

There is a body of literature that focuses on whether HRM can be classified as a profession. This literature suggests that the development of HRM is concerned with applying a radical approach to managing people that is different from traditional personnel management (Storey, 1989:14). A review of the literature indicates that personnel management has an operational focus that emphasizes technical skills and day-to-day functions, but also that HRM is supposed to be proactive, aiming to bring about effective management of people to achieve organizational objectives (Storey, *ibid.*). HRM used to be seen as a strategic rhetoric that attempted to manage people in the long term through applying an integrated approach which links all aspects of people management and it intends to maximize the utilization of its human resources (Price, 2011). A group of researchers have argued that there is no distinctive difference between HRM and personnel management. For example, Armstrong (1987) argues that HRM is just a relabeling of personnel management. He argues that HRM is the same as personnel management but has been given a new image or, in other words, it is '*old wine in new bottles*'. Armstrong (2000: 34) also claims that '*Human resource management is just the continuing process of personnel management, it is not different.*' He wonders how these contradictory views of academics affect practitioners' perceptions of HRM as a profession (Armstrong, 2000).

Similarly, Guest (1987: 506) claimed that: *'A number of personnel departments have become 'human resource departments' without any obvious change in roles, just as the new editions of several longstanding textbooks have changed title but little else'*.

According to Legge (1978), personnel professionals faced a lack of legitimate power in the organization which led to difficulties in implement their solutions for organization's problems and therefore, they needed a new way to deal with the new challenges they faced. Legge (ibid) analysed the personnel management roles and provided an argument that there is an ambiguity occurs because it is difficult to define the success in personnel management and to determine who or what is responsible for success or failure and to clearly identify the unique contribution of the personnel management in the organization. Legge (1978) concluded that personnel managers are looking for a key role and a special status that represents their position in managing organization. Legge (ibid)'s argument has been strongly supported by Freidson (1993) who claims that *'personnel professionals, as a relatively weak occupational group, face some very specific challenges relating to the inherent role ambiguities that have characterized their functional position'*.

Within the development of HRM, Legge (1995) believes that HR professionals' role contributes to their *'willingness to adopt different roles and rhetorics to suit the contingencies of the times and to exploit possible bases of power'* (p. 53).

From the previous discussion, it was clear that the development of HRM reflects the searching for an appropriate role and status for HRM practitioners

to achieve credibility, recognition and status in the eyes of other organizational groups.

Grant and Oswick (1997) use the metaphor of religious belief in order to conceptualize the main features of the personnel/HRM debate, through differentiating between believers (who hold strong beliefs in HRM), 'atheists' (who don't believe in HRM) and agnostics (who don't doubt or don't know). The findings of their study indicate that most practitioners claim that HRM is something very different from personnel management or, in other words, they believe in HRM. Conversely, a small number of practitioners argue that they do not recognize that there is a difference between HRM and personnel management. Grant and Oswick (*ibid.*) argue that the significant thing is that those professionals who believe in HRM also tend to be those who join the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) as their professional body. This argument is also supported by Farndale and Brewster (2005). They indicate that professional status is clearly desired by HR practitioners and could be supported through the activities of professional bodies in the field that could help them to enhance their body of knowledge, to adopt common standards and to gain practical experience. These benefits would all contribute to the creation of professional identities for HR managers that would include having guidelines for particular activities and codes of ethics. They also argue that there is a very strong positive link between holding a formal board position within the organization and being more involved in strategic decision-making, because engaging with a professional body helps in providing technical and tacit knowledge for HRM practitioners. This raises a question about how professionalization redefines HRM's tasks and roles.

For HR practitioners, professionalism is defined as '*a route into organizational status to enhancing an individual's own sense of self-worth*' (Brockbank and Ulrich, 2002). Farndale (2005) suggests that the concept of professionalism of HR is defined as the HR practitioner '*being perceived to make a valued strategic contribution*' to the organization. This is measured through board membership and involvement in corporate strategy development and the evaluation of the department's performance.

Farndale and Brewster (2005) argue that HRM is a profession, because there is an established body of knowledge that can be taught, learned and tested, and there is an ethical code of practice produced by professional associations. HR practitioners have largely focused on developing a strategic role to enhance their professional status (ibid.).

According to Farndale and Brewster (ibid.), there is evidence that an increased strategic role for the HR department does relate to higher levels of organizational involvement and influence.

Ulrich (2001:3) argues that the HR profession reflects the four main stages of development in the history of HRM. The first stage considered the administrative side of HRM, where HR focused on dealing with the terms and conditions of work, delivering their administrative role and day-to-day activities. The second stage of the development of the HR profession was based on innovative HR practices, which included sourcing, compensation, learning and communication. This stage considered changes in the practices and techniques of HRM through taking into consideration the importance of learning and communication in order to improve the HRM profession. The

third stage considered the strategic role of HR. This stage was based on developing HRM's strategy so that it takes a more proactive role in order to link HRM's strategy with the organization's strategy. The fourth stage is the emerging stage, in which HR practices are derived from and respond to external business conditions' fit.

Becoming a professional is a complex accomplishment, involving induction into a wide range of formal and informal norms in the organization, that should be organized and managed in a certain way to achieve organizational goals (Grey, 1998). Moreover, the concept of professionalism is being used as both an *'ideological instrument'* and a mechanism that promotes and facilitates organizational change and persuades employees to accept change in the organization by setting out a body of knowledge and values which consider control and regulate the organizational setting (Evetts, 2011:24). There is a question to be answered about whether professionals who legitimately claim to pursue objectives derived from their profession rather than the organization may create tension between their professional status and their professionalism.

Based on the previous discussion in this research, we will refer to HR practitioners as 'HR professionals' to reflect the reality that HRM practitioners are acting in and leading in a set of roles that could help in achieving competitiveness in delivering value and that they are responsible for creating a body of knowledge which works to lead reform and change in an organization. In addition, an organization expects that they are contributing to and strategically involved in its activities.

This research will attempt to indicate, from the HRM professionals' point of view, how changes in the professionalization of HR redefine roles, practices and strategies of HRM in HE. The findings section of this thesis will work to explore whether the HRM professionals' experience changes their status within NPM in universities and whether the published HRM strategies in these universities reflect these changes.

3. The HRM role

Ulrich, in his book *Human Resource Champions* (1997), suggests that HRM has a key organizational role in dealing with environmental challenges. He presents five challenges that face HRM. The rapid change of the global markets (globalization) is a key: *'Globalization requires that organizations increase their ability to learn and collaborate and to manage diversity, complexity, and ambiguity'* (Ulrich, 1998: 2).

Secondly, organizations face challenges to maintain profitability through growth. This means that if companies are seeking to acquire new customers and develop new products, they must be creative and innovative and must encourage the free flow of information and shared learning among employees. He argues that this applies to companies seeking growth through mergers, acquisitions, or joint ventures.

Ulrich (ibid.) states that the third challenge is technology. He illustrates how must managers make good use of what technology offers. So-called intellectual capital and knowledge has become a means of competitive advantage for organizations. He concludes that:

'From now on, successful companies will be the ones that are the most adept at attracting, developing, and retaining individuals who can drive a global organization that is responsible to both its customers and the burgeoning opportunities of technology'. (Ulrich, 1998: 2)

Ulrich (1998: 2) also indicates that change is the greatest competitive advantage. He explains how:

'Constant change means organizations must create a healthy discomfort with the status quo, an ability to detect emerging trends quicker than the competition, and the ability to seek new ways of doing business'.

And finally concludes that:

'Successful organizations will be those that are able to quickly turn strategy into action; to manage processes intelligently and efficiently; to maximize employee contribution and commitment; and to create the conditions for change'.

To deal with these challenges, Ulrich (1997) presents and defines four roles and models of HRM. These roles are:

Employee Champion role:

Following the argument that the organization's employees make up its value, the employee champion role positions HR professionals as being responsible for ensuring that employees are engaged in organizational decisions and that they are committed to organizational objectives. Ulrich (ibid.:2) concludes that:

'The new HR should be the employee's voice in management discussions'.

This means that HR should become a champion for employees, representing their concerns to senior management and at the same time working to increase employee contribution. He indicates that (38):

'The employee champion role involved ensuring that employees felt committed to the organisation and its goals and involved training and developing line managers to get the best out of people, monitoring levels of employee morale, consulting on work processes'.

Francis and Keegan (2006) claim that the employee champion is a particularly 'interesting role'. They argue that it combines a focus on people with a focus on day-to-day operational issues to achieve valuable relationship between employer and employees. They indicate that employee champion role gives a chance for managers to be partners in decisions making and delivering values and it supports 'people driven approach' whereas employees at the heart of the system.

Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) argue that the Employee Champion role 'see(s) *the world through employees' eyes*' and at the same time '*looking through customers', shareholders' and managers' eyes and communicating to employees what is required for them to be successful in creating value*' (Ulrich and Brockbank, *ibid*). I argue that this may cause a 'tension' and a sort of 'ambiguity' and may 'conflict' between HR professional's role in achieving organizational objectives and in being an employee's voice working to respond to and protect employee needs and stakeholders' and managers' ones . On the other side, Ulrich and Brockbank (2005b; 201) argue that HR professionals should put more attention on 'caring for', 'listening to', and 'responding to employees' because this represents the main core of HRM work. Therefore, Ulrich and Brockbank (*ibid*) splits Employee Champion role to Employee Advocate (EA) and Human Resource Developer as a future-focused terms of employee champion. In this case Employee Champion role

works to balance between management and employees needs to achieve organizational objectives.

Although, Francis and Keegan (2006) argue that Employee Champion is not perceived as a potential route for HR practitioners, they conclude that HR professionals should be careful of losing trust and confidence of employees with Employee Champion role:

'If HR practitioners have indeed become strongly associated with the strategic partner role, perhaps at the cost of other roles such as the employee champion, the enhancements this might bring to HR practitioners should be carefully weighed against the drawbacks in terms of the loss of visibility and voice of other stakeholders, especially employees' (Francis and Keegan, *ibid.*:236).

Administrative Expert role:

HR in its Administrative Expert role provides administrative activities (resourcing, payroll, absence monitoring) as well as advice on how to balance effective employee relationship with achieving low cost services. From this perspective, HR professionals become experts in organizing, delivering administrative efficiency and establishing quality standards. Based on this idea, Truss (2008:1072) suggests that:

'Administrative roles are regarded as routine, reactive and tactical tasks which associated with the operationalization of the HR policies and employee facing roles such as welfare and industrial relations'.

Similarly, Ulrich (1998) concludes that organizations should significantly transform their HR departments from the traditional role, which depends on

doing administrative work (pay, pensions, etc.), to the application of strategic thinking in HRM to achieve effectiveness and to face challenges.

From 2004-2007 the administrative role of HRM in organizations represented around 50% of HR professionals' time, but after that there has been a marked drop in this figure to just over a third (36%) and the respondents of this survey expect that this figure will decrease to be about a quarter (24 %) in the following three years (CIPD HR Survey Report, 2007). The reason behind this is that HR professionals are spending more time engaged in strategic work rather than administrative work that still substantial part of role (CIPD HR Survey Report, *ibid.*: 19).

Business Partner role:

The notion of a 'Business Partner' is used to describe the transformation of HRM from an administrative job to a strategic job. It involves restructuring HRM to encourage HR professional to identify the strategic direction of the business in order to make sure that the organization makes the best use of its people in order to achieve its strategic objectives (Ulrich, *ibid.*). Four steps are necessary to identify the role of HR in determining the strategic approach of the organization.

The first step is that HR professionals should play a role in establishing the organization's architecture. This means that HR professionals should work toward setting organizational strategy, structure and systems. Secondly, and related to organizational accountability, HR plays crucial role in conducting an organizational audit to identify which parts of an organization should change to achieve its strategic direction.

The third role for HR as strategic business partner is to identify, create and apply 'culture change programmes'. These programmes aim to encourage people in an organization to accept and operate the 'business partnering' concept. Finally, the fourth step is concerned with HR's role of setting an organization's priorities and objectives through encouraging managers to identify their goals and objectives and their relationship to organizational goals and objectives. Reviewing his model in 2005, Ulrich argues that '*HR professionals must be more than partners; they must be players...in the game, not at the game*'. He mentions that the new role of HR involves:

'Leading HR function, collaboration with other functions, setting and enhancing the standards for strategic thinking, and ensuring corporate governance' (Ulrich, 2005:23)

Therefore, business partnering represents a fundamental rethink of HRM that mainly focuses on long-term applications and the development of HRM strategy.

According to CIPD Survey Report (2007), 38% of HR participants in this survey indicate that they have more concern about the 'Business Partner' role rather than any other role. The participants in this survey argued that Business Partner role could help to achieve strategic objectives, to improve staff engagement and performance outcomes. Francis and Keegan (2006) thus argue that Business Partner role has recently become increasingly 'popular' with HR practitioners because it could support management position to achieve organizations' strategic objectives. They argue that business partner role supports the movement toward achieving strategic objectives that may lose HR professionals the day to day contact with employees and could

create a risk of losing confidence and trust in the HR function to advocate employees' needs.

Change Agent role:

The final role that Ulrich indicates for HR is that of a change agent. He holds that HR has the responsibility to encourage an organization to go forward and change:

'HR's role as a change agent is to replace resistance with resolve, planning with results, and fear of change with excitement about its responsibilities'

(Ulrich, 1998:3)

This means that HR should become an agent of continuous transformation, shaping processes and culture that improve an organization's effectiveness.

I argue that this is not an easy role because HR professionals will face a lot of challenges to achieve change objectives and to manage organizational culture.

Francis and Keegan (2006) refer to the significant increasing use of the Business Partner and Change Agent role within HR practitioners in the CIPD survey (2003).

'One third of practitioners currently see their primary role as being strategic business partners, one in four see themselves as change agents and fewer than 24 per cent as administrative experts'

(CIPD, 2003:11).

Based on the previous discussion, the following figure summarizes Ulrich's work in HRM roles:

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Focus | Operations | Strategy |
| People | Employee Champion | Strategic Partner |
| Process | Administrative Expert | Change Agent |

Figure 2: Model of HRM Roles

*Adapted from Francis, H. and Keegan, A. (2006), 'The Changing Face of HRM: In Search of Balance', **Human Resource Management Journal**, Vol. 16, No. 3, 231-249.*

Francis and Keegan (2006) argue that Ulrich's initial work indicates the shift toward being Strategic Partner, implying a shift from an operation to a more strategic focus (Figure 3).

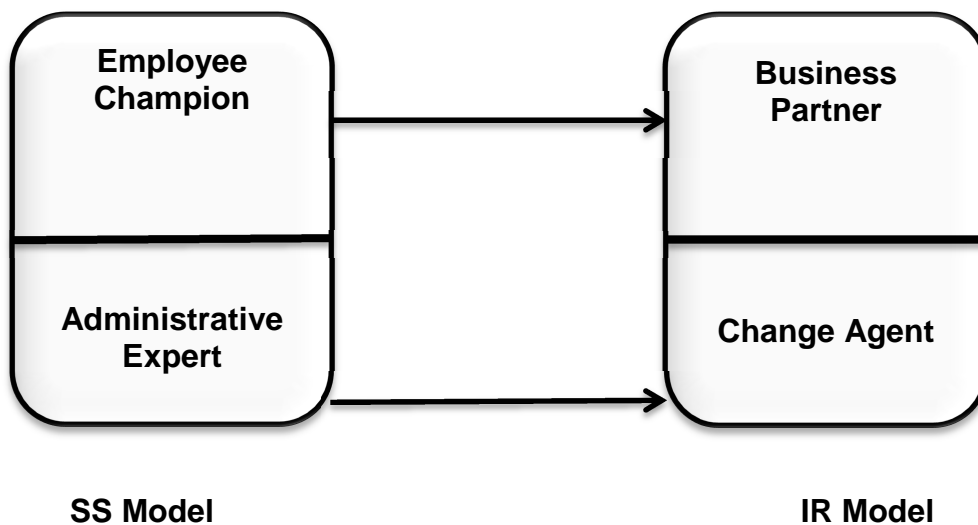


Figure 3: Ulrich initial perception of change in HR role

Figure (3) suggests that Ulrich (1997) argues that the movement from operations focus to strategy focus is a key concern of HRM reform. This means movement from satisfying stakeholders and organizational members' interests and response to their needs (SS model) to achieve strategic objectives, reduce cost and increasing effectiveness of human resource (IR

model). His work argues for the importance of the Business Partner role as a key element for applying strategic approach in organizations and for playing an active role to achieve reform objectives. However, Truss (2008) indicates that there is a debate in the literature about the type of the role of HRM and its relationship with organization reform. Similarly, Francis and Keegan (2006) conclude that giving strategic implications for HRM need constructive dialogue and balancing agenda to evaluate business partner role with Employee Champion role.

There is a group of researchers that supports Ulrich work as indicated in figure (3) and argue that the movement toward a more strategic HRM role is essential and that it represents the future of HRM (Ulrich and Beatty, 2001; Jamrong and Overholt, 2004). They hold that the change in the role of HRM toward applying strategic objectives means that HRM plays more than the traditional role of HR, mainly concerned with setting HRM policies and doing administrative activities. Instead it adopts new HRM roles, for example those of coach, architect, builder, facilitator and leader of HRM (Ulrich and Beatty, 2001). This further underlines the shift toward a more strategic direction for HRM. This could support the argument that there is a movement in managing HR from the SS model to the IR model.

Francis and Keegan (2006: 9) argue that HRM professionals support the adoption of the Business Partner role because it reflects the power of management in an organization *'The role of business partner appeared to offer great appeal to practitioners seeking to raise their influence and credibility and secure their identities as professionals....'*

Other groups of studies illustrate that the role of HR in most organizations remains an administrative and reactive role (Truss et al., 2002; Guest and King, 2004). These studies build their argument on the difficulties and constraints that face HRM reform. Truss (2002) indicates that cultural norms and the highly decentralized organizational structures may limit a move toward strategic HR involvement. She also indicates that the depth of business understanding of the HR professional creates on-going tensions when balancing the needs of employers and employees. Because of this, the HR professional may default to the performance of an administrative role rather than the strategic one. In relation, Guest and King (2004) conclude that *'The opportunity that Ulrich identified to seize the initiative and become HR champion has been passed by'*. Francis and Keegan (2006: 11) argue that *'Administrative expertise is seen as something that is essential'*

This conclusion is the starting point for the argument of the third group of researchers, who indicate and support the possibility of the 'multiple roles' for HRM as indicated in Figure 4 (Caldwell, 2003; Kamoche, 1994).

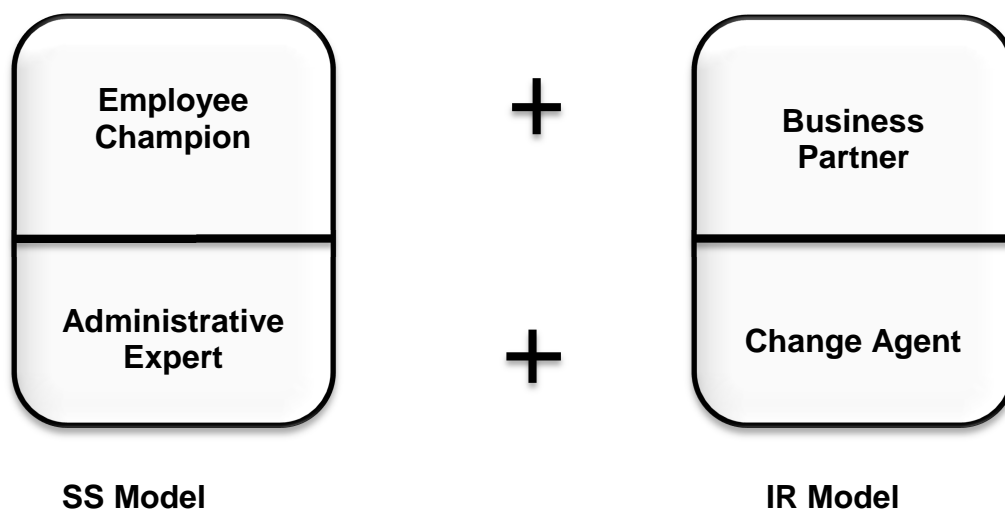


Figure 4: Multi roles of HRM

The previous figure illustrates that HRM, as a set of roles which can be performed in organizations. One group of these roles concerns operations of HRM (Employee Champion and Administrative Expert role) dimension and it is orientated toward achieving organizations' members' needs and acting as their voice. The other group is concerning with applying strategic direction and achieving organizational effectiveness in terms of determining performance targets, quality standards and economic goals.

The multi roles of HRM may cause a sort of conflict for HR professionals. Caldwell (2008) indicates that these conflicts are the result of the movement from an HRM role that was working with unclear accountabilities and performance measures to an HRM role that provides a discourse of outcomes and performance, i.e. the movement from the SS model to the IR model.

As indicated earlier, Francis and Keegan (2006: 12) suggest that the HRM's role will move from an operation focus to a strategy focus. Their findings support the decreasing evidence of HRM playing the Employee Champion role from HR professionals themselves. They argue that *'the strategic amplification of HR work seems to have an effect that the employee champion role is not perceived to be a potential career route for HR practitioners'*

This finding dovetails with the CIPD HR Survey Report (2007) that indicates the relative lack of interest of HR professionals' in applying Employee Champion role. This finding is related to the previous argument that HR professionals 'prefer' Business Partner role because it is working to strengthen the power of management in organizations as well as establish definite objectives and standards to achieve. Moreover, Francis and Keegan (ibid) argue that there are many legislative pressures on HR professionals to

keep and enact the Administrative Expert role. This can be illustrated in the following figure:

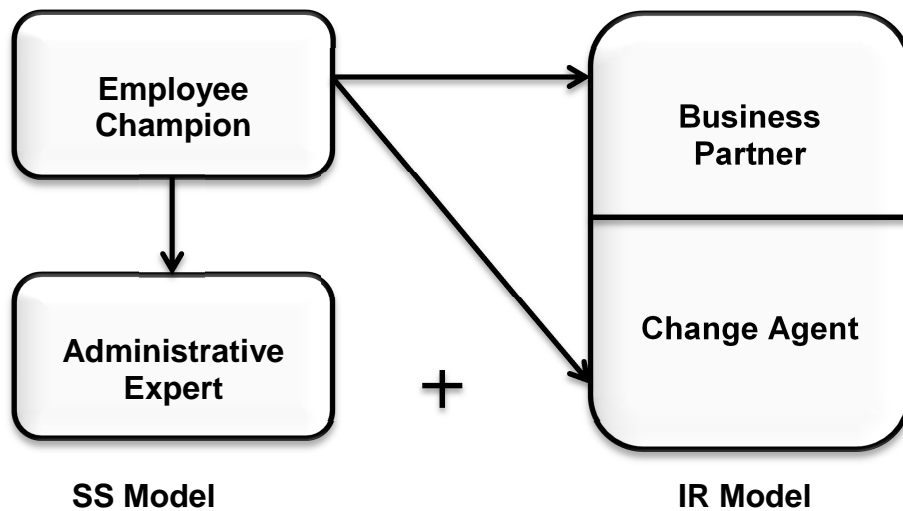


Figure 5: HRM role based on Francis and Keegan work (2006)

The previous figure illustrates that the role of HR could be moved toward the strategic direction (IR model) with keeping the administrative Expert role as a part of HRM due to legislative pressures. This discussion and debate that surrounds HRM's role can help us to propose a further research question, which is, under the influence of the NPM, what is the HRM's role and how are public sector HRM functions perceived to apply to it? The following section is a discussion of HRM in the public sector.

4. HRM in the public sector

Boyne et al. (1999:408) state that during the last decade there has been a rapid emergence of interest in HRM in public sector organizations. Pynes (2004) indicates that there are external and internal environmental factors affecting this. He notes, for example, that economic, social, cultural, technological and legal changes are also relevant to HRM reform challenges

in the public sector. In order to meet these challenges the organization must be flexible and must seek to improve the quality of its services.

As indicated earlier, the OECD (1996:9) illustrates that economic factors in the public sector are increasing the demand for greater efficiency in delivering better quality public sector programmes and services. The report indicates that there is a need for identifying value for money in terms of the provision of public sector activities. Meanwhile, Ingraham (2007:521) argues that public sector 'reshaping' has been a part of governmental legislation. It can be seen from the discussion in the previous chapter that governments are looking to achieve public sector reform and this requires managing government's most important resource: its employees (Berman et al., 2005:3).

Moreover, as the discussion in the previous chapter suggested, Brown (2008) argues that the introduction of NPM requires a transformation of HRM from being an administrative role to a more strategic role.

Similarly, Pynes (2004) suggests that organizations need individuals with the right technical knowledge, skills and abilities; they also need people who are flexible and willing to deal with rapid and unstructured change.

However, Kramar (1986) argues that the adoption of HRM in the public sector should run parallel with a managerial restructuring and reform programme. Gardner and Palmer (1997) conclude that the adoption of NPM may open up the possibility for managers to achieve performance outcomes in line with the strategic direction of the public sector organization (IR model). Farnham and Horton (1996) identify a number of primary characteristics of HRM practices in

the public sector. They indicate that applying a paternalistic style of management and adapting standardized employment practices in each part of the public sector (SS model) sets a public organization up as a 'model employer' for the private sector to follow as representing the traditional features of public sector HRM. Farnham and Horton (ibid.) argue that these features seem to be disappearing because public sector organizations are more emphasis to achieve strategic and economic objectives (IR model).

Boyne et al. (1999:410) show that there are changes in public sector HRM in the UK. They appoint out the change from paternal management that is concerned with employees (Employee Champion role) to rational management that aims to achieve effective job performance, high quality of output, service to the customer and value for money (Business Partner role). Boyne et al. (ibid.) also explain that uniform and standardized employment practices are being replaced by flexibility and differentiation. This is achieved through adaptive HRM functions, for example applying a performance management system. Thus there has been a move from 'collectivism' to 'individualism' in terms of more dependence on individual performance criteria in performance measures. Finally, Boyne et al. (ibid.) indicate that one of the changes in the public sector is that public organizations have lost their status as 'model employers' and are trying to apply private sector management to their practices through applying NPM. This argument raises a question regarding the implications of NPM in HEIs and the role of HRM professionals in achieving change objectives.

One of the HRM reform objectives in the public sector is to control and evaluate public sector staff (Lavelle, 2006). Lavelle argues that achieving this objective requires changing the mind-set of public sector staff to be able to deal with new employment conditions through creating effective teamwork and through applying performance management systems.

Ingraham (2007:523) states that there are three sets of HRM reforms in the public sector. He argues that the first set focuses on increasing flexibility and moving away from standardized, centralized-based public service systems. The second set of reforms is related to pay, and includes pay for performance and performance contracts. This reform set intends to refocus the nature of reward systems in the public sector that were associated with the idea of automatic promotion to clarify performance objectives and targets. The third set of reforms focuses on decentralization and devolution with the intention to move away from centralized structures toward allocating people to carry out specific tasks. He refers to the importance of thinking about how to recruit and manage the people who will achieve these objectives and deal with these changes.

Truss (2008:1072) argues that Ulrich's HRM model is widely applied in the private sector and concludes that there is a difference between the public and private sector when dealing with and applying NPM. She explains that there are many challenges in the application of HRM reform in the public sector. For example, Truss (ibid.:1073) refers to the degree of openness to the environment, the level of public scrutiny and monitoring, the broader range of stakeholders, the multiplicity of goals and objectives. Thus the working

environment for public managers is more complex than that of private managers.

HRM reform in the public sector, therefore, faces a lot of challenges. It requires a change in strategic direction as well as a change in skills and tasks. Sometimes, these developments may lead to challenging the power of HR professionals in the public sector rather than strengthening it (Oswick and Grant, 1996; Klingner, 1993). This argument based on that HRM will have multi roles that may reflect sorts of conflicts and ambiguity on HR role.

In conclusion, based on the literature review, there has been a movement in HRM in the public sector from having centralized, standardized and collectivist systems (SS model) to having decentralized, flexible and individual ones (IR model) in order to create business like organizations and to achieve performance objectives and output.

Ingraham (2007) explains the difficulties that face HRM reforms in the public sector. He demonstrates that the efforts to apply decentralization lead to a change in the nature of management and the tasks carried out to cope with the local conditions of organizations. Increasing flexibility and managerial discretion in the public sector is needed by newly skilled managers with responsibility for implementing the new ways of dealing with the motivation and reward of employees. Ingraham (ibid.) argues that strategic direction in HRM in the public sector is very important to enable workforce planning and to identify future needs for necessary talents and skills.

Klingner (1993) claims that the reasoning behind Ingraham's argument is that applying NPM in the public sector should change the traditional role of HR, which is mainly concerned with individual and social equity (Employee Champion role), to being more concerned with achieving economic objectives and cost savings (Business Partner role). This change requires HR professionals to enhance their skills and to challenge organizational culture to accept the new reforms.

However, Boyne et al. (1999) argue that HRM's role in dealing with employees and caring for them in the public sector still remains critical. They explain that this argument is based on the unique nature of the public sector, as indicated earlier, which requires special treatment in terms of HRM reform. This follows Ulrich's advice that before applying a HRM role, knowing the business and identifying the organizational culture of the business are crucial.

The following section will explore HR reform in UK HEIs.

5. HRM in UK HEIs

The UK HE sector generates over £59bn of output for the UK economy, including export earnings amounting to £5.3bn. It produces about 2.3 per cent of the national GDP (Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA), 2010). As indicated in the previous chapter, there are many factors that affect change in UK HEIs. A growing climate of accountability, the increasing number of students and international competition are some of these factors (Becket and Brookes, 2006).

In the Green Paper of 1985, *The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s*, the government highlighted the importance of universities' participation in improving the performance of the economy (DES, 1985). In 1991, the government issued a further White Paper, *Higher Education: A New Framework*. In this White Paper the government gave more attention to setting and enhancing quality standards in UK HEIs. Based on this and the White Paper (2003), *Future of Higher Education*, the government emphasized the importance of raising academic standards and paying more attention to the quality of teaching (DES, 2003).

So, from reviewing the literature about HRM in UK HEIs, we can conclude that HRM is partly responsible for responding to requirements. The following section will present an overview of trends that can facilitate HRM reform and achieve effectiveness:

5.1. Strategic orientation

The White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education*, (2003), argues that a strategic role for HR is the main way to develop and reform HRM in HE. The paper calls for more attention to putting in place measures for recruitment, retention, and reward and to delivering quality standards of higher education.

The White Paper (2003) also indicates that the government will provide extra funding for HEIs and this additional funding will be provided to the universities once their HR strategy has been approved. This indicates that there is a government support for HR to apply strategic direction and to facilitating change. Indeed, government will use economic forces to encourage HEIs in this direction, which complies with Mackay's (1995) view that universities have

been exhorted to become market-led, consumer-responsive institutions giving value for money.

The previous actions of the government reflect on HRM functions, as Doherty and Horne (2002) argue: that recruitment and selection, for example, requires professional managers who can process recruitment and selection steps effectively in the public sector. Therefore, as indicated earlier, there is an orientation toward public reform in UK HEIs; this reform will reflect on HRM's approach toward applying strategic objectives and achieving economic goals (Business Partner role).

Farndale and Hailey (2009) claim that traditionally HRM has been responsible for activities that are required to perform administration functions, such as recruitment and selection, pay, training, and promotion. In particular, they state that with regard to the academic staff's point of view, HRM's role has largely been administrative rather than an active role for the benefit of the academic staff. This complies with the Administrative Expert role that is adapted in Ulrich's model of HRM. This positions HRM as responsible for a process-orientated role with a day-to-day operational focus.

Moreover, Farndale and Hailey (*ibid.*) argue that as a result of the above mentioned changes in UK HEIs, there is an expectation that there will be a shift in HRM to performing a more strategic role. This argument supports the Business Partner role that is based on the strategic management of people and aligning HR and business strategy. This thesis will explore the HRM professionals' points of view regarding this proposition.

5.2. Performance management

As outlined in this chapter, the issues relating to performance management have been high on the agenda of reform for higher educational institutions (Cullen et al., 2003). Armstrong and Baron (2004) define performance management as *'a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance'*. In HEIs there are many tools for performance management. The RAE rating (Research Assessment Exercise), as one of performance management systems, influences the decision about the funding of UK HEIs. It ranks highly rated departments in research as the best or the least adequately funded (Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) 1997). The REF (Research Excellence Framework) will replace the RAE as a new system of assessing the quality of researching in UK and it will be completed in 2014. The primary purpose of REF is to produce assessment outcomes for each submission made by institution (Higher Education Funding Council for England (hefce). Willmott (2003) emphasises that the failure to comply with these standards will lead to a risk of losing funding. He argues that setting performance targets is a result of the government pressures on HE to be more 'commercialise' sector. He indicates that *'Pressure to achieve greater efficiency in undertaking established activities (e.g. teaching and research) was complemented and intensified by demands that Universities should be more closely aligned to industrial and commercial priorities and practices'* (Willmott. *ibid.*: 11). He argues that these changes will reflect on academic performance criteria that will be affected with economic and financial factors and will create a challenge for managers to answer a

question of *'How can more 'knowledge workers' be produced at a lower cost without damaging either the 'quality' of educational provision or the 'quality' of research activity?'* (Willmott, *ibid.*: 23)

Doberty and Horne (2004:326) argue that in order to evaluate public services, managers must provide information about how their services are performing. Is the service achieving its targets? Is it meeting identified needs or expectations of quality? Is it giving value for money?

This means that there is an important need for performance management in public sector organizations and in HEIs and it reflects the fact that achieving economic objectives are new features of HRM reform (Doberty and Horne, *ibid.*).

However, Broad and Goddard (2007) argue that within HEIs, the application and understanding of performance management systems is less well reported. They conclude that applying performance management in HEIs is affected by many factors; internal engagement from academics and their acceptance of the strategic direction of HRM are two examples of these factors. The main difficulties that are faced when applying performance management in HEIs are that an education service is intangible and that it is difficult to measure performance, because it is mainly related to knowledge transformation (Broad and Goddard, *ibid.*).

Talbot (2005) claims that in seeking to measure organizational performance, it is important to determine the performance perspectives or alternative views of managers and employees. Performance as 'accountability' requires more performance information, performance as 'user choice' requires more

attention to attracting customers and performance and 'customer service' requires clear statements about the level of quality of service. In addition, performance as 'efficiency' requires cost-effectiveness in turning inputs to outputs, performance as 'effectiveness' has become more focused on the outcomes that it is intended to achieve, and finally performance as 'creating public values' requires more focus on equity, equality and social relations. The above perspectives on performance are related to the objective of this thesis, which is to investigate the HRM professionals' point of view regarding the movement from the SS model to applying performance management, accountability, control styles and applying regulation and quantity measures (IR model).

In sum, recent changes in higher education have seen an increase in the use of private sector managerial techniques that could support the Instrumental Rationality model such as performance management and monitoring. It could be argued that the role of HRM is crucial to apply these techniques. Through the empirical work, this thesis will try to investigate how HRM professionals in UK HEIs are interpreting and implementing the NPM agenda through HRM reform. Particularly in relation to academic staff who will work under more regulated and controlled work patterns rather than having academic freedom and autonomous conditions.

5.3. Managing quality

Huston (2008) indicates that there are many definitions of quality in the higher education context. He explains that while Elton focused on defining quality as a set of E's' activities: Enhancement, Empowerment, Enthusiasm and

Excellence which supports the quality of 'social relations' in an organization, there is a definition of the external agencies that quality depends on achieving A's: Assurance, Accountability, Audit and Assessment which supports the quality of dealing with financial and economic factors.

In 1991, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) was set up to apply quality standards in UK HEIs. In 1997, the Quality Assurance Agency of higher education (QAA) was established. Their main responsibility is to look for sound standards of quality assurance in teaching and research in UK HEIs (QAA, 2008).

Based on that, Holmes and McElwee (1995) suggest that applying total quality management in higher education institutions represents one of the HRM's reform characteristics. Davis and Thomas (2002) explain the difficulties of identifying the quality of academic service. They indicate that there are multi-faceted in academia (teaching, research and administration) and cause the difficulties in determining agreed quality standards.

Davis (2007) examines the effect of the academic culture on the implementation of the excellence model in UK universities. She argues that giving more consideration to the academic culture will help in implementing the excellence model as a type of TQM. She concludes that selecting staff to be involved and work in teams, and choosing appropriate management styles could help in the implementation of the excellence model. Harvey (2005) indicates that there is a growing movement toward internal and external evaluation of quality in UK HEIs. He explains that this change started when the Jarratt Report (1985) was finalized; it recommended that universities

should work to clear objectives, develop performance indicators and achieve value for money and it was followed by a set of regulations and rules to apply this change.

One of the challenges that face HR professionals in applying HR reform strategy and practices is their relationship with academic colleagues (Whitchurch, 2007). Academics may have a lack of respect for administration if they perceive it as weak and ineffective or if they have a lack of trust in management as they perceive it as having control over them (Whitchurch, *Ibid.*9).

In the same vein, Rolfe (2003) explains the importance of the introduction of regular external assessments of the research and teaching quality of the higher education sector. He indicates that HRM reform requires the application of an academic audit of institutional systems for quality assessment, a national teaching quality assessment and assurance mechanisms. In conclusion, setting quality standards is one of the challenges to HRM reform's in UK HEIs.

As indicated in the above discussion, there are many constraints to be faced when applying quality standards, such as the unique characteristics of an academic job that has multi-faceted activities and relates to the intangible nature of knowledge, which is difficult to identify and measure.

5.4. Equality and Diversity

It could be argued that Equality and diversity agenda is one of the HRM reform activities in HEIs. Barry et al. (2007) consider changes in academia in Sweden and England and focus on gender equity and NPM reforms. The

study argues that public sector agendas in these countries have been affected by NPM applications. Moreover, Deem (2003) examines the relationship between managerialism and gender management in the higher education sector with the assumption that the cultural aspects for both men and women indicate that they are subject to similar constraints and pressures. Deem (ibid.) argues that managing divisions in higher education, for example, age, ethnicity and disability, is considered one of the most important functions of management reforms in the higher education sector (Deem, ibid.; Riddell et al., 2006).

Deem (ibid.) concludes that there is no strongly gendered division of labour but women must prove that they have the same rights and responsibilities as men. On the other hand, McTavish and Miller (2009) argue that managerial reform in higher education fails to consider the equality and diversity dimensions, and they call for more representation of women in public bodies.

Concluding that:

'The representation of women on College Boards is not good and only one quarter of non-executives are female. Clearly there is more effort required to improve gender balance in the Scottish college sector'.

(McTavish and Miller, 2009: 351)

It could be argued that equality and diversity in HEIs is a part of the HRM reform activities that could encourage the movement toward respecting differences among people and treating them equally. This raises a question about if the HR professionals in UK HEIs can apply the equality and diversity agenda with their intention to move to IR model and what are the main constraints that they are facing in applying these activities?

The conclusion from the above discussion is that applying equality and diversity in HEIs requires more support from HRM strategy and practices (Deem, 2003). The empirical work of this thesis will try to highlight the HRM professionals' perspectives toward dealing with equality and diversity in UK HEIs.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion from the previous discussion is that there is a debate around the HRM role under the NPM agenda and that there is a need for more research to find out in what ways HRM's role in the public sector is changing. This helps to propose a further proposition that, under the influence of the NPM, university HRM functions are perceived to be moving from a focus on the Employee Champion role to that of the Business Partner role. Therefore, this thesis seeks to contribute to the on-going debate over whether or not and to what extent the HR role can be described as a Business partner role. This research explores the HRM professionals' point of view in relation to the implementation of NPM philosophy in higher education and its impact on HR strategy, its objectives, tools, and its relationship with organizational effectiveness; this will be the core of the next chapter. Evidence from HR professionals themselves will be presented in terms of how they see their contribution toward applying the Strategic role. The thesis will also illustrate the role of HR professionals in directing HR towards achieving public sector reform and achieving organizational effectiveness.

Chapter Four:

Organizational Effectiveness

1. Introduction

The underlying logic of public sector reforms relates to the quest for the three E's: Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness (Boyne, 2002). So, organizational effectiveness (OE) is one of the key performance dimensions of New Public Management (NPM) practices (Boyne, 1999). Therefore, this research will discuss how the role of HRM is implicated in contributing to organizational effectiveness in higher education institutions (HEIs). HRM professionals represent part of management team that is responsible for driving change and reform and taking decisions that could facilitate achieving reform objectives. Moreover, the research seeks to consider the HR professionals' perspectives because the literature mainly considers the academic staff's points of view.

The chapter begins by defining the concept of organizational rationality and exploring its relation to organizational effectiveness. This is followed by a discussion of the relation between organizational effectiveness and value (i.e. how organizational effectiveness is measured, by whom, and so on). The impact of NPM on understanding organizational effectiveness is then considered, and, finally, a discussion is undertaken of the role of human resource management in organizational effectiveness in the higher education sector.

2. Organizational effectiveness and rationality

OE is a broad concept which has different definitions according to different points of views, different organizational levels and different organizational objectives and purposes (Mullins, 2007:756). In order to explore the

relationship between HRM reform and OE within a specific context, an explanation of organizational rationality and its relationship with OE will be presented.

The early literature of rationality indicates that rationality is *'an issue when there is something to choose from'* (Schipper, 1996). This means that there are alternatives, and the selection of one of these alternatives should be based on rational decisions. Weber (1978) indicates that rationality means *'the rational consideration of alternative means to achieve end (goal)'* (Weber, 1978:26).

Weber's main themes are related to his interest in understanding how to move from a pre-modern society to a modern Western society, and one of his focuses was on the process of rationalization and the role it has played in the development of Western societies (Parker, 2000). Weber believes that Western society reflects the process of rationalization in its political, economic and religion systems (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2009). His writing focuses on studying social and historical process that he calls 'rationalization'. The rationalization concept is used by Weber (1978) to express a type of social development in modern industrial societies that could help in understanding how these societies develop to become modernized.

For Weber, the danger of modernity arises not simply from the creation of separate institutional entities, but through the specialization of values, knowledge and interests which are separated from the purposes of the population as a whole.

Weber (1978) argues that rationalization could be applied in institutions and in everyday working life as well as to all components of society, including its economic and political aspects. In relation to the economic aspects of society, rationalization means achieving profits by the use of rational accounting methods and by the control and regulation of work. From a political aspect, rationalization encourages the creation of forms of leadership and governance based on legal legitimacy and law (Morrison, 2006).

Weber (1978) suggests that the concept of rationalization refers to two contradictory trends in historical development. The first considers the social and historical process and then becomes more concerned with calculation (economic aspects) in relation to its focus on how it is possible to obtain control over the social world. The second trend considers human social action which is trying to be free from rules and regulations (Hamilton, 1991). Rationalization therefore depends on two types of activities (Morrison, 2006): strategies and actions that work to exercise control over empirical reality, and the selection of the means of and the ends of action from which, respectively, to derive strategies and in order to achieve selected goals. The end may simply be described as the goal of the action and the means refers to the techniques used to obtain specific ends. It is clear from the previous discussion that the importance of efficiency when selecting means and ends is significant.

Weber (1978) analyses the new organizational forms of the nineteenth century, and his main arguments are:

- a) The development of an organization is based on applying new forms of control within bureaucratic systems.

- b) These new organizations have a new basis of values and norms that are shared by organizational members.
- c) These new organizations are described as 'rational', and this rationality depends on a system of control that is based on calculative and quantitative procedures.

According to Weber (1978), rationality is defined as the increasing role of calculation and control in social life which is combined with a replacement of traditional values and norms of society with rational and calculated ones. Therefore, rationalization is a process which becomes the guiding principle behind bureaucracy and the increasing division of labour (Gerth and Mills, 1946), and it also related to terms like depersonalization and development of bureaucratic work. Weber is pessimistic about the possibility of avoiding the problem of the '*iron cage of bureaucracy*'. Habermas (1984, 1985 and 1987) provides a clear critique of Weber's pessimism and the weakness of providing a prescriptive alternative. Habermas argues for a new theory of 'communicative rationality' and resulting communicative actions. He claims that such a theory could be one '*that makes possible a mutual constraint – free understanding among individuals in their dealings with one another ... this means, on the one hand, a change of paradigm within action theory: from goal directed to communicative action, and, on the other hand, a change of strategy in an effort to reconstruct the modern concept of rationality that become possible with the decentration of our understanding of the world*' (Habermas, 1984:391-392).

Habermas argues that the definition of ends to achieve should come out of systematic discourses between participants and stakeholders, leading to a consensus on ends that could therefore have an effect on organizational performance (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2009). Habermas argues that, put ends, in whatever forms, should not be predefined instrumentally, through abstract values or through any charismatic leaders, but should find their definition and legitimacy through the discursive process and consensus agreement of the participants/stakeholders in any action situation. Habermas (1985) comments on rationalization as follows:

'The new structures of society were marked by the differentiation organizational cores of the capitalist enterprise and the bureaucratic state apparatus. Weber understood this process as the institutionalization of purposive rational economic and administrative action. To the degree that everyday life was affected by this cultural and societal rationalization, traditional forms of life - which in the early modern period were differentiated primarily according to one's trade - were dissolved.' (Habermas, 1985:2)

As indicated earlier, Weber refers to rationalization as a form of control. He supports his arguments with different themes that indicate that the principle of development in Western societies is based on control of external reality by the active mastery of the natural world (Weber, 1978). Weber indicates that there is a wide use of calculation as a strategy for social action and as a method of controlling the outcome or ends of actions. According to Morrison (2006), Weber uses the term rationalization *'to describe the process by which nature, society and individual action are increasingly mastered by an orientation to*

planning, technical procedure and rational action' (Morrison, 2006:279) that leads to more bureaucratization. Bologh (1990) has reacted to Weber's work and criticized it by saying:

'Weber saw no modern choice rather than capitalist bureaucratization tempered by patriarchal leaders. This stand led him to reject socialism or anything like a feminist solution.' (Bologh, 1990:94)

Weber indicates (1978) that there are four types of rationality from an organizational perspective: practical, theoretical, formal and substantive rationality. He argues that social action is dependent on the 'actor' (leader), who can set the end goals and identify the means to achieve these goals. Practical rationality is mainly based on a concern with employees and the 'methodical calculation' needed to control their performance. Practical rationality follows explicit and restricted rules of experience and everyday performance in order to achieve *'valued ends or goals which may be economic or religious'* (Weber, 1978:399-400).

The second type of rationality is theoretical or conceptual rationality, which works to set a conceptual framework that could help as guidance in justifying the reasoning that is involved in decision making. The third type is formal rationality, or the use of quantitative calculation and accounting procedures that help to achieve an action or make a decision (Instrumental rationality). Rationality depends here on numerical and calculation standards that start with the end goals and then measure the performance towards achieving these goals. The fourth type of rationality is substantive rationality, which considers the set of values in the organization without considering the nature

of the ends or the outcome of the action. Substantive rationality represents the ethical and cultural background which defines the criteria that are considered during decision making. In relation to substantive rationality, the main concern is to get commitment from organizational members to the values and ethical standards of the organization (ibid.:85-86).

This thesis will define effectiveness in terms of rationality. In this sense, rationality considers taking decisions that should be purposeful and effective responses to the given situation facing the organization. The definitions of organizational effectiveness within the academic literature and those found within the historical review of rationality can be broadly based within the following perspectives:

- ***Instrumental/ technical and economic rationality perspectives:***

This perspective is based on Instrumental rationality (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2009) and a logic of technical and economic perspective that is mainly about achieving clear, non-conflicting goals which are accepted by all organizational members (Roy and Dugal, 2005). As Hartwing (ibid.:167) suggests:

‘A technical rational organization is one in which each step or activity makes the maximum (feasible or reasonable) contribution to a productive sequence, resulting in the achievement of a given goal...’

It follows then that instrumental and technical rationality relates to the effectiveness of outputs or goals and applies to the particular situation and the actions undertaken in order to achieve a given end (IR model). According to this type of rationality the managerialist perspective treats organizational

effectiveness as *'the degree to which an organization realizes its goals in a resource efficient way'* (Daft, 1995:98). When seen from this perspective, organizations receive inputs, transform them into outputs, export them to environments, monitor changes in the environments and take corrective actions to ensure their survival (Miner, 1988).

Roy and Dugal (2005) highlight that the measure of OE should be time specific because over time an organization's goals will change and thus so will the criteria for measuring OE. However, technical decisions are not possible until after the economic questions of comparative costs have been answered. Thus, economic rationality has the same principle of adapting a 'means to an end' but with more consideration to the principle of 'economizing' and calculation. This means, therefore, the evaluation and selection of alternatives when two or more options are in competition with each other, involves the cost- benefit nexus (Hartwing, *ibid.*:167).

Boyne (2003) refers to the 'goal model' as an organizational effectiveness model particularly relevant to public sector organizations. He argues that this is the oldest and simplest model of OE; it is based on the idea that each organization has objectives to achieve. These goals may change over time, but goals continue to guide the strategic direction of an organization. Public service organizations may not have formal goals that are clearly expressed in legislation or other documents and their goals are likely to be general missions rather than concrete objectives. Moreover, public organizations often have a multiplicity of goals.

Taken in summary, from this perspective, organizations are likely to be seen as mainly unitary, positivism, and flexible. OE is looking to achieve goals and use performance appraisal techniques to achieve the cost-effectiveness relationship which is significant within this perspective. This perspective supports the IR model which based of achieving effectiveness through economic and technical rationality. In instrumental/economic rationality, performance indicators are generated by formal rationality, where measures come first and then there is a search to define the implied values (culture) underlying these measures. Weber (1978) argues that instrumental rationality will, in the end, develop into the iron cage where individual preferences and self-interest will give way to more bureaucratic end goals.

The conclusion from the previous discussion is that there are economic and political pressures which have a significant influence on defining end goals and on determining the main techniques needed to apply these goals, particularly in the public sector, which is governed by restrictive rules and procedures. These economic and political factors restrict managers' ability to take rational decisions and could affect the effectiveness of the decision-making process. More discussion about the management role in achieving organizational effectiveness in the public sector will be presented in section 6 of this chapter.

- ***Social/Political/Communicative rationality perspectives:***

OE, according to this perspective, relates to organizational effectiveness in the context of organizations as social systems (substantive rationality). OE here is concerned with negotiated order among organizational members. It relates to social constructionism as a philosophical position about the nature

of reality in organizations and is mainly focused on a social and communicative style of management (Herman and Renz, 2008:26). The relational nature of OE is further asserted by Gaertner and Ramnarayan (1983:97):

'Organizational effectiveness is not a thing, or a goal, or a characteristic of organizational outputs or behaviours, but rather a state of relations within and among the relevant constituencies of the organization'.

Whilst, Hartwing reminds us that (2006:167):

'A social system in an organization includes cultural roles (e.g. expectations, obligations, and ideals)'.

Following this, social rationality in an organization may be obtained through challenging the emotional energy in an organization (Substantive rationality), eliminating conflicts, providing more support for strengthening actions and linkage actions with past and future ones. Roy and Dugal (ibid.) argue that the definition of organizational effectiveness is different for different constituents. A constituent is a member or a group of individuals holding similar preferences pertaining to the activities of the organization. They also argue that the definition of organizational effectiveness is the net satisfaction of all constituents in the process of gathering and transforming input into output in an efficient manner. Similarly, Kanter and Summers (1987) conclude: *'In the end organizational effectiveness is what the relevant parties decide it should be'.*

To conclude, rationality according to Weber is defined as being the increasing role of calculation and control in social life. Weber describes a number of

types or forms of rationality that help us to understand choice and the means to achieve end goals.

In order to address the issues set out in the previous discussion, this research will work to find answers to the following questions by investigating the HR managers' perspectives: Are HR managers in the UK's HE sector working toward a more social and communicative perspective as a basis on which to achieve organizational effectiveness, or are they working to achieve economic and final ends? The following sections and the empirical work in this research aims to clarify this question.

In sum, the assessment of organizational effectiveness with a social and participative perspective rests not simply on how much of particular outputs is being produced, but also on the decision making that sets the framework in which the production of these outputs is carried out. So, we could conclude that effectiveness in the social construct is not an end state, but a continuous process relating the organization to its members. This OE perspective could be considered as a base for the SS model whereas social and communicative effectiveness is the main target of organizations.

As outlined above, the classification of these perspectives has significantly influenced academic thinking and writing regarding organizational effectiveness.

3. Organizational effectiveness and value

Diesing defines organizational effectiveness as: *'The successful production of any kind of value'* (Diesing, 1962:3). The question here is which kind of values and how organizational effectiveness can be measured?

In order to explore this, the work of Boyne (1998) is helpful. He argues that the effectiveness of the public sector is difficult to define and measure because of conceptual and methodological problems. Boyne (ibid.) also mentions the increasing political and technical pressure on public sector organizations to adapt performance management systems. He suggests too the importance of producing better performance indicators in the public sector (Boyne, 1998).

Boyne (ibid.) argues that the main purpose of applying new 'value added indicators' that have been introduced as performance indicators in the public sector is to facilitate the central control of local agencies. In another study, Boyne (1999) states that the UK government's proposals on 'best value' in local government emphasize five different dimensions of the concept of performance: efficiency, effectiveness, quality, fair access and cost.

These points can be related to Boyne's (2002) work, in which he proposes that performance indicators draw upon two models of organizational performance: the first one is called the three E's model: Economy - Efficiency - Effectiveness and the second is the Input - Output - Outcome (IOO Model).

Thus, Boyne (ibid.) indicates that efficiency can be defined in two ways:

- 'Technical efficiency' which refers to the cost per unit of output and
- 'Allocative efficiency' which refers to the responsiveness of services to public preferences.

This has some resonance with the earlier discussion of rationality. He also argues that (1999:18):

'The term effectiveness can be interpreted in a number of ways, but is most commonly taken to refer to the achievement of the formal objectives of services'. The importance of defining how the objectives of services can be assessed and to operationalize the concept of effectiveness in public sector organizations is now rendered significant.

However, it may be helpful to combine these notions. For example, Heath (2003) follows Boyne in arguing for the utilization of a combined 3E's and IOO Model to form a framework for assessing value for money (as shown in figure 6 below).

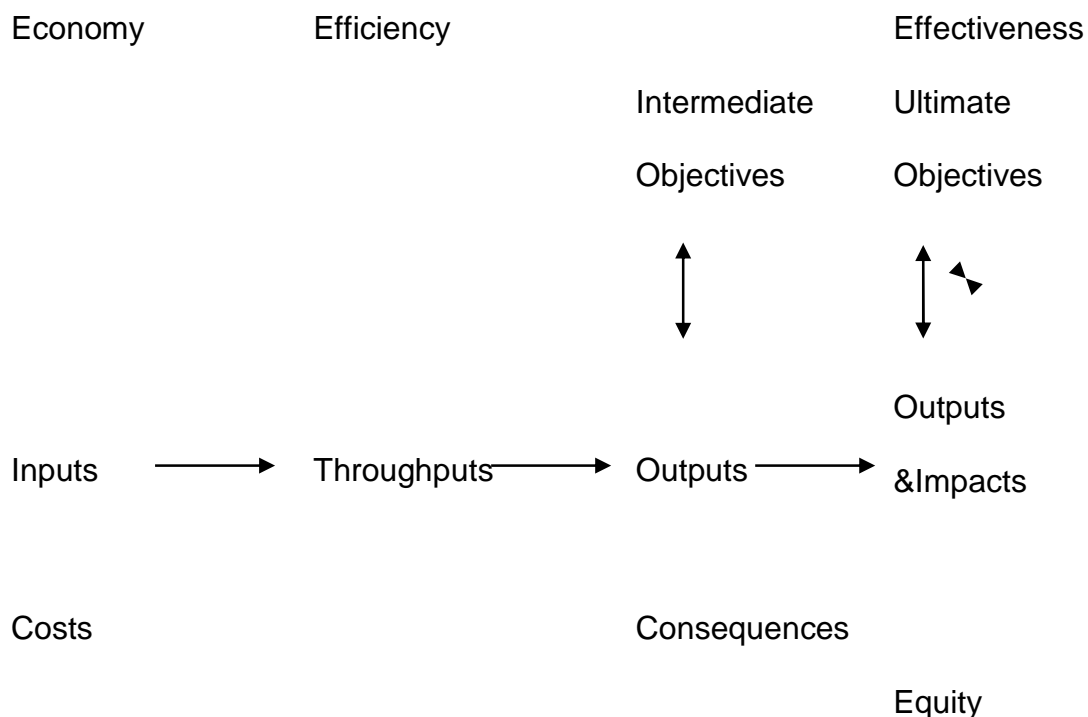


Figure 6: Framework for value for money analysis

Source: Heath (2003) based on Boyne (2002)

The above highlights the relation between effectiveness and value, especially in the public sector. The model may seem to be related to economic rationality and focus on the achievement of organizational goals, but managers play an

important part in creating the roles and regulations to achieve organizational goals, which is related to the political rationality perspective. Moreover, deliberative processes of goal-setting are not ruled out in the establishment of both ultimate and intermediate objectives.

4. The concept of organizational effectiveness and its measurement

The measurement of effectiveness is one of the most problematic issues in the field of organization theory (Steers, 1975; Zammuto, 1982). A number of authors have noted that measuring and conceptualizing organizational effectiveness reflecting organizational, environmental and employee characteristics, as well as managerial policies and practices, could be one of the difficulties of using one universal model for organizational effectiveness (Steers, 1977; Cameron, 1986). Gaertner and Ramnarayan (1983:97-100) suggest that two major dimensions characterize the different definitions of and approaches to organizational effectiveness:

- (1) **Focus on the definition.** Some approaches focus on measures of terminal outcomes, such as profitability, survival, or goal attainment. Others are intended to be more concerned with organizational processes and structures.
- (2) **Intended use of the concept.** There are approaches that tend to be organization-specific. Others are intended for a generality of organizations.

These two dimensions, when cross classified, result in four distinct types of approaches, as proposed in figure 7 below.

| | | Intended use of concepts | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | General | Organization-Specific |
| Outcomes | | Representative schools: Traditional Accounting Measures Population Ecology | Representative schools: Goal Attainment |
| Process/ Structure | | Representative schools : Leadership General Management Contingency theories Systems theories | Representative schools: Process-Oriented Qualitative Evaluation |

Figure 7: Approaches to organizational effectiveness

Source: Gaertner and Ramnarayan (1983)

General Output Measures:

These include the traditional accounting measures such as productivity and profit or return on investment as criteria of effectiveness. The first criticism of these types of measures is that different organizations produce different things, so there are not always metrics available to convert these outputs into comparable units across, or even within, organizations. Secondly the multiplicity of outputs produced by the organization results in their differential valuation by different constituencies of the organization (i.e. the effectiveness of an organization is viewed from different perspectives by its various stakeholders).

Organization-Specific Output Measures:

Goal-centred approaches to organizational effectiveness assess effectiveness by how well the goals of the organization are being achieved. These approaches provide a useful degree of detail that is often lacking in general output measures, but at the expense of some generality in findings. The analysis of goal attainment for evaluating organizational effectiveness has several limitations. Firstly, goals for programmes and organizations are dynamic and are likely to change over time. Secondly, there is a problem interpreting the uses of goals in the organization according to each party's point of view. Thirdly, goals in organizations are frequently inventions to suit activity already performed – they are or become the organization's means of constructing a rationale for past activity (Boyne, 2002).

General Process Measures:

This approach focuses on generally effective aspects of organizations. It argues that it is possible to specify aspects of the organizational activity that could improve organizational effectiveness such as management style, leadership, decision making and organizational structure. Such views of organizational effectiveness also have problems of their own. First, in order to generalize they rely heavily on ad hoc bridging assumptions in applying more general theories to any particular case. Second, these theories frequently neglect the varied uses and meanings that more generally defined constructs have in particular settings.

Organization Specific Process Views:

The focus here is on process and qualitative evaluation of organizational effectiveness as a response to the limitations of the outcome-orientated views of effectiveness. This approach focuses on information gathering, collecting

documents and observing the effect of the programme on institutions and individuals. It has some positive features, for example flexibility, openness to information and adaptability. However, it is criticized, for example, for being too diffuse and not result orientated. Gaertner and Ramnarayan (1983:100) argue that each of the four major categories of approaches to organizational effectiveness has something to recommend it and at the same time each has distinctive disadvantages and limitations in theory and the empirical result.

Cameron and Whetten (1983) suggest seven critical questions, which should be answered explicitly by evaluators prior to all assessments of effectiveness:

1. From whose perspective is effectiveness being assessed?
2. On what domain of activity is the assessment focused?
3. What level of analysis is being used?
4. What is the purpose of assessing effectiveness?
5. What time frame is being employed?
6. What type of data is being used for assessments?
7. What is the standard against which effectiveness is judged?

This reflects the discussion above in that answering these questions in different ways makes different criteria of effectiveness applicable. The challenge then lies in determining the most appropriate answers for a particular research setting.

5. The NPM and Organizational Effectiveness

In seeking to understand the importance of organizational effectiveness in the public sector, one can refer to Handa and Adas's work (1995:341), in which it is argued that the measurement of organizational effectiveness is a very

important step in the improvement process of any public organization.

However, it should also be kept in mind that:

'Non-profit organizational effectiveness remains a complicated and challenging construct for researchers and practitioners alike'.

(Herman and Renz, 2008:412)

A key theme of the introduction of NPM ideas into the public sector was to improve public sector effectiveness, via a shift from *'accountability for processes'* to *'accountability for managing outcomes'* (Hoque, 2005:369) and this idea is related to the managerialist perspective on organizational effectiveness that was discussed earlier. Therefore NPM strategies have an emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness and quality, and aim to make organizations more results-orientated (Noblet et al., 2006:335); i.e. shift organizations from a Stakeholder Satisfaction Model to an Instrumental Rationality Model of OE.

Thus Hood (1991, 1995) indicates that there is a potential cluster of benefits associated with NPM ideas, examples of which include:

- A competitive business environment;
- Quality improvement;
- Competitive costs of services delivered;
- Long-term financial performance; and
- Improving managerial performance.

Successful implementation of NPM may transform the public sector into a more business-like form, dealing with more competitive environments and shifting public sector from complying with rules to managing for outcomes (managerialism).

Similarly, Pollitt (2000:184) argues that organizations within the new public management arrangements would:

- Become more concerned with strategy and less with delivery;
- Seek to use market mechanisms wherever possible to produce competition between public providers; and
- Seek inter-organizational partnership, both within the public sector and with private and voluntary sectors.

Pollitt (ibid.:185) then contends that the results of implementing management reform programmes could be one or more of the following:

- Savings (reduced budget appropriations);
- Improved processes (e.g. faster, more accessible complaints procedures);
- Improved efficiency (better input/output ratios, e.g. more students graduating per full time equivalent member of staff);
- Greater effectiveness (gender and ethnic equality, more new jobs created); and
- An increase in the overall capacity/flexibility/resilience of the administrative system as a whole (e.g. through the recruitment and training of more skilled, more committed public servants).

There are, however, a number of difficulties of determining the effectiveness of public sector organizations with regard to three aspects. Firstly, the public sector is characterized by multiple, conflicting and vague policy objectives, so it might be hard to answer the question of what outcomes are being aimed for. Secondly, there is a problem of timescales; this means that it may take a long

time before judgement can be passed on the final outcomes of some educational, health and environmental programmes, for example. Finally, there is the question of to what extent the outcomes of public programmes are due to a particular public policy or, for example, to a general improvement in economic conditions. This is reinforced in that many different programmes may be simultaneously addressing a particular issue. Likewise Schmid (2002:378) concludes that in non-profit organizations which have ambiguous and amorphous goals and offer intangible services, it is particularly difficult to measure organizational effectiveness.

6. Effectiveness and human resource management

Datta et al. (2005) argue that:

'Recent years have witnessed burgeoning interest in the degree to which human resource systems contribute to organizational effectiveness'.

Assessing the effectiveness of HRM is as complex as assessing any other aspect of organizational effectiveness, if not more so, because HRM's support and development goals may be inconsistent or in contradiction with one another. Ahmed (1999) for example explains and explores the 'emerging measure' of effectiveness for different HRM functions. The emerging measure basically incorporates both mission support and employee support by HRM as criteria of effectiveness. Essentially, therefore, this measure would assess a human resource management function on the two different criteria: its contribution to the accomplishment of the organization's mission *and* its contribution to prompting and achieving employee support for the goals of an organization. This is likely to be particularly important where organizations are undergoing rapid and significant change.

Wang (2005) also highlights the importance of the role of HRM strategy in supporting organizational effectiveness. He refers to a personnel strategy that focuses on a variety of human resource practices facilitating employees' high performance values, intrinsic motivation, attitude to teamwork and leadership skills, and on enhancing cross-functional and cross-cultural competencies, and its role in improving technological innovation and entrepreneurship.

The last part of the discussion about OE is related to the previous discussion in chapter three about the development of the HRM role.

Ulrich's model of HRM, that identifies the role and activities of HRM functions, depends on whether the focus is on strategy, operations, process or people (as shown in figure 2: 64 in the previous chapter). Moreover, Ulrich's work indicates that there is a shift in HRM's role from an operation focus to a strategic focus. It could be argued here that this could be related to organizational effectiveness perspectives that have been changed from satisfying members and stakeholders' perspective to achieving economic goals and objectives.

Based on the literature review and the discussion of HRM reform and organizational effectiveness, this research will explore the contention that HRM in UK HEIs is shifting from the Employee Champion role that is mainly concerned with satisfying individuals' interests (Stakeholder Satisfaction model) to the Business Partner role that is mainly concerned with achieving strategic direction and cost effectiveness objectives (Instrumental Rationality model). The following section will explain more about these two models of effectiveness in higher education institutions.

7. Effectiveness in Higher Education

Rosser et al. (2003:1) argue that higher education institutions have moved to being increasingly accountable for measurable outcomes. Increasing competition for scarce resources and a decrease in the public's trust in higher education practices have resulted in demands for universities to demonstrate their productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. This may be seen, however, as a significant change in the way the effectiveness of universities is viewed.

Thus Cameron (1978) identifies that higher education institutions have a tradition of resistance to assessments of their effectiveness. College and university staff claim that universities are unlike other types of organizations and, therefore, traditional approaches to assessment are not applicable. Cameron argues that while judgments about college and university effectiveness must occur regularly (for example, by agencies, students, faculty members, parents, funders and employers), no universal criteria of effectiveness have ever been identified, and the meaning of effectiveness in higher education remains unclear. Nevertheless, Cameron (1986) proposes criteria to measure effectiveness in higher education institutions. The most prominent is the use of 'reputation ratings' by peers or experts (e.g. faculty members, deans, senior scholars, corporate executives). The second criterion is citation counts of faculty members in institutions. The other four most prevalent criteria used to rate effectiveness in colleges and universities comprise faculty awards and honours, student achievements after graduation, national exam scores of new students and institutional resources.

Cameron (ibid.) holds that one of the most important factors that affects organizational effectiveness is the institutional strategy and how it contributes to the achievement of organizational goals. He suggests that such strategies may lead to positive change in effectiveness. Those institutions with an external and proactive emphasis are more successful than those whose strategies are reactive and are orientated toward internal institutional affairs.

Cameron (1986:9) highlights the importance of the need to reinforce the value of human resources inside the organization and the human resource strategy as a managerial strategy. He argues that the major predictors of improving effectiveness are factors under the control of managers (e.g. strategic actions) and the use of managerial techniques that help in improving organizational effectiveness. This is significant for our discussion of the role of HRM departments in universities.

Smart and Hamm (1993) conclude that Cameron's dimensions of organizational effectiveness represent key management and institutional performance indicators for higher education's organizational effectiveness, but argue that there are other factors that influence effectiveness (e.g. the decision making process, organizational culture and managerial practices). They also suggest that human resource practices and strategy are important for organizational effectiveness. There seems to be some support here for a notion that there is a change in emphasis in higher education from a Stakeholder Satisfaction Model of OE to an Instrumental Rationality Model. Certainly higher education in the UK (and elsewhere) has experienced a decline in resource allocation and staff–student ratios, as well as attempts to

transplant managerial techniques drawn from the private sector (see, for example, Barry et al., 2003).

Barry et al. (2003) point to an increasing emphasis on the managerialist perspective and on marketization in the sector. Significantly, these changes involve performance management targets and the introduction of systems of appraisal in the context of reduced resources and increased competition. They conclude that from the academic staff's perspective, NPM may be seen as a governmental initiative and a means to facilitate a growth in student numbers and financial revenues. However, whilst this analysis is now well established, the views of HRM professionals in HEIs are less well explored.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, there was a presentation of the theoretical background of the concept of rationalization according to Weber. Weber (1978) distinguishes instrumental rationality from communicative and substantive rationality. He indicates that instrumental rationality works to take people from their own system of values to share the pattern of organizational values. In contrast, communicative and substantive rationality are directed by a person's self-values that guide organizational members' behaviour (Weber, 1978:25).

In the discussion, it has been proposed that there are two models of OE which can be applied to public sector organizations, such as HEIs: one model that is based mainly on balancing the demands of different stakeholders and another model that is focused mainly on the achievement of given objectives. The first model can be related to political, social and communicative forms of

rationality, and the second to notions of instrumental/technical and economic rationality in organizations.

It is clear from the previous discussion that rationality is not always managerially implied, particularly in the public sector, and political, cultural and economic factors could influence the rationality perspective.

Figure 8 below represents a summary of the concepts associated with each of the models.

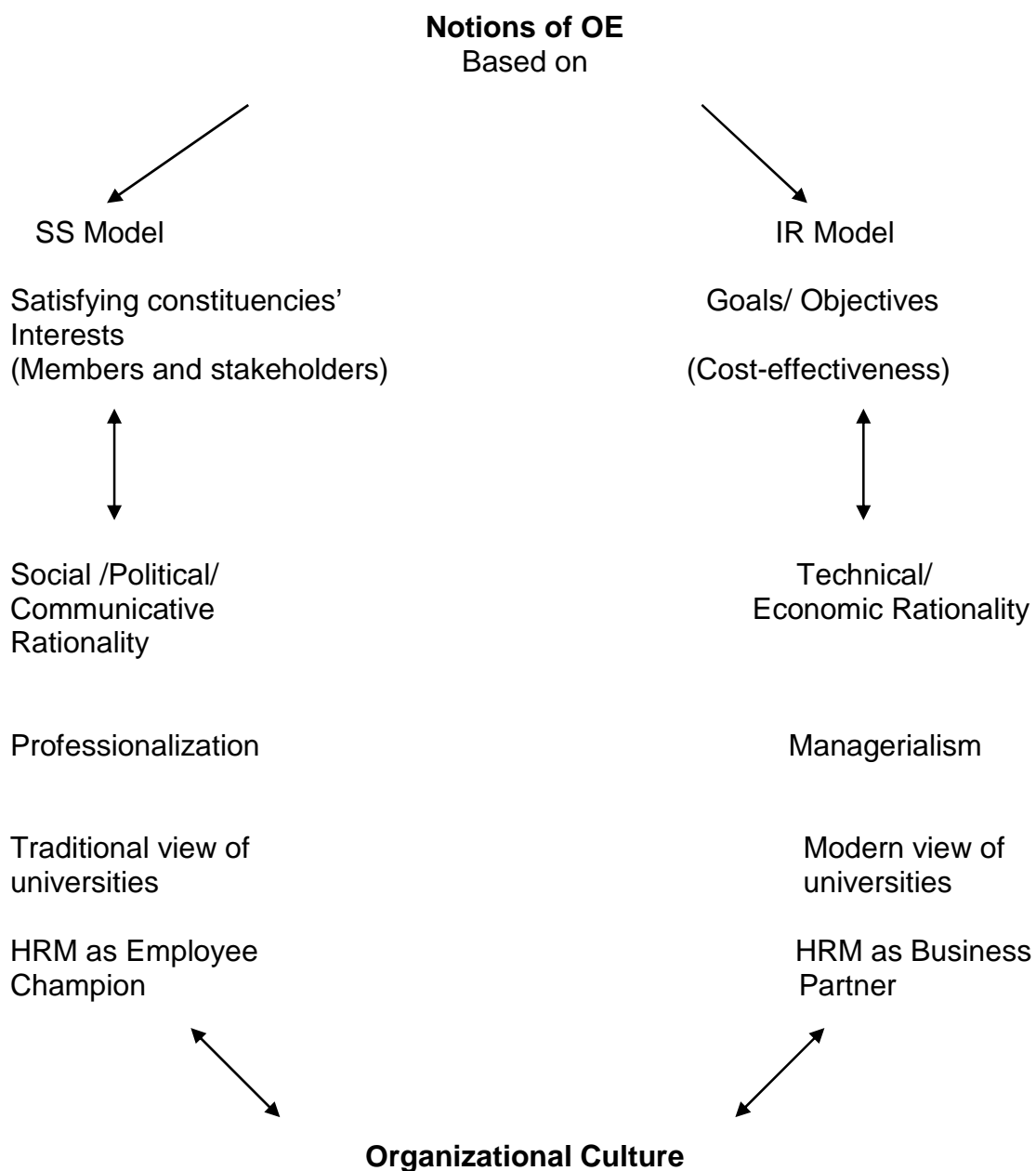


Figure 8 : Definitions of organizational effectiveness in HE

The NPM may then be seen as an attempt to influence public sector organizations to move their cultural emphasis from the Stakeholder Satisfaction model to the Instrumental Rationality model. Similarly, this might well be accompanied by HRM departments in HEIs shifting their main focus from the role of Employee Champion to that of Strategic Partner. Such developments would represent a significant change from the traditional model of higher education institutions as organizations that seek, primarily, to balance the needs of their stakeholders. In sum, one of the most significant changes in the way we think about universities today is in how to identify their success (Shattock, 2003). Given all these changes to the HE system in the UK, universities do not all start from the same position and they are different in many respect (historically, locationally, and financially), and as a result their position could be very different.

There is some evidence that the change in HRM's role in an organization will face much resistance (Driscoll and Morris, 2001). Organizational culture is one of the factors that can facilitate or resist change in an organization (Jung et al., 2009). The literature focuses extensively on the attitudes of public sector professionals, including academic staff, to these developments. However, the views of HRM professionals toward change in the HRM role under NPM have been explored less widely, if at all. Due partly to this lack of research in the literature, this thesis will go on to explore the point of view of HRM professionals in UK HEIs toward HRM reform and organizational effectiveness, in order to contribute to theoretical and practical studies.

The next chapter will illustrate the role of managing organizational culture in HRM reform and its relationship with OE.

Chapter Five:

Organizational Culture

1. Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapters, public sector organizations have sought to be more business orientated, customer focused, service focused and more flexible. However, there are some factors affecting an institution's ability to respond to change effectively and to achieve these objectives. Organizational culture (OC) is one such factor that has become central to public sector reforms (Jung et al., 2009). Although there is a call in the literature for wide-scale cultural change in public sector organizations in order for them to change effectively after applying NPM (Parker and Bradley, 2000), there is an argument that changing public sector culture is the main challenge in applying public sector reform (Wilcocks and Harrow, 1990).

In this chapter the concept of organizational culture is analysed and, in particular, the idea of the 'management' of OC will be presented in a critical way to highlight different perspectives in the literature. There will also be a discussion about managing culture in the higher education sector. This is achieved via a consideration of the role of HRM professionals in managing organizational culture that includes consideration of organizational identity.

2. Definition of organizational culture

Williams (1983:87) states that culture is '*one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language*'. He argues that the difficulties of defining culture relate not just to its '*intricate historical development*' but also to its impact on intellectual disciplines and '*systems of thought*'. Williams (ibid.) presents various definitions of culture from different perspectives and in different languages, and these variations in definition may contribute to the

argument regarding the complexity of finding a fixed or broadly agreed definition of culture.

Smircich's definition of culture indicates that:

'In a particular situation the set of meanings that evolves gives a group its own ethos, or distinctive character, which is expressed in patterns of belief (ideology), activity (norms and rituals), language and other symbolic forms through which organization members both create and sustain their view of the world and image of themselves in the world. The development of a world view with its shared understanding of group identity, purpose and direction are products of the unique history, personal interactions and environmental circumstances of the group.' (Smircich, 1983: 56)

The previous definition of culture includes several aspects (i.e. meanings, beliefs and a worldview) and uses several words or phrases (such as activities and environmental circumstances). The definition explores how culture represents the ethos and unique personality of a group of people that create its identity and its relationship with other groups. So, this definition stresses a lot of studies and assumes that culture is both a shared and a unique phenomenon (Martin, 2002:61).

Martin (2002) presents different definitions of culture which cover different aspects (i.e. meanings, values and a way of thinking). She argues that these definitions vary in terms of considering culture as a shared or a unique phenomenon and in terms of the depth of study they use in exploring culture.

According to Schein (1991: 247), culture is *'a pattern of shared assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked*

well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, is to be taught to new members of the group as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.'

In this definition, culture is seen as a shared, common framework for a human group, and Schein suggests that one cannot define culture without defining the experience and history of this group of people. He argues that culture can be shared between all organizational members and taught to new members as well.

An early definition offered by Jaques (1951:251) suggests that organizational culture is *the shared way of thinking* for organizational members. He defines it as a:

'traditional way of thinking and doing things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all members, and which the new members must learn and at least partially accept, in order to be accepted into the services of the firm'.

According to this view, organizational culture is a shared and accepted way of thinking among organizational members. Considering culture as a shared way of thinking could be hard to apply, particularly if organizational culture clashes with individual culture. So, this definition does not consider the conflict that could be happening between different subcultures in the organization (i.e. managers, employees, etc.).

Following this definition, Schein (1985) defines OC as *'A set of shared values, beliefs, assumptions and practices that shape and guide members' attitude and behaviour in the organization.'*

Similarly, Schraeder et al. (2005) argue that *'The culture of an organization has a profound influence on the behaviour of individuals within the*

organization because it represents a set of values and norms that affects organization members' commitments towards achieving organization objectives.'

The previous definitions argue that organizational culture is a set of shared values, beliefs and assumptions that influence and 'guide' the behaviour of organizational members. The difficulty in achieving this objective is in finding how the culture of the organization can create experiences that direct and guide the employees to behave in ways that are consistent with its values.

Maanen and Schien (1979) indicate that new organizational members always bring with them their own values and beliefs which have been taken from family, community, church and school. Once they become organizational members, their values and beliefs might clash with those of the organization, and in some cases they need to align these values and beliefs with the organizational ones. They claim that new organizational members have been taught the main principles and roles of work through the 'socialization' process in the organization, which may help them to be engaged with the work environment and allow them to ask about how the work is to be performed. This is intended to create a pattern of work in the organization to 'institutionalize' new members. The responsibility of managers is always to attempt to develop this pattern of work into shared values and beliefs (culture).

Culture as a sharing phenomenon not only means that culture should be agreed among organizational members; it also allows differences among them in terms of how they perceive knowledge and experience in their own

unique way according to their different cultural background (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006:178). This leads to another aspect of defining organizational culture that concerns the subjectivity or objectivity in interpreting meanings. Martin (2004:2) argues that culture consists of:

'The patterns of meanings that link organizational formal practices, informal practices, rituals and physical arrangements, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in bitter conflict between groups and sometimes in webs of ambiguity, paradox and contradiction'.

It seems from the previous definition that culture is central to all aspects of organizational practices and that it could influence how people in organizations think, feel and act according to their beliefs and the meanings they attach to aspects of the organization. Meanings refer to *'how an object or an utterance is interpreted'* (Alvesson, 2002:4). Although Martin's definition of culture, which is in terms of meanings or understanding, emphasizes subjective interpretations, Alvesson (ibid.) argues that in culture studies there is a focus on defining culture as *'socially shared meanings'* among organizational members and not so much as *'personal meanings'*, and, as indicated earlier, this ignores the individual interpretation of meanings from each person's point of view and according to their personal experience and cultural background.

The previous set of definitions suggests that organizational culture is a shared phenomenon (Jacques, 1951; Martin 2004; Schein, 1985), but there are definitions of organizational culture that stress the conflict between different

points of view in the organization rather than considering culture as a shared phenomenon. For example, Mills (1988:366) argues:

'Culture arrangements, of which organizations are an essential segment, are seen as manifestations of a process of ideational development located within a context of definite material conditions. It is a context of dominance (males over females/owners over workers) but also of conflict and contradiction in which class and gender, autonomous but over determined, are vital dynamics. Ideas and cultural arrangements confront actors as a series of rules of behaviour; rules that, in their contradictions, may variously be enacted, followed, or resisted.' (Mills, 1988:366)

This definition highlights the differences and conflicts between organizational members that could influence their behaviour and experience in the organization. So culture does not necessarily imply a uniformity of values (Feldman, 1991:154), and this could allow for ambiguity because there is no clear unity or framework between organizational groups (Martin, 2002).

There are different perspectives that consider culture either as a dynamic or as a stable phenomenon. Ogbonna and Wilkinson (2003) argue that organizational culture has been viewed in the literature as a dynamic phenomenon in that it is created and re-enacted by and through the interactions between organizational members. This represents another aspect of the difficulties that come from the argument that there is a lacuna in the deeper understanding of how people and organizations function and interact in terms of culture (Alvesson, 2002).

Considering culture as a dynamic phenomenon ignores the perspective that culture represents the ethos and character of individuals, which are not easy to change.

From another perspective, Schien (2010:3) indicates that culture *'implies stability and rigidity'* in terms of how we are supposed to perceive, feel and act in a society and organization, that these are not easy to maintain or change, and that this creates a more stable nature for culture rather than a dynamic one.

Schien (ibid.) argues that the difficulties in defining organizational culture come from the argument that there are many types of culture: macro-culture, which is related to the cultures of nations, ethnic and religious groups; organizational culture, which is related to different types of organizations; subculture, which reflects occupational groups within organizations; and micro-culture, which is concerned with systems within or outside organizations. Identifying these types of culture, and determining and considering their effect on and relationships with other types of culture make it difficult to define culture.

To sum up, it seems clear that researchers and management find it complicated to define culture. This difficulty may be because culture is concerned with meanings, values and norms that are intangible aspects and may be difficult to change over time (Rashid et al., 2004) or because there are widely varying types of scientific disciplines and research orientations involved in organizational culture studies, and this makes the field very heterogeneous (Alvesson, 2002).

Following Alvesson (ibid.), I believe that organizational culture is significant as a *'way of understanding organizational life'*. In the HE sector, the interaction between the culture of managers and academics represents a distinctive

richness and variation within the sector. I support the argument of Alvesson (ibid.:8) that culture represents the framework of the interaction and relationships between different groups. He argues:

'Culture is not primarily 'inside' people's heads, but somewhere 'between' the heads of a group of people where symbols and meanings are publicly expressed, e.g. in work group interactions, in board meetings but also in material objects' (Alvesson, 2002:8).

The debate regarding organizational culture and the degree to which it can be managed or not will be discussed in the following section.

3. Managing organizational culture

3.1 Culture can be managed

The literature on managing organizational culture has developed in several directions. A starting point for many writers and management gurus is to assume that culture can be controlled and governed by managers (i.e. culture can be managed) (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982). This section of the literature recognizes culture as an organizational variable, asset or element, and the main argument of this stream of thought is that culture can be controlled, managed and changed.

Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982), from their reviews of data over a period of time for American organizations, argue that there is a set of features commonly found among excellent or the best-run companies. These features indicate the importance of a manager's actions towards culture change; the importance of autonomy and entrepreneurship; and the importance of encouraging individual employees to deliver

productivity in an organization. These features are the organizational characteristics behind highly successful US firms and create their corporate cultures. Excellence researchers (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982) argue that taking these features into consideration could create a shared cultural framework that reflects positively on the organizational ability to maximize organizational performance.

In other words, Excellence writers are engaged in an attempt at '*engineering values*' (Martin, 2004:3) in an effort to secure employee commitment in order to increase productivity or profitability. These objectives could be achieved, they argue, through the development of common, corporate-wide values that organizational members may share.

Peters and Waterman (1982) indicate that managing organizational culture aims to win '*the hearts and minds of employees*' so as to gain their commitment towards achieving organizational objectives that could impact positively on organizational performance.

This stream of thinking is mainly concerned with managing and controlling culture, and it relies on the assumption that the success of cultural change (end) depends on the ability of managers (as culture creators) to link individual culture to an organization's strategic directions and objectives (means). This direction of thought supports the argument that culture is something that an organization *has* (Smircich, 1983).

Ogbonna and Wilkinson (2003) indicate that this stream of thinking could be called 'the optimistic stream'. They suggest that it is the one most associated

with practitioners, that it is a functionalist perspective that suggests culture can be managed and controlled, and that it may be used as a managerial tool (means) to persuade employees to work harder. From this perspective, culture can be created and manipulated for a particular organizational outcome (end). In this case, culture could be seen as a predictable and observable factor in organizations (Dixon and Dougherty, 2010).

According to Weber, the relationship between rationality and culture came from the main assumption explained in chapter four, which is that rationality establishes a world of control and calculations that has different values. These values stress impersonal procedures and set restricted and bureaucratic rules. It is clear from chapter four that Weber argues that rationality is also characterized by complicated and disordered values and ideas and it has an influence by its use of economic, political and intellectual values. These different, complicated values may make it difficult for managers to understand and manage organizational culture.

Peters and Waterman (1982) indicate that through processes of recruitment and socialization, for example, employees are selected and trained to encourage development of a 'love of product' concept, and social interactions and communications are enhanced as a way to gain employees' commitments to organizational objectives (Peter and Waterman, 1982:75).

According to this perspective, managers are managing culture not through applying a strict calculation and economic standard (IR model), but through defining culture as a 'socialization process' (SS model) that takes place within the organization and is usually considered to commence with the recruitment

and selection process (Schein, 1988:21). From the SS model perspective, organizational culture involves many dimensions of socialization between groups and individuals, and all these social relations impact on the values that managers want to shape and to share in the organizational (culture) (ibid.:21). Managing organizational culture from a substantive rationality and communicative rationality perspective (SS model) indicates that research and practice in this tradition are mainly focused on exploring the importance of employee acceptance and commitment to the organization's values. Based on this argument, it seems that the role of managers, particularly HRM, in managing OC based on substantive and communicative rationality may include playing an Employee Champion role that mainly focuses on ensuring employees' engagement with and participation in organizational decisions (means) and achieving organizational objectives (ends) (Ulrich, 1997).

Weber indicates that rationality stresses control and calculation in the organization. So, if actors (managers) depend on instrumental rationality as a means to manage organizational culture, this leads to set economic and quantitative goals being achieved. This perspective focuses on how the decision makers (actors) play the main role in managing organizational culture. The relation between organizational culture and leadership is more significant in this situation (Schein, 1988) because it means that culture can be created from the top down by managers as 'culture creators'. In this situation, this perspective could be related to Ulrich's model of HRM, as the Business Partner role seems to work to achieve strategic goals for an organization. It represents the role that focuses mainly on achieving economic goals (ends) (Ulrich, 1998). The management role in shaping organizational

culture is seen as vitally important, implying that management must be cautious when putting decisions into place that allow for the sharing of values that are based on achieving economic rationality (Urrabazo, 2006). Urrabazo (ibid.) argues that:

'Managers must realize their function in establishing and maintaining an organization's culture. The attitudes and behaviours of an institution begin with its leadership.' (Urrabazo, ibid.:193)

One of the criticisms of the 'culture can be managed' perspective is that individuals' values and norms are invisible, and this creates difficulties in managing organizational culture. Schein (1983:14), for example, argues that:

'Culture is not the overt behaviour or visible artefacts that one might observe if one were to visit the company. It is not even the philosophy or value system which the founder may articulate or write down in various charters. Rather it is the assumptions which lie behind the values and which determine behaviour patterns and the visible artefacts such as architecture, office layout, dress code and so on.'

The main idea here is that employees have their own hidden values and norms, and they may behave according to these invisible values. This shows that one of the main difficulties in managing organizational culture is its 'effective invisibility' (Brewis and Jack, 2009:234).

Although Peters and Waterman (1982:323) assume that the establishment of 'a set of shared values and rules by management would be necessary and sufficient to ensure that employees would act autonomously but also compliantly and responsibly so as to maximise corporate performance', managers may have limited capacity to understand and control values and

assumptions of employees which are '*deeply embedded in the subconscious*' (Willmott, 2003:75).

Another criticism of the 'culture can be managed' perspective is related to employees' resistance, which may happen as a response to management attempts to change their strong individual culture or group culture (Willmott, 1993).

3.2 Can culture be manipulated?

The other perspective that answers the question of whether and how organizational culture can be managed relates to the 'Culture IS' theory. According to this perspective, culture is a 'root metaphor' rather than a variable (Smircich, 1983). Culture in this case is unique; an organization's culture is not easy to observe, and organizational culture does not change as a result of managerial manipulation (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998).

This direction in the literature rejects the view that culture could be a directly manageable variable. The researchers of this tradition argue that culture cannot be viewed as something the organization *has*, but is more appropriately something the organization *is* (Smircich, 1983; Parker, 2000).

According to this view, culture has been treated as a metaphor for an organization, not as a variable to be managed.

Ogbonna and Harris (1998) suggest that this stream of thinking may be called the pessimistic view of cultural change, which depends on the assumption that managers cannot manage or change culture. They argue that culture is

too rich, complex and inherent within the organization to be managed or to be effectively influenced so as to ensure a prescriptive way.

According to this perspective, managers have a limited capacity to effectively understand and influence the deeply held values and beliefs of employees because of the invisibility of their own values and beliefs (Willmott, 1993) and also because they have a life outside the organization that influences their interpretation of meanings in a subjective way.

Willmott (1993) argues that applying management concepts like Total Quality Management (TQM) and HRM is intended to align individual and organizational needs and objectives through establishing and developing a framework of values and thoughts:

'Corporate culture expects and requires employees to internalize the new values of "quality", "flexibility" and "value added"—to adopt and cherish them as their own.' (ibid.:519)

This view may raise interesting questions in relation to the role of managers in organizational culture.

Willmott indicates that organizational culture *'advocates a systematic approach to creating and strengthening core organizational values in a way that excludes all other values'* (Willmott, ibid.:524). Although the individuality of each employee should be respected, he argues (2003) *'that ideas of autonomy, individuality and/or self-determination are seized upon for the instrumental purpose of extending and deepening control over employees' hearts and minds'* (Willmott, 2003:75). This could lead to more resistance

from employees to organizational culture and more calls for their individual autonomy.

Willmott (ibid.) argues that in strong organizational cultures *'individuals explore diverse systems of values and make a deliberate choice, or series of choices, between and within them'* (Willmott, 1993:533). On the other hand, this could create confusion for employees trying to identify which starting point (value) they have to work from – is it their individual values or the organizational values? (Willmott, 2003: 77).

Finally, the third stream of managing organizational culture rejects both the 'culture can be managed' and the 'culture may be manipulated' points of view. The researchers from this perspective try to find a middle point between the last two paradigms (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998). These researchers argue that whilst the culture of organization can and does change the impact on the organization, it cannot be controlled by management actions and activities (Willmott, 1993). This supports Parker's argument that *'culture is managed in the sense of a managerial attempt at intervention, but the outcomes of this intervention can never be totally controlled'* (Parker, 2000:230). This view is different to the 'culture is' view, which perceives that culture is an asset or an organizational variable that managers can predict, control and manage.

Meyerson and Martin (1987) offer three different ways of thinking about culture and culture change in organizations. Although they support the view that 'organizations are culture', they present three paradigmatic views on culture. The 'Integration' paradigm, or a 'Leader generated' paradigm, claims that culture is mainly based on the idea that culture is an integrating

mechanism that is shared by numerous organizations or groups and/or is unique to one of them. Meyerson and Martin (Ibid.:624) indicate that culture in this paradigm is the '*social and normative glue that holds together a potentially diverse group of organizational members*'. This paradigm is based on the idea of consistency across cultural members. The main assumptions are that managers are culture creators and that they, as organizational member from various levels and divisions of an organizational hierarchy share their views so that, in this case, the managers' own personal values are the primary source of culture content. The main idea of this paradigm is that it recognizes only culture that is consistent with each other and only that values are shared (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998). This means that culture within the Integration paradigm is clear for everyone and it excludes unclear meanings and confusions (ambiguity). As indicated earlier, this is difficult to achieve in reality due to the differences in personal interpretation of meanings and people's varied experiences and cultural backgrounds.

Cultural change within this paradigm is usually driven by the values of top management, and so it is seen as easier to control. According to this view, culture can be seen as one of many organizational variables that it is possible to manipulate. The supporters of this paradigm (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982) believe that top management should lead, or at least control, the cultural change. Meyerson and Martin (1987) criticize this paradigm by questioning how culture is viewed within it. Is it seen in terms of 'surface level' values or does it include a deeper level of values and norms that affect behaviour and could force and resist change?

Meyerson and Martin (ibid.) claim that culture is an organizational metaphor and that it is not an organizational variable that could be managed and controlled by managers.

The second paradigm is the 'Differentiation' paradigm. This approach indicates the importance of recognizing the cultures of subunits, groups and individuals in the organization. It is mainly based on the idea of differentiation and diversity. According to this paradigm, *'organization is not a single, monolithic dominant culture. Instead culture is a collection of values and manifestations, some of which may be contradictory'* (Meyerson and Martin, ibid:630). According to this approach, the organization contains many and different hierarchies and class, radical, ethical, and gender classifications that create nested subcultures. These subcultures may be inconsistent with the dominant culture of the organization or sometimes enhance it.

The Differentiation paradigm is based on multiple sources of culture rather than being a sole source of culture and being, as such, a leader. This paradigm supports the idea of isolating each level of subculture to reduce the amount of ambiguity. Cultural change within this paradigm will be more *'localized'* for each level or group rather than having an organization-wide culture. It allows each organizational subunit to react and respond to an organization's overall environments, but at the same time it causes problems in creating organization-wide change because each level or group has different meanings and, accordingly, different objectives (Meyerson and Martin, ibid:631). This paradigm focuses on the assumption that managing

culture has a localized impact, but is not predictable and is not organization-wide or controlled.

The third paradigm is the Ambiguity paradigm. It is different from the 'Integration' paradigm, where there is more focus on shared and consistent culture. This paradigm holds that treating ambiguity is important in order to deal with the different cultures and subcultures. In paradigm three, ambiguity could be accepted, and there is a chance to legitimate complexity and lack of clarity. In the Ambiguity paradigm, cultures could be seen as not totally shared and integrated but characterized more by ambiguity. Therefore, people share some points of view and ignore others.

Meyerson and Martin (1987) conclude that researchers and organizational members should be aware of all three paradigms and that this would avoid the 'blind spots' that are associated with considering just a single perspective. They conclude that it could be difficult to consider all perspectives and to be aware of different point of views at the same time, and that this is one of the reasons for complexity in managing and understanding organizational culture.

In discussing the degree to which culture can be managed, it may make sense to determine from the start what the meaning of culture is. Parker (2000) argues that it is impossible to define culture in the sense of creating a set of shared belief in the organization. He explains that this is so for many reasons: creating a shared meaning for different individuals and groups in the organization is difficult due to variations in their interpretation of meanings and social interactions due to their different cultural backgrounds. The second reason is that managing culture based on activities designed and put in place

by managers may not be accepted by the other groups in the organization. The final reason is that the organization is affected by economic, political and social factors that are dynamic and changeable over time, and it is hard to isolate the organization from these changes.

Parker (2000:230) continues by arguing that once organizational members have been institutionalized in the organization, this means that there is a cultural pattern they follow, but, at the same time, resistance to this culture is '*always possible*' and managers' objectives may be misunderstood.

From the previous discussion, it is very clear that the culture management concept should be treated with caution because each organization has its own uniqueness, people, history, technology, geography and so on. All these elements produce sets of ideas and values that are unique.

Managers play an important role in understanding employees and the cultural background of the organization, and this may help them (managers) to predict and understand their values, expectations and behaviours.

In conclusion, the discussion presented here seeks to provide a historical and philosophical analysis of perspectives on managing organizational culture. It highlights the question about organizational culture in the public sector that I will discuss later. This raises issues about the attitudes of HR professionals' perspectives in UK HEIs towards managing cultures and how they experience and understand managing organizational culture within public sector reform in their institutions, and provides an important lens for the empirical work yet to come.

4. Managing organizational culture in the public sector

The earlier literature indicates that successful implementation of NPM will turn the public sector into a more business-like form that can deal with a more competitive environment and shift the traditional focus from a culture of complying with rules (communicative rationality) to a culture of managing for outcomes (Instrumental Rationality) (Hood, 1991 &1995). Similarly, Zammuto and Krakower (1991) maintain that managing culture from a communicative rationality perspective is achieved through building good relationships with employees (SS model) rather than seeking to exercise control over them (IR model) (Zammuto and Krakower, *ibid.*).

As indicated in chapter two, NPM represents the key philosophy that is used to understand change in public sector organizations (Boyne, 2002). Organizational culture could be seen as an important tool for applying New Public Management. Jung et al. (2009:108), for example, suggest that: *'Organizational Culture is widely considered to be one of the most significant factors in reforming and modernizing public administration and service delivery.'*

On the other hand, organizational culture represents a major challenge to the application of NPM. Driscoll and Morris (2001:806), for example, suggest that:

'If behavioural change requires a change in organizational culture, then the public sector might be in need of a cultural revolution.'

Similarly, Ulrich et al. (2008) argue that culture change means that a firm is trying to shift its brand to be more connected with customers' new expectations. Buono et al. (1985:482) argue that organizational culture is a

powerful determinant of individual and group behaviour. They suggest that it affects all aspects of an organization, including the way in which people interact with each other, how they perform their work, the types of decisions made in a firm, its organizational policies and procedures and strategy considerations. Driscoll and Morris (2001:803) also make the point that:

'Unsurprisingly, (OC) was also embraced by public service reformists who saw it as a vehicle, via the 'New Public Management (NPM)', to shift public service provision from a stable bureaucratic hierarchy form to a more fluid customer-oriented one.'

The argument is that shifting concern from traditional public management to a more market- and commercial-based orientation in the public sector requires the underlying values and beliefs systems of the organization's members (culture) to undergo a similar change (Ferlie et al., 1996). Although managing organizational culture is a key part of the transformational change agenda, and is considered as the fundamental determinant of employee behaviour and commitment (Driscoll and Morris, 2001:804) that could help in achieving effectiveness, it is a complicated concept for researchers and management that creates challenges in defining, dealing with and managing it. These complexities mean that cultural change management raises questions about how managers and, in this research, HRM professionals in UK HEIs understand and experience their role in managing organizational culture.

Parker and Bradley (2000) discuss in detail the relationship between public sector reform and the culture shift combined with this reform. They indicate that the traditional model of the public sector is characterized by a lack of rules and procedures, structured hierarchies and formalized decision-making processes. In criticizing the traditional model of managing public reform, they

argue that the public sector has a lack of orientation towards adaptability, change and risk taking and, therefore, a lack of orientation towards outcomes such as productivity and efficiency. They explain that stability and predictability are the main features of this traditional model. They argue that managing organizational culture seeks to establish a good relationship with stakeholders and members to get their commitment towards achieving organizational objectives (SS model). Moreover, Parker and Bradley (2000) argue that as a result of political control and pressure to change, public sector organizations have had blurred objectives and goals based on achieving economic output, whilst the autonomy of public sector managers to pursue organizational goals has been constrained due to their following political and economic forces.

As indicated in chapter two, from the 1970s there was significant pressure on public sector organizations arising from economic conditions and pressure from governments to cut costs (Osborne and McLaughlin, 2002). This led to the design of a proposed model of management that was developed to overcome the 'deficiencies' of the traditional model of public administration, to provide a basis for increased productivity and to achieve economic objectives in the delivery of public services (Parker and Bradley, 2000). The new model (Managerial model) of the public sector seeks to improve performance management. It is based on the belief that efficiency and effectiveness of public sector organizations could be improved through the application of management techniques which aim to ensure that value for money and responsiveness to public needs (Instrumental Rationality) dominate. This led to a call for a culture shift, which was found in NPM.

The above discussion indicates that NPM may encourage public organizations to move from a communicative rationality of managing organizational culture towards an Instrumental Rationality, which aims to achieve economic objectives through cost-effectiveness.

It also reflects a movement from paternalism, where there is a family-like relationship between management and an individual that could reduce the tension between them and create a social and communicative relationship among organizational members, to instrumentalism, which reflects setting policies, purposes and strategies to achieve political and economic objectives.

However, the literature review indicates that there is a debate around NPM's role in cultural change in the public sector. While a group of the literature (e.g. Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Driscoll and Morris, 2001) indicates that NPM provides a dynamic organizational culture that facilitates the shift in the public sector from an administrative to a managerial approach, there is a group of literature that raises a concern that management techniques associated with NPM will conflict with the attitudes, values and culture within public sector organizations and that there are many difficulties associated with managing the public sector culture (e.g. Wilcocks and Harrow, 1990; Oswick and Grant, 1996).

The first group of literature indicates that NPM is looking to manage culture change by applying private sector management practices and philosophy to achieve end goal objectives (Instrumental Rationality). In order to achieve these objectives, there is a requirement for a strong positive attitude towards change and more attention being given to applying the management tools of

organizational culture that aim to achieve quality and performance management objectives.

The second group of studies supports the argument that applying NPM in the public sector will lead to conflicts between current values and cultures and the imported ones from the private sector (Wilcocks and Harrow, 1990). Rashid et al. (2003) indicate that applying customer service orientation, output focus and greater emphasis on performance will contribute to increasing the level of job stress in public sector organizations. Moreover, Korunga et al. (2003) indicate that the degree and nature of change in the public sector requires the adoption of a new culture that is mainly concerned with increasing focus on quality of service, value for money and performance accountability. Korunga et al. (ibid.) conclude that achieving this requires new skills in managerial practices that can help in shifting organizational culture. They argue that applying HR strategies and practices (such as team work) can help in managing organizational culture.

This debate raises a question about the role of managers, particularly HRM, in public sector organizations. Valle (1999) indicates that HR managers must help their employees to understand the change in the public sector environment and engage them in organizational adaptation; this could be obtained through training to help them to accept and support changes in the organizational culture.

Similarly, Ogbonna and Whipp (1999:80) indicate that:

'Further, organisations wishing to develop and sustain 'strong' cultures would need to pay particular attention to their HR policies to ensure that they are

supportive of the culture they wish to develop and that they feed through to strategic planning. It is the consistency over time in the pursuit of the culturally relative policies that may give rise to a strong culture.'

On the other hand, Driscoll and Morris (2001:814) argue that HRM is becoming the 'guardian' of an outdated culture by reinforcing the behaviours the organization seeks to change.

There is also evidence from the literature that the achievement of HRM objectives requires management of an organization's value system (culture) (Boyett, 1996:27), and there has been increased recognition of the strategic link between HRM practices and policies in helping to create, reinforce and change organizational culture. Watson and Green (1996), for example, analyse in detail the effects of HRM practice on managing organizational culture change. They consider that a team- and customer-orientated structure with a flexible job design helps in adapting to any changes in the organization. They argue that if recruitment is carried out in a systematic way, it is possible to have a strong influence on culture change. Watson and Green (ibid.) illustrate how using various forms of training is a primary tool of culture change that mainly focuses on the long-term benefits of cultural change; practical skills training is concerned with the development of new attitudes and values. They conclude that the communication system is a powerful tool for directing cultural change, for example, staff focus groups, staff surveys and communication meetings.

To conclude, the review of the literature indicates that NPM imported some ideas from the private sector to public organizations, for example, a greater

emphasis on quality management, customer satisfaction measurement, decentralization of management and cost control. NPM emphasizes the change in managing the public sector, which depends on communicative rationality to apply 'managerialist' values, which in turn depend on economic and instrumental rationality and aim to achieve specific goals and objectives in the public sector.

The above discussion of managing cultural change in the public sector highlights the idea that public sector employees may have values and motives that are different from private sector employees. As indicated earlier, public sector employees are working in a stable and predictable environment that creates a culture which supports establishing social and communicative relationships among organizational members and stakeholders (SS model). NPM requires adopting of new activities and techniques in the public sector that, to be successful, require a culture which supports value for money and the achievement of economic objectives (IR model). This conclusion might lead to difficulties for HR professionals facing the introduction of management reforms techniques that derive from the private sector experience. One of the main challenges for HR professionals is to 'create' an appropriate culture, not use an imported one.

5. Managing organizational culture and identity

The consideration of organizational culture is increasingly based on understanding the identity concept. In attempting to understand managing organizational culture in HEIs, it becomes necessary to explore the identity concept and its effect on the relationship between managers and academics.

Ravasi and Schultz (2006) indicate that identity is how we define, express and experience our self. Albert and Whetten (1985) indicate that identity as a concept has two uses. The first one is the scientific concept of identity that is used by scientists to define and characterize certain aspects of the organization. The second concept is used by the organizations themselves as a self-reflective use of identity. Similarly, Parker (2000) indicates that organizational identity reflects the claim about 'us' and 'them' in the organization. Albert and Whetten (1985) explore how unique values and beliefs may help organizational members substantiate their identity and express their unique culture. They argue that from this perspective the relationship between identity and culture is clear (Albert and Whetten, *ibid.*).

Similarly, du Gay (1991) suggests that:

'Excellence in management theory is an attempt to redefine and reconstruct the economic and cultural terrain, and to win social subjects to a new conception of themselves - to turn them into winners, champions and everyday heroes. As much as anything, cultural excellence is a struggle for identities, an attempt to enable all sorts of people, from highest executive to lowest shop floor employee, to see themselves reflected in the emerging conception of the enterprising organization and thus to come increasingly to identify with it.' (du Gay,1991:53-54)

Fiol (1991) indicates that organizational identity helps members make sense of what they do in relation to their understanding of what their organization is (culture).

The identity concept in the HE sector is gaining more attention due to the clash of values between academic identity and the application of NPM that is

looking to 'modernize' the culture of higher education. Winter (2009) indicates that NPM and managerialism reshaped all aspects of academic work and identity to reflect the need for efficiency and a strong managerial culture and to achieve economic goals and profit-making objectives. He shows that there are identity divisions and conflicts between academic identity and professional and managerial work ideology. He identifies that identity in higher education is the *'notion of value fit and organizational situations in which academics and managers' ideological beliefs and values may not overlap in respect to the roles and obligations of academics and the primary purpose of the institution'* (Winter, *ibid*:122).

Winter (*ibid.*) refers to the main characteristics of the university's values, such as institutional autonomy and academic freedom. He argues that academic identity refers to *'the extent to which an individual defines themselves primarily in terms of the organization or as a member of a profession'* (*ibid.*: 122). Academics may have many identities, such as a professional identity and an administrative or managerial identity. They may work to align themselves with these identities or to separate their academic identity from their managerial one. Parker (2000:204) indicates that organizations are not homogeneous in culture or identity terms. This could be one of the challenges in the HE sector as it involves many types of identities that should be treated carefully, such as academic identity and managerial identity.

Albert and Whetten (1985) indicate that traditional academic identity, which is based on professionalism and autonomy, is *'squeezed out'* and replaced or managerialized with a managerial identity that is *'governed by values of*

economic rationality, the primacy of profit, and the minimization of cost' (Albert and Whetten, *ibid.*:281-282). This reflects change within the HE sector and the shift from the SS model, which is based on communicative and substantive rationality, to the IR model, which is based on instrumental and economic rationality.

The relationship between academics and management in the HE sector can be perceived as a matter of occupational/professional identity in terms of *'them who do that, us who do this'* (Parker, 2000:188). Winter (2009) suggests that communication and conversation is a necessary step for academics and managers to take so that they can interact with each other and discuss the practices that could affect them. Weber (*ibid.*) also argues that this dialogue will help to build unifying values and identities in academia.

As outlined in the literature, a central theme in managing UK HEIs has been a decline in public funding and the use of external audits of teaching and research quality (Barry et al., 2007). This also includes the requirement of applying new management techniques and changing organizational culture to be based more on an economic model and to set it apart from the Instrumental Rationality (IR) model.

Although the literature has attempted to examine the understanding and experience of change in academia via academics themselves (Barry et al., *ibid.*), there is an unclear view in the literature about managers' perspectives, particularly HRM professionals' perspectives, regarding the implications of NPM philosophy and practices for HRM reform and the impact of managerialism in the academic sector. The literature search throws up little of

the management point of view regarding public reform in UK HEIs. This thesis, therefore, seeks to contribute to the literature by exploring management, particularly the HR professionals' point of view, regarding HRM reform and organizational effectiveness in UK HEIs. From the academics' point of view, NPM has been initiated by government forces, and it represents a strategy to face the growth of student numbers and to increase financial revenues through applying NPM. On the other hand, applying NPM, from academics' points of view, leads to an increasing workload and more pressure as a result of management reform (Barry et al., *ibid.*).

To clarify which perspective is used in managing organizational culture in HEIs, it is important to highlight that one part of the literature suggests that a number of aspects of culture are specific to universities' academic context and identity because of the special nature of the academic sector and because the role of academic culture in shaping reform is significant (Deem, 2003). So, management style in higher education is different to that in the traditional commercial industrial sectors (Barry et al., 2003). Applying managerialism in the HEI sector means that there is a shift from a culture that is working to defend and promote distinctive accounts of their professionalization and academic freedom and identity (SS model) to one that is working with a managerial identity of managing organizational culture that is seeking to introduce quality and performance management (IR model) (Winter, 2009). This movement faces many challenges due to the special characteristics of academic identity that might resist the managerial point of view.

For example, Dearlove suggests that: *'Academics recognise no boss, choosing to see themselves as individual entrepreneurs, albeit on a steady salary.'* (Dearlove, 2002:267)

Deem (1998) indicates that the key characteristics of shifting from academic professionalization to managerialism include the use of internal cost centres, encouraging competition between employees, the marketization of public sector services and the monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness through measurement of outcomes and individual staff performance (Deem, 1998:50). The important features of this reform include an attempt to manage organizational culture and academic identity and to alter the values of public sector employees to those found in the private sector.

Reviewing the literature of managerialism in UK HEIs and its impact on cultural change leads to the view that HR professionals are responsible for applying HRM functions that could facilitate managing culture change through applying activities that may help in sharing values and beliefs among organizational members.

The discussion about managing organizational culture in the context of managerialism relates to the previous chapter's discussion which highlights the role of instrumental and economic rationality as a basis of organizational effectiveness. This means that managing organizational culture requires more consideration in relation to shifting organizational culture in UK HEIs from a culture that allows more communication between individuals and groups (based on communicative rationality) to a culture that works with regimes

which are designed to control academic work and to ensure the maintenance of quality (IR model).

Winter (2009) argues that university managers need to understand the academic value system and use the leadership strategy that considers these academic values, while at the same time allow for the application of NPM activities in a balanced way between achieving organizational objectives and considering academic culture. A question therefore arises: how can HRM professionals in UK HEIs work to manage academic culture and identity by changing it from being one that encourages academic autonomy to being a culture that accepts and works to apply quality management and performance management and achieve economic goals for universities (managerial identity)?

The empirical section in this thesis will illustrate the HR professionals' perspectives towards these issues, based on the position that an effective HRM function is increasingly important, especially in terms of aligning the NPM culture with organizational outcomes. The argument arising from the above discussion is that there is support for carrying out a cultural assessment before implementing any reform in order to identify potential barriers and to help in designing the implementation programmes.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, organizational culture is a complex and unique term that should be treated in a very cautious way, particularly in the higher education sector where managerial and academic culture are the challenges to applying public reform. As in many other public service organizations, academic work has

been subjected to recent processes of rationalization involving an emphasis on higher productivity and accountability. It seems that the role of HRM is crucial in understanding organizational culture, especially in terms of public sector reform. My thesis seeks to find answers to the following research questions: How do the HRM professionals (as part of the highest management level in UK HEIs) experience the importance of managing organizational culture? How do they experience and understand the approach they follow to manage organizational culture (based on communicative rationality or instrumental rationality)? The general theme that this thesis seeks to explore is the nature of HRM reform in UK HEIs, derived from HR professionals' perspectives.

In this chapter, managing organizational culture has been discussed in a critical way. The chapter's objective is to bring out how the literature considers managing organizational culture, particularly in the public sector, while highlighting the role of HRM in culture change. The chapter also shows how managing organizational culture in higher education institutions affects organizational identity. Finally, the chapter explains some of my research questions that arose from the discussions in the literature review. The following chapters will consider the research methods, philosophy and strategy that may help to find some answers to the previous questions.

Chapter Six:

Methodology

1. Introduction

A review of the relevant literature indicates that there is a group of studies (e.g. Boyne et al, 1999; Truss, 2008) that argues that the role of HRM is crucial to achieve NPM objectives through focusing on improving service quality, maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of provision and directing the strategy and practices towards being more business-like. That said, another stream of the literature indicates that there are many difficulties in the path of achieving these objectives (Charles, 2003; Koch, 1999). The aim of the thesis is to explore how applying NPM in UK HEIs may affect HRM's role and the attitudes of HRM managers to achieving organizational effectiveness.

In order to achieve this, this thesis follows the approach used by Eisenhardt (1989) to build theory from case studies. Eisenhardt (ibid.:534) sets out some steps that could help to define research questions, select appropriate research methods and contribute to theory. Within this chapter, I reflect on how my experience as a researcher in a social setting has changed and challenged me by exploring the concept of reflexivity and how reflexivity affected my approach to research.

2. Definition of research questions

Eisenhardt (1989) indicates that defining research questions represents the first step in developing theory from case study research. The clear definition of research questions and of the research focus is important, and it is also important to specify the kind of organization to be approached and the kind of data to be gathered. This allows the researcher to approach the work in '*knowledge base*' (Eisenhardt and Santos, 2002) because clear determination

of research questions and research processes facilitates understanding the research setting and developing confidence in the research findings.

My first experience of research as a researcher was for an MSc dissertation with the title, 'Leadership style and its relationship with organizational commitment.' My research interest concerned change and management. So, within my PhD journey, I developed the research idea to be related to these themes. I developed my research idea with regard to the impact of public sector reform on HR professionals, what their attitudes towards the implementation of NPM are and how they deal with the new vision and practices that are combined within reform. My review of the literature indicates that there is also a need to explore the extent to which HRM staff understand the reform in public sector, and this may enable a better understanding of HRM's role and its contribution to the achievement of organizational effectiveness. I decided that the objective of my research is to investigate the HR professional's perspective regarding their own role and how this has changed over time.

Based on the literature review presented in this thesis, I was aware that there had been a change in HRM philosophy and practices within UK HEI. I planned the research in order to investigate this change and identify the main difficulties in applying NPM in UK HEI, focusing on the perspective of the managers as a change and policy agent. Thus, this thesis considers the assumption that there is a movement from the Stakeholder Satisfaction (SS) model in managing HRM in UK HEI to the Instrumental Rationality model (IR).

The findings of this research contribute to previous work by focusing on the change in HRM from the managers' perspective, and the findings section in this thesis presents a critical discussion regarding change in management and organizational effectiveness with reference to managing organizational culture and identity.

As indicated in the literature review, applying NPM in the public sector is a problematic issue because of the special characteristics of this sector, such as the unique nature of the higher education service, the nature of academic work and its ethos (Dent et al., 2004). I decided that the starting point of this research would be to explore HRM managers' attitudes to how HRM's role had changed in HEIs and how this change was affecting organizational effectiveness.

3. Case study

The research strategy of this thesis is based on the analysis of case studies. A case study as a research strategy focuses on '*understanding the dynamics present within single settings*' (Eisenhardt, 1989: 534). Case study research is '*the study of a specific bounded system e.g. person or an institution*' (Holliday, 2002:18). It is the study of a social phenomenon, in a natural environment, using multiple data sources and describing multiple perspectives (Yin, 1994). Bryman and Bell (2003) indicate that the case study design is normally employed to gain an understanding and the meaning of a given phenomenon, rather than to test a certain set of variables. The case study approach was selected in this thesis because it is related to the main research question that focuses on exploring the HRM professionals' attitudes and perspectives regarding HRM reform and organizational effectiveness in UK HEIs. It is

particularly useful to use the case study approach when research is focused on understanding attitudes. It is also a suitable approach for answering the more qualitative 'how' and 'why' questions (Yin, 2003) and for studying phenomena in their wider context. Using case study research (whether it depends on one or more case studies) can provide a detailed understanding for the case study and can help in answering research questions.

Punch (1988:150) in Silverman (2005:126) explains that:

'The basic idea is that one case (or perhaps a small number of cases) will be studied in detail, using whatever methods seem appropriate. While there may be a variety of specific purposes and research questions, the general objective is to develop as full an understanding of the case as possible.'

The unit of analysis for the case study should be driven by primary research questions and what researchers need to know from the study (Yin, 2003:24). Bryman and Bell (2003:53) indicate that a case can be a single organization, a single location, a person or a single event. They conclude that the case is an object of interest in its own right and the researcher aims to provide an in-depth understanding of it. For my own research, I decided to focus on HRM professionals in the UK HEIs as a unit of analysis.

4. Selecting cases

According to Eisenhardt (1989), selecting cases carefully is an important aspect of building theory from cases studies. The first step is to identify the population of interest. Eisenhardt (1989:537) argues that *'Identifying a particular population helps to control extraneous variation and sharpens*

external validity.' For this research, the population of interest is the UK HE sector.

Choosing the population for this study, as indicated in the literature section, was because of the rapid and significant changes in the HE sector that could impact on HRM strategies and practices. Another reason for choosing this sector was my intention to provide empirical and theoretical insights into HRM reform in UK HEIs from HR professionals' perspectives, as this has been neglected within the public management literature. To date the literature has been more concerned with investigating academics' views of HEI reforms.

To determine the research population, I used Universities UK (UUK) as the major representative body and membership organization for the higher education sector in the UK. It has 133 members, comprising all HEIs in the England and Northern Ireland Council, Universities Scotland and Higher Education Wales (HEW).

The second step was choosing the sample of cases, which must be determined based on their theoretical usefulness and their relationship and logic to research questions. For this research, I decided that the sample should be focused on HRM directors at UK HEIs because they are at the highest level in HRM and are probably the change agents and drivers with respect to HR being proactive in HEIs. In order to determine the sample of research, I spent some time collecting information from each UK university website about the contact details of the HR directors and about the HRM strategy at specific institutions. I experienced some difficulties in getting information about HR professionals' contact details at some universities so I

phoned the university contact numbers asking for their details. In some cases, when I failed to find the HRM Director's details, I sent the invitation to the general enquiries facility at these universities stating that this was an invitation to the HRM Director.

Regarding the issues of internal and external validity surrounding case study research and how a case study can be representative of the wider and general society, Yin (2003:37) suggests that '*critics typically state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalization*'. Despite this, Bryman and Bell (2003:55) state that '*although many researchers emphasize that they are interested in the detail of a single case, they do sometimes claim a degree of theoretical generalizability on the basis of it*'.

On the other hand, Schofield (2002) indicates that there are growing emphases on generalizations in qualitative research. Schofield (ibid.) states the importance of reconceptualizing generalizability in qualitative research to involve answers to questions about what we want to generalize and how we can design qualitative studies in a way that maximizes their generalizability. Similarly, Huberman and Miles (2002) argue that qualitative research that is based on well-designed studies may lead to increasing generalizability.

Stenbacka (2001) suggests that Yin (1989:40) classifies generalizability into two types: analytical generalizability and statistical generalizability.

Stenbacka (2001) argues that analytical generalizability is related to qualitative research. She argues that analytical generalizability means that analytical understanding is made possible as a result of the study, by lifting the empirical material to the general level. Stenbacka (ibid.) states that this

could be achieved through careful selection of relevant research participants: *'This is made possible by strategic choice of informants relevant to the study and not by statistically drawn sample'* Stenbacka (ibid.:552).

This thesis and its methodology are predicated upon the possibility of analytical generalizability; the thesis places emphasis on the design of this research to illustrate HRM professionals' views regarding change in the HR role in HEIs. I believe that HRM professionals should be the focus of analysis because of their direct awareness of and input into HRM strategy and their experience of change in the HRM role. They are the decision makers who are responsible for setting and applying HRM strategy and driving HRM reform in universities. Moreover, I had planned that the design of the research would include documentary analysis of HRM strategy in these case studies to reach a deeper understanding of HRM reform in HEIs.

Regarding internal validity, my research was designed to allow the respondents to explain their experience. I used multiple sources of data: data from semi-structured interviews together with data from universities' documents (HRM strategies and reports), with the aim of generating a deep understanding of the research setting and context. More explanation about the triangulation of data will be presented in section (7) in this chapter.

5. Research approach and philosophy

For this thesis, the decision to undertake qualitative research was not predetermined. In choosing a research method, everything depends upon what the researcher is trying to find out and describe and upon the specifics of the research question. The distinction between qualitative and quantitative

techniques is only a small part of a far wider debate about ontology and epistemology (Symon and Cassell, 1998:2). The ontological perspective considers the social world as something external to social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Thus, it raises questions about the nature of reality and whether social reality is a given or constructed through people and interactions and the meanings they give to those interactions (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008:25).

The epistemological perspective concerns appropriate knowledge about the social world. It raises questions about whether or not a natural science model of the research process is suitable for the study of the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

For this research topic, the decision was taken to use qualitative methods, based on the belief that they can provide a deeper and better understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from quantitative data, which could therefore help in answering the research question. For example, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:8) suggest that:

'Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasise the measurement and analysis of casual relationships between variables, not processes.'

For this research, a qualitative technique was useful because the research questions were seeking to explore the attitudes and perspectives of HR managers and to investigate their experience in the work setting in HRM reform and how this impacted on their role and experience in HE.

Also, many qualitative researchers express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through '*the eyes of the people*' that they study because they are close to and in more contact with the research setting (Bryman and Bell, 2003:293). Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2003:5) indicate that '*Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of material practices that make the world visible.*' They argue that qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials (case study, personal experience and interviews, etc.) in order to explore issues relevant to the research question. The empirical material seeks to describe different '*moments*' and '*meanings*' in individuals' lives (Denzin and Lincoln, *ibid.*:4).

For this thesis, I intended to investigate the perspectives of individuals (HRM professionals) who are involved in events and activities concerning HRM reform and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, in order to gain insight into how the implementation of NPM may affect HRM's role and processes, I recognized HR professionals as 'social actors'. Consequently, I concentrate on their perspectives towards the HRM role and organizational effectiveness in UK HEIs. The design, therefore, of this thesis concerns elucidating meanings from HRM professionals and seeks their perspective and understanding of change in HRM as well as critically examining them.

In this research, I put great emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world. So the HR professionals' point of view was investigated because they are aware of changes in the philosophy and practices of HRM in HE, particularly changes in their roles as HR managers. HRM directors are responsible for strategy and represent the change agent,

and their role and decisions should be significant for achieving organizational effectiveness.

Following the interpretative tradition, the researcher is necessarily *'part of the research setting but not a mirror of it'* (Kelemen and Rumens: 2008: 25). So, in my research, I present the HRM professionals' point of view but I do not speak for them, and this may limit my interpretation of 'reality'. This could be because I present the HR professionals' perspectives regarding their relationship with academics, but I also show academics' points of view regarding this relationship, as will be presented in the findings chapters. As indicated by Kelemen and Rumens (ibid.: 28), *'social objects are not given in the world, but are constructed, negotiated, managed, reformed, exchanged and organized by human beings in their attempts to make sense of what is happening around them.'* Therefore, investigation of HR managers' perspectives and attitudes regarding HR reform will try to get a close-up view of how they interpret and experience changes that have happened in HE.

In this research, I believe that qualitative research can be constructed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words and meaning (from interviews with HRM professionals and document analysis) rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. I applied the inductive approach, which enabled me to link the theoretical analysis and the empirical data (Seale, 1999:88). The use of an inductive approach to link theory and research means that objective facts are drawn from the social world (in this research through investigating the HRM professionals' perspectives) and then it is possible to proceed to the development of theory.

Bryman and Bell (ibid.:25) argue that qualitative research follows the inductive approach, that its epistemological orientation is interpretivism, and that the ontological orientation is constructionism. They explain that 'Interpretivism' means that researchers from this perspective share the view that people and their institutions are different from the objects of the study of natural science. This means that the study of the social world requires types of logic within research procedures that are different from those in the natural sciences. In addition, they indicate that 'Constructionism' is an ontological position which indicates that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by 'social actors' (ibid.:25).

6. Research paradigm

A research paradigm is

'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted.' (Bryman,1988:4)

Burrell and Morgan (1979:22) argue for the existence of two dimensions and four paradigms that reflect the assumptions that researchers make about the nature of organizations. One dimension is related to the researcher's view of the nature of organizations (Objectivist and Subjectivist) and the other is related to the function and purpose of scientific research (Regular and Radical change). 'Objectivist' represents the external view of an organization and its mission, process and structure whereas 'Subjectivist' deals with an organization as a socially constructed product, thus incorporating the social experience of individuals so it can be understood from the point of view of individuals who are directly involved in its activities. Regarding the purpose of

scientific research, Burrell and Morgan (ibid.) indicate that the 'Regular' change perspective means that the purpose of research is to describe what goes on in an organization, possibly to suggest minor change but not to make any judgement of it, whereas 'Radical' means that the aim of research in this dimension is to make judgements about what the organization should achieve and make suggestions about how this could be done.

Based on the previous dimensions, Burrell and Morgan (ibid.) indicate four paradigms as positions for the study of organizations. The 'Functionalist' paradigm means that the dominant framework for the study of an organization is based on a problem-solving orientation. The 'Interpretive' paradigm is based on the assumption that understanding organizations must be based on the experience of those who work within them. The 'Radical humanist' paradigm sees an organization as a social arrangement and research as guided by the need for change. The 'Radical structuralist' paradigm views the organization as a product of structural power relationships, which results in conflict (Burrell and Morgan, ibid.:22)

Interpretive methods of research adopt the position that knowledge of reality is constructed by the human actors in a social setting (Adkins, 2002). Furthermore, researchers' preconceptions in data processing and through the interaction with the research settings could be changed. The 'Interpretive' paradigm allows the researcher to get closer to the actors' perspectives (HR professionals) through detailed interviewing and through document analysis of HRM strategies. I believe that to get a generation of rich descriptions of the changes happening in the HRM role in universities and to help to make sense

of what is happening around the research setting, the 'Interpretive' paradigm is appropriate because the research questions concern understanding people and their attitudes and perceptions.

Eisenhardt (1989) argues that theory-building research calls for the multiple data collection method (triangulation). She argues that *'the triangulation is made possible by multiple data collection methods provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypothesis'* (Eisenhardt, *ibid.*:538). Multiple data collection methods help to understand the potential of the study, and this could enhance confidence in the findings (Eisenhardt, *ibid.*:538). In this research, I planned data collection methods based on semi-structured interviews with the HRM professionals in UK HEIs and on documentary analysis of the HRM strategy in these universities.

7. Triangulation of data

Triangulation means using multiple techniques within a given method to collect and interpret data (i.e. several qualitative methods within-method) or combining qualitative and quantitative method (between methods). Denzin (1978:291) defines triangulation as *'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon'*. Combining methods allows one research method to use the advantages of another method in a way that might help to cover weaknesses or blind spots, which could improve the validity of research (Jick, 1979). Denzin (*ibid.*:294-307) goes on to identify four types of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources in the same study. Investigator triangulation is the use

of multiple researchers to study the same research question or the same setting. The main advantage of this type of triangulation is that different researchers' perspectives may bring different thinking to and analysis of the data that could strengthen the final evaluation and analysis. Triangulating theory suggests that the research should examine the phenomenon from different theoretical points to see which would be the most helpful to clarify and explain what has been studied. Methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods to gain the most complete and detailed data possible on the phenomenon.

For this research, two qualitative research techniques are utilized: semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. I felt that each of these two types of data collection has unique strengths and weaknesses and that the combination of these methods could help in strengthen the research findings and could allow me to be confident of the results (Jick, 1979:608).

The advantage of the use of interviews in this research is that they allow for a prepared explanation of the purpose of the study being given to the respondents, thus facilitating information gathering. Moreover, open-ended questions in the design of the interview *'are important in allowing the respondents to say what they think and to do so with greater richness and spontaneity'* (Oppenheim, 1992:81).

A semi-structured interview approach was chosen for this study because it combines structure with flexibility (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Structure here relates to the ability to form interview guidelines which help in setting out the key topics and issues to be covered during the interview. The flexibility of the

semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to be responsive to any relevant issues raised by the interviewee and to ask additional questions during the interview.

Choosing documentary analysis as a research technique helps to explain why, in some cases, there are differences between what individuals say in interviews and what they do according to published documents (Hall and Rist, 1999). In this research, documentary analysis for HRM strategy provided background information about the policy and strategy which frame the work of HRM professionals, thus helping to enrich the interviews and the analysis of data. The organizational documents (HRM strategies) helped to build up a description of each university and its history. It also helped to gain insights into past HRM decisions and actions, and it was useful to get more information about HRM's future plans and strategies as well.

Although these methods have strengths, they also have weaknesses. For example, semi-structured interviews may *'leave the researcher vulnerable to selective recall, self-delusion, perceptual distortions, memory loss from the respondent, and subjectivity in the researcher's recording and interpreting of the data'* (Hall and Rist, 1999:298). In order to mitigate these weaknesses, another research technique was used (documentary analysis) which helped to understand the situation in higher education in general and in each university. The analysis of the published documents before commencing the interviews assisted greatly with creating more familiarity with each university, and it also helped after the interviews in interpreting the data collected and considering whether it supported the research findings.

On the other hand, documentary analysis relies on the researcher's interpretation of what is in the document being analysed. Reading a HRM strategy could not reveal how this strategy had come about or how the HRM department applied it in reality. Therefore, another qualitative tool (semi-structured interview) was used to clarify these issues. For these reasons, triangulation can provide

'A more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study. That is, beyond the analysis of overlapping variance, the use of multiple measures may also uncover some unique variance which otherwise may have been neglected by single methods' (Jick, 1979:603).

7.1 Putting the two research methods together

Putting these various techniques together may give a more rounded view of the situation than using either technique alone. I tried to be more aware of the HRM practices and strategy before I commenced the interviews. Some documents were downloaded directly from the universities' websites and others were located after interviews with the HRM professional, particularly in relation to those universities that had not published their HRM strategy because they had just had a change from being a personnel department to a HRM department with a clear, published strategy, for example.

Analysing these documents provided an important source of information regarding what HRM professionals are required to give attention to and it also helped in shaping the interview questions further. Documentary sources were used alongside in-depth interviews with HRM professionals, which helped to reinforce their reliability and validity for the purposes of my research. For

example, the HRM professionals referred to some of this information involved in HRM strategy in their discussions, whilst the HRM strategy confirmed the information passed to me during the interview. Therefore, there appeared to be a good degree of consistency between the interviews and the documentary evidence (a sample of documents collected is available in Appendix 2).

I found reading the documents of UK HEIs to be important and valuable. I downloaded documents from the regulatory and other stakeholder institutions (for example, the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), the UK Cabinet Office, the UUK annual report and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (hefce)). Before I commenced my interviews, I was ambitious regarding the response rate to my invitation. But I found that it is not that easy to get access to HRM professionals perhaps because they are at the highest level of management in UK HEIs. Despite this, the thesis is built upon rich and detailed information from the interviews, which gave me the opportunity to support my work (more details will be presented in section 11 of this chapter).

Using documentary analysis in this research helped to identify key themes, strategies and values that supported the design of the interview questions and helped with coding schemes and data analysis. Documentary analysis provided good opportunities in terms of not depending solely on interviews, which may be affected by selective memory or social bias.

8. Entering the field

I sent an invitation to all HRM directors in UK HEIs. I received nine positive responses and I interviewed all of them. As I indicated earlier, at the

beginning of my empirical work I was worried about the number of responses to my invitations, but after commencing the semi-structured interviews, I found that I gained rich and appropriate qualitative data that facilitated doing case study research, and this justified my choice of methods.

The semi-structured interview guidance was determined before commencing the interviews, and it was developed through the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee. Within the interview, I tried to use a range of techniques to achieve greater depth of answers in terms of discussion and explanation. For example, because I had examined HRM strategy before commencing the interviews, I asked questions based on my readings of HRM strategy to encourage HR professionals to explain their views and perspectives. Before I commenced my interviews, I considered the requirements of an in-depth interview. I concluded from the literature that the success of in-depth interviews depends on the personal and professional qualities of the interviewer (Ritchie and Lewis, 1999).

Ritchie and Lewis (ibid.) argue that the interviewer must *'hear'*, *'digest'* and *'comprehend'* the participant's answer. The interviewer should also be *'knowledgeable'* in the topics investigated, and this means that in-depth interviews require a clear and logical mind. They finally argue that the interviewer should have a sense for good stories and should have the ability to establish a good 'rapport' with participants by creating a climate of trust that is comfortable for the participants. In this research, I prepared myself for the interviews by reviewing the HRM strategy for each university and by preparing an interview guidance that helped in structuring the interview. I tried to be

confident and to be aware of the HRM development by reviewing the HRM's published documents available on each university website.

Regarding the validity of interviews, the interview design followed the use of open-ended questions that would allow the respondents to explain and describe their experience. I tried to avoid leading questions that might have been perceived as suggesting a particular reply to respondents. I used 'why' and 'how' questions to get more information from the participants. I recorded most of the interviews after gaining the respondents' permission and took notes on those that were not recorded, depending on the participant's request. I found it useful to take notes and write down whatever impressions occurred during interviews. I regard these as useful techniques that I could use in the future. I wrote down some notes like 'ask more questions that could help to clarify the relationship with academics?' and 'ask about if this supported the HRM strategy and how?'

Another benefit that comes from taking notes in interviews is writing down notes about the interview setting and the personal reaction of the HRM professionals (for example, how some of them dealt with me as an academic and how this may have influenced their response). I found that these notes helped me to get more data, and they can also assist in identifying the main themes, which may be useful in analysing the data gathered from interviews.

I prepared the transcriptions of the interviews with special consideration to the quality of transcription. I did some of them myself but time constraints meant the decision was made to send the interview audio to a third party for transcription. Although there is the matter of financial cost, I preferred to save

my time and efforts for listening again to the interviews and reading the transcriptions to ensure the quality of transcription. I used Nvivo software, which helped in tracking the audio with the transcription. I thus became familiar with the material and found that it was ready for data analysis and coding.

9. Analysis and interpretation of data

The challenge is not so much making data but rather making useful, valuable data, relevant to the question being asked and reflecting usefully on the process of research (Richards, 2005). 'Data' are the material that the researcher works with (ibid.:34). Analysing data is at the heart of building theory from case studies, but it is the most difficult part of the research process (Eisenhardt, 1989:539). Quantitative researchers seek to 'collect' data from people to categorise, collecting items to be numerically represented, but in qualitative research 'making' data is crucial. This means that the researcher needs to be aware of his/her part in making these data. In interviews, for example, the researcher's responsibility is to create the appropriate situation for interviews and record the participants' perceptions and experience sensitively and handle such data well. The skilled interviewer makes data relevant for the purposes of the project (ibid.:36). Data analysis means the process of making sense of, sifting, organizing, cataloguing, selecting, determining themes of and processing of data (Holliday, 2002:99).

NVivo software was used to help in the management and organizing of the research project and to achieve accurate and useful use of data. The quality of qualitative data depends to a degree on the quality of recording and

whether it is accurate, contextualized as 'thick description', useful and reflective (Richards, 2005:51). For this research, the need for accuracy meant that I checked the transcription of my interviews to pick up on inaccuracies and misinterpretations onscreen. Contextualized means that I kept writing field notes about interviews and what I observed and felt during the interviews to cross-refer against my emerging analysis. Thick description means involving all interpretative comments and the contextual knowledge, including impressions and reflections about the interviews. Reflexive means that I am, as a researcher, part of the study: I made the data and I conducted the interviews, so I have to be careful about the situation I created, the context I imposed and the ideas and behaviour that I influenced.

Data analysis of each case study focuses on analysing the interviews and the documentary analysis to generate insights and themes. This research follows tactics to create themes and patterns within each case study and then looks for similarities and differences among the case studies. In this research, there is a use of interview quotes combined with themes arising from the analysis of documentary material. The main idea here is to get insights from different types of data collection (interviews and strategy analysis). This approach helps the researcher to create patterns from the interview and support these patterns with evidence from the strategy analysis. Analysing the patterns, in some cases, indicates further the differences and conflicts between interview insights and documents, which may provide a deeper understanding of the data. An approach of 'Cross case patterns' (Eisenhardt, 1989) was followed after that to go beyond each single case and to provide broad patterns to all cases. The main themes were that data focused on three main levels of

analysis: strategic, operational and individual. These levels represent levels of change in HRM as well as strategic dimensions in the case studies.

10. Research and reflexivity

10.1 What is reflexivity?

Reflexivity is a concept that refers to the way in which the research is affected by those conducting the research and by the process of doing research and how the researcher noted his experience along research phases (Davies, 1999:4). Therefore, reflexivity determines the researcher's influence on the research environment, and it could help the researcher to think more deeply about research topics (Weick, 2002).

Bryman and Bell define reflexivity as (2003:573):

'a term used in research methodology to refer to a reflectiveness among social researchers about the implications for the knowledge of the social world they generate of their methods, values, biases, decisions, and mere presence in the very situations they investigate.'

In doing qualitative research, the researcher is a central figure who influences, and in some cases actively constructs, the collection, selection and interpretation of data (Adkins, 2002). Reflexivity for the researcher means a focus on how personal values, attitudes and norms affect data collection and analysis. The focus of reflexivity is related to the assumptions behind our research; this means that *'how knowledge is acquired, organized, and interpreted is relevant to what the claims are'* (Altheide and Johnson, 1998:486). This requires the researcher to think about how his/her position and interests influence all stages of the research process. Therefore,

reflexivity becomes a *'continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness'* (Callaway, 1992:33).

10.2 Reflexivity and research

I started my research as an international student who had worked and researched in a quantitative research environment. My research interest was concerned initially with change and management. To a very large extent, my view was that using numbers is the right way to analyse and interpret data. I was actively involved in quantitative research methods while studying for my Master's degree and during my work as a researcher at Cairo University. I always considered quantitative methods to be the main methodology and never considered the qualitative method of research. I believed that my role as a researcher was to collect data and work with numbers to get significant meanings and outputs related to a previously constructed hypothesis. When I started to develop my research idea, I was introduced to different research methods and different paradigms. I found choosing qualitative research to be more suitable for my research ideas, but I was not comfortable with my performance using this type of research method. I tried to be less biased (as I am from a quantitative research background) in choosing the appropriate research methods that were suitable for my research problems and questions. I attempted to minimize this possible bias by exploring how qualitative research emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality. As I sought answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning, qualitative research then seemed to be the most suitable technique. I now realize that working with qualitative research has helped me to bring richness to my research experience and knowledge. As a researcher, I have

always kept a research diary that indicates my progress in research ideas and processes; this helped me to record the challenges and limitations I faced and the progress I made while doing this research.

In the empirical stage of my research, particularly at the beginning of interviews, I was not confident enough as a researcher in managing the first interview, asking questions or opening up more discussions, but in the following interviews I had more confidence and a clear understanding of the purpose of the research. When interviewing HRM directors, I realized that in some cases they took account of my position as an academic and that this reflected on their answers to my questions, which were conservative in terms of explaining their relationship with academics. For example, one asked, *'when you finish your PhD and apply for an academic work in our university, you will recognize how HRM developed in this university'*. Initially, I found it difficult to deal with this aspect of the conflict between managers and academics. I found that the challenge is allowing them to speak and then critically reviewing their opinions as an academic, and I was worried about their true feelings and answers to the questions. When I became aware of this sensitivity in their relationship with academics, I was able to utilize this as a theme in my discussion, and I started to get more data about their relationship with academics.

Although my intention was to investigate the HRM professionals' view in UK HEIs regarding HRM reform and organizational effectiveness, I feel that the findings are applicable beyond the higher education sector because, as I indicated above, I am looking for *'analytical generalizability'* that can be

applied in qualitative research (Yin, 1989:40). From this point of view, I think I achieved my research objective. Although previous research on UK HEIs has focused on investigating the academic view in public reform, my own research is intended to investigate the HRM professionals' perspectives (at a top management level) in applying and implementing this reform. More detailed implications for HEIs will be followed up in my final conclusions in chapter nine.

For myself, as a researcher from a quantitative background working in the academic sector since 1995, I think that my PhD research developed my professional research skills and knowledge. I was very cautious when I started qualitative research because I knew that the role of the researcher is crucial (Bryman and Bell, 2003). I realize that my personal values and knowledge have been changed during my PhD research period. I will be able to recognize the importance of words as well as numbers in my future research. As an academic, this thesis gives me a chance to perceive managers' points of view and seek to explore the gap between managers and academics.

10.3 Limitations of reflexivity

Reflexivity has its limitations. Although it is a critical practice for social research, there are problems in determining the criteria for evaluating and interpreting social research (Adkins, 2002:333). One of the limitations of reflexivity came from the idea that the experience of researchers is created in the social setting and written by researchers themselves (Adkins, *ibid.*), and so it can become an end in itself (Weick, 2002). The researcher is responsible for creating the research idea and questions, choosing the research

population, the sample, the research methods and interpreting the data, and any or all of these actions could limit the reality.

May (1998) indicates another limitation of reflexivity, which is that it includes not only the experience of people who are the subjects of the research, but also those within social communities in terms of how they construct the topic of their enquires (May, 1998:8). The relationship between reflexivity by social actors as a part of research and the researcher as a part of the social scientific community and how this relationship can influence the level of experience and knowledge represent a limitation of reflexivity (May, *ibid.*:8). May argues that this could produce an *'in-ward looking'* effect because of the difficulties in understanding the role, place and interactions of social sciences (May, *ibid.*:18). Therefore, Fay (1996:20) argued that the worth of social science should be judged in terms of *'what it tells us about those under study, not just what it reveals about the social scientist'*.

11. Representation of case studies

As indicated in chapter two, universities in the UK vary in size, mission, history, values and location. The literature review indicates that UK HEIs have, to some extent, undergone changes by adopting private sector managerial approaches to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and economic objectives (Shattock, 2008) and that these changes influence ways of managing HR in HEIs.

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the nine case studies used in the thesis. These case studies varied in location, type, size and the foundation year of adopting the HRM strategy. The case studies also represent HEIs

from different locations within the UK. Six of these case studies are located in England, and there is one university from Wales, one from Scotland and one from Northern Ireland. Six of the universities in the case studies were founded before 1992 (pre-1992) and three of them were founded after 1992 (post-1992). The case studies are different in size where institutional size in this research represents the number of students registered. Five of the case studies represent HEIs with more than 20,000 students, whereas four institutions have less than 20,000 students (small institutions) (the average size is 20,000 students, based on the figures provided by the Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA)).

The most significant figure for my thesis is the foundation year of the HRM strategy, i.e. the year when universities decided to apply strategic direction in HRM through setting and adopting a HRM strategy.

In six of the case studies, a HRM strategy was formulated and applied after 2008, whereas in three of them, formulating and applying a HRM strategy started from 2002. The reason behind that, and as indicated in chapter two, is that there was a governmental call for adopting HRM strategy, which started in 2003 when the White Paper (*The Future of Higher Education*) agreed that government should link extra funding to UK HEIs that adopted a HR strategy, to mark its approval.

The following table (Table 1) summarizes some of the descriptive data for the case studies involved in this thesis:

| | U (A) | U (B) | U (C) | U (D) | U (E) | U (F) | U(G) | U (H) | U (I) |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Post/Pre 92 | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Pre | Pre | Pre | Post | Pre |
| HRM strategy foundation year | From 2002 | From 2008 | From 2008 | From 2008 | From 2008 | From 2002 | From 2008 | From 2008 | From 2002 |

Table 1: Basic background information for case studies

12. Research Ethics

It is crucial for a researcher to be aware of the ethical principles involved in research work and the nature of concerns about ethics in research. I also acknowledge that I have a responsibility to ensure the validity and reliability of my research as well as my research ethics. Bryman and Bell (2003) indicate that research ethics should make us consider how we should treat the people we research and what activities we 'should' or 'should not' engage in during our relations with them.

It is also my responsibility, as a researcher at the university, to follow Keele University's Code of Practice on Ethical Standards in the conduct of my study. The code of practice states that the ethical permission represents part of the quality assurance process at Keele University that reviews the quality of research design and questions. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. The ethical approval must be obtained before potential participants are approached to take part in any research, and this

process included filling in and signing the ethical checklist form for the postgraduate office. It also included a letter of invitation for participants which indicated that all data gathered, including participant identity, would be kept strictly confidential and the data collected during interviews would be used for research purposes only.

I also included an information sheet which explains the following issues: 'why the participant has been chosen'; 'what will happen to participants if they take part'; a discussion of the possible disadvantages, risks and benefits of taking part; the procedures for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity; and the proposed use of the research findings. (The ethics approval documents are available in Appendix 1.)

In the summary sheet, I explain why the participant has been chosen and what would happen to participants if they take part. I also note that while the participant may not benefit directly from participating in the research, he/she would be making a valuable contribution to a study which would hopefully provide greater knowledge and insight into issues that might enhance the understanding of the impact of NPM philosophies on the HRM function within the academic sector. I indicate too that I am sure that the participant's contribution would enhance my understanding of the issues and provide valuable practitioner input. I suggest that the participant may also find that discussing the subject may help him/her to explore alternative perspectives.

The summary sheet also indicates that all of the research data collected during the study would be kept strictly confidential, and any information which has the participant's name, address and any other identifying information on

it, including the consent form, would be kept confidential according to the relevant procedures. Moreover, the summary sheet also states that the research fulfils the appropriate legal requirements, e.g. the Data Protection Act 1998.

After applying for ethical approval, I started arranging my database, which includes the following details about the Human Resource Management Directors within UK universities: their names, emails and contact addresses. Once the permission for ethics approval had been obtained, I contacted the respondents who had agreed to participate in order to arrange a mutually convenient day and time for interview.

The second reminder for those who did not reply was sent within two weeks after the first one, and I tried to call some of them to find out their decision regarding whether or not they wished to take part in my research.

Before I commenced any interview, I gave the participant a few details about who I am, why I am here and what I was aiming to achieve. As the participant had received the Information sheet providing these details, this was just a reminder and a chance to ask any additional questions or clarify any issues before we began. Interviewees were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and I would give each individual a code, for example HRDUA. At the beginning of each interview, I checked again that the participant clearly understood and felt comfortable with what they were consenting to.

As indicated earlier, I respected some interviewees' specific request that they did not want their interview to be recorded and would just allow me to take notes. Therefore, I placed my recorder near to the respondents, showed them

the 'off' switch and invited them to turn it off at any time they felt uncomfortable.

13. Using NVivo

I started using NVivo 8 as qualitative research software before I started my empirical data collection. I used it as project management software which facilitated sorting of important articles, books and websites that are used in the literature review and helped to organize my design and arrange my work. Similarly, I used NVivo in the early design for my thesis for sorting and analysing the HRM strategies in UK HEIs. Indeed, NVivo software also helped me to store my thesis work, my ethical approval documents and my research diaries. I stored all audio of interviews on the software as well, and that helped to recall them easily.

Using NVivo facilitates the storing, coding and analysis of data. It saves time and effort in carrying out the research process. The processing of data with NVivo started with setting up my project and then creating and importing data. For my research, the data used was the interviews and the HRM strategy documents for case studies. I managed my data via NVivo using cases and sets to organize the work for each case study. Afterwards, I started categorizing my data and doing codes or 'Nodes'. One of the advantages of NVivo is that it helps in coding from different sources. Coding with NVivo helped me to return easily to the source of codes (Nodes) and to know from which different sources I obtained my codes (a sample of NVivo Nodes is available in Appendix 3).

Using the software facilitated matching the HRM strategy for each university with the codes that I developed. It also helped me to sort out qualitative data from multiple sources by recoding and setting relationships between codes, making the access and recall of data easier. It also helped in ensuring the smooth flow of data into the project, and therefore it facilitated my interpretations of data. I can conclude that using NVivo in my research helped me to use my data effectively and saved time and effort.

14. Conclusion

This chapter has set out the main methodological issues in my research. The objective here is to highlight the research design, research methods and philosophy. Data collection and data analysis issues have been considered. These have been framed with a critical analysis of the research ethics issues and the data collection techniques and how all of these issues reflect on research design. The chapter explores reflexivity in relation to the research process and field work.

There is also a discussion of what qualitative research means (interviews and case studies) and why it has been chosen to highlight the HRM professionals' attitudes towards HRM reform and in achieving organizational effectiveness. The following chapters will turn attention to the findings and their implications.

Chapter Seven:

HRM Reform at a Strategic Level

1. Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the perspectives of HRM professionals (HRMPs) in HE toward HRM reform and its relationship to organizational effectiveness in the context of NPM. Therefore, the findings part of this chapter outlines the analysis of data collected from the interviews with HRMPs in UK higher education institutions (HEIs) and from human resource management strategy documents (HRMS) within the case studies.

Findings will be presented in three parts to explore the HRM professionals' perspectives in HRM reform at a **Strategic level**, an **Operational level** and an **Individual level**. Presenting findings in this way provides deeper insights about the views of HR professionals in HEIs on changes in their roles and the changing nature of HRM generally.

The first part (chapter seven) will attempt to explore the HRM professionals' perspectives on the extent to which the philosophy of NPM affects HRM reform in UK HEIs at a **Strategic level**. This section will also illustrate the change in HRM's role by looking at these main points: HRM as a strategic function; HRM as being a business partner, HRM and Business Excellence model; HRM and change management and finally the role of legislative landscape and its relationship with HRM reform.

The second part of the findings (chapter eight) will attempt to discuss, changes at the **Operational level**; with for example practices and operations brought into focus. Finally this chapter presents an investigation of the perspectives of HRM professionals toward how they consider the particular character of HEIs affects the issues and how they try to respond to the shifting

conditions wrought by NPM practices. This section will also explore HR professionals' perspectives towards reform of HRM functions such as in performance appraisal, equality and diversity and training and development. This includes their perspectives toward flexibility, quality, team working and use of technology

The third part (chapter nine) will attempt to discuss perspectives of HR professionals at the **Individual level**. This part illustrates the perspectives of HRM professionals toward individuals as a tool to achieve HRM reform. It will consider the extent to which HRM reform might change the nature, structure and organization of HRM in HEIs for those operating within the function. It contains the following features: staff development; staff engagement; and staff survey and feedback.

Finally, chapter nine will provide a discussion of the barriers, obstacles and challenges that are facing HRM reform within UK HEIs. It will consider organizational culture, international competition and change (NVivo Models that helped in organizing these data are available in Appendix 3).

Through my analysis of the interviews, I am going to refer to some quotes as typical (have been repeated with more than one case study), some of them as untypical but have unique qualities and/or refer to different issues and some are simply interesting to present and code to support my analysis.

2. HRM as a strategic function

Flynn (2002) argues that managerial philosophy is considered as a part of the public management reform process. So one of the questions asked of HR

professionals within interviews was, *what changes in HRM philosophy have you experienced over, say, the past five years?*

The question was intended to highlight what are the main changes that HR professionals perceive in their work at the strategic level and to learn more about their philosophy regarding the application of HRM reform in their institutions. There is evidence from interviews that one of the main changes in HRM philosophy within UK HEIs participating in this research is related to a change from Personnel Management to HRM. The following selected quote supports this view:

'Well, the big change for me is that I was appointed last April as the first Director of Human Resources for University (C). Prior to my appointment it was the Director of Personnel Services. So my appointment symbolised a change from Personnel to Human Resource Management. And it's quite symbolic....for me the big change is that it's now a more strategic function. What we do is linked to delivery of the University's strategic objectives. It is for a student experience, for an excellence in student experience, for research excellence, for growing our knowledge transfer work. Then my task is to show how HR can contribute to those objectives, to teaching excellence, to research excellence, to a broadening of the University's strategy. My role is to try to demonstrate how HR can achieve that link'. (HRMPUC)

The above quote indicates that a HR professional in one of the post-1992 universities, which adapted its HRM strategy after 2008, perceives that the unique change and added value brought to his role is to be 'strategic' and this represents the main focus of the Business Partner role. The response from the HR professional reflects high expectations for the strategic role that HR professional would play. The quote indicates that clear HR strategic perspectives and objectives in research and teaching had been developed

and linked in with university strategy. It illustrates how the strategic aspect of HRM is crucial in reform and development and to enable professionals to set strategic objectives and targets within a certain time (Instrumental Rationality Model). The above quote is related as well to Truss' (2008) argument which indicates that the Business Partner role supports the strategic direction in an organization. This quotes indicates as well that HR manager recognizes HR department and function as a profession which has a body of knowledge and could contribute positively to the success of university activities (teaching,, research, ..).

Similarly, the following quote indicates how HRM strategy in university (C) (HRMSUC) supports the same view:

'The university's intention to develop an increasingly strategic approach to Human Resource Management, recognising that our success depends on commitment, creativity and professionalism of our staff and ensuring that all staff understand their role in delivering success for the university'.

(HRMSUC: 1)

The quote is taken from the HRM strategy in university (C) which started changes to HRM in 2008 with the appointment of a new director of HRM responsible for development and implementation of HR strategy across the university which had not been before. The quote indicates the importance of a strategic approach as a success tool and it illustrates well the role of staff participation and involvement in achieving HRM strategy. So, in this case HRM strategy is concerned with people and strategy to achieve the organization's objectives and the appropriate role of HRM on this occasion is seen as the Business Partner role.

The main insight here is that the HRM strategy supports the HR professionals' perspective that the role of HRM moved toward achieving strategic direction through an HRM role that encourages aligning the HR strategic direction (Business Partner role). A response from the HR professional in university (I) supports the same view about the main changes in HRM philosophy:

'It has a much higher profile. It seen as a business critical and strategic function not just a transactional service at least in this university'. (HRMPUI)

Here the HR professional in university (I), one of the pre-1992 universities that started formally applying HRM strategy in 2002, indicates that the strategic approach of HRM is regarded as the most appropriate approach and he has high expectations and a positive view regarding the value added of bringing the strategic approach into HRM. The HR professional felt that he can play a much more proactive role than have previously been. The above quote is related to Pollitt's (2000:184) argument that an organization operating under NPM would become more concerned with strategy and less with carrying out routine activities (Administrative role). Similarly, it is related to Ulrich's (1997) argument that the Business Partner role defines strategy as the approach that an organization intends to move to, and it establishes the framework for actions which it intends to carry out.

There was evidence that HR professionals are supporting the strategic approach and there were clear and high expectations about how the Business Partner role can contribute to achieve strategic objectives. However, HR professionals have to clearly understand that 'strategic' and 'critical' HRM may

cause a sort of 'complexity' about how can they apply this strategic direction in HE. The HR professional in case study (F) describes changes in HRM as:

'Human resource management changed to have more of a focus on impact measurement, talent management and employee engagement. This requires constant review of policies to keep up with legislative developments. So it has become even more important to the organisation through having to apply legislative changes and be more commercial'. (HRMPUF)

Through this response I was able to ascertain that the HR professional in university (F) considers management of 'outputs' as an objective of HRM reform. The use of the word '*measurement*' in the above quote indicates that the perspectives of the HR professional in this case study support the economic and political perspective of rationality which indicates that the IR model of universities is looking to achieve economic objectives. For the HR professional in university (F), the legislative's role to shape these HRM reform is significant. Generally, the HR professional in this case study felt that change in the HRM role involves applying strategic direction beside encouraging employees to participate and share in HRM reform. This view was supported by Truss (2008) who indicates that HRM reform will create 'multi-roles' for HR professionals.

The HR professionals from UK HEIs who are participants in this thesis hold that the relationship between HRM strategy and university strategy is crucial for HRM reform. The HR professional in case study (B) explains this in the following response:

'I think you've got to accept that you're one small cog in rather a large machine. But that your overall duty is to make sure that machine turns quite well. Well the university has got a board of trustees and the board of trustees

set the university's strategy. So we do have, one of my obligations is to make sure that the HR strategy does align fully with that. And I have to report to the board of trustees to make clear that that is so. So I'm quite happy about that'.

(HRMPUB)

The above quote indicates that the HR professional in university (B) perceives that ensuring that HRM strategy 'fits in' with the overall strategy of the university is an important part of his role. So the linkage between HR strategy and organization strategy is critical. This response reflects the concept of 'best fit' that is usually applied in private sector and it concerns with linkage between the overall strategy and the HR strategy in the organization (Gratton and Truss, 2003, Cited in Truss, 2008). This was echoed by the HR professional in case study (F):

'Absolutely, as already explained, the university's strategy and objectives has to be underpinned by our core values, these flow through into our HR practice. Yes we have reference to our strategic plan and values'. (HRMPUF)

This indicates that part of HRM's role is based on coordinating and fitting in HRM strategy with university strategy to achieve effectiveness. This could lead to the argument that formulating and assessing the effectiveness of HRM strategy is complex and may even be more important than assessing any other organizational effectiveness because HRM supports and develops a variety of goals from different partners in university which have different priorities (Ahmed, 1999). This reflects more challenges for HR professionals to play Business Partner role.

Within the previous quotes, it was evident that HR professionals' role had gone beyond setting HRM strategy to develop and enhance the relationship between HRM strategy and university strategy.

Moreover, HR professionals in the case studies state that HR strategy implementation is one of the challenges that they are facing and this will be discussed in the following section. The HR professional in case study (C) felt that continuous reviewing of the HR role is an important process. He indicates that the reason behind this is *'to ensure they (HR professionals) act as enablers rather than barriers to effective management change'*.

So, there is a sense that HR professionals have to accept and 'facilitate' achieving the movement toward strategic direction (IR model). This relates to Ulrich's (2005) argument that a HR professional as a Business Partner should be contributing to setting an organizational direction toward reform as a 'player in the game' rather than a 'partner', and this also indicates their responsibilities to support changes in direction.

Moreover, the perspective of a HR professional in university (B) explains how a HR professional could contribute in achieving this direction:

'Our HR department actually consists of every line manager in the organisation; they're the first line of HR management. In the long term my HR strategy here is to give those people the skills and the tools to be able to do an awful lot more HR management than they do at the moment. So they don't have to rely on a central HR department'. (HRMPUB)

The previous quote indicates the importance of empowerment for line managers to apply HRM strategy. There is evidence that the HR professional in case study (B) is working to 'strengthen' and supports the power of line

managers as a main tool for applying strategic management reform (IR model). This argument is related to Truss (2009: 168) in that *'the devolution of HR activities to line managers is viewed very much as a key element of a strategic HRM approach'*. On the other hand, her findings argued that line managers have got a sort of 'misunderstanding' of their responsibility in applying HRM strategy. This was supported as well by Francis and Keegan (2003: 242) who indicates that *'It might be naïve to assume that line managers have the time, the training or the interest to give employee well-being the kind of priority it deserves'*. So, it is clear that the HR professional is looking to rely on line managers to do the job which could be risky action in some cases because of their lack of skills and qualifications.

It was clear from the above discussion that the HRM role has been changed over time to be 'strategic' and HR professionals welcomed these changes because it supports their management position and role in public reform.

The above discussion supports the argument that there is a movement in HEIs toward a model of universities which is concerned with strategic direction (IR model). The conclusion from the above discussion is that the strategic direction of HRM will create more responsibilities and more challenges for HR professionals to set up and implement strategy.

3. Business partner

As was discussed in the HRM chapter (chapter 3), Ulrich (1997) suggested the Business Partner as a role of HR to apply the strategic direction of HR. From the analysis of interviews, there are two case studies have mentioned 'Business Partner' as a clear term in their discussion. The HR professional in

case study (C) indicates this in the following untypical quote:

'Well, under our new structure we will have Business Partners and they will be outward facing working with the Faculties. We'll also have a specialist team where we'll be looking at reward and benefits and policy development generally. So we will be a sort of 'Think Tank' up here but we will be working closely with HR people who are out in different parts of the University. And I hope we will achieve that. ... We wanted to work better so that our Partners, we want them to be contributing to policy development and they will be supported by HR Advisors. And they will find out how policies are actually working and then they will feed that back to us as we develop the new policies'. (HRMPUC)

And then the HR professional continues:

'In HR we've just been given more resources to make Business partnering work..... And that is one reason why we're changing from Personnel to HR so that our policies reflect the priorities and needs of each part of the University much better.... And that's why I'm restructuring the HR function and introducing Business Partners. We're going more for the Ulrich Model of HR with Business Partners and a Service Centre'. (HRMPUC)

This interviewee indicates that being a Business Partner role is the way to achieve HRM reform. HRM's role thus becomes as a 'strategic' coordinator between partners (managers) to encourage them to participate in public reform. The role of business partner is working to offer great opportunity for managers to use its people and its resources. Similarly, the HRM strategy in case study (C) explains how the Business Partner project will work:

'HR business partner will work with faculties and departments to restructuring and review where it is necessary to reflect changing academic demands. This will also support efficiency reviews to reduce duplication and introduce smarter working across professional support functions'. (HRMSUC: 6)

The university in this case study expects more contribution from HR professionals in order to achieve the strategic direction. It is clear from the HRM strategy that Business Partners will work to create a framework in which they achieve non-conflicting objectives which are accepted by all partners. This will cause a challenge for HR professionals to coordinate different partners' priorities to achieve reform objectives. Along the same lines, the HR professional in case study (D) indicates the following in an untypical quote:

'We've undertaken quite a restructuring of personnel, and we've actually now got business partners for the – the university itself is having a restructuring as well, and the departments are going into colleges. We've got four colleges. So we've got four business partners, and actually I'm one of those business partners too.... And the idea there is that the business partner will help the new college to set their strategic vision for their particular college. But obviously that needs to feed into the university's overall strategic plan. Now we're just working on that at the moment. Then the HR team as colleagues were getting together to look at an HR strategy, but of course it needs to be done in conjunction with the colleges as well'. (HRMPUD)

And they continue to explain:

'Well we're moving towards a bit of both with the business partners, because obviously the business partners will be aligned to the colleges, but they have a dual reporting role. So they report to the head of college and to the director of HR. And obviously it's important from their perspective that any strategy developed covers the needs of the colleges. But then centrally we need to look at how it all fits together'. (HRMPUD)

This quote, from the HR professional in university (D) in one of the case studies that had recently implemented a HRM strategy, indicates that the main objective of approaching Business Partners is to set and highlight HRM strategy. The quote indicates the importance of 'fit in' partners' strategies with

overall strategy. It also highlights that the HR professionals encourages working with other HR professionals to define a clear and realistic vision and goals for the university. The perspective of the HR professionals in this case study supports the proposition of this thesis that the HR role changed to become more concerned with strategic direction rather than focusing on its administrative role. The noteworthy point arising from the previous discussion is that the two case studies that highlighted the term 'business partner project' in their interviews were new universities approaching HRM's strategic perspective and they have a greater intention to achieve strategic partner's objectives.

The previous discussion is also related to the literature review and particularly to Ulrich's argument about applying Business Partner challenges and difficulties. One of these challenges is highlighted in the previous quote and it is related to the importance of central revision for the partners' decisions to ensure consistency with the overall strategic perspective of the university. This process requires professional HR line managers and a close relationship between units and university departments to achieve organizations' objectives. The above discussion supports the idea discussed previously in the 'Organizational Effectiveness' chapter about an organization being made up of groups with different goals, interests and values; the Business Partner model is working to reach decisions through trying to match up these goals. Power and political rationality may be used as a tool to influence and obtain strategic outcomes through legislative procedures that represent the framework of HRM reform. The above discussion also supports the proposition presented in the 'Organizational Effectiveness' chapter that there

is a movement in HEIs towards the IR model of HRM where HRM is working as Business Partner to achieve cost-effectiveness objectives, through more consideration for strategy and the best use of people (people-strategy dimensions). The final conclusion in this discussion is that neither HR professionals nor HR strategy mentioned 'academics' and their contribution in setting and applying 'Business Partner' objectives. This could create a challenge for them to manage academic culture and to persuade academics to contribute in setting and applying the IR model.

4. Business Excellence model

One of the approaches that supports the strategic nature of HRM reform in UK HEIs is the Business Excellence model.

A Business Excellence model as defined in the HRM strategy in case study (A) is:

'The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) or "Business Excellence" model is a non-prescriptive framework to help organisations establish appropriate management systems. It operates as a practical tool to help organisations measure where they are on the path to excellence, understand the gaps and devise solutions'. (HRMSUA: 5)

So, the Business Excellence model is aiming to achieve excellent standards and targets for universities in teaching, research and management practices. Similarly, the HR professional in case study (A) explains this in the following interesting quote:

'I don't expect that we are unique but what I would say is that we have been become more business efficient, for example we have gone down the path of strategic management through use of the business excellence model we were

the first University won the national award for business excellence in the university sector so I think what we have become is much more conscious of management by fact, in the last five to ten years, business excellence being just one example of that approach'. (HRMPUA)

University (A) being the first UK university to undertake a full institutional self-assessment against the rigorous criteria of the model. As a result, areas where the university's management system can be improved have been identified. Areas such as personal development, performance review and reward and recognition had already been identified prior to the results from the work on the Business Excellence model and are the subject of strategic implementation projects. In addition, the HRM strategy indicates as well that:

'on-going activities under this project (Business Excellence model) include: an organisational and development project to address structural and cultural issues within the Estates and Facilities team; a process review and improvement project to embed responsibilities for continuous review within defined project management review responsibilities; and the establishment of a centre for Organisational Development and Performance Enhancement to promote the range of university activity in relation to change'. (HRMSUA: 5)

These quotes state that the HR professional and the HRM strategy in university (A) perceive the Business Excellence model to be a 'practical tool' that helps to moderate organizational culture and organizational performance and activities to be more change orientated. The HR professional and HR strategy in this case study used the Business Excellence model in HRM reform because it can play an active role in changing traditional academic culture, mainly based on academic freedom and autonomy, to a 'rational

culture' that is mainly concerned with achieving economic objectives through applying performance management systems.

The previous discussion indicates that the Business Excellence model is encouraging a strategic approach in HEIs (IR model) and it represents one of the HRM reform activities that is used with the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness. It supports a model of universities that is mainly based on managerialism and achieving performance targets and standards (Business Partner role) more than being concerned with satisfying academic requirements and needs (Employee Champion role).

5. Change Management

The HR professionals in the case studies indicate that one of the characteristics that shapes the strategic level in HRM reform is the role of HRM in change management. The HR professional in case study (B) supports this argument through the typical quote below:

'I think what I've seen is that organisations, particularly universities, are much more concentrated now on organisational development and organisation change.... I would say certainly the major change I've seen is that they're looking for organisation advice. Universities are looking for advice from the human resource management on how to organise themselves, how work should be organised, how the workforce should be structured. It's much more than the usual sort of stuff about hiring, firing and all that sort of thing'

(HRMPUC)

A key concern of the HR professional in university (B) seems to be organizational change. The quote above indicates that the HR professional perceives the importance of Change Agent role in restructuring the organization to apply the IR model. They suggest that HRM's philosophy is

concerned with caring about organizational development and organizational change as the main objectives for all organizations, so thus and HRM is not just responsible for carrying out traditional activities (administrative activities). The response from the HR professional in university (B) indicates that the role of HRM was growing and becoming more involved in organizational change and development over time. It reflects as well the importance of the advisory role of HRM in reorganizing structures. The previous quote is also related to the previous discussion in the literature review that indicated how HR professionals intend to do more to encourage HRM to lead change in their institutions. Ferlie et al. (1996) support this idea by arguing that the more strategic role of HRM could facilitate the recruitment and retention of valued staff, enhance organizational effectiveness and encourage adapting a change culture in organizations. When the HRM professional points out that *'It's much more than the usual sort of stuff about hiring, firing and all that sort of thing'*, he/she supports the modern model of universities that mainly focuses on achieving a strategic agenda for HRM rather than leaving them simply to deal with administrative activities and satisfying members' needs (Employee Champion role). The above perspective of the HR professional complies with the previous discussion of Ulrich's model of HRM (2005) which indicates that HRM reform is based on acting in Business Partner and Change Agent roles that focuses on achieving strategic orientation, rather than in Employee Champion and Administrative Expert roles concerned with routine and tactical tasks to satisfy stakeholders and members.

Similarly, the HR professional in case study (A) explains his perspective toward HRM reform in the typical and interesting quote below:

'What I would say is that we've been very successful as a HR team in enabling change management. We have contributed very directly to restructuring some change management programmes that have been going on the university. We have also contributed extensively to accreditation for investors in people and we are also the first university to be accredited for working with the balance, and we have had very much a focus on the choice agenda looking at not just the traditional ways of recruitment and selection but ways of incentivising recruitment, selection and retention but actually looking at a more broader perspective working around peoples life choices'.

(HRMPUA)

The above quote indicates that the HR professional in case study (A) makes a link between the contribution of HRM in change management programmes and investment in people as a main tool to achieve HRM reform. This demonstrates how important the role of HRM is, not just in carrying out administrative activities (recruitment, selection, etc.) but in helping people to develop and improve their choices and objectives. This quote also supports the proposition of this thesis that HRM reform in UK HEIs is working with the IR model in which the role of HRM is to achieve strategic direction as Business Partner and Change Agent, not just focus on operations (Employee Champion and Administrative Expert roles).

Moreover, the HRM strategy in case study (A) supports the same view:

'The university recognises that it needs a clear corporate mechanism or process for identifying HRM priorities through the annual planning round both to enable the university gradually to re-profile its staffing against changing external and operational requirements to ensure that people implications of major change projects are identified and supported'.

(HRMSUA: 5)

The quote above from the HRM strategy of university (A) highlights the importance of reshaping HRM as an important tool to manage change. The reshaping or *'re-profiling'* activities that support change management are based on planning for change and determining the priorities of HRM reform. The HRM strategy indicates that the re-profiling process requires setting future perspectives that enable people (academics) to accept change management programmes and to manage their culture, changing from having more academic freedom toward achieving end objectives and goals. The following quote from the HRM strategy in case study (A) highlights the role of change planning:

'Corporate change planning needed to recognize and address the issue of how to create the time and space for staff to change working practices. This has both cultural and structural dimensions'. (HRMSUA: 6)

This indicates that university (A) has invested in developing HRM to be more supportive to organizational change. In addition, the HRM strategy illustrates the importance of managing organizational culture as the main tool to support change. The above quote mentions *'cultural and structural dimensions'* that could help to move from the SS model of managing universities, which is mainly characterized by more academic freedom and autonomy, to the IR model of universities that sets out performance targets and economic outcomes.

From the previous discussion of HR professional's perspectives in the case studies, it is clear that there is a movement in HRM from the SS model that is concerned with performing administrative activities and looking to satisfy

academics' needs through social and communicative rationality to the IR model of managing universities that mainly focuses on achieving end goals and setting the strategic direction of HRM reform. Change management is one of the characteristics of the modern model where HRM is working to set change planning and contribute to identify a cultural and procedural framework to achieve reform objectives.

6. Legislative landscape

Amongst the HR professionals in the case studies, there is a perception that change in the legislative landscape will influence HRM reform at a strategic level. One of the HR professionals indicates this as follows:

'There is a new law in areas such as flexible working, age, maternity. It requires a high emphasis on the policy development function within HRM'.

(HRMPUG)

This suggests that changes in the legislative landscape and laws affect the shaping of the strategic direction for HRM and its effects on HRM functions.

The HRM professional in this case study considers change in regulations and its effects on achieving certain goals and outcomes. Some of the HR professionals experience the legislative landscape as an essential background to their plans for development and for the change agenda. For example one of the HR professionals indicates the following in the typical quote below:

'Well, we work within the framework that the University is a public, mainly a publicly funded body. 80% of our income comes via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). And so the main influence that has is that our people management processes need to be approved by HEFCE and deemed as modern and fit for purpose. And so last year we went through a

self-assessment. We used the HEFCE self-assessment tool, the SAT and that involved bringing in an external peer reviewer from another University, from Oxford Brookes University. And we were approved by HEFCE; our people management practices were approved by HEFCE'. (HRMPUC)

This demonstrates how the HR professional in university (C) feels that the legislative and regulatory landscape plays an important role in approving change and developing HRM's plans. It provides evidence that any development should be reviewed and approved by funding bodies and it reflects the importance of satisfying governmental and funding requirements. It represents quite a conservative view from the HR professional to applying developments in their work because she/she perceives the regulations and the legislative landscape as a starting point from which to go forward in HRM reform. This HR professional's perspective in this case study is related to the literature review chapter's discussion about rationality and effectiveness. The HR professional supports the managerial perspective for achieving organizational effectiveness. This view reflects the economic rationality perspective, which supports the relationship between cost and effectiveness as well as supporting establishing common goals and objectives and, in this case, this framework reflects legislative regulations.

The last quote from the HR professional from university (C) (see page 179) supports the proposition of this thesis that HRM reform in UK HEIs moved from achieving social and communicative rationality by satisfying members' needs to the instrumental rationality model where achieving strategic and economic objectives is crucial. Using HEFCE assessment standards reflects change in HRM from the HR professional's perspective that indicates the

importance of performance management systems to ensure the achievement of certain objectives and standards. It could be argued that because these standards derived from outside the organization, it may be unacceptable from academics.

On the other hand, some of the HR professionals perceive the importance of legislative rules as a supportive tool for development and change but have a more conservative view about their role in shaping all HRM activities. For example the following quote indicates this:

'I think the range of employment legislation is such that's vital to us. But we always aim to do more than just comply with legislation. We aim for best practice so there's family friendly legislation that's influenced us. Equality legislation that's influencing us. We're always aiming to anticipate new legislation. So I think areas like employment, like equality and employment and family friend policies are important drivers of our HR policy'. (HRMPUD)

A key concern for the HR professional in case study (D) is not to be proactive in terms of the legislative landscape but they think how they can use law to help them to achieve their objectives. So, one of the main purposes of HRM reform is to develop its own policies and procedures that help in achieving the reform objectives. The use of the 'best practice' concept in people management derives from the private sector that aims to make the best use of resources (Hood,1991), and it reflects the competitive environment the HR professionals are working in.

The previous quote is related to the theme of this thesis that there is a movement, in managing HRM, to achieve economic objectives, and the framework for this shift is the governmental regulation that encourages

applying business like values and practices in HEIs. The HR professional intends to be legally compliant with government legislation but wishes to have some flexibility whilst doing the job. The following quote supports this view:

'We believe it's very important that the university is legally compliant, but beyond that there should be some flexibility because we have a wide range of different staff groups and people. And that's how we approach it really.'

(HRMPUF)

The quote above demonstrates that the HR professional in case study (F) understands the unique nature of HEIs and the special characteristics of academic staff. It also indicates how it is important for university (F) to be compliant with governmental rules and procedures but to have some flexibility in applying these procedures. The HR professional stresses the importance of considering the people working in an organization when applying these regulations.

The issue of academic culture, one of the HRM reform challenges in UK HEIs, is also touched on in the quote. Managing academic culture to work with the modern model of universities is one of these challenges that requires more flexibility in applying government legislation. Further discussion about the perspectives of HR professionals in managing the challenges of HRM reform will be presented later.

So, the previous discussion of the role of the legislative landscape for shaping and approaching HRM strategy in the case studies indicates that HRM professionals perceive that HRM reform should be within the governmental framework that they have to work within but should not ignore the challenges

that face applying HRM reform and that one of these challenges is the academic culture.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, HR professionals' perspective toward changes at the strategic level of HRM is analysed. The main features of strategic change in HRM reform are represented when considering HRM as a strategic function: the application of the Business Partner model and the business excellence model; the setting of change management programmes and the consideration of the legislative landscape as a framework of HRM reform. As indicated earlier, organizations that are working to apply NPM are supposed to be more concerned with strategy and increasingly seek to use change as a tool to respond to competition (Pollitt, 2000). Similarly, the literature review indicates that applying reform in the public sector requires HRM to create more flexible structures and processes and to set performance indicators and standards that could help in achieving reform objectives (Brown, 2008).

The analysis of the perspectives of HRM professionals supports the proposition of this thesis that there is a movement from the SS model of managing universities that is mainly concerned with the social and communicative rationality perspective to the IR model where managerialism and achieving economic objectives is the main focus.

The role of HRM, according to this proposition, has changed from performing more tactical and routine activities and supporting members' needs (Employee Champion and Administrative Expert roles) to steering the

strategic direction in UK HEIs through applying performance management and quality standards (Business Partner and Change Agent roles).

The final conclusion is that, at the strategic level, there is evidence from HR professionals' perspectives and from the HRM strategy that the role of HR has changed over time to be more strategic and to be more concerned with change management and achieving performance standards within government regulations.

The discussion indicates that HR professionals welcome the strategic approach in HRM but in some cases there is complexity and conflicts in how to apply this approach. There is evidence from the previous discussion that HR professionals have not consider organizational members' interests (academics) and their role and contribution in shaping the strategic direction of HRM and they have more concern on applying this direction.

The HR professionals do not take into account that academics might still have the power to defend their autonomy and freedom based on their professionalism. This reflects tensions and conflicts in relationships between academics and managers in setting HRM strategic objectives and it reflects more challenges for HR to apply strategic reform with considering academic status in HE.

Therefore, the previous discussion leads to a question about what the HR professionals' perspectives on the impact of these changes are at the operational level. This will be discussed in the following chapter through exploring how HRM's practices and operations adapt with this reform in HEIs.

Chapter Eight:

HRM Reform at an Operational Level

1. Introduction

As indicated previously, this thesis proposes that the HR role has been transformed from the traditional role of HRM (Employee Champion role) that is mainly concerned with ensuring that employees are engaged in organizational decisions and that they are committed to organizational objectives to the strategic role (Business Partner role) that is concerned with achieving strategic direction and economic goals. This chapter attempts to illustrate, from the HR professionals' point of view and in accordance with the HRM strategy of the UK HEIs participating in this thesis, how HRM's functions reflect the application of NPM perspectives. It aims to consider the impact of HRM reform at an operational level through exploring how HRM's practices and operations adapt to this reform, taking into consideration the particularity of the HE sector that may add some complexity for HR professionals trying to develop their functions and practices in this direction.

This chapter presents the HR professionals' point of view of HRM reform at an operational level through exploring the following: performance appraisal; equality and diversity; training and development; flexibility; quality; team working and technology.

2. Performance appraisal

The conclusion from the discussion in the literature review chapter is that changes in HEIs towards applying NPM reform encouraged universities to develop their strategies and control their results rather than their inputs; this requires a development in performance appraisal programmes and standards that helped HEIs to apply this reform. The main factor in effective

performance management is the shared understanding from organization members about what is to be achieved. The following typical quote supports this argument:

'Performance appraisal was based on what do you need to do in terms of your development to achieve a better level of performance. What we're now in the process of doing is introducing a competency framework, a proper competency framework. We've had the Hay Group come in to do it for us. And we are actually over the next few months going to be rolling that out and getting people to link into how their performance relates to the standards expected of their particular level and have them performance appraised against those standards. Which I think is a much better way of doing it then we've done before. It's a nice simple competency framework and I have great hopes for it.'

(HRMPUG)

The overall impression gained from this quote is that the HR professional in case study (G) perceives that employee performance as a critical activity for HRM reform. This creates more pressures on HR professionals to ensure that organizational members know and understand what is expected of them (performance standards) and have the skills and ability to deliver on these expectations and on the other hand HR professionals have to give feedback on organizational members' performance. It is clear that establishing a 'competency framework', which involves setting expected standards against which individuals appraise their performance, is an important step. In HE, HR professionals are working to set pay progression using a competency framework rather than results because of the unique nature of academic status. The previous quote identifies that the HR professional in case study (G) supports the managerialist perspective which focuses on involving performance management targets and introducing a system of appraisal.

There is evidence that HR professionals cooperated with an external group to set up performance targets. This appears to be a remarkable step for managing performance of academics and it may raise difficulties in applying these targets because academics haven't been involved in setting their own performance targets in this case. Although, performance management is about interrelationships and about improving the quality of relationships, between managers and individuals, it is clear from the previous quote that academics have limited participation in setting their performance standards and performance appraisals and this could cause tensions between academics and managers.

The above quote relates to a previous discussion in the 'Organizational Effectiveness' chapter about achieving organizational effectiveness through achievement of the goals of the organization. As discussed before, this is related to the IR model of universities where the Instrumental Rationality model is the main perspective of organizational effectiveness that considers achieving outputs but with more consideration to economic principles.

However, the HR professional in this quote supports HE becoming more result orientated with more focus on the IR model of OE and he has given the responsibility for setting performance targets to an external group. This action could create a sort of role ambiguity and tensions between HR managers and academics because of the different interests of HR managers who are looking for achieving cost- effectiveness objective and academics who are keen to defend their freedom and autonomy. The HR professional in the following untypical quote has a different approach:

'We use something called HERA, Higher Education Role Analysis, so we grade all the jobs using HERA. And we try and clarify; we try and ensure people have clear job descriptions and person specifications. So that's clearly a tool that we use. We are trying to change the appraisal process. We see that as critical that as everyone has a one to one discussion with their manager and told how they performed in the last year and what their objectives will be for the coming year. When we have reviewed our appraisal process recently we used a cross sectional team to review that. We had managers and staff from different parts of the University and different levels to do that. Because I believe that our policies should be developed using the involvement, employee involvement at all levels'. (HRMPUC)

Through the above quote I was able to ascertain that the HR professional in case study (C) is looking to apply HRM strategy through performance management systems. Although the above quote indicates that case study (C) is working within the IR model of universities where strategic direction has been set, the HR professional gives quite a lot of consideration to the importance of employee involvement in setting performance targets and objectives. The quote is related to Ulrich's argument (2001) that HR professionals should create new forms of engagement with employees to achieve HRM reform. It also indicates that the perspective of the HR professional is to play the Business Partner role through setting a change agenda and an appraisal system but, with more participation from individuals about how HR applies this change and this could create conflicts between achieving organizational objectives and satisfying organizational members. This case will create a sort of 'hybridization' for HR reform.

The HR professional in case study (C) considers the importance of formal and informal discussion and communication with academics about

performance evaluation, to highlight performance targets and to explain how they are going to evaluate performance. There is evidence that managing individual performance should rely on achievement rather than performance because of the particularity of HE sector.

Similarly, the HRM strategy in case study (C) supports this:

'As a part of the new process (Appraisal), we will focus on developing managers' skills in setting objectives, assessing competencies and giving constructive feedback on performance. We will also provide training and support in the implementation of University Policies on occupational performance'. (HRMSUC: 3)

The HRM strategy in case study (C) supports the IR model of universities through applying regular and effective appraisals to achieve economic objectives. The quote from the HRM strategy indicates too the importance of development programmes for staff to ensure that they are involved and engaged in achieving university objectives. The above quote reflects the main aspects of performance management that are performance improvement, development and managing behaviour.

In a similar vein, the following quote indicates:

'It's ensuring that appraisal happens consistently across the organisation, right. Appraisal is patchy and some people can work for years for the university and never be appraised. We want to change that. We want to make sure it happens across the university. So, we will be investing in training for managers in acting as reviewers of performance and development needs. But for us performance and development go hand in hand, so we assess performance where we can on a one to one basis but then provide support to meet people's development needs. And you'll see from our strategy that when we talk about performance, I'll show you the heading it's 'Contribution,

Performance and Reward'. And so we're now being very explicit with our strategy. We're recognising enhanced contribution and we're extending a consistent appraisal processes'. (HRMPUA)

These words indicate that the HR professional in case study (A) recognizes the importance of 'managerialism' across the whole university and it supports managers' responsibility to set and apply performance management. The quote states that performance management systems were not in existence in that university before and indicates that there is a shift to apply new management in HR and to move toward the IR model of universities. The quote also illustrates the importance of the relationship between performance management and the development of an individual's skills and needs. Performance improvement comes about by building on strengths and overcoming weaknesses. The HR professional in case study (A) is also aware of the importance of training managers as performance reviewers and the importance of linking the university strategy and the performance management system and the application of performance related pay.

Again, there is clear evidence that the HR professional does not consider the role of academics in setting and applying performance management systems and has more attention of the role of managers in this function. A different view of HRM strategy in case study (A) which states the following:

'The HR strategy recognizes that staff are the university's most valuable and costly resource and that the focused and effective performance of those staff is critical to the university's success and indeed, survival...Developing performance needs to be a partnership between staff and management. Best practice suggests that this is likely to be enhanced by the adoption and

consistent application of an effective personal development and performance review process (PDPR)' (HRMSUA: 11)

The previous quotes from the HRM strategy and from the HR professional in case study (A) highlight the importance that the university gave to the participation between academics and managers to setting standards and targets for staff. There is evidence from the HRM strategy that HR should play a more active role to get organizational members' commitment toward applying performance management systems. The previous discussion supports Ulrich's (2001) argument that performance management represents one of the HRM activities that could facilitate applying HR reform through indicating performance standards and measuring performance to ensure achieving organizational objectives. But, as indicated in chapter three (Human Resource Management Reform), there is an argument that performance appraisal is different in the public sector to that in private sector institutions (Brown 2008, Boyne, 2002); the following selected quote supports this view:

'I think we're different to a private sector company. The Higher Education sector hasn't necessarily been performance focussed in the past. When I talk to our Trade Unions on this they prefer to talk about achievement rather than performance, so performance is still quite a controversial term. So we don't use tools to measure individual performance... What we're doing is we've changed our appraisal process to a performance and development review process. We're piloting it now and we're hoping there to provide a one to one context within which employees are comfortable in talking about their performance but it's a culture change here. If I took that question out to Faculties, people will be uncomfortable with it... Yes in the private sector it is day to day evaluation... In university you have to be very careful' (HRMPUC)

Through the above quote, I was able to ascertain that the HR professional in case study (C) considers the unique characteristics of the HE sector in applying performance management systems. The above quote indicates that changes happened in HE to turn it from being based on the SS model that considers professionalization and the good relationship between members and stockholders to being based on the IR model that considers managerialism and performance management. The quote demonstrates that applying performance management is a challenge for the HR professional in case study (C). This relates to the differences in culture between the private and the public sectors. For example, Butterfield et al. (2008) argue that public sector organizations are very different to those in the private sector in terms of their organizational goals, environments, structure and managerial values. This argument supports that there is a hybridization status for HR professionals in how to apply private sector techniques in HE and this could represent a challenge for the movement toward the IR model. The quote indicates that in the HE sector the use of the term 'achievement' may be more acceptable than the term 'performance' and this is related to the intangible nature of an educational service that is mainly concerned with knowledge transaction which it is difficult to measure. We can refer here to Deem (2004: 111) argument that *'Managing academic knowledge is not remotely comparable to managing retailing and industrial production and it can be particularly challenging to manage'*. This argument is related to Cameron's (1978) argument that colleges and universities are unlike other types of organizations, and therefore those traditional approaches to assessment are not applicable.

The HR professional in case study (A) refers to 'culture change' for academics as a mean to establish and apply performance management, and this represents one of the big challenges that face HR professionals in UK HEIs when attempting to move forward to the IR model of universities. Further discussion about organizational change will be presented later. The quote refers to the managerial perspective of managing organizational culture in which managers try to use management tools to persuade academics to change their culture to fit the IR model of universities that aims to achieve the cost-effectiveness objective.

The conclusion from this analysis of the HR professionals' perspectives highlights that they are very keen to apply performance management systems in HEIs but there is a question about if they are aware of the constraints and limitations in HE or not. This argument is related to the HRM reform and a move away from thinking that it is not necessary to apply performance appraisal (the SS model of universities) to an increasing intention to evaluate staff performance and compare their performance to targets (the IR model of universities). It is clear from the quote that there is some sort of tension and ambiguity about the appropriate role in relation to how HRM can apply performance management in HEIs. The HRM professional as a decision maker has an unclear view about the how they can apply performance management in HE.

This raises a question about how the HEIs measure and evaluate performance within the particularity of this sector; the following typical quote indicates one of the answers:

'How can you measure it? So when I talk to academic staff they will say "Okay you can use student feedback. But does it mean then you're only going to reward the most popular teacher?" So you have to make sure you use student feedback in the right way. ...where I'll be working with academic colleagues to make sure we have that flexibility... within our professional service departments you can perhaps more easily set targets. But on the academic departments it's very difficult to set those targets. Because when we set targets and use tools they must recognise quality as well as quantity. And the message that our Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor have got to get over to staff is "We've got to work smarter in the future, so we can all provide a better performance with possibly less resources." So it's a real challenge for the Higher Education sector'. (HRMPUD)

This response notes some of the challenges facing performance management in HEIs. Measuring academic performance is one of these challenges. The reply from the HR professional in case study (D) reflects the difficulty of applying performance appraisal to academic staff, and it also reflects a strategic intention to apply performance management systems in the future. The quote indicates that academic work involves quality and quantity dimensions that should be considered when measuring performance and that this represents a big challenge for HR professionals in the academic sector.

Although the HRM strategy in case study (D) tries to provide a strategic view about the performance management project, from the interviews with HR professionals within UK HEIs, there is an unclear view about identifying a satisfactory account of how they will set targets to manage academic performance. The HR professionals understand the importance of performance management systems but they cannot perceive, in terms of functional matters, how they can apply these systems.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the previous quote is that a HR professional in case study (D) supports the movement toward the IR model of universities where performance management is one of the main objectives to achieve. However, the academic sector requires more consideration of culture change for successful HRM reform because of the unique characteristics of HE where most academics have freedom and autonomy. The HRM strategy in case study (A), one of the HEIs that formulated and applied HRM strategy earlier than all the other case studies participating in this research, indicates how the university will apply job evaluation and performance appraisal:

'the university and its recognised trade unions have commenced joint consultative committee work to draw together the job evaluation project with the move to the single pay spine and the creation of a local pay structure.....it will be necessary to produce generic role definitions for certain benchmark roles to support the work on pay and progression and the role analysis exercise will be used to collect this information'. (HRMSUA: 10)

The university strategy indicates specific steps to evaluate performance. The first phase is data and information collection from a staff survey to inform the strategy and to indicate a way forward. The second phase is the implementation, which pays due regard to a modernized pay framework for university staff through evaluating academic jobs as indicated in the following quote:

'we need to review the mechanisms used to recognise specific local responsibility, such as teaching and learning co-ordination, and the used of honoraria for academic posts....we have reviewed recently our use fixed term contracts and moved a significant number of staff on to 'permanent' terms'. (HRMSUA: 12)

The above quotes from the HRM strategy in case study (A) identify specific steps how to apply performance management in the university. The HRM strategy uses specific performance targets and links the job evaluation with the pay levels in the university. Theoretically, the HRM strategy in case study (A) takes away the special status of academics when determining performance management steps. In interviews, the HRM professional in case study (A) support the same view through this untypical and interesting quote:

'We do have an executive dashboard which is basically a way of the strategic management group looking at key indicators that link to the strategic plan some of which are HR indicators and at the moment they are fairly unsophisticated. We are just at the minute implementing a new HR system and the second phase of the development of that system is to look at benchmarking and key performance indicators and when we talk about benchmarking I am not only interested in benchmarking in the sector in fact I am probably less interested in the sector but benchmarking across the profession. And we will obviously use the indicators that most organisations would use about turnover, numbers of grievances, sickness levels, but I think the trick to pull off is how they then correlate directly with your strategic plans and systems so that certainly is the environment that we are in at the moment but we are hoping to refine and make better'. (HRMPUA)

The significant factor in the above quote is that the HR professional in case study (A) is looking to apply performance indicators and benchmarking from outside the HE sector. This approach may not consider the special status for academics in moving toward the IR model of universities. This represents one of the dilemmas that is faced when responding to NPM in HEIs that have special academic status and where academic freedom and autonomy are important features. The above argument is related to Broad and Goddard's

(2007) argument that there are some challenges facing applying strategic direction in HEIs, and gaining the internal engagement and acceptance of the strategic changes from academics are two examples of these challenges.

Similarly, the HRM strategy in case study (C), the university that recently started formulating and applying HRM strategy in 2008, indicates that:

'For academic staff, appraisal discussions will be more explicitly linked to their contribution to research, knowledge transfer and scholarship, alongside their teaching and learning responsibilities'. (HRMSUC: 3)

The main argument from previous analysis of interviews with HR professionals and of the HRM strategy in the case studies is that there is a movement toward applying the IR model which is concerned with economic rationality and cost-effectiveness goals and thus is based on managerialism and applying management activities such as performance management. The role of HRM in this model of universities is mainly concerned with a strategy dimension (Business Partner and Change Agent roles). In addition, the analysis indicates that there are challenges facing the application of performance management systems in academic institutions because of the unique nature of HEIs. These challenges sometimes cause role ambiguity for HR professionals in connection with how they can apply HRM reform.

Therefore, we can set out an argument that universities are adopting a sort of 'hybridisation' rather than becoming pure business like organizations. The final argument is that HR professionals should use special treatment and careful consideration of the academic status in applying NPM philosophy and in setting up HRM reform activities in HEIs. From the previous discussion, I

can argue that establishing an organizational culture in HE in which individuals (managers and academics) can take shared responsibility for the continuous improvement of business processes.

3. Equality and Diversity

As indicated in the literature review discussion, managing diversity in higher education, for example, age, ethnicity and disability, is considered one of the important functions in management reforms in HEIs (Deem, 2006). So, the question arises of *'How can HR professionals deal with the equality and diversity practices in universities?'*

The following typical quote suggests one of the answers to the above question:

'What we have had to make sure is that all our policy procedures are legislative compliant..... Sort of generally individuals have become far more aware of their employment rights and therefore are far more inclined to take an employee to an employment tribunal if they think that they have been dealt with in a way that they think is inappropriate' (HRMPUA)

This quote indicates that the HR professional in case study (A) considers managing diversity and equality as a reaction to governmental legislations and rules. The HR professional has a perception that recently employees have more power to protect their rights. This means that the Employee Champion role is unnecessary to this HR professional as he/she believes that recently employees have an ability to defend their rights. As a result of this, the HRM role is expected to change from the SS model where HRM was very conscientious about satisfying members' needs to the IR model where the main objective is to achieve strategic and economic outputs.

Case study (A), one of the UK HEIs that started applying a HRM strategy earlier than the other universities participating in this research, has an approach in which diversity and equality practices represent one of the HRM reform trends. The HRM strategy supports equality and diversity as well; the following quote from the HRM strategy explains that:

'It is a core value of University A to demonstrated fairness, equality and opportunity and respect to all...cultural diversity awareness is part of core training for all staff and feeds through directly into recruitment and selection processes as well as contributing to cultural awareness' of diversity issues as an integral part of our activities and strategies'. (HRMSUA: 4)

The HRM strategy also illustrates the importance of audits of the equal opportunity profile for the university as a strategic objective of HRM reform in HEIs. The quote mentions the importance of cultural awareness and the role of training to engage staff in strategic objectives and goals. Although HRM strategy in case study (A) indicates that equality and diversity awareness are legislation-led activities that aim to apply equality and diversity agenda to HEIs and it is a part of the HRM responsibility to get people aware these activities, the HR professional in the previous quote highlight that it is employees' responsibility to know and protect their rights. This reflects the status of role ambiguity about the responsibility of HRM in HR reform.

Another typical answer from the HR professionals indicates the following:

'The government during that period has become a lot more interested in issues of equality for example. So that's equality of pay and equality of treatment. During that period the government has been enforcing legislation to do with making different minority groups and giving rights to different minority groups such as disabled people, such as those of different sexuality. And there's been a great deal of pressure on the university sector to come up with

plans by which it's going to take those new rights forward. And not just treat people properly but actually we have an obligation in the university sector to actually improve relationships between different groups of staff. And that's something that I have to say the university sector has struggled with greatly because it's very difficult to know how to do that. You know, how do you actually do that? And I don't know any area that's actually succeeded in doing that particularly. So I think the government's agenda has clearly been about equality. We're seeing the government at the moment pressing on their new Equality Bill, and that's bringing it all together. There are elements in the government that would like to force organisations to do equal pay audits for example. Now we did an equal pay audit here about two years ago and we came up with the unsurprising conclusion that generally speaking women were paid less than men. Now we knew we were going to have that conclusion to start with because just about every organisation in the UK, and indeed beyond the UK, has that situation. The question is what do you do about it and how quickly? So I think I've seen us having to concentrate a lot more on equality and diversity' (HRMPUB)

The HR professional in case study (B) continues:

'It's very hard... Because if we were to do another equal pay audit tomorrow and we were obliged to put right everything that we found there immediately we actually couldn't do it. We would be bankrupt. So what we have to do is do it bit by bit really. I find this quite difficult. There are some organisations in this country such as some local authorities who have tried to do it very quickly and have got into very severe financial problems. Now the way that I try to balance it here is to have quite an open dialogue with the local trade unions and say to them look, if I did try and do this now all at once we'd all be out of jobs. Now the position that I've got, and I'm very lucky with this, is that I've got some very realistic and pragmatic local trade unions who say well that's okay, as long as we can see you've got a plan to do it and you're going to do it over a certain period of time. And that's what we're doing. We are taking it in stages. So we revised our grading system in 2006 and we introduced a new job evaluation system at the time that was much better than we had before. We introduced

the Hay Group system which is a well-known international one. Before that we had one that had been, as far as I could tell, devised just for this organisation. And I was very unhappy about it because I didn't think it was analytical. So we've had that for three bit years now so that's much better. And gradually you can see the effects are coming through that if we have that, well we are going to have another equal pay audit very soon. And I think the results will be much better than they were when we did it two or three years ago. I think many of the gaps will have narrowed' (HRMDUB)

A key concern from the perspective of the HR professional in case study (B) is the great pressure from the government in HEIs to apply an equality and diversity agenda. The main challenge that actually faces HR professionals is how to apply equality and diversity in practice with a challenge of financial constraints. The response from the HR professional in the previous quotes illustrates that the HR strategy indicates the importance of equality and diversity but the HR professionals report that there is a problem in applying an equality and diversity management system and they are going to solve this problem gradually. Again this quote reflects that there is a sort of hybridisation in this case study. It seems that the HR professional may recognize and sometimes welcome this status in university. The conclusion from the previous quote is that managing equality and diversity in universities is legislatively required as a HRM activity that facilitates the movement toward the IR model of universities that is concerned with achieving managerialism practices, but it may sometimes be conflicted with achieving financial goals that are looking to save costs. The above argument is related to the argument in the literature that managerial reform in higher education fails to consider equality and diversity dimensions. The literature calls for more representation

of women in the workplace and supports the arguments that there is complexity in managing diversity in HE, that academics are facing difficult choices and that female academics are facing more difficult challenges than male ones (McTavish and Miller, 2009; Barry et al., 2006). It was clear from the previous discussion that the HR professionals only concern with equal pay without more consideration to the unique status of HE and the professionalization of academics.

These discussions of diversity and equality in HEIs from the perspectives of the HR professionals and the HR strategy support the proposition of this thesis that HR role moved to achieve strategic objectives (IR model) and to cope with the legislative requirements that encourage applying management reform to achieve economic end goals. It is clear as well that there is hybridization status where the HR professionals have limited clear view of how can they apply these strategies in practice.

4. Training and development

It can be seen from the analysis of interviews with HR professionals, and from the HRM strategies of case studies participating in this thesis, that there is an argument that one of HRM's functions that could facilitate applying private sector management in HEIs is training and development. The HR professional in case study (F) supports this argument in the following typical quote:

'It's (Training and development) fundamental for this university ...And that's one of the things that make us attractive to academic staff. For other staff we have a dedicated IT trainer here. We offer as I've said accredited management courses which mean you can get a certificate at the end of it. We offer the European Computer Driving Licence. We do all kinds of

management related training. And I think if there's something that is a really good aid to retention of staff it's the fact they know they can get very good training here.....the main point of it is to make them more efficient in their jobs. And being a university we ought to have very good training because we are here for education, that's what we're here for'. (HRMPUF)

It can be seen here that the HR professional in case study (F) considers that training and development has an important role in applying HRM reform. Training and development are helping to improve organizational performance and individual growth. The quote indicates the importance of linking training and development programmes and business objectives. Moving toward applying public sector reform (IR model) requires more focus on training employees in new techniques and processes and developing their skills to support their achievement of reform objectives (cost-effectiveness).

The HR strategy in case study (F) supports the same perspective:

'One of the key performance indicators is the extent to which there is a demonstrable commitment to training and development and the extent to which internal training is relevant and useful'. (HRMSUF: 4)

One of the performance indicators that case study (F) used was getting more commitment from employees towards training and development programmes. This is an important step to improving levels of participation and engagement from academics and to getting their view regarding applying NPM in HEIs; it represents an important means to move toward applying the new model of universities that is concerned with achieving strategic and financial objectives. Training and development programmes are also important for managing organizational culture. The following quote supports this view:

'Line managers should play a key part in developing training plans, and assisting individuals in determining what further training they need. We do have another individual who specifically looks after academic practice, so on the teaching side, he looks after that, if that's of any help to you. But no, I think they should be involved, and as a team we try as much as we can to consult and get people interested. Training programmes are required for managing and to change university's culture. Academics should accept that and engage on it'. (HRMPUE)

The importance of the line manager's role in shaping and facilitating the training and development requirements within the university is noted in the quote. The main idea is the importance of training and development programmes to change and manage organizational culture. This quote relates to the literature discussion in that one of NPM's objectives is managing culture through shifting from a culture of complying with rules (the social perspective) to a culture of managing for outcomes (the managerialist perspective) (Hood, 1991,1995). It was clear from the quote that HR professional perceives that academics should be involved in HE reform as long as they are doing what they are told. The use of words of *'academics should accept that'* means that HR professional will carrying out some implications if academics avoid involvement and this could affect the success of these implications.

In addition, the above quote supports applying the managerial perspective in managing organizational culture where managers have the orientation to apply change through persuading academics to contribute to the change. Similarly, the previous quote indicates that training and development is a management technique that facilitates change in universities from satisfying members and stakeholders' interests (SS model) to achieving goals and

objectives from a cost-effectiveness perspective (IR model). Although the HR professional in this quote states that academics *should* accept training and development objectives.

The HRM strategy in university (A) supports this perspective:

'The HR strategy recognises the focal role of line and corporate management in HR management and the need to ensure that managers develop the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver this role. Internal management development programmes have been established for all levels of management to support development of interpersonal and managerial skills and abilities particularly with regard to coaching, recognition, and performance management activities. These will continue to develop together with the extension of the leadership and management development workshops across the university'. (HRMSUA: 4)

This statement clearly supports a training and development agenda as an important tool to achieve management reform and develop staff skills and knowledge. It reflects the importance of training and development programmes to successfully achieve HRM processes and activities and to support the strategic HRM vision.

Indeed, the following quote supports the same attitudes:

'We provide a lot of staff development, not just through HR but also academic professional, continuing professional development. And we recently, in the last 18 months, we set up a Staff Development Group that coordinates all the provision.And we're also investing more in management development at all levels of the University.... Not just through traditional attending courses but through coaching, mentoring, online, action learning – the new techniques.....we have a well-established Management Development Programme. But our strategy talks about changing the Management Development Programme to a

Leadership Development Programme. So it's good at the moment we're trying to make it even better by aiming for leadership and accessing external resources more'. (HRMPUG)

And the HRMPUG continues:

'Under our new strategy, the Staff Development Group will review the training provision that's there, they'll bring all the providers together and then they will report not only to me but to the Strategic Planning Group of the University. So the Strategic Planning Group which includes the Vice Chancellor, Directorate and Deans will receive regular reports now from the Staff Development Group about the provision. And they will look for any gaps that are there. So they'll try to ensure it reflects strategic objectives. So if say next year employer engagement is a big strategic objective – talking to local employers, looking at the skills agenda – then we'll see whether our training and development programmes match that. Or the next year, internationalisation might be a big objective well we'd see then are we providing the right skills for our employees in internationalisation? For academic staff, we want to ensure that they are accessing the programmes offered by the HEA, by the Higher Education Academy to make sure that professional skills are being continually upgraded'. (HRMPUG)

From the previous quotes, I was able to ascertain that training and development programmes are considered as important tools for applying and achieving a university's strategic objectives. The HR role is to apply strategic goals (Business Partner role) in HEIs through leadership development programmes that can facilitate HRM reform and a change toward the modern model of universities. There is evidence from the previous quotes that HR professional is working to put everything on place and academics should accept these changes and should engage in training and development to apply them. The HR professional does not refer if academics will welcome these changes or not. This could give clear insight that HR professional

dealing with academics as employees and this ignored the unique status of academic work and in the same time it ignored that academics may still have the power to defend their professionalization.

5. Flexibility

The HRM professionals in the case studies participating in this research indicate that applying HRM reform in HEIs requires flexible processes and procedures that can facilitate the shift in models of the universities with more consideration for the unique status of the academic sector. The following selected quote supports this argument:

'I've worked in the Civil Service for a couple of years. Most of my career I worked in the private sector in engineering. Now I think the university sector is a strange sector in that it's not quite private sector, it's not quite public sector, it sort of sits in the middle. And it has quite a lot of the good elements of both, which I find very attractive...So, because it sits in the middle there between the two it is very flexible....Now in the university sector I have found practices very flexible in the sense that you don't have an overarching government body sitting on top of you laying down what you're going to do like the Civil Service does. So institutions are very free to develop their own policies and procedures by reference really to statute and then locally to what they want to do based on that'. (HRMPUB)

The HR professional continues, saying:

Here we are sort of half way in between. I don't think we are quite benevolent; we're not paternalistic in that sense though. We expect people to work hard and to earn their money. And if they do then we will treat them very well. But if they don't we do have a history here of being able to deal with people and move them on if that's the right thing to do. This sector has the most flexible sort of policies and procedures of anywhere I've ever worked'. (HRMPUB)

These two quotes from the HR professional in case study (B) indicate that they generally feel that HEIs are different from the rest of the public sector in terms of their flexibility in setting procedures and policies. The above quotes support the one of the themes of this thesis that there is a change in managing HEIs from having a professionalization that is concerned with social and communicative rationality to a managerialism that is concerned with achieving value for money through achieving cost- effectiveness objectives. When the HR professional indicates that HE *'is not quite private sector, it's not quite public sector, it sort of sits in the middle'*, this reflects the particularity of the HE sector that needs flexibility when applying change management programmes and in the same time it reflects the hybridization in managing HE reform where the HR professional is looking for like business organization rather than business like organization. The HR role seems to be a Business Partner role that aims to restructure HRM and to apply a strategic direction. The HR professional in case study (C) supports this idea through the following typical quote:

'Our policies and practices have been seen as inflexible in the past and that is one reason why we're changing from Personnel to HR so that our policies reflect the priorities and needs of each part of the university much better. And that's why I'm restructuring the HR function and introducing Business Partners. We're trying to make them more flexible but there will always be a need for some consistency across the piece so they will never be completely flexible. We will always have consistency. But within that, we're looking to make them more responsive. More responsive I would say to the needs of the business. So I like the word, I think I would use the word 'responsive' rather than 'flexible'.

(HRMPUC)

This statement continues:

'We have a redeployment policy that encourages that. We also have what we call an 'At Risk Register'. So if an employee's post becomes redundant in one part of the University we ensure they have every opportunity to apply for jobs on a ring-fenced basis in other parts of the university. We provide support in terms of re-training and re-skilling for those people and we very much encourage them to find opportunity elsewhere in the university. So when change does occur we never have to make anyone compulsorily redundant. We always try to ensure that they have that opportunity to redeploy. If all those opportunities are made open to them but if after that they can't find another opportunity then we would offer voluntary severance or voluntary retirement'. (HRMPUC)

Similarly, this quote from the HRM strategy of case study (C) supports flexibility:

'We will develop an engagement strategy to include these components: new policies for flexible working and enhancing work life balance'. (HRMSUC)

The previous selected quotes indicate that the perspective of the HR professional in case study (C) is that one of the activities that matches with applying the IR model is applying flexible HRM practices and procedures that could help people to change their jobs through reskilling and retraining them to achieve economic objectives and apply a strategic agenda. The use of the word 'business' in the previous quotes may support the movement toward the IR model. It is clear that the HR professional used responsiveness to university needs as an approach for HR reform but this responsiveness does refer to academics' interest. The HR professional acknowledges that the Business Partner role supports flexibility in the university by encouraging the positive relationship between central management and its partners. Quotes state that HRM in a Business Partner role is very keen to find other

employment chances for people facing redundancy to share in achieving organizational objectives with consideration of financial constraints. From the previous discussion of the HR professionals' quotes and the HRM strategies in the case studies participating in this research, it is clear that the HR professionals report the importance of flexibility as a reform feature at the operational level. The above discussion noted that the perspective of HR professionals supports the suggestion that flexibility should be consistent with the central university procedures and roles (strategic direction). There is evidence from the previous quotes that HR professionals have a commitment to apply more flexible procedures and to pay more attention to providing more flexible solutions to the employment problems, within the central umbrella of the university's procedure and policies and this is in compliance with the previous discussion in the literature review (Truss, 2008). It is clear that these changes towards flexibility represent one of HRM's activities under the IR model that is working toward setting organizational strategy, structure and practices that help to achieve the economic rationality perspective.

6. Quality

As indicated in the literature review, quality represents one aspect of HRM reforms in HEIs (Holmes and McElwee, 1995). Similarly, HR professionals in the case studies in this research indicate the importance of quality in HEIs. The following interesting quote supports this view:

'When in an environment in higher education where students are paying considerable sums of money for their education as undergraduates and postgraduates and I think that we have therefore a responsibility to make sure that the product that we deliver which is their education is of the best quality and I think you achieve that through your policies and HR policies and

procedure by making sure that for example robust appraisal processes in place, robust performance management in place and that you are not afraid to use them'. (HRMPUA)

The perspective of this HR professional in case study (A) indicates the increasing intention to apply quality standards in HEIs as a reflection of change toward applying the new model of universities where quality of services is crucial (Harvey, 2005). The quote states that HR professionals perceive that quality achievement should be through applying HR policies. The quote does not refer how he/she will judge the quality of academic work and what is the role of academics in determining quality standards. Again, this indicates the hybridization in HR reform. And similarly, the HR professional from case study (C) indicates this in the following typical quote:

'Well I think our staff development seeks to do that (quality standards). Our investment in staff development and management development improves service quality. I think our pay policies help to that because we have a pay policy called 'The Contribution Pay' where we award people two increments above the top of their pay scale if they can demonstrate a contribution to service over and above that normally expected of their grade. So that's rewarding excellence over and above, excellent performance. .. We pay contribution pay to about 11% of our workforce. So ... They have to demonstrate that they've enhanced service policy and if they do, we reward that'. (HRMDUC)

Here, the HR professional clearly describes that establishing quality standards represent one of HR reform agenda's requirements. As discussed before in the literature review, the quality of an educational service is related to the quality of the people working to provide this service. Therefore, improving and developing a strategic focus toward quality is a challenge. The previous quote

also shows the HR professional's perspective that achieving reform objectives, for example cost-effectiveness and performance management, would come under the umbrella of quality. The HR professional refers to performance pay as a motivating staff to achieve performance targets and quality standards. The HR professional states that they apply '*the contribution pay*' that usually pays more if they can '*demonstrate a contribution to service over and above that normally expected of their grade*'. This means that staff are reward for achieving university goals and developing their skills in ways which fit with the university strategy, rather than their own priorities. The previous quote does not refer how HR professional will evaluate the teaching quality for example that is hard to measure any way.

The above mentioned management activities represent a change in HRM from the SS model where academics enjoyed freedom and autonomy to the IR model where imposed quality standards and targets are important indicators for performance management. But this may cause constraints for HRM professionals. The HR professional in case study (B) supports this view through the following typical quote:

'I think service quality that's a very hard one (quality management)... Now in HR here, a couple of years ago the HR budget was cut down. It's remained level and next year it will be the same amount that it was this year. So I'm actually getting no increase even though staff salaries have increased fairly dramatically in the sector over the last 12 months. That means in real terms I have to cut down the number of staff I've got in the department and manage with fewer. Now, that means, it's quite easy to work out that means that the service that I can provide is actually not going to be as good as it was last year. My difficulty is trying to educate people to understand out there that it won't be as good. And the reason it won't be as good is that they're not

prepared to pay more for it. They tell me that it's more important for them not to pay more than it is to have a really good service. So what have we got to do here? We've got to make better use of our external advisors like lawyers and consultants to do stuff that perhaps we would have done before. And that does mean spending less time with people, or less time on stuff. It means getting line managers to do more. Certainly the thrust I see of the coming 12 months, 24 months, will be us giving more tools to line managers so that they can do work that previously we would have done. And that work will include things like having difficult conversations with members of staff and doing those in a way that's acceptable. Whereas before we would have said oh that's too difficult for you we'll talk to them. I think that's inevitable and I think people need to accept that'. (HRMPUB)

This reflects the HR professional's perspective in case study (B) regarding the difficulties in achieving quality of educational service within a reduction of financial resources. The quote indicates that academics should accept an evaluation of quality of their work to ensure meeting the quality standards. It can also be seen from the statement that this represents a challenge in that the HR professional perceives that university staff should accept the new situation. The HR professional also refers to the use of external lawyers and consultants to perform the administration role of HRM while HR professionals concentrate on the strategic direction of HRM (Business Partner role). It is clear that there is a sort of ambiguity regarding how the HRM will evaluate the quality of academic work. Academic resistance to this situation may represent a limitation to move toward the IR model. The conclusion is that the HR professionals' perspectives show that there are challenges in setting quality targets in HEIs because of financial constraints and because of the special status of academics, and this complies with the literature review where Davis and Thomas (2002) argue that difficulties are faced when identifying the

quality of academic service. They refer to the multiple roles in academic jobs (teaching, research and administration etc.) that cause significant difficulties in applying quality standards.

7. Team working

One of NPM's challenges is to achieve partnership, not just among departments in the same organization, but among people (cross-functional teams) within the same organization (Ferlie et al., 1996). Team working means that members share common goals that they pursue collaboratively. This should mean an extension of freedom, independence and discretion in decisions (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010). This represents one of the characteristics of the shift in HRM from the administrative view to the strategic view. The following quote of the HR professional in case study (A) comments on this in this typical quote:

'We do get involved in a lot of cross team working. To give you a practical example, we are implementing a new HCI (Human Computing Information) system which has for the first time ever brought the payroll in house so we have had a cross team working between computing information services, payroll and HR.... We encourage that cross team working quite a lot of it is about communications and it's about trying to resolve issues at an early stage and that inevitably involves bringing people together. I think that HR advisors are very facilities people and they are usually looking for early solutions to problems, inevitably that means bringing people from different parts of the organization together so I do think it does contribute'. (HRMDUA)

This is an acknowledgement that cross teams represent a type of management technique used to share their ideas with employees from different departments, to solve work problems, and to benefit from team

members' experiences. This individual supports team working to help in the shift from the SS model to the IR model through communicating with people to explain organizational objectives and to manage organizational culture. The HR professional in case study (D) supports the same view in the following selected quote:

'I think it's really dangerous to work separately. If we work in isolation then we're not meeting the needs of the organisation. We perhaps might have been accused of doing that in the past. But that's not our objective now. So, anything that we develop, we always consult throughout the university with the departments, with key members of the management team here'

(HRMPUD)

The perspective from the HR professional in case study (B) supports the argument that team working is a management tool that *could* facilitate achieving organizational objectives (cost-effectiveness) in the IR model through sharing ideas and experiences from different parts of the university to achieve agreed objectives. In reality, applying this has a lot of challenges and the HR professional from case study (B) notes this:

'I would love to. The difficulty we have is getting different; we have difficulty in getting managers at certain levels to release staff or to think that that's a sensible way of working. So I would love to make that happen but it has proved difficult. But I'm still chipping away'

(HRMDUB)

This professional states that the challenge with team working is to engage people to work together effectively with their different thinking and different styles. As indicated in the literature review, the movement toward the modern model of universities, where each becomes a '*business-like organization*',

requires more group working to adapt to changes and to increase the communication channels between departments, which facilitates achieving the organization's objectives (value for money and economic objectives) (Beattie and Osborne, 2008). There is evidence from the previous quotes that teams exclude academics and this represents one of the team working barriers in practice that may cause conflicts between managers and academics and could limit the movement toward the IR model.

8. Technology

As discussed in the NPM chapter, the adaption of NPM practices requires the use of organizational tools that support this reform. Technology represents one of these tools and, therefore, is one of the reform features that *may* affect the shift in HR from having an Administrative Expert role to a Business Partner role. The HR professional in case study (E) supports the same idea through this quote:

'IT has an important role to play in improving our transactional processes. This is important not only because it increases efficiency and therefore reduces cost, but it also frees up more time to do the higher added value things we need to do.....good IT systems can enhance positive views but the ability of HR staff that really counts when it comes to making a difference.'

(HRMPUE)

Thus technology seems to be one of the main tools for the transformation from the SS model to the IR model. In this quote it is argued that saving time and effort is one of the advantages of applying information technology that helps HR professionals to set up the organizational objectives that make the real difference in HRM reform. The previous quote does not highlight the way

the HR professional will use technology to move toward the IR model. The HR professional refers to the role of technology to do administrative work (Administrative Expert role) but there is limited view regarding the technology role in the movement toward the strategic direction (Business Partner) . The HR professional in case study (B) supports this view:

'Well I couldn't function without the internet...The internet contains so much information now. We subscribe to an HR service called Expert HR that contains all the legislation, case work, policy advice and that sort of thing. So that's our first port of call if there's a question about the law. And that means that we don't have to use our solicitors so much which saves us money. HR technology, the technology that we have is fairly standard here. But the things I was just describing like making the payroll records, HR records much more accessible to people will help a lot. It will remove an awful lot of the drudge that we do at the moment...' (HRMPUB)

The respondent signalled the magnitude of technological change for the HR function. The main point in this quote is that using technology is significant through saving their time and effort. The role of technology in this case could help to reduce the Administrative Expert role but the HR professional does not refer to technology as a main tool could help in taking strategic decisions and moving to IR model. The following typical quote from the HR professional in case study (A) supports this view:

'Quite simply it's management by fact, what it has enabled us to do is more sophisticated monitoring and data collection on staffing. I would have to say that the changes the systems are going through at the moment are enabling us to move in that area, but where I think it has been powerful is that it is enable us to do talk for example about an issue to do with absenteeism to pick a simple example. The level of sophistication to which we can now report on sickness can break it down and it can obviously provide up to the minute information about your levels of sickness absence where you have hotspots of

problems and then you can obviously target your resources to deal with those particular problems, so it's management by fact giving you the information and it is also a lot less labour intensive I mean because I have been in the profession as long as I have, which is now 32 years, I started my working life at a time when they didn't have computers we did things manually we used to look at sickness reporting but it took an awful lot longer so what it enables you to do it to diversify your resource to do more value added activity'. (HRMPUA)

Put simply, the above quote is a description of the shift in HRM's role from carrying out routine and tactical activities (Administrative Expert role) to a Business Partner role. From the previous quote, it is clear that information technology is a strategic management tool that helps the HR professional to use useful information analysis to develop HRM practices and take strategic decisions. Technology is playing an important role in shaping the HRM functions and it helps HR professionals to play the Change Agent role; the following quote supports this view:

'We're looking to integrate our HR information system with our payroll system. So that at the moment those systems are separate and I think it will be more powerful as a tool if they are linked together. And so we have a major project of introducing a new integrated HR and Payroll system. So that will be one big change so that the information that HR input directly affects what people are paid. That's the important change. The second change is that we are at the same time introducing an element of self service in IT, HR IT systems. So that every employee will be able to go on and check their own...and do some simple updating to their own IT records, their own HR records. And thirdly, there will be an element of self service from managers. So that managers will be able to access the HR system. And it will be web based so that it will be much more accessible than the current system. Web based and managers will be able to run off reports relating to their stuff from HR, from the HR records system'. (HRMPUC)

The perspective of the HR professional in case study (C) here is that using technology in HRM functions will help staff to participate and to be more engaged in HRM practices through updating HRM information system; and for HR professionals, information technology helps them to be more updated about any changes in the HRM agenda and to effectively play the Business Partner and Change Agents roles which focus on adapting the strategic direction of the university.

The conclusion from the above analysis of the perspectives of the HR professionals in the case studies participating in this thesis is that the HRM information system can be considered as a helping tool for HR professionals to move from the SS model to the IR model through setting and updating HRM activities and procedures that could be available for organization members to facilitate their engagement and then commitment toward HRM reform objectives.

9. Conclusion

The findings from the analysis of the perspectives of HR professionals and of the HRM strategy in the case studies participating in this research provide a detailed insight into the role of HRM in public reform, specifically at the operational level. Generally, there is evidence that HR activities are playing an important role in the movement from the SS model to the IR model. The HRM functions and activities in the case studies support the contention that HRM reform is being directed toward an increasingly strategic HR role that focuses on a strategic agenda and which is going to restructure universities to have more business-like functions. There is evidence in this thesis that

performance management, quality, equality and diversity, training and development, flexibility, team working and technology are supporting achieving cost-effectiveness objectives and economic goals through encouraging the determination of the final outputs and measuring performance and quality standards.

According to the opinions of HR professionals, the role of HRM has changed from the traditional role that is concerned with performing a reactive, administrative and processing role (Administrative Expert role) and satisfying members' requirements (Employee Champion role) to a more strategic and proactive role (Business Partner role and Change Agent role). It is clear from the study that there are tensions, role ambiguity and conflicts for HR professionals because sometimes they have multiple roles and they face many challenges and constraints to achieve public reform. Academic culture represents one of these challenges that affects applying HRM reform. Academics tend to oppose the movement from the Stakeholder Satisfaction (SS) model that is based on social and communicative rationality to the Instrumental Rationality (IR) model that is based on economic and technical rationality and which aims to achieve cost-effectiveness objectives.

The following chapter will illustrate HRM reform at the individual level through a discussion of the HRM perspectives in terms of how they investigate and manage the individual level contribution to HRM reform and the main challenges that face this reform.

Chapter Nine:

HRM Reform at an Individual Level

1. Introduction

As discussed in the literature review, the main purposes of changes in the structure and role of HRM have been to increase the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and performance of HEIs as public organizations. This has involved an increasing focus on changes at the strategic level, the operational level and the individual level of HR. This chapter attempts to illustrate changes in HRM by referring to case studies and investigating the perspectives of the HRM professionals. Moreover, this chapter will explore the main challenges and constraints that are facing HRM reform with the change from the SS model to the IR model.

2. Staff engagement

The main conclusion from the literature review is that the major challenge in applying HRM reform is to engage people to understand and implement NPM concepts, for example performance management and quality management. Employee engagement can be seen as a combination of commitment to the organisation and its values and a willingness to help to achieve organization's objectives. As indicated earlier that movement from the SS model to the IR model means applying management reform and this may create a challenge for individuals (managers and academics) to understand change and to engage in business-like activities. Therefore, staff engagement represents an important and strategic factor for HRM reform that encourages individuals to share ideas and participate to achieve strategic reform objectives. The following quotes support that:

'Our HRM strategy is increasingly designed to enhance staff engagement. They are designed around the four themes of our HR strategy: Change Capacity, Leadership, Engagement and Communication and Workforce Development'. (HRMPUF)

'Engagement is therefore at the heart of our people agenda as we firmly believe that staff who are highly engaged with our business, know what we are trying to do and understand the part they play in its execution, are more likely to give their discretionary effort and allow us to differentiate ourselves'. (HRMPUI)

'The university mission, purpose and values can only be achieved if the work practices of staff align with them. Achieving this alignment continues to be a key aim of the HR strategy'. (HRMSUA)

It is stated here that staff engagement could help in reducing reform constraints through encouraging people to contribute their ideas to reform activities. There was a positive perception by HR professionals that part of their role is to manage individual contributions in public reform through providing the opportunity to share in setting and applying reform objectives. It is clear from the previous quotes that HR professionals perceive 'staff' as HRM staff not academic staff. Therefore, we can observe that there was limited consideration of academic engagement and contribution in HRM reform. This argument is not matching Dent and Barry (2004: 7) suggestion that *'NPM represents an empowerment of those it employs and those it seeks to serve'*.

The HRM professional in case study (C) explains ways through which staff engagement can be applied in the quote below:

'That's two things I would focus on, leadership development, and two-way communication to improve employee engagement. Well the big thing is employer, employee engagement. Can we engage our employees more effectively? Can we engage them in every part of the University with our changing objectives? And if you ask me in three years time how I would judge the success of the HR strategy it will be are our employees engaged more effectively? And have we improved, have we developed leaders? That's the second heading in the strategy, developing leaders. Have we developed leaders at all parts of the University who can inspire employees to go the extra mile. To provide that extra performance that we need to make a difference. So developing leaders is - I think - where HR can make a real contribution. We can sit down with managers, we can ensure they have coaching and mentoring and all the tools they need to be more effective managers and leaders. So HR can make a real contribution there. And on employee engagement, we can do something to improve two-way communication across the University'. (HRMPUC)

The HR professional in case study (C) feels that employee participation in public reform is essential to the success of this reform. The quote mentions that achieving extra performance and end goals need employees to make a difference through their participation in HRM reform. The above quote indicates that HR's role is more involved in getting staff engagement as a strategic function not a support function to achieve reform objectives. This highlights a question regarding if participation is only a particular sort of controlling academic work or it is looking for their contribution in reform. It is clear that the use of word 'employees' to refer to academics is simply indicates that academics are just employees and this ignore the professionalism status of them. This could cause limitations for their engagement and contribution in reform.

It was clear from the previous quotes that HR professionals are very keen to support and develop managers' abilities and power through enhancing their leadership skills as main tools to achieve the strategic movement in HRM. Similarly, there are no clear mentions from the HR professional about how can they engage academics to participate in HRM reform. The main theme is to engage managers and support management identity in universities without consideration of the academic point of view in HRM reform. This highlights the argument of how leadership and engagement go together and how leadership and fellowship can be applied in HEIs.

This view was echoed by the HRM strategy in case study (C):

'The HR strategy is to work with and support the widening participation agenda and the learning, teaching and assessment strategies to enable staff skills and role perceptions to develop in alignment with developments in academic and other roles. It is apparent that significant changes in the roles of teachers, managers and those involved in student administration need to be supported'. (HRMSUC)

The above quotes from interviews with the HR professional in university(C) and the quote from the HRM strategy highlight the importance of management and leadership development for supporting HRM reform. This indicates that HR's role continued to obtain more engagement and a greater contribution from HR managers toward how they can apply public reform in an effective way. This requires developing skills and abilities of HR staff to be more effective in achieving strategic HRM reform. The argument here could be that they are still a way of achieving the strategic objectives.

So again, there is evidence here that the contribution and engagement of academics in HRM reform is so limited and the main consideration of HR

professionals is to gain the engagement and participation of HRM staff to apply HRM reform.

It is clear as well that HR professionals are very keen to support HRM position and role and enable academics to contribute in the strategic movement toward the IR through enhancing HR skills, abilities and contribution in setting and achieving reform objectives. But there are many concerns regarding the role of academics in HE reform and the way that HR professional are dealing with academics and this could be limitations to the movement toward the IR model.

The following part of the chapter will explain staff development as one of the reform activities at an individual level.

3. Staff development

One of the activities that raised in the interviews about HRM reform at the individual level is staff development. The perspective of the HR professionals is that staff development has a main role in encouraging staff to take on more responsibility in public reform. The HR professional in case study (B) highlights the importance of self-development because of the particular nature of HEIs:

'The most important is giving people the opportunity to have well ordered, well targeted training in as many different ways as possible... We do a lot of training on what we call our virtual learning environment. So you can go on the computer at work, or indeed you could log on at home actually. And you could say right I want to be trained in diversity or safety or quality. And you can go through the modules on the computer and do it in your own time....And we also offer people the opportunity to do things by distance

learning. So there are all sorts of ways there for people to do it. Now a lot of that does qualify as self-development really'. (HRMPUB)

The HRM role in staff development is to encourage and develop the skills of people in HEIs to achieve the reform's strategic objectives by providing more training programmes that could help them to cope and understand the new activities in HRM reform, for example performance management and quality management. There is evidence that self-development could help staff to enhance their skills through many tools for example distance learning and using IT as indicated here. The previous role of HRM was supporting Business Partner role where the professional was looking to move the organization toward achieving strategic reform through supporting managerial power and identity in organization. We can also observe that there is limited participation from academics in setting and applying these development programmes. This may be happened because HR professionals have sort of ambiguity and tensions about the role of academics and their contribution in setting and applying these systems. Again, the HR professionals recognize academics as just employees and they have to accept the decisions from the HRM and they ignore that academics are using such power as they have to resist it .

Similarly, the HR professional in case study (C) supports the idea of self-development as a change at the individual level in the following selected quote:

'Individuals taking responsibility for their own development. I'm a great believer that staff ought to take responsibility for some development. There are great opportunities available within the University. For example at

University (C) we run a Masters in Leadership and Management through our Business School. And I'm talking to the Business School next week to see how we can make that available to our own staff. Because often we're very good at providing education to people outside the University but we ought to be offering, ensuring that our own staff can access these opportunities. ...So I'm passionate really about encouraging our own staff to take up the learning opportunities that are here in the University'. (HRMPUC)

This statement illustrates the role of development for staff to enhance their experience and practices in the IR model. The HR professional in case study (C) holds that HRM staff should engage in the academic programmes (for example Leadership and Management) at the university, which could help them to apply new management forms that support the movement toward a more strategic direction.

As indicated earlier that it is clear from the previous quote that HR professional has a significant attitude to enhance the position and power of management in universities as a main tool to achieve reform objectives. Moreover, the HRM strategy in case study (C) supports staff development as this quote shows:

'The widening participation agenda has considerable staff development implications. In the area of learner support, we have put in place Faculty Learning Development Manager posts....to inform policy and strategy for learner support. The next stage is for the embedding of the role of Learning Development Managers. We have explored ways in which staff development support can be provided for staff teaching on programmes leading to university (C) awards in partner colleges to support the development of ' an inclusive academic community'. HRMSUC)

This quote from the HRM strategy in case study (C) indicates that there are many programmes and positions in the university that encourage HRM staff to develop and enhance their experience and support the IR model and that there are programmes that could help them to deal with academics by exploring the HRM reform activities for them and encouraging them to participate in university reform.

In conclusion, the perspectives of HRM professionals and the HRM strategy indicate that staff development is working to enhance staff skills and qualifications to be able to support the movement toward the IR model of universities. There is a clear evidence that HR's role is working to enhance 'management position and power' in universities through enabling and encouraging HRM staff to learn and to develop their skills to be more involved in setting and applying HRM reform .

4. Staff feedback

The third activity that could support HRM reform at the individual level is to get feedback from staff about the reform activities and about their suggestions to improve them. The importance of staff feedback is an indicator about the level of staff satisfaction with reform decisions. The HR professional in case study (D) indicates this in the following selected quote:

'Well, staff feedback measured through the new strategy that has been approved by the Board last year. And it will be measured by the contribution of our HR Business Partners to each of the Faculties and Services. We also are measured through our Staff Survey and we've just completed a major Staff Survey. And the results of those will go to our Board of Governors in the autumn and one was conducted this year by Capita People Development. And we are eagerly waiting for those results now to see what -

we measure employee satisfaction levels and those employee satisfaction levels are reported to the Board. And we're held responsible for that and those results are awaited. So the most recent one we have shown good employee satisfaction ratings. But we're waiting for the most up to date'. (HRMPUC)

The HR professional in university (D) indicates that staff feedback about changes in case study (D) reflects an indicator of the level of staff satisfaction. The above quote illustrates how the HR professional is very keen to know about the feedback from HRM staff regarding changes and reform activities. It also highlights the importance of Business Partners to identify the main outputs of a staff survey and to highlight these points to the people responsible to show how satisfied staff are about the shift from the SS model to the IR model.

The above discussion of the perspectives of the HRM professionals about the activities at the individual level that could encourage HRM reform identifies that staff engagement; staff development and staff feedback represent the main activities that could support the movement from SS model to the IR model. The discussion indicates, as well, that the role of HRM has changed to give more consideration to applying a strategic agenda for universities, and to support the position and power of management in HRM reform. It is clear from the previous discussion that academics' point of view in setting and applying HRM reform objectives is very limited and in some cases there was not any mention of the academic participation in HRM reform. This may reflect a sort of 'tensions' in the relationship between managers and academics. This reflects Dent and Barry's (2004) argument that adapting new managerialist arrangements will replace academic autonomy and self-government concepts

with a 'managerial reform movement'. The HR's role is continued to get more involvement and participation from organization members in strategic movement in HRM. This leads to a question about the main challenges and barriers that HR professionals perceive in the movement toward the IR model of universities. However, the discussion also indicates that there are significant constraints on moving from a SS model to an IR model. The following section in this chapter will explore the main challenges that are facing HR professionals in applying public reform in HEIs.

5. Challenges of HRM reform

One of the questions asked in interviews with HRM professionals who participated in this research was about challenges and obstacles they faced when trying to apply HRM reform. The following section will attempt to explain their perspectives towards these barriers and challenges.

5.1. The role of culture

As indicated in the 'Organizational Culture' chapter (chapter 5), culture can be thought of as a complicated concept (Parker, 2000). This means that managers in public sector organizations must help their employees to understand change in the public sector environment to effectively engaging them in organizational adaptation (Valle 1999). All HR professionals from the UK case studies participating in this research indicate that organizational culture represents an important challenge in HRM reform. The typical selected quote below supports this view:

'It's culture. ...a lot of academics think that academics should be in charge of the university and think that they would challenge your right to have anything to do with the running of the organisation. Because they would not view HRM it as a proper discipline; they saw it as a rigorous academic discipline. Now of course it's not a rigorous academic discipline because that's not what it tries to be. It's a management discipline. And I think that's where there isn't a meeting of minds. There is a cultural gap and it's bridging that cultural gap that can sometimes be very, very hard. There isn't that cultural gap in the private sector interestingly. ...in the private sector my experience was that managers are very grateful for assistance, support. And provided that they think that you personally are a person with credibility they will listen to you. That tends not to be the case here (HEIs)'. (HRMPUB)

It is clear from the previous quote that the HR professional perceive the tensions in relationships between academics and HR managers. The HR professional indicates that management power should be considered and welcomed as a main tool for change. The quote indicates that bridging the gap between what management wants to achieve in HEIs (IR model) and what academics would prefer to achieve (more consideration of their needs and more academic freedom and autonomy) is a hard job. The HR professional explores that in the private sector there is more consideration of HRM's management role than in public sector. I argue that the lack of trust and confidence between managers and academics in HE sector may be because of managers are working to strengthen their position depending on reducing academics power and it could be because academics does not want to lose their professionalism in universities as a source of their power. Then the HR professional in case study (B) continues:

'If your next question is how do you bridge that cultural gap? In the end the only way you can do it here is by personal credibility. It's actually by giving

them a very good service ...And academics are usually so surprised that they've had a good service that they're quite taken aback. And that's fine, and that's how you win them over. .. Their expectation, particularly when they come from external universities that HR is going to be dreadful, they're not going get the papers on time, they're just going to say no and they're going to be unhelpful. So if you can puncture any of those expectations then you're on a winning streak...You've got to develop those personal relationships. The best way, as I keep saying to everyone here, the best way is not to sit in your office all the time it's actually to go out and see them, go out and talk to them'.

(HRMPUB)

The HR professional in this quote supports the argument of Parker and Bradley (2000) that as a result of public sector reform, concern has been raised toward managing organizational culture becoming more associated with the NPM attitudes and values. The HR professional highlights the conflict and tensions between academic culture and management culture and provides advice about bridging the gap between these two sorts of cultures. They identify staff requirements and expectations as tools to build trust between academic culture and management culture. The HR professional highlights the importance of providing a good and different management tools so that academics can manage their culture. This idea is related to ideas in the literature on management style in universities that concentrate on the concepts of managerialism that work to achieve end goals (Holmes and McElwee, 1995). I argue that although some of HR professionals refer to academic participation and engagement, no one of them highlight their intention to go and listen to them. So, I argue that there is very little notion of dialogue with academics and managers only trying to win them over.

This perspective reflects how academics in HEIs believe in a particular culture that could protect their autonomy and freedom and how managers believe in Managerialism that supports management reform and achieving strategic and end goals. The perspective of managing organizational culture in the above case study supports the argument that culture is not easy to controlled and managed. It also supports Goffee and Jones's argument (1998), which indicates that 'Solidarity' is the perspective from which to manage organizational culture where managers should pursue shared goals efficiently and effectively with individuals. This means that if there is to be movement from the SS model of to the IR model it seems it must be based on building or creating an organizational culture that could help in achieving HRM reform objectives.

This view is supported by the HR professional in case study (C) as follows:

'Yes we have a long term perspective because we're going now for culture change. We really believe that culture change is very important so that we want to ultimately achieve a link between every employee in the university and the university strategy. We want every employee to be able to understand what they do to contribute to the university strategy. So that means long term improving communication, long term changing the culture to produce that alignment and changing the skills of people in management positions and making them better at people development'. (HRMDUC)

This illustrates that organizational change management is about establishing and improving communication channels between academics and HRM staff. The main reason behind the management of academic culture is to support managerialism and to support the movement toward the IR model that is based on strategic direction. The HR professional above indicates that

academics should understand changes in HEIs to enable them to contribute to the movement toward the IR model. It is clear that the HRM role in the previous quote is concerned with strategy and people (Business Partner) to achieve economic objectives based on the economic and technical rationality perspective (Instrumental Rationality model). But still there is evidence of conflicts and tensions between academics and managers in HE. The HR professional in case study (G) suggests applying a '*pilot test*' to facilitate communications between organizational parties and reduce conflicts:

'Whatever is new requires a 'pilot test' and the idea then sold to others. Lack of communication will cause obstacles as there will be resistance to change'.

(HRMDUG)

The previous untypical quote supports the idea of discussion between managers and academics through communication and explanation of the reform objectives. The argument here is that communication could reduce the resistance level and conflicts from academics toward applying strategic movement and applying performance management and quality management which they believe will affect their academic rights, freedom and autonomy. There is evidence that management is the solution of these problems and managers are the key tool to solve them. Similarly, The HRM strategy in case study (C) indicates why the roles of leaders and managers are seems as important for achieving the management of organizational culture.

'The development of a high performance culture that delivers academic excellence and an outstanding student experience depends on strong leadership by individuals and teams at all levels of the university'. (HRMSUC: 4)

The previous quotes support applying a leadership system that enables the university to build up a strong culture that could facilitate applying the IR model. Again, there is clear evidence that HR strategy finds HR role as key and perceives that managers could easily support the movement to the IR model but I argue that this is not easy to achieve.

It will be argued from the analysis of the perspectives of HR professionals that managing academic culture represents is one of the reform's challenges. The HR professionals in the case studies of this thesis feel that they are under great pressure to manage organizational culture in different ways to achieve cost-effectiveness objectives as the main objectives of the modern model of universities. There is evidence that HR professionals and HR strategies find managerialism is the solution of culture gap between academics and managers. They are looking for more management practices and they are expecting more participation and acceptance from academics to their strategies and actions for HRM reform.

5.2. Competition, Change and HRM

The HR professionals in the case studies that participated in this thesis identified that competition in the HE sector represents one of the challenges to achieving HRM reform. The following selected quote from the HR professional in case study (C) supports this view:

'There is increased competition in the market and to an extent it will always be a challenge because we pay good rates of pay. In some areas we probably pay above the market rate. And so if new private providers were to come into the market and undercut our rates that would always be a danger to us. But I think in general, we invest in good quality talent for the University. And I think in general because we pay well, because we offer good conditions

including a final salary scheme, that will hopefully help us attract and retain the best possible talent to - in order to keep up with changing developments in the market'.

(HRMPUC)

The HR professional argues that the increased competition is one of HR's reform challenges. There is evidence that HR professional is looking to manage change through using competitive pay rates and good conditions of work. This professional mentions using financial compensation not academic autonomy to encourage academics to support the IR model. This means that HR professionals are not that much aware of the nature of academic culture and how can they deal with it.

This clearly reflects how managers are using their tools to apply their objectives otherwise there is no consideration to be a voice of employees or to express their requirements and needs. HR professionals are looking for more capability and power of managers to achieve reform objectives. The HR professional in case study (D) highlights another perspective regarding challenges that are facing HRM reform:

'One of the biggest challenges for me is a lack of a sense of corporateness. That a higher education institution doesn't think in the same way as other organisations do in terms of things that are seen as corporate. I don't think we're corporately visible in that sense... Obviously we've got the logos for the university and we've won awards, etc., but I'm talking about how it's managed really. So that's quite a challenge'.

(HRMDUD)

It can be seen in this quote that although universities try to apply management activities and business-like reform there are constraints related to the nature of these universities as educational institutions. The HR professional uses the concept of a '*lack of a sense of corporateness*' to describe how NPM

application in HEIs has difficulties and challenges in terms of managing organizational reform. This means that the 'collegiate' idea of corporateness seems meaningless to this participant. The HR professional in case study (C) explores the differences between the private sector and HEIs. As HR professionals they have responsibility for managing these differences with special consideration of the academic status in HEIs. The HR professional feels that the movement toward a business-like organization model that aims to achieve strategic objectives is a big challenge for HR professionals. The following quote from the HR professional in case study (I) supports the above argument in the interesting quote below:

'I have over 25 years' experience of working at senior levels in some of the world's largest/best regarded organisations. My staff has been chosen because they too bring things to the party. I am satisfied that what we do here compares favourably with good practice elsewhere, it is however different. Expectations from the business are different and there is a fair degree of organisational education required before the business really understands what HR should give them. Here again I think that this institution has made some important changes in the areas of performance management, demand lead development, Internal communications, performance related pay and flexible benefits, to name just a few that I would expect to find in the more sophisticated private organisations. I do not however subscribe to the notion of private sector good, public sector bad, to do so would I feel run the risk of throwing a great deal of value out of the window'. (HRMPUI)

This quote indicates that the change agenda in the public sector is different from that in the private sector because of its different objectives and activities. The HR professional in case study (I) is considering the particular nature of public sector institutions, particularly higher education institutions, in relation to applying reform and change but he is looking for more managerialism to

achieve reform objectives. The HR professional mentions that there is a lack of recognition of consideration for the importance of HR in HE compared to the private sector and this represents a reason for HR professionals to give more support and to increase the power and identity of managers in HE.

The previous quotes from interviews and consideration of the HRM strategies relate to the previous discussion in the literature about the many challenges that are facing the role of HRM in managing the shift from the SS model, which depends on professionalization to the IR model, which is based on managerialism and intended to achieve strategic objectives (new model of universities). The HR professional in case study (E) explains some reasons behind this:

'HR reform just takes more time than I would expect in a more commercial environment. The challenge for the future will be how institutions are able to transform themselves and do things more quickly in response to market changes. We are well on our way on this particular journey but I wouldn't say that all the change is completely embedded as yet'. (HRMPUE)

The above quote notes that the HR professional in case study (E) perceives that reform in HEIs toward the IR model is different in terms of how long the reform will take, the nature of reform and challenges that are facing this reform. This reflects that HR reform in HE is going toward the IR model but there are a lot of challenges are facing this progress due to the particularity of HE.

The general conclusion is that, in all case studies participating in this research, it is clear that implementing HRM reform and the movement to apply the IR model are challenges not just for HR professionals but for all

universities' departments and activities. The role of HRM in this movement from the SS model to the IR model is crucial to confirm the strategic direction and to achieve the cost-effectiveness goals. There is clear evidence of the limited participation and consideration of academic point of view in HRM reform. There is also hybridization regarding how to apply HE reform, how to deal with academics and academic culture.

The conclusion from the above discussion is that the role of HR managers (Business Partner role) has become more efficient and effective and it has started to 'act' rather than 'react'. Adopting a Business Partner role is helping the movement from the SS model to the IR model of through supporting managers in developing the strategic vision of HR to achieve economic objectives.

Further and more discussion of the final conclusions and implications of this thesis will be provided in the next chapter.

Chapter Ten:

Conclusions and Implications

1. Introduction

The final chapter in this thesis aims to join the previous discussions together by putting forward ideas about the role of HRM in public reform and the contribution of this role in achieving organizational effectiveness in UK HEIs from the HRM professionals' points of view. This chapter attempts firstly to provide conclusions from the main findings of the analysis of interviews and the HRM strategies. Secondly, there will be suggestions for future studies to improve and to support the literature and the empirical findings presented here.

2. Summary of thesis aims and objectives

The objective of this thesis is to explore the point of view of HRM professionals in UK HEIs toward HRM reform and organizational effectiveness and to contribute to the theoretical and practical studies by providing insights about the HRM reform in HEIs.

The role of HRM is crucial in this reform. Based on Ulrich's model (1997), there is a shift from the traditional model of HRM that is concerned with operations (Employee Champion role and Administrative Expert role) toward being a strategic partner (Business Partner role and Change Agent role). This means that there is a movement from an operation focus to a strategic focus in HRM. From the literature review, and based on the discussion of HRM reform and organizational effectiveness, this thesis explores proposition that HRM in UK HEIs is shifting from the Stakeholder Satisfaction (SS) model where the HR role is Employee Champion that is mainly concerned with satisfying individuals' to the Instrumental Rationality (IR) model which the HR

role is the Strategic Partner that is mainly concerned with achieving strategic direction and cost-effectiveness objectives.

Thus, I have proposed that there are two models of OE which can be adapted to higher education institutions (HEIs): one model that is mainly based on balancing the demands and satisfying the interests of different stakeholders (SS model) and the other model that is mainly focused on the achievement of economic objectives (IR model). The first model can be related to political, social and communicative forms of rationality and the second to notions of technical and economic rationality in organizations. As indicated in figure 5, in chapter four of this thesis (page: 68), NPM may be seen as an attempt to influence public sector organizations to move their cultural emphasis from the SS model to the IR model. Similarly, with HRM the main focus is shifting from the role of Employee Champion to that of Strategic Partner. In the literature there is some evidence that the change in HRM's role in an organization will be faced with many resistance factors. Organizational culture is one of these factors (Driscoll and Morris, 2001).

This thesis contributes to the literature by arguing that HRM's role in public sector organizations has changed and it explores this change by proposing that there is a shift from a view of universities that is concerned with social and communicative rationality where the role of HRM is the Employee Champion to a view of universities that is concerned with the economic rationality perspective where the role of HRM is to achieve strategic transactions (Business Partner Model).

The methodological section of the thesis constitutes another contribution. In that section the HRM professionals' perspectives toward the HRM reform and organizational effectiveness in the UK HEIs is considered that has been less reported previously: indeed, most of the literature considers the academics' points of view and ignores the perspectives of the HRM professionals. The following sections will summarize some conclusions from the findings of this thesis at the strategic, operational and individual levels.

3. HRM reform at a strategic level

It is clear that HR professionals report that HRM is playing an important and growing role in change and reform within HEIs; in particular, they argue that these changes affect HRM at a strategic level in HEIs. The analysis of HRM professionals' perspectives indicates that change from personnel management to human resource management represents an indicator of the strategic shift toward applying a more strategic agenda as a reform objective. The HR professionals highlight the importance of HRM's role as a management advice: a role that will assist in moving toward achieving strategic change and that will help to provide advice about change for HRM activities and for the wider university.

The HR professionals and the HRM strategy within the case studies support the re-profiling of HRM staff to accept the new role as a Business Partner and to create the cultural and structural dimensions that help to achieve a change in philosophy and practices. The HR professionals understand that HRM as a business partner has different dimensions from the same function in the private sector due to the particularity of HRM in HEIs. The main unique

characteristics reflect that HR professionals have to balance multiple and conflicting objectives as they seek to manage academic culture to accept and participate in the movement toward the new model. The HRM strategies support this approach by addressing more areas in change management programmes that help to achieve change objectives. There is sort of hybridization in the movement toward the IR model because of the limitations and resistance to this change.

Another critical element of the HRM role in the case studies is the strategic vision of HRM. The strategic approach in HRM in the HEIs studied demonstrates that HRM plays a strategic role and creates more strategic opportunities for all parts of the universities that help to set strategic objectives for reform and change. The findings indicate that HR strategies support the importance of HR staff commitment to and involvement in applying the IR model with limited consideration of academics' role. The findings show that strategic HRM causes a challenge for HR professionals to fit together HRM strategy and university strategy, which is a crucial step to the achievement of strategic objectives. The HEIs studied indicate that HRM strategy is working to achieve multiple objectives. So, as HR professionals are looking to achieve end objectives and goals as a tool to achieve organizational effectiveness based on economic and political rationality, they are going to consider staff involvement and engagement to support the application of organizational effectiveness and the achievement of economic objectives but in a more limited way than previously.

The data collected suggested that the drive for change and a move toward the Instrumental Rationality model appear to be coming from a number of sources. One major factor is the government that shapes the legislative framework through which HRM can apply a strategic vision of reform. All HR professionals participating in this research perceive the importance of legislative regulations as a framework of reform. This perspective is supported by the managerial perspective for achieving organizational effectiveness. This means that achieving a cost-effectiveness objective is the main objective of HRM reform but regulation also requires the Administrative Expert role.

Another source of change comes from the HR professionals themselves who are looking for a more strategic vision. Some HR professionals participating in this research have a clear desire to see HRM become more 'proactive' in terms of its contribution to public reform. However, there is clearly some 'ambiguity' in terms of what is considered a desirable role for HRM and this is particularly apparent when considering the legislative landscape as a starting point for change and when considering how people working in the public sector perceive this reform. Another source of difficulties comes from the conservative view of the HR professionals about the legislative landscape. Some of them indicate that HRM reform should go beyond working within legislation and take into consideration the unique environment of higher education.

It has already been noted that one reason for the recent popularity of HRM is its relationship with organizational strategy. This research indicates how this represents a core element in the public sector for the HR professionals and

for HRM strategies as well. As indicated earlier, organizations under NPM become more concerned with strategy and are looking more to use change as a tool to respond to competition (Pollitt, 2000). Similarly, the literature review indicates that applying reform in the public sector requires HRM to create more flexible structures and processes and to set performance indicators and standards that could help in achieving reform objectives (Brown, 2008).

The analysis of the perspectives of the HRM professionals supports this thesis's proposition that there is a movement from the SS model that is mainly concerned with social and communicative rationality perspective to the IR model that gives priorities to achieving economic objectives. The role of HRM according to this proposition changed from responding to members needs and representing their concern (Employee Champion role) and performing tactical and routine activities (Administrative Expert role) to directing the strategic direction in UK HEIs through applying performance management and quality standards (Business Partner and Change Agent roles). The final conclusion is that, at the strategic level, there is evidence from the HR professionals' perspectives and from the HRM strategy that the role of HR changed over time to be a more strategic role and to be more concerned with change management and achieving performance standards within the government regulations but with hybridization regarding how and why can they apply these changes.

4. HRM reform at an operational level

As proposed in this thesis, HR reform in UK HEIs is looking to apply the new model of universities that is based on new management in response to a

challenging and competitive environment. The HR professionals explore the role of HRM at an operational level in public reform and organizational effectiveness through an emphasis on HRM practices and activities. One of the conclusions is that performance appraisal in HEIs is different from that in the private sector. There are many reasons for this divergence: differences in culture, structure, goals, managerial values and environment in higher education institutions. However, HR professionals are still expected to and are working to put performance targets in place for academic staff, although they perceive that measuring academic staff performance is the biggest challenge thus face.

The conclusion is that there is no clear way of identifying a satisfactory account of how the HR professionals will work to manage academic performance. Although most of the literature argues that performance management is one of the most important activities in public reform (Hood, 1995), this research argues that there is complexity in applying performance management systems in academic institutions due to the unique status of academic freedom and academic autonomy in the UK's higher education sector. Again, it is clear that in most case studies HR professionals support management power and identity in setting and applying performance management systems with limited participation from academics. It was clear as well that measuring performance in HE is a difficult task due to the unique nature of the academic work.

Equality and diversity policy is one of HRM's functions that is highlighted through interviewing HR professionals. All the case studies show that there is firm attention toward achieving the equality and diversity agenda in UK HEIs

and there is a strategic attitude to applying activities to support diversity and equality. There is also key concern from some of the HR professionals about how to apply equality and diversity policies in universities.

The HR professionals explain that managing equality and diversity is one of the factors required under government's legislations, but some of them illustrate how difficult it is to manage equality and diversity systems due to financial constraints. It is clear that there is government pressure on HRM to keep playing the Administrative Expert role in some HRM functions (As indicated in figure 8, page: 109)

HR professionals and HR strategies in the case studies indicate the importance of training and development for managers and academics to improve their skills so as to be able to accept and contribute effectively in the reform toward the new model of universities. However, the contribution of academics to identify their own needs for these training programmes is limited.

The findings indicate that HR professionals perceive that a Business Partner role should support applying quality standards in the higher education sector as one element of the reform agenda that is working toward the IR model that gives pre- eminence to cost-effectiveness objective.

The main conclusion is that the HRM functions and activities that are mentioned in the case studies do support applying HRM reform toward an increasingly strategic HR role that focuses on a strategic agenda that is going to restructure HRM to perform more business-like functions. The HR professionals indicate that performance management, equality and diversity,

training and development, flexibility, team working and technology all support the Instrumental Rationality model through achieving cost-effectiveness objectives and economic goals. According to this view, the role of HRM in HEIs has changed from the traditional role that is concerned with performing a reactive, administrative role that is mainly concerned with satisfying members' interests and respond to their concerns (Employee Champion role) to a more strategic and proactive role (Business Partner role).

In some cases, there is a kind of conflict and ambiguity for HRM professionals regarding the proper ways to achieve the reform objectives and end goals. There was also evidence that by law HRM continued to play an important administrative role (Administrative Expert role) and this supports Francis and Kegaan argument (2006) that administrative role is crucial for HRM as shown in figure (8) page (109).

The findings indicate too that academic cultures create different sorts of tensions, role ambiguity and conflicts in performing the HRM role because they have to consider academic culture in setting and applying public reform objectives that caused hybridization in the movement toward the IR model.

5. HRM reform at an individual level

The case studies demonstrate that HRM reform has some effects at an individual level. HR professionals perceive the importance of HR staff more than academics as part of a movement toward the IR model that is based on managerialism. Staff engagement represents a significant contribution toward change from the Stakeholder Satisfaction model to the Instrumental Rationality model.

The findings also indicate that the HR professionals are very keen to know about the feedback from HRM staff regarding changes and reform activities in order to get their support for applying a strategic agenda but there is less consideration of academics' feedback.

The HRM professionals' perspectives indicate that the main responsibility of HRM in HEIs is to support the movement from the SS model to the IR model (as shown in figure 10) that is based on strengthen the power and identity of HR managers.

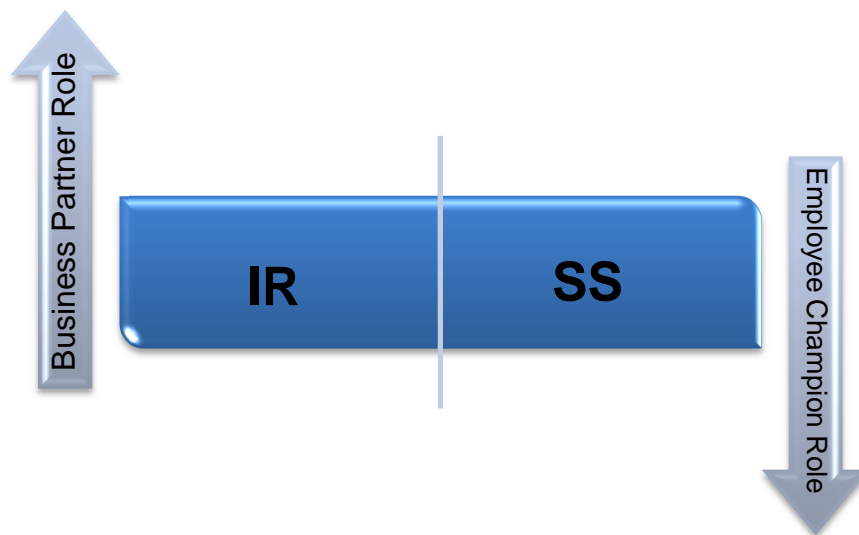


Figure 9: The main thesis argument based on findings

Another significant conclusion is that NPM has brought more complex and conflict role for HR managers and it requires them to play as multiple roles to successfully apply HRM reform. This matches Dent et al (2004) argument that:

'NPM does not offer managers a single instrument but a collection of management tools that have been adapted and modified over time' (Dent et al, 2004:1)

The findings also indicate that this requires dealing with many serious challenges in HEIs.

6. Challenges of HRM reform in HEIs

The findings illustrate the HR professionals' point of view regarding the main challenges that face the movement from the SS model to the IR model. Academic culture and the relationship between management and academics is one of these challenges. The HRM professionals indicate that the main challenge in HE reform is bridging the gap between management objectives of moving in a strategic direction and academics' objectives of keeping academic freedom and autonomy. Based on this, the HR professionals state that managing organizational culture to be more associated with the IR model's values may conflict with the academic culture. This analysis of HRM professionals' perspectives indicates that they have a particular perspective relating to culture management so that managerial reform in HEIs can be supported. The HR professionals believe that the role of HRM in facing competition in the higher education sector represents one of the challenges to the movement from the SS model to the IR model and that this requires applying new management philosophy and practices. These are concerned with achieving performance management, quality achievement and cost-saving objectives. The findings from the analysis of the HRM professionals' responses is that the role of HRM (Business Partner role) is more efficient and effective and it is beginning to act rather than react; it is also helping the movement from the SS model to the IR model through developing a strategic vision of HR to achieve economic objectives.

Generally this thesis has brought to light the complex and multi-faceted nature of HRM in HEIs, and while much of the literature to date has discussed 'traditional' and 'new' public sector HRM as polar opposites, what emerges from this in-depth study is that HR departments perform both of these roles at different times, and in different areas of activity. One HR professional supports this through the following quote:

'HR is valued in the institution but no one really considers how to measure it. There are metrics but it is really about partnership building with the managers and academics and their feedback should counts' (HRMPUE).

The general conclusion is that all HR professionals in the case studies largely support the view that the role of HR has changed over time from the traditional role (Employee Champion role) to the strategic role (Business Partner role) but there is sort of hybridization in moving from the SS model to the IR model. Generally, the view is that these changes are positive and that the HRM role has grown in its contribution to HEIs' reform. In all of the case studies there is clear evidence that the HRM role has become increasingly strategic, proactive and intends to apply more business practices. The HR professionals welcome these changes in HRM philosophy and practices and they expect more trends towards applying a strategic HRM role in HEIs; this is supported by the findings of other studies in the literature such as that of Boyne (2006), Ulrich (2008) and Truss (2008).

However, there is also evidence that HR professionals should give more consideration to academics' power that is derived from their professionalism and might still be significant in HEIs and that could slow the movement toward the IR model as indicate in figure (11).

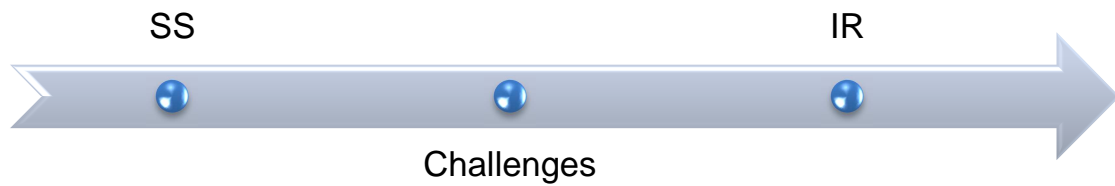


Figure 10: A movement toward IR

7. Research limitations and future research

Although there is no attempt to make complete generalizations from this thesis for the higher education sector or the wide public sectors, this thesis brings forward points of interest that may have relevance for those researching and working in the areas of human resource management and public sector development.

This thesis provides insights about the role of human resource management in HEIs and its relationship to academics and the role of managing organizational culture in dealing with academic culture. Based on that, it opens the door to future research about the role of HRM and NPM in public sector organizations. This could be supported in the future with comparative studies to investigate the role of HRM in the public and the private sectors and to explore this role in different countries.

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Appendices

Appendix (1) Ethics Approval Papers

Information Sheet

Study Title: Human resource management reform and organizational effectiveness: perspectives of human resource professionals in UK Higher Education institutions

Invitation

You are being invited to consider taking part in a research study 'Human resource management reform and organizational effectiveness: perspectives of human resource professionals in UK Higher Education institutions'. This project is being undertaken by Hala Mansour

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read this leaflet carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of the nature of your role and position within the university. The study will explore the impact of New Public Management philosophies within the HRM functions of universities. I feel that your knowledge and experience will make a very valuable contribution to this research.

Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide if you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep and the other is for our records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reason.

What will happen if I take part?

If you are willing to participate in the research, please sign and return the consent form and I will contact you again to arrange a convenient date, time and place for the interview. Please feel free to contact me for more details if you need additional information.

The interview will take place at a place and time convenient to you. It will last for approximately 1 hour and will be semi-structured in nature. By semi-structured, I mean that I will have a series of prompts or questions around which to frame the discussion. You are free to explore other issues which you feel are of relevance. I would like to tape record the interviews if you are agreeable. You will be asked to confirm that this is acceptable to you and, if used, you may ask for the tape recorded to be switched off at any time. The recordings will be transcribed for use in my PhD and, if you are agreeable, quotations may be used in support of my research. I can share and explain quotes

with you if you want that. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

What do I have to do?

If you are interested in participating in this study, please return the response slip which is attached to the invitation letter to: Darwing Building (Room 1.48) Keele University, Staffordshire ST5 5BG, UK in the stamped-addressed envelope. I (Hala Mansour) will telephone you to arrange a convenient time for the interview. If I don't hear from you within the next two weeks, you will be sent a reminder pack. If we don't hear from you after that we will assume that you do not wish to take part.

What are the benefits of taking part?

While you may not benefit directly from participating in the research, you will be making a valuable contribution to a study which will hopefully provide greater knowledge and insight into issue that might enhance understanding of the impact of NPM philosophies on the HRM function within the academic sector. I am sure that your contribution will enhance my understanding of the issues and provide valuable practitioner input. You may also find that discussing the subject may help you to explore alternative perspectives.

What if something goes wrong?

We don't expect any problems to arise in this study. However if you wish to complain about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of the study, you may address this to my supervisor Dr. Matthew Brannan, email, m.brannan@mngt.keele.ac.uk.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

All of the research data that we collect during the study will be kept strictly confidential. Any information which has your name, address and any other identifying information, including your consent form will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Data will be anonymised from the outset (from transcription of the tape). I will work to keep all the data confidentially according to the procedures and the research fulfils appropriate legal requirements e.g. Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Tissue Act 2004.

Who is organizing the research?

The research is undertaken at Keele University, Economic and Management School, Institute of Public Policy and Management.

Contact for further information

Researcher contacts: Hala F. Mansour

Address: Darwing Building (Room 1.48) Keele University, Staffordshire ST5 5BG, UK.

Telephone number: 07517442588

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Interview Guidance Sheet

Before we commence the interview, I would like to give you a few details of who I am, why I am here and what I am aiming to achieve. You have received the Information Sheet providing these details, so this is just a reminder and a chance to ask any additional questions or clarify any issues before we begin.

The title of my research is: Human resource management reform and organizational effectiveness: perspectives of human resource professionals in UK Higher Education institutions

I am a full-time student, studying at Keele University for a research degree.

Section 1: Background information

1. Could you start by giving me some details of your role and position within the university?
2. How long have you worked here?
3. What changes have you experienced over, say, the past five years? (Dependent on the answer to the above)
4. How has the role of Human Resource Management changed during that time?
5. What are the main governmental or legislative issues that have influenced the organisation's approach to HRM?
6. How is the HR contribution to the organisation measured? That is, how does HRM participate in/contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the university?
7. What management tools do you use in your work?
8. Do you think that the university's HRM policies and practices are seen to be flexible?
9. Do you think that the university's HRM policies and practices, in terms of increasing employee motivation, satisfaction and commitment to the organization, are effective? If so, how?
10. Do you think the university's HRM policies and practices help to enhance the service quality? In what ways?

11. Do you think that the university's HRM policies and practices appear to more relate to the new developments in the market?
12. How do the university's HRM policies and practices promote flexible cross-sectional teams and action work groups?
13. Do you feel that the university's HRM policies and practices encourage opportunities for autonomy and the use of creative skills? Can you give me some examples?
14. Do the university's HRM policies and practices supporting flexible working, such as helping employees to change jobs, re-skills or change locations?
15. Do you feel that the university's HRM policies and practices adopt a long-term perspective? If 'yes' can you give some examples? If not, why not?
16. Would you describe the university's HRM policies and practices in the various HRM areas as closely integrated with each other? If 'yes' how, if 'no' why not?
17. Do you think that the university's HRM policies and practices seem designed in line with the university's strategy and objectives? And how?
18. Can you tell me about how technology, in particular IT, gives the human resource management a powerful tool in its functions?

Section 2: Human Resource Management Functions

1. Recruitment

- What are the procedures that you should follow in the recruitment process?
- Is there some flexibility in how you follow these procedures?
- Do you adopt new tools and techniques in the recruitment process? If yes, what are they, if no, why?
- What is your strategy to improve the quality of the recruitment processes?
- How influential is the universities recruitment process in its performance overall?
- What is the role of technology in the recruitment process?

2. Training and Development

- From your point of view, what is the importance of training and development programs?
- How can you depend on the self-development approach as a development tool in university?
- Do you think that you should involve other management levels in your decisions regarding training and development standards in the university?
- What is your view of the training and development programmes offered by the University?
- What is your strategy to continually improve the training programs quality?
- What is the role of technology in the training and development process?

3. Accountability and performance management

- What tools are used to measure individual performance?
- Do you think that the performance management tools should be flexible? And why?
- How do you encourage decentralization in management performance? Still not sure what this means.
- What is your strategy to improve the quality of performance management programs?
- What tools do you use in the development of performance management.

Letter of invitation

Dear participant,

In support of my PhD in Management at the School of Management Studies at Keele University, I am researching the impact of new public management philosophy on the Human Resource Management strategy in UK universities, and its potential impact on the universities effectiveness. The purpose of this letter is to ask if you are willing to participate in this research by being interviewed.

The HRM function has experienced significant changes over the past decade and it will continue to do so as its strategic role within organizations of all types evolves. The introduction of processes that fall under the general conceptual framework of 'New Public Management' (NPM) focuses upon the transfer of private sector management techniques into the public sector. The adoption of these techniques has shifted the focus from 'administration' to 'management' of public services as part of a broader strategy to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, quality and value for money.

My research seeks to understand if and how the use of New Public Management philosophy is related to the organizational effectiveness. In addition it will consider how human resource management strategies in the public sector respond to the shifting conditions wrought by new management practices. Furthermore it will consider the extent to which NPM might change the nature, structure and organization of human resource management in universities for those operating within the HR function.

I hope you are able to contribute to this research by participating in an interview. If so, you can contact me by email at:

h.f.mansour@ippm.keele.ac.uk

Before you decide to take part of such a study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the attached Information Sheet carefully and ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

All data gather, including your identity, will be kept strictly confidential. The data collected during this interview will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you for considering this request; I hope you are willing to participate.

Sincerely,

The researcher

Appendix (2): Sample of HRM strategy in one of UK HEIs.

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Strategic change priorities

In order to provide clear direction and realistic deliverables the HR strategy must:

- focus on a number of key target outcomes for the delivery of real sustainable change
- recognise operational actuality (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) in order to create real improvement

The central focus of the strategy is to support the delivery of key university strategic objectives. This operates at many different levels but the following key strategic areas have been identified as priorities.

1. Culture
2. HR Planning
3. Staff deployment
4. Supporting changing roles
5. Good people management practice

HR strategy implementation is the responsibility of corporate, line and HR functional management and will be managed via the key strategic projects indicated in the bulleted points below.

1. To promote a culture which aligns with the new corporate values

- Leadership & Management Development.
- Accountability and Empowerment
- Equal opportunities practice
- Business Excellence Model

2. To ensure corporate strategic HR and change planning

- Corporate HR information and planning process

3. To align staff deployment with strategic and operational delivery requirements

- Organisational restructuring
 - Recruitment, retention, development and nurturing of human capital
 - Staff profile which meets long term organisational needs

4. To develop new role perceptions and practices (ways of working)

- Staff development

5. To improve effective people management practice

- Employment handbook (HR policy and practice)
- Job evaluation
- Performance review/development process
- Performance and reward
- Pay modernisation

The strategic HR priorities to the end of 2006 build upon the strategic HR achievements 2001/04 and address the criteria and conditions within HEFCE Paper 2004/03: Rewarding and Developing Staff in HE – round 2, within the overall context of the strategies and character of JMU.

In the context of the above we have retained the five strategic aims identified within the original full strategy (2002) and identified a number of broad themes – strategic change priorities; equal opportunities; staff development; job evaluation; reward; and performance management; and pay modernisation – to be managed through the revised and updated key strategic projects identified within the five strategic aims.

Implementation of the strategy is the responsibility of corporate, line and HR functional managers and is dependent upon the actions and involvement of all staff.

JMU HR STRATEGY

Strategic Aim 1:

1. To promote a culture which aligns with the new corporate values

HR Projects:

- Leadership & Management Development, incorporating Accountability and Empowerment
- Equal opportunities practice
- Business excellence Model

The university mission, purpose and values can only be achieved if the work practices of staff align with them. Achieving this alignment continues to be a key aim of the HR strategy.

Following a considerable period of consultation with university stakeholders, and staff in particular, the new university mission, purpose and values statement was agreed in March 2002. This has influenced strategic planning from September 2002. The new organisational structures became effective in August 2002 and support this planning process.

The three key projects to be continued and extended within this aim seek to provide a consistent framework for effective management and to promote changes in working practices, which, once established will evidence a new corporate culture.

Leadership and management development project:

The university values are an explicit statement of aspects of the culture of the university. The initial emphasis of the Leadership development workshops focussed on the leadership role of senior management leading by example and being aware of the impact of their own behaviour and style on others. New senior management structures were put in place by August 2002 and the leadership and management development project has worked with these new teams to develop leadership skills and coaching styles which align with the aspirational culture of the university.

It is evident, however, that much of the strategic change, which impacts on organisational culture and ways of working, has placed new demands upon all managers across the university. There is a need to support current managers as they manage the personal impact of changed expectations of the management role and implications for behaviours, attitudes and management style. All managers feel the impact of the strategic plans and values including strategic themes such as management accountability within a corporate framework; staff empowerment; implications of cross functional processes; and the overarching theme of continuously emphasising student needs.

Changes in the roles of current managers and new opportunities for progression into managerial roles have arisen from the organisational restructuring. Systematic identification and provision of core developmental needs for managers in this environment continue to be important in helping managers play their crucial role in delivering organisational success.

Working together with the equal opportunities strategic project, the leadership and management development project will continue to identify priorities and provide relevant and stretching management development for all groups. The importance of the leadership role in achieving behavioural and attitudinal change is emphasised and equal opportunities in management practice forms part of the management development provision.

The HR strategy recognises the focal role of line and corporate management in HR management and the need to ensure that managers develop the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver this role. Internal management development programmes have been established for all levels of management to support development of interpersonal and managerial skills and abilities particularly with regard to coaching, recognition and performance management activities. These will continue to develop together with the extension of the leadership and management development workshops across the university.

Equal opportunities project:

It is a core value of JMU “to demonstrate fairness, equality of opportunity and respect to all”

JMU has a tradition of promotion of equal opportunities amongst staff and students in which policy underpinned by staff development has been key. Cultural diversity awareness is part of core training for all staff and feeds through directly into recruitment and selection processes as well as contributing to cultural awareness of diversity issues as an integral part of our activities and strategies.

The widening participation agenda raises issues as to how we meet the needs of students and how we make available staff development opportunity to enable this. Legislation such as the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act place duties upon the university and there are pressures from the sector and the Government for universities to model good practice. The HR strategy has responded actively to these demands through an explicit Equal Opportunities strategic project. We have developed and adopted a new Race Equality Action Plan and embarked on training for staff and governors in relation to obligations under the above legislation. In addition the Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy has a significant emphasis on staff development to enable provision of an inclusive, and accessible, curriculum for all.

The recognition of the need to improve monitoring processes has led to changes in the collection, storage and reporting of equal opportunities monitoring data. Data is collected during recruitment and employment processes and stored electronically. New data items have been introduced and the staffing database refreshed via a request to all staff to update their personal information.

Equal opportunities targets have been established to prioritise affirmative action and to enable some quantitative monitoring of progress. Audits of equal opportunities profiles are being produced regularly to monitor progress against targets and reporting information and progress has become a standing item on senior management and governance committees.

Equal pay for work of equal value is an important part of the university’s equal opportunities strategy. This will be progressed through the HERA job evaluation project and through formal pay audit.

Other issues identified for action include the embedding of equal opportunity principles and practices in the ethos, culture, management and curriculum of the University, in large part through staff development and support initiatives.

Business excellence model project:

The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) or “Business Excellence” model is a non-prescriptive framework to help organisations establish appropriate management systems. It operates as a practical tool to

help organisations measure where they are on the path to excellence, understand the gaps and devise solutions.

We are the first UK university to undertake a full institutional self assessment against the rigorous criteria of the model. As a result, areas where the university's management system can be improved have been identified. Areas such as personal development, performance review and reward and recognition had already been identified prior to the results from the work on the Business Excellence model and are the subject of strategic implementation projects.

Ongoing activities under this project include: an organisational and development project to address structural and cultural issues within the Estates and Facilities team; a process review and improvement project to embed responsibilities for continuous review within defined project management review responsibilities; and the establishment of a centre for Organisational Development and Performance Enhancement to promote the range of university activity in relation to change.

Strategic Aim 2:

2. To ensure corporate strategic HR and change planning

Corporate HR information and planning process project:

There are three major aspects to this aim, the HR planning process; HR information; and change management process and responsibilities.

The university recognises that it needs a clear corporate mechanism or process for identifying HRM priorities through the annual planning round both to enable the university gradually to re-profile its staffing against changing external and operational requirements to ensure that the people implications of major change projects are identified and supported.

HR planning requires change in both process and perception. The model for HRM within the organisation is one of central co-ordination and support and local delivery, however, the annual planning/budgeting process required some amendment to ensure that significant HR trends and issues can be identified at both local and corporate levels.

The implementation of the HR strategy needed to address issues of how HRM is perceived and managed corporately. The importance of strategic HR has been recognised by ensuring that Board level responsibility for HR strategy resides in the new role of Pro Vice Chancellor (Admin). Equally, there is now senior level HR involvement (PVC or Director) in the annual financial planning round to ensure that any people implications of financial planning decisions are understood both corporately and locally.

It was recognised that the university needed to develop a sound information basis from a number of sources, for long term strategic planning. This would

also establish which information should be provided internally and which externally (It is noted that UCEA have recognised the need to assist with providing eg benchmark recruitment, retention and pay market information).

In addition, corporate change planning needed to recognise and address the issue of how to create the time and space for staff to change working practices. This has both cultural and structural dimensions.

The focus is upon evidence based planning and the quality of data held on the HRMIS continues to require improvement if it is to be key to management planning processes.

The university is currently considering its long-term strategy in relation to the architecture of corporate systems and is debating a move to an integrated e-business suite of corporate applications. An integrated personnel and payroll system would be part of this strategy.

The university has invested in upgrading its HR Management Information System (HRMIS), with the aims of improving the quality of management information and of enabling more effective and efficient personnel, administrative and management processes. We are seeking, through a combination of process review and system development to put the HRMIS at the centre of personnel administrative work. There has been some success; HRMIS information plays a crucial part in the annual pay commitment process; HESA individual and aggregate reports are produced from the current database and a self-service personnel information system has been made available to staff and management. This includes a workflow reporting system for sickness administration. This is part of the wider strategic initiative to promote self-service systems for stakeholders as part of what will eventually be a managed learning environment. Improved HR information to local management, probably via the development of the staff self-service system is, however, still required to support the managerial role.

The JMU organisational restructuring impacts on all corporate systems which hold staffing information. Significant new HESA staffing return requirements will require changes to HRMIS to enable the new all staff HESA (NISR) return. We need to address movement to the single pay spine. Work to inform development of the longer term infrastructure, taking account of job evaluation, pay modelling, and outputs from national pay modernisation work will come together in 2004/05, although full implementation of pay structures and job evaluation may not be achievable until 2005/06 and 2006/07 progressively.

There will be new data and reporting requirements coming on stream from Equal Opportunities strategy requirements such as pay audit as well as from the planning requirements of the HR strategy more generally. All this will have both staffing and system implications.

Staff feedback on working at JMU has been gained through a mixture of focus groups and individual questionnaires and the results have informed both

operational planning and the development of this HR strategy. These surveys have been carried out bi-annually for some 10 years now and meaningful trend data is therefore available to inform planning and strategy. The next staff survey is scheduled for 2004/05.

Strategic Aim 3:

To align staff deployment with strategic and operational delivery requirements

The HR strategy seeks to ensure that the university identifies the impact of changing needs and profiles of provision on staffing as early as possible and provides continuing support to enable these to be managed effectively.

It is recognised that to fulfil aspirational long term strategic objectives, the policy and practice relating to recruiting, retaining, developing and nurturing the right staff in the right place, is crucial.

Organisational Restructuring project:

New senior management roles have been created in the new organisational structure and it is vital that those recruited, redeployed or promoted to these posts (and to the vacancies which may arise consequentially) have the necessary skills and management style to deliver university strategic and operational aims. Considerable management and HR input has been and will be required to ensure that this process is managed effectively. The leadership and management development project has worked with these new teams to develop leadership skills and coaching styles which align with the culture of the university.

The implementation of the restructuring of the new university organisational and staffing structures has had considerable HR implications. The restructuring has impacted upon the organisation of university staffing and processes around student needs and academically focused provision. Faculty based restructuring is now largely completed. Restructuring of staffing structures is now an evolutionary process, driven by the strategic plan and managed locally with support from the personnel office.

The professional expertise of the HR function and the availability of HEFCE earmarked funding has been and will continue to be deployed to support managers in delivering this change.

As part of the planned restructuring, the location and structures of the HR function have been reviewed so that all mainstream personnel functions are now within the same office.

Strategic aim 4:

To develop new role perceptions and practices (ways of working)

Staff development project:

The HR strategy (and the staff development project in particular) places emphasis on supporting the new role requirements (new ways of working) arising from the university's strategic response to external requirements within the Higher Education Bill and TQEC proposals.

The HR strategy is to work with and support the widening participation agenda and the learning, teaching and assessment strategies to enable staff skills and role perceptions to develop in alignment with developments in academic and other roles. It is apparent that significant changes in the roles of teachers, managers and those involved in student administration need to be supported.

University strategic aspirations to create managed and virtual learning environments and other elements of information strategy and teaching, learning and assessment strategy identify the implications of changing models of teaching and learning, particularly for perceptions and practice of the academic role. Changes in the models for learning and teaching require a focus on learner support and on a range of delivery skills impacting significantly on the traditional teaching role.

Supporting learning, teaching, and assessment is being addressed through the learning, teaching, and assessment strategy (and earmarked TQE funding) but is a continuing theme in our multi strand staff development project. The strategy has established frameworks for staff development, through continuous professional development frameworks and an organisational commitment to achievement of liP through an incremental approach.

The synergy between the complementary strategies of HR and teaching and learning was identified early on and has been exploited to maximise the benefits to be derived from both strategies.

Significant staff development drivers include:

- Academic staff development in learning and teaching practice and implications of the Higher Education Bill/TQEC proposals with specific reference to the proposed academy and professional standards for teaching. We have researched in this area and put in place an interim reward and recognition bonus scheme for staff joining the ILTHE. The Post Graduate Certificate programme for Learning and Teaching in HE has achieved full accredited status with ILTHE. The next phase seeks the approval of a policy paper to provide for consistent practice in attendance on and completion of the programme and further review of the implications of the HE Bill/TQEC proposals.
Research has shown that there is a need to develop action learning/mentoring approaches to staff development in learning and teaching areas, which is consistent with national research and feedback from participants on the CPD events provided over the past eighteen

months. Work is ongoing in relation to staff development for part time and sessional staff.

- The widening participation agenda has considerable staff development implications. In the area of learner support, we have put in place Faculty Learning Development Manager posts, jointly funded with the LTA strategy, and a range of learner support projects to inform policy and strategy for learner support. The next stage is for the embedding of the role of Learning Development Managers.
We have explored ways in which staff development support can be provided for staff teaching on programmes leading to JMU awards in partner colleges to support the development of 'an inclusive academic community'. Work undertaken has included a review of current activity, clarification of ideas and production of materials. Communication within JMU and partner colleges and programmes has been identified as a major issue and will be a focus for continuing activity.
- A review of requirements for development of new research staff is being undertaken by the university Research and Graduate School.
- Using ICT systems and applications across the range of job roles is another important theme, in particular to support the student experience in a variety of ways. The next phase will be influenced by the findings of the evaluation of the current Faculty/ School VLE support element of the staff development project and analysis of the technical support staff ICT skills audit.

A future project will look at the most effective means and structures of communication and consultation with staff on HR related matters. This is necessary in order to deliver effectively at the local level on the complex set of issues arising from the pay modernisation agenda and also in anticipation of the Consultation and Information Directive which will be brought into force during the planning period.

Strategic aim 5:

To improve effective people management practice

- Employment handbook (HR policy and practice)
- Job evaluation
- Performance review and development process
- Performance and reward
- Pay modernisation

This strategic aim recognises the importance of the university maintaining and developing practice that supports its reputation as a good employer. This includes the provision of a sound policy and procedural framework to enable effective and accountable people management practices across the university.

The aim reflects also the importance of individual and team performance to the university's continued success in the increasingly competitive world of global higher education.

The legislative environment which impacts upon the employment relationship is undergoing significant change at present and the university must respond proactively to this through development of policy and practice which is responsive to the needs of both staff and the business.

This is the area traditionally seen as core to the central personnel function and there is a solid foundation of personnel, health and safety and equal opportunities policy and practice already established. Further improvements are sought through the equal opportunities strategy and the projects outlined below.

Employment handbook:

There is a continuing recognised need to review the currency and availability of written guidance on HR policy and practice not only to provide an information resource for managers but also to encourage consistency of advice and practice.

The broad platform of existing policy and procedure documents are available to staff (and management) via the intranet. However, there have been issues around ease of access and navigation and the resource is in need of some updating generally. There is a particular need for better guidelines for managers, which should include guidance particularly on areas of discretion to enable fair and consistent practice across the university. Clarification of role requirements (through the leadership and management development and job evaluation projects) linked to relevant information sources will enhance the provision.

A web enabled employment "handbook" will be available to all managers and staff as a first line of help by September 2004 which will contain enough in-depth information on university procedures to ensure consistency of guidance and practice within the HR practice. A pilot to establish a local management handbook, in Learning & Information Systems and Personnel has supported this project.

It is intended to back up this information source by providing additional "people management" focused training and development for managers.

The senior management of the university have an important role in demonstrating leadership in the consistent application of university HRM policy and procedure, which exists to ensure fair, reasonable, and effective management practice across the whole university. This has been addressed within the Leadership and Management project.

Job evaluation:

Equal pay for work of equal value is an important part of the university's equal opportunities strategy. This is being progressed through the HERA job evaluation project.

There is no current evidence to indicate that this would expose equal opportunity issues; the major projected benefits would be staff perceptions of a fair process and provision of support for pay modelling in areas where pay scales are not nationally negotiated. The project will also form part of a review of job profiles allied to work on understanding the changing nature of job roles.

Given the progress of the national pay modernisation agenda and the likelihood that the university will wish to review its current pay structures in the light of national proposals the role of job evaluation is regarded as imperative in fair grading processes. The University and its recognised trade unions have commenced joint consultative committee work to draw together the job evaluation project with the move to the single pay spine and the creation of a local pay structure.

An initial pilot of the HERA job evaluation methodology has been conducted in the (wider) HR function. The exercise suggested that, although the HERA methodology appears robust, it would not provide useful information in support of equal pay without a much larger sample size. A larger and more representative sample of job roles (250, 10% of JMU staff) have been identified, drawn from 4 faculties and several service areas, representing a range of pay and roles. Interviews are ongoing.

In addition, it will be necessary to produce generic role definitions for certain benchmark roles to support the work on pay and progression and the role analysis exercise will be used to collect this information. We are advised that the sample size will be sufficient to provide benchmarks for all roles within the university and to underpin any investigation of our pay and grading structure.

Performance review/development process:

The HR strategy recognises that staff are the university's most valuable and costly resource and that the focused and effective performance of those staff is critical to the university's success and indeed, survival.

Developing performance needs to be a partnership between staff and management. Best practice suggests that this is likely to be enhanced by the adoption and consistent application of an effective personal development and performance review process (PDPR).

The new PDPR scheme, developed during the first phase of the HR strategy is being implemented across the university. It is expected that all staff will have had a review under the new scheme by July 2004. The scheme will be subject to a full review in 2004/05 and issues arising from the first running will be addressed. There is a clear need to embed the review process to ensure that there is a holistic approach to managing performance in the context of the

performance and reward project below, and to provide a mechanism through which trend data from the PDPR process actively feeds staff development initiatives and planning

Performance and reward:

The performance and reward project was formally defined as follows:

'It is university strategy to provide terms and conditions of service that will effectively attract, monitor, motivate, manage, reward, develop and care for creative and effective staff. This area covers both the reward and recognition strategy of the university and how this impacts on the terms and conditions of employees'.

We were always clear however, that, since the first phase of the project was data and information collection, the second implementation phase, which paid due regard in content and timing to the national negotiations on a modernised pay framework for university staff, would require detailed definition at a later date.

The data collected in the staff survey has been used to inform the strategy and has been seen alongside the business excellence analysis to indicate a way forward. The focus now is upon a systematic longer term approach to implementing performance and reward mechanisms. This is a challenging agenda requiring the agreement and establishment of an integrated set of policies on promotion and progression; rewarding excellence; workload allocation; performance management and reward for enterprise in the context of both internal and external drivers.

It has been recognised that we need to revisit existing appointment and progression mechanisms for academic and certain groups of support staff. The current system of assessing salary on appointment and of progression is inflexible and insensitive to performance. In areas where recruitment and retention are problematic particularly because of the lure of market salaries we have no flexibility to make realistic pay offers to attract or retain staff. We believe that we should explore options *for criterion* based progression and for appointment based on level of job performance required, (and possibly with elements to reflect market factors) rather than on previous experience and qualification.

We also need to review the mechanisms used to recognise specific local responsibility, such as teaching and learning co-ordination, and the use of honoraria for academic posts. The recent use of earmarked funding to drive local implementation of national initiatives has also highlighted the need to have a fair and consistent approach to reward additional work or contribution of staff, which arises in connection with specific funding.

We have recently reviewed our use of fixed term contracts and moved a significant number of staff on to "permanent" terms. However, we believe that we need a broader review of the terms and arrangements for employing

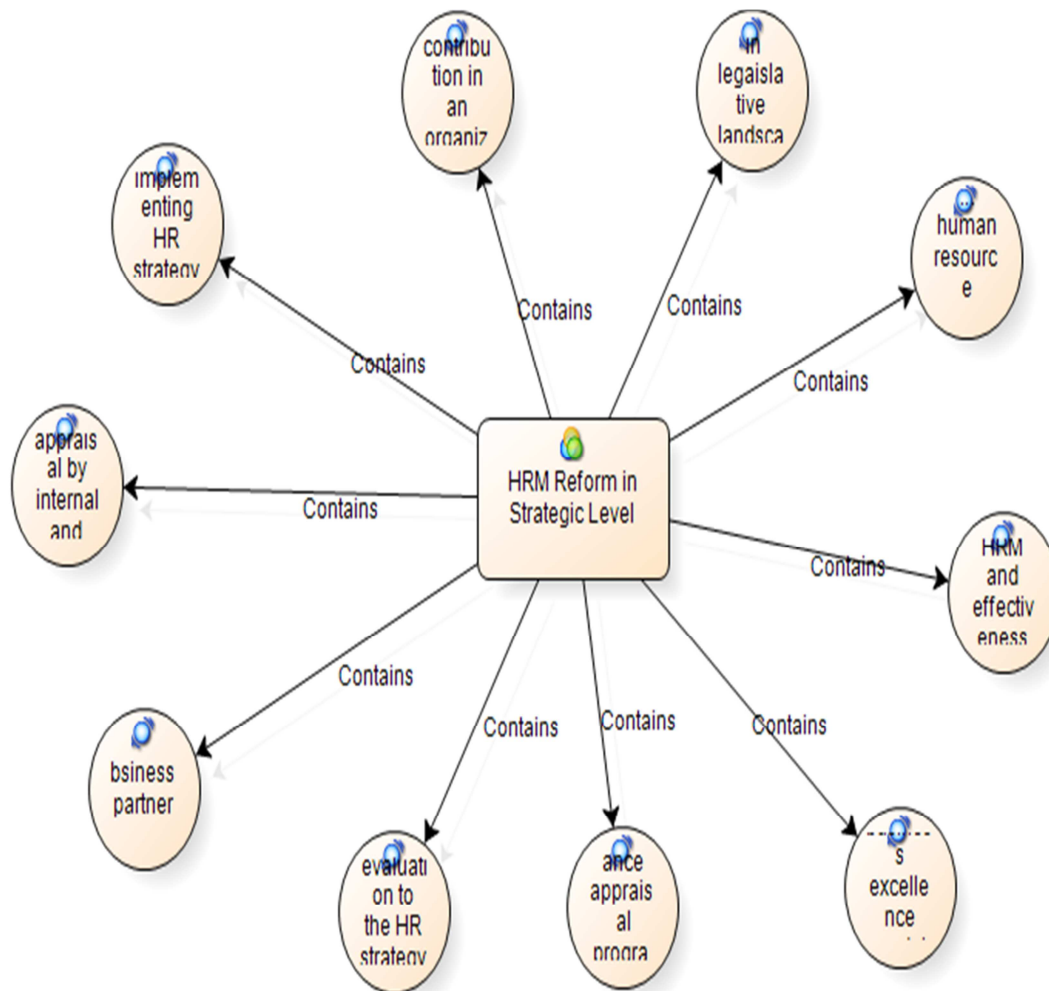
temporary staff. In particular we need to ensure the equality of treatment of staff, regardless of whether they have part time or full time status. We aim to review how we recruit, reward, retain and develop “non-standard” staff and to develop management guidelines to promote and manage flexible employment options.

Performance management documents are currently under development with links to the revised PDPR scheme and a revised framework for workload allocation is proceeding to local application.

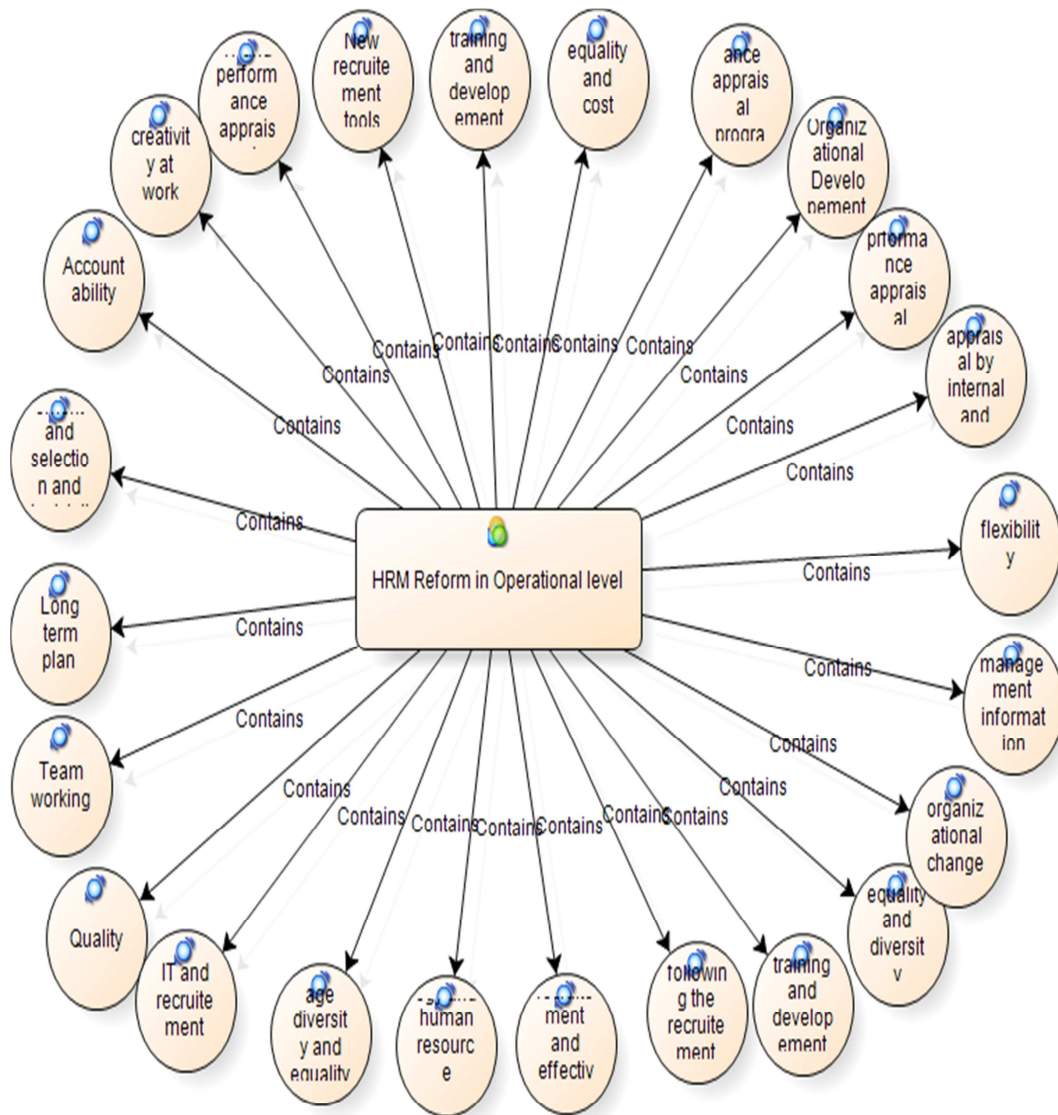
A way forward has been agreed which, although seeking to avoid the generation of unrealistic expectations will work to inform the development of the longer term infrastructure taking account of job evaluation, pay modelling and outputs from national pay modernisation work. This is likely to come together in 2004/05 with the implementation of an interim reward scheme, workload allocation and performance management schemes, although full implementation of modernised pay structures and job evaluation may not be achievable until 2005/06 or 2006/07.

Appendix (3): Sample of NVivo Nodes (codes) and Models

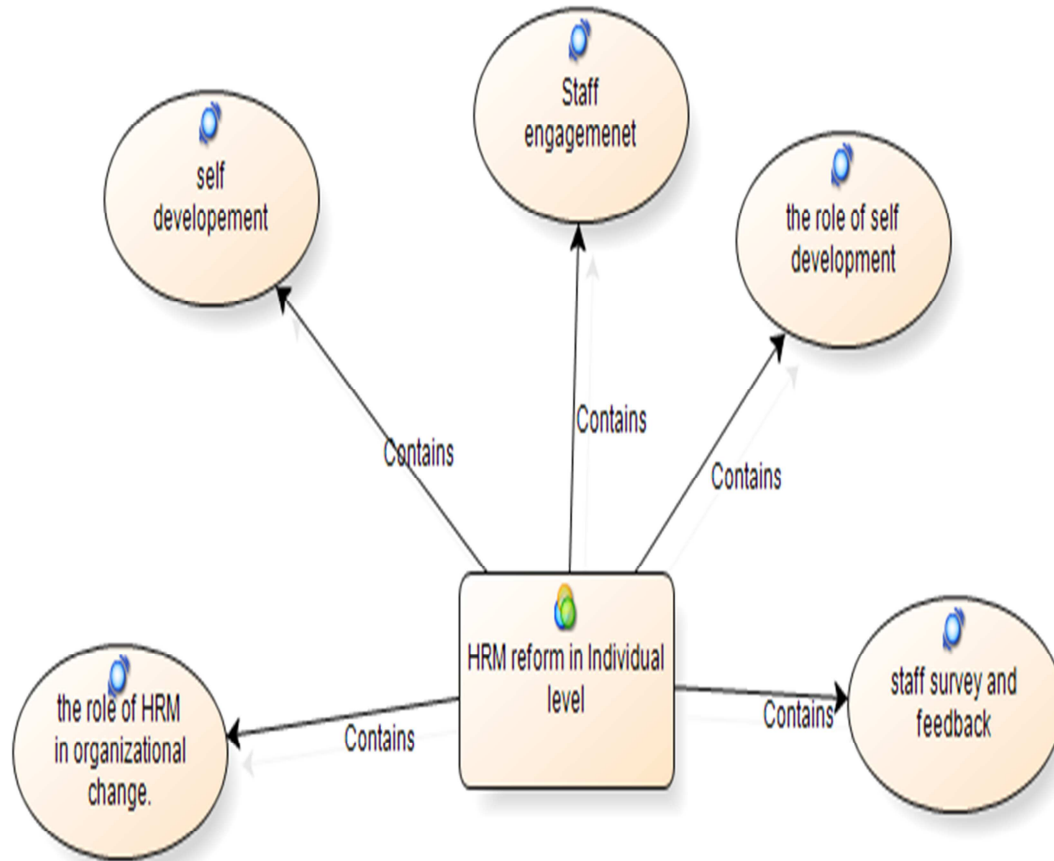
HRM reform at Strategic Level (Using Nvivo Nodes)



HRM Reform at an Operational Level (Using Nvivo Nodes)



HRM Reform at an Individual Level (Using Nvivo Nodes)



Challenges of HRM reform (Using NVivo Nodes)

