

Developing HR processes at group level: Case Halton Group

lina Maria Anniina Sorvari



Author lina Sorvari	
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<p>The case company, Halton Group, as many other global technology companies worldwide, is investigating the possibility of taking a global human resource information system into use globally. In order to have a successful implementation process for the project, it is essential to have human resource processes described at the group level.</p> <p>This study aimed to develop the key HR processes in a global technology organization at the group level in order to enable modelling the group's HR processes for further applications in Halton Group. This goal was approached from a managerial point of view, where the HRM function was seen through organization design elements. The study focused on three main areas: the structure, role and activities of the HRM function in Halton Group. HR processes are the ways in which activities of the HRM function are managed systematically and as a procedural reality. That is why the key HR processes, from HR planning and recruitment to exit management, were studied at the group level in all of Halton Group's operating countries.</p> <p>The topic was researched in three phases using qualitative methods mainly. The first phase included secondary data research and a mini survey, the second phase consisted of focus group interviews, and the third phase collected more detailed qualitative data through four semi-structured interviews. The data collected during phase one, two and three, was analyzed by using comparative and qualitative analysis methods. The development suggestions were based on the comparative analysis between the results and the theory.</p> <p>The results indicated that the HR processes differ between units in Halton Group's units and that the role and responsibilities of group level HRM are perceived as unclear. It appears that, in order to ensure their quality, HR processes should be harmonized at the unit level and the group should have a guiding, strategic role in human resource management activities globally. The roles and responsibilities at the other levels of the organization should also be clarified in order to have a clear, systematic implementation of the strategic guidelines of the group HR. The results also indicated that the communication among units and between the group and units should be improved.</p> <p>The key areas for further development at group level were identified to be strategic human resource and human resource planning, talent management and international human resource management besides communication.</p>	
Keywords HR processes, group level, HRM function, internal analysis, HR system, HRM process	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Case company.....	2
1.3	Research purpose and research question.....	4
1.4	Delimitations and scope	6
1.5	Key concepts	7
2	Human resource management contributing to business	9
2.1	HRM and its role in an organization	9
2.1.1	Defining HRM.....	9
2.1.2	Roles of the HR function	10
2.2	Structures of HRM	14
2.2.1	HR systems.....	15
2.2.2	Structural factors affecting the HR systems.....	16
2.3	HR processes – HR in practice	19
2.3.1	Defining HR processes	19
2.3.2	Areas of HR activities	20
2.3.3	HR processes covered in this paper.....	24
2.3.4	HR processes in details.....	26
3	Research methods	42
3.1	Research design	42
3.2	Data collection	45
3.3	Analysis methods.....	47
3.4	Validity, reliability and minimizing risks.....	48
4	Findings	51
4.1	Current HR processes.....	51
4.1.1	Phase 1.....	51
4.1.2	Phase 3.....	54
4.1.1	Conclusions	65
4.2	HRM's current role at the group level	66
4.2.1	Phase 1.....	66
4.2.2	Phase 3.....	67
4.2.3	Conclusions	68
4.3	Group HR's wished role in the future.....	70
4.3.1	Phase 2.....	70
4.3.2	Phase 3.....	71
4.4	Development suggestions.....	72

4.4.1	The HR processes to be developed	72
4.4.2	Group HR's role in HR processes	78
5	Discussion.....	81
5.1	Key findings	81
5.2	Recommendations for Halton Group	82
5.3	Trustworthiness of the research	83
5.4	Suggestions for further development and research	84
5.5	Evaluation of the thesis process and one's own learning	84
	References	86
	Appendices.....	90
	Appendix 1. Research tool	90
	Appendix 2. HR system.....	91
	Appendix 3. List and status of the HR processes used in the survey	92
	Appendix 4. Workshop slides	96
	Appendix 5. Interview questions.....	97
	Appendix 6. Sample 1: Forms used in the analysis – interviews.....	100
	Appendix 7. Sample 2: Forms used in the analysis – comparative analysis	101

1 Introduction

The introduction provides an overview of the situation resulting in the need for this thesis. First, background of the topic is explained which is followed by the introduction to the case company. After, the research purpose and research question are introduced and the scope of the paper is explained. The chapter will finish with a list of the key concepts relevant to the topic.

1.1 Background

Globalization has changed the environment where the companies operate. As the world – the environment of global organizations – change continuously, also companies need to adapt to it. That is why the organizational structures of global organizations and their processes are revised and reformed. Companies aim to be locally flexible and responsive while they are operating and managing their operations globally. That is why the organizational structures of global organizations have become more complex and different types of structures are created to manage an organization. Also the processes have often become more complex. All parts of organizations – operating units and staff functions alike – must be part of the change.

Human resource management (HRM) is a part of company's operations and the HR function has the structure and role of its own within an organization. It is the function, which is in charge of the human resource, employees, of an organization in cooperation with line managers. HRM aims to support business processes to happen as efficiently as possible by taking care of the employees, actors of the business processes. As the complexity grows, also the need for managing people grows. So how does the human resource management respond to the requirements of global companies? How should the structure and processes of HRM to be? Should the HR processes to be operated globally or locally in order to support the implementation of a business strategy?

In this research I try to answer to these questions in the case of Halton Group. Halton Group has also grown from a small family business to a global player having operations in more than thirty countries worldwide. It has decided to tackle this challenge of being as local as possible by having strong presence locally and decentralizing everything it can. Also the HR function of the company is decentralized. However, now the company sees that it would be strategically beneficial for them to have centralized data of the human resources of the company. That is why they are planning to apply a human resource in-

formation system for their organization in a near future. If this is done at group level, the HR processes must be described.

This thesis aims to research the current situation of the HR processes globally, and based on the analysis of the sample, to give development suggestions when reflected with the theories in HRM and writer's own perception. The theories used in the paper are a unique combination of the elements which answer to the HRM challenges rising from global growth concerning the HR processes in a company. Even though many companies struggle with similar challenges than Halton Group does, there isn't a clear set of theories to solve cases like this. Therefore, the writer has combined a set of theories from HRM and organizational design in order to create a combination which will answer how the HR processes should be developed at group level in order to support the implementation of a human resource information system. The focus is on HR processes as the title already indicates, but also the structure of HRM function and its roles are researched in order to be able to give recommendations which will serve the case company's unique HR architecture.

For the researcher and fellow HR professionals, this case study provides an opportunity to discover how a global technology company organizes its HRM in practice and how this is reflected with theories. This is real life case study which provides the ideas for other HR professionals how to analyse HR processes at group level when a company is highly decentralized. Besides, many people have an idea what HR process might mean, but this paper teaches in practice what those processes are and how they can be developed to answer an organization's requirements at group level giving also strategic perspective to HR activities.

1.2 Case company

Halton Group is a Finnish family owned company currently present in over 30 countries. The headquarters are in Helsinki, Finland. There are also American headquarters placed in Nashville, USA, and Asian headquarters near by Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Halton was created in 1969 by Seppo Halttunen and is owned by Halttunen family. Halton Group's mission is to enable wellbeing in indoor environments and it aims to create comfortable and safe indoor environments that have energy-efficient and sustainable life cycle. This is done by specializing in indoor climate and indoor environmental products, services and solutions. The product categories are air diffusion, air flow management, cabin ventilation, air filtration, kitchen and galley ventilation, ventilation fire safety, and central vacuum

cleaning systems. Additionally, Halton Group provides indoor environmental management services. The turnover of the Group was 197 million in 2015. (Halton Group 2014a.)

Halton Group has three strategic business areas (SBAs): Halton, Halton Foodservice and Halton Marine (Figure 1). Halton offers indoor climate solutions for public and commercial buildings such as offices, healthcare and laboratories and hotels; Halton Foodservice for commercial kitchens and restaurants; Halton Marine for ship building, oil & gas, energy and naval markets. Each of these SBAs has their own management team. The role of Halton Group is to coordinate the strategy, the strategy process, and leadership development of the company as a whole. SBAs are responsible for their global strategy and development, and for its business including sales. (Halton Group 2014b.)

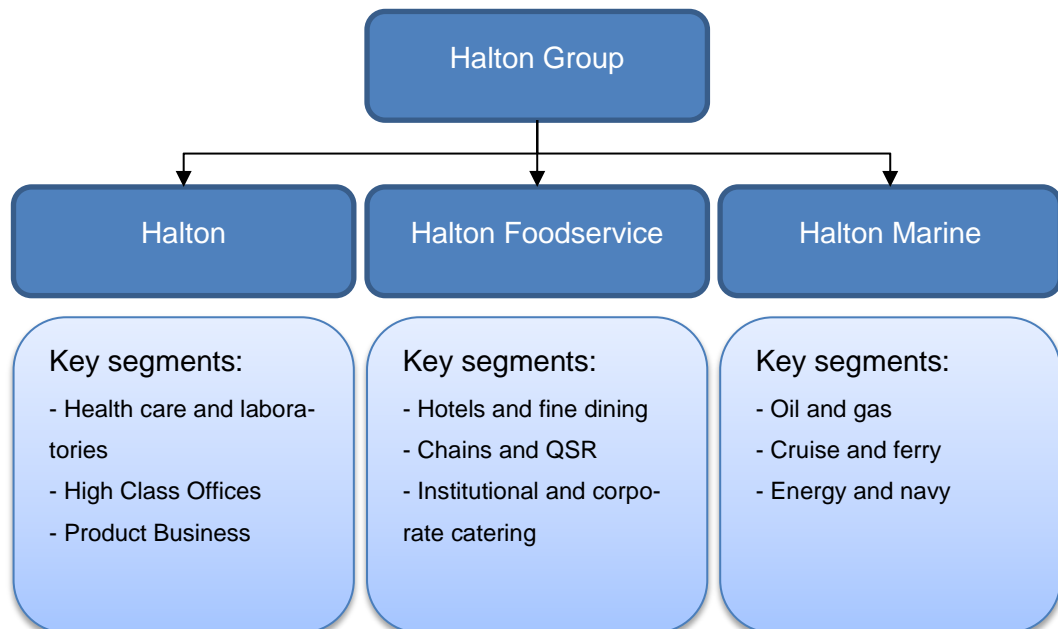


Figure 1. Structure of Halton Group (Halton Group 2014b)

As one of Halton Group's guiding principles is to be close to the customer, these SBAs are operating worldwide (Rinne 11 December 2015). Some of Halton Group's strategic business units (SBUs, mainly factory complexes) are specifically concentrated on one business area only, and some have operations from each strategic business area in their SBU. Besides, the Group has various customer relationship units (CRUs) in different countries in order to be near to the customer. Production facilities are located in Finland, France, Germany, UK, Hungary, Canada, USA, Malaysia and China. (Halton Group 2014a.)

Halton Group has approximately 1400 employees in over 30 countries (Halton Group 2014a). Within the past 37 years, Halton Group has expanded fast internationally by mergers and acquisitions and by exporting through CRUs (Halton Group 2014c). Most of the employees are employed by the SBUs and working for the benefit of a strategic business area. The group has approximately only around 30-40 employees and they are the CEOs of the group and SBAs, the executive team and then other key managers and some finance functions mainly. The structure of employees is so that most of the employees of SBUs are blue-collar workers working at the factory supplies and then there also are white-collar workers and managers. (Hallila August 2015.)

Halton Group's functions, including the HRM, are highly decentralized. There is only one HR person, Group's human resource and development director, working as the employee of the Halton Group, the rest of HR professionals are employed by the SBUs and dedicated for a SBA or for a country. There are around 10 people whose main area of responsibility is the human resource management as holding the status of human resource manager or director. The rest of the people related to employee management are often having several "hats" e.g. being the controller of a certain areas but also coordinating the payroll and personnel management actions. (Hallila August 2015.)

As the processes are so decentralized, it is hard to gather continuously changing personnel information worldwide. Now, the Group is investigating the possibility to set a common human resource management information technology-based system. The system would help gather data globally and ensure the quality of HR processes everywhere. Before setting an information technology-based system, the processes must be described at group level. Therefore, the current HR processes must be researched and development suggestions for possible harmonization must be given in order to have a set of HR processes described at group level.

1.3 Research purpose and research question

This thesis aims to develop the key HR processes in a global technology organization at the group level in order to enable modelling Halton Group's HR processes for further applications in Halton Group.

The research question can be worded as "How can the key HR processes in Halton Group be developed at group level?" It was divided into investigative questions (IQ) as follows:

IQ1. What are the current HR processes at Halton Group?

IQ2. What is the current role of the group level HRM at Halton Group?

IQ3. What should be the key HR processes at the group level in the opinion of the HR managers and directors?

IQ4. What development suggestions can be made to develop group level HR processes modelling in Halton Group?

Table 1 below presents the theoretical framework, research methods and results chapters for each investigative question.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Investigative question	Theoretical Framework*	Research Methods	Results (chapter)
IQ 1. What are the current HR processes at Halton Group?	Chapters: 2.3.: 2.3.1., 2.3.2., 2.3.3., 2.3.4.	Qualitative research, desk-top study, little survey	4.1.
IQ2. What is the current role of the group level HRM at Halton Group?	Chapters: 2.1.: 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 2.2.: 2.2.1, 2.2.2.	Desktop study, qualitative interviews	4.2.
IQ 3. What should be the key HR processes at the group level in the opinion of the HR managers and directors?	Chapters: 2.1.-2.3.4.	Qualitative interviews, focus group interviews	4.3.
IQ 4. What development suggestions can be made to develop group level HR processes modelling in Halton Group?	Chapters: 2.1.-2.3.4.	Desktop study, qualitative interviews, focus group interviews, little survey	4.4.

1.4 Delimitations and scope

This research aims to develop HR processes at group level in the case company. In order to be able to suggest any development actions, it is important to understand the current situation of the function – the nature of the case company and what HR processes and group level mean in this case. Besides, it was chosen to research how the HR processes should be operated at group level according to local HR managers and directors of the organization in order to get support for development suggestions and understand the role of the group HR.

A theory of organization design is used to give a framework to understand what the existing state of HR processes at group level is and how this could be improved through applying a theory of organization reviews (Armstrong 2012, 146). Organization analysis is the first step of organization review and it provides tools for understanding the external and internal environment combined with strategic issues and objectives in order to be aware of the existing arrangements and factors that may affect the organization now and in the future (Armstrong 2012, 146-147, 623). This paper covers internal analysis of structure, roles and activities (HR processes) because those are the elements which answer directly to the research question as demonstrated in Figure 2 below.

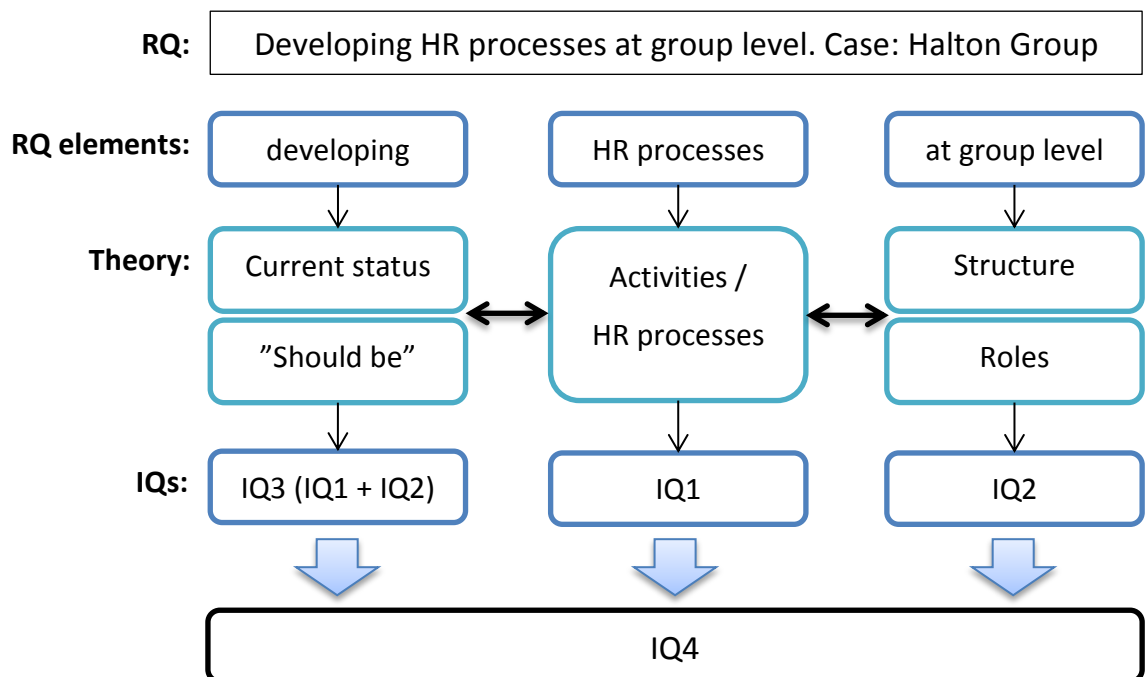


Figure 2. The relationship between theory framework and research questions

Developing aspect sets its own requirements. First, the current status of HR processes, structure of HR function and roles within group HR are analysed and then problems are

diagnosed. This will give indication how to improve the Group's HR function and result in recommendations for development – how HR processes should be done at group level. Analysis on external environment and culture are excluded from this paper in order to keep the scope of the paper as suitable for bachelor thesis as possible. Deep analysis on strategic issues and objectives are excluded until a certain extent as the company has its main strategies at SBA level and this paper is focused on group level and functions more as a background study for further decisions to be taken by the executives. This thesis focus approaches the topic from managerial point of view, not from the employee experience point of view, so employee-life-cycle models are left out.

In other words, this paper covers internal analysis of structure, roles and activities (HR processes) since they provide tools for understanding the status of the group level. The role of group level HR is approached by defining HRM and its roles traditionally and comparing HRM done at different levels of the organization in order to understand the role of the group HR. This is important because without understanding the aim of the group HR it is not possible to improve it to correct direction.

The analysis of structure cover how activities are grouped together or decentralized, what are the levels of hierarchy and the relationships between the different units and HR function. Besides, the HR function is analysed through applying HR architecture and especially the theory of HR systems to the case company.

Activities are analysed through analysing HR processes at all the levels of the organization with a framework created to this specific purpose. First, it was defined what a HR process is and then the core HR processes were selected to be analysed. The framework covers key HR processes from HR planning, recruitment and selection to exit management giving an overview of the most important areas of HRM. The research tool and selected HR processes are demonstrated in Appendix 1. For more information about the demarcation of the HR processes, please see Chapter 2.3.2.

1.5 Key concepts

Internal analysis is an analysis conducted on internal factors of a company. In organization design it normally covers analysis on an organization's structure, role, culture and activities. This paper covers internal analysis of structure, roles and activities (HR processes) based on the reasons explains in Chapter 1.4. (Armstrong 2012, 146-147, 623.)

HRM function is a functional area of a company which work with the employee related matters of a company. It refers to staff group which deliver routine transactions services, traditional HR systems development and administration, and strategic business support. (Lawler 2012, 9.)

The HR system explains, how HR philosophies, external and internal environments, human capital management, corporate social responsibility, HR strategies, policies and practices, and different HR processes are interrelated. According to Armstrong's definition (2012, 32), "the HR system contains the interrelated and jointly supportive HR activities and practices which together enable HRM goals to be achieved". In the HR system HR processes and other HR activities meet the 'bigger picture'. (Armstrong 2012, 32.)

HRM process refers to the aim of HRM function and HR system to be completed. It is a process of a firm to attract, socialize, train, motivate, evaluate and compensate its human resources so that they become more valuable to the organization. In this paper HRM process is used as the term to cover the whole set of HR activities (HR processes) done by the HR function. (Amit & Belcourt 1999, 174.)

HR processes are a systematic way in which HR activities are identified, formulated and implemented with a procedural reality. HR processes are a part of HR systems. (Monks & McMackin 2001, 59.)

Group level is a term to describe the structure of a company and refers to the corporate level of an organization. In the case company, Halton Group, the organizational structure is structured so that the group level is responsible for coordinating the corporate strategy, strategy process and leadership development as an entity. Besides, Halton Group has three strategic business areas (SBAs): Halton, Halton Foodservice and Halton Marine. They are in charge of the global business strategies and development including the sales and other business functions. (Halton Group 2014a.)

2 Human resource management contributing to business

Human resource management processes are only one, quite small but still very important, part of the big picture of the human resource management in organizations. Processes are a part of a bigger entity and wouldn't work alone. That is why it is important to cover also the background of the HR processes for the basis of the analysis for developing the key HR processes. This chapter represents the essential terms and theories behind the human resource management processes.

This topic is approached through applying the principles of organization analysis in order to understand the current internal environment at Halton Group and HR processes are analysed as a part of it. Organization analysis normally consists of analyses on external and internal environment combined with strategic issues and objectives (Armstrong 2012, 146-147, 623). This thesis covers internal analysis on the role, the structure and activities of HRM in the case company because these elements are expected to answer the research question setting in best way possible within the scope of bachelor thesis. Analysis on the role and structure of HRM explain what the group HR means in the case company and the analysis on activities of HR concentrates on HR processes of the company.

This chapter begins with defining HRM and its roles. This is followed by discussing organizational structures related to HRM and the HR system briefly. The HR systems, as a part of HR architecture, work then as an introduction to the last topic covered in this chapter: HR processes. There was a set of key HR processes selected to be researched in this paper (Chapter 2.3.3) and these HR processes are described in this chapter in more details.

2.1 HRM and its role in an organization

The function, which is analysed in this thesis, is HRM. The analysis on the structure and the role of HRM function provides tools to understand the group level HRM and its processes. Roles of HRM are tightly linked with the definition of HRM and its evolution from an administrative function to be a strategic business partner which provides added value for the business. This chapter gives a definition for HRM and discusses the roles HRM can have in an organization through using two different theories.

2.1.1 Defining HRM

Human resource management is a term with many definitions. When considering the word itself, the term can be seen as the management practices of human resources (HR): an

organization's employees, personnel or workforce (Heery & Noon 2001, 162, 165). Simply, human resource management can be seen as a convenient shorthand term for grouping together the range of activities associated with managing people, but also as a set of professional practices as a coordinated approach to managing people that seeks to integrate the various personnel activities so that they are compatible with each other. Therefore, the HRM would not only be covering personnel management but the interrelated key areas of employee resourcing, employee development, employee reward, and employee involvement. HRM can also be seen as a method of ensuring internal fit and external fit or as a competitive advantage. As a method of ensuring the internal fit HRM is a coordinated approach considering how policies will fit with other aspects of the organization and organization's strategy. Ensuring the external fit takes a step forward by seeking to match the policies, procedures, and activities of people management with the demands of the external environment. (Heery & Noon 2001, 162-165.)

Other definitions for HRM are for example Storey's (1995, 5), "Human resource management is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of highly committed and capable workforce, using an array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques" or Boxall and Purcell's (2011, 1), "HRM refers to all those activities associated with the management of work and people in organizations". These different approaches for definitions are based on the philosophy of human resource management as well as on the evolution of HRM function and its role within an organization. In this thesis, HRM is used as a term to refer to the activities associated with the management of work and people in organizations, with a special focus on the activities organized by the HR function of an organization.

2.1.2 Roles of the HR function

As mentioned before, the definition of HRM is linked with the fact, what the role of HRM is considered to be in an organization and what kind of additional value it gives to an organization if any. The aim of HRM and the enabling technology have developed over the years. The evolution of HR function has gone through several transformations from an operational role, personnel management, to integrated talent management and now to business driven HR (Bersin 2015, 5-6). Figure 3 demonstrates the evolution of the HRM function and its statuses in different companies.

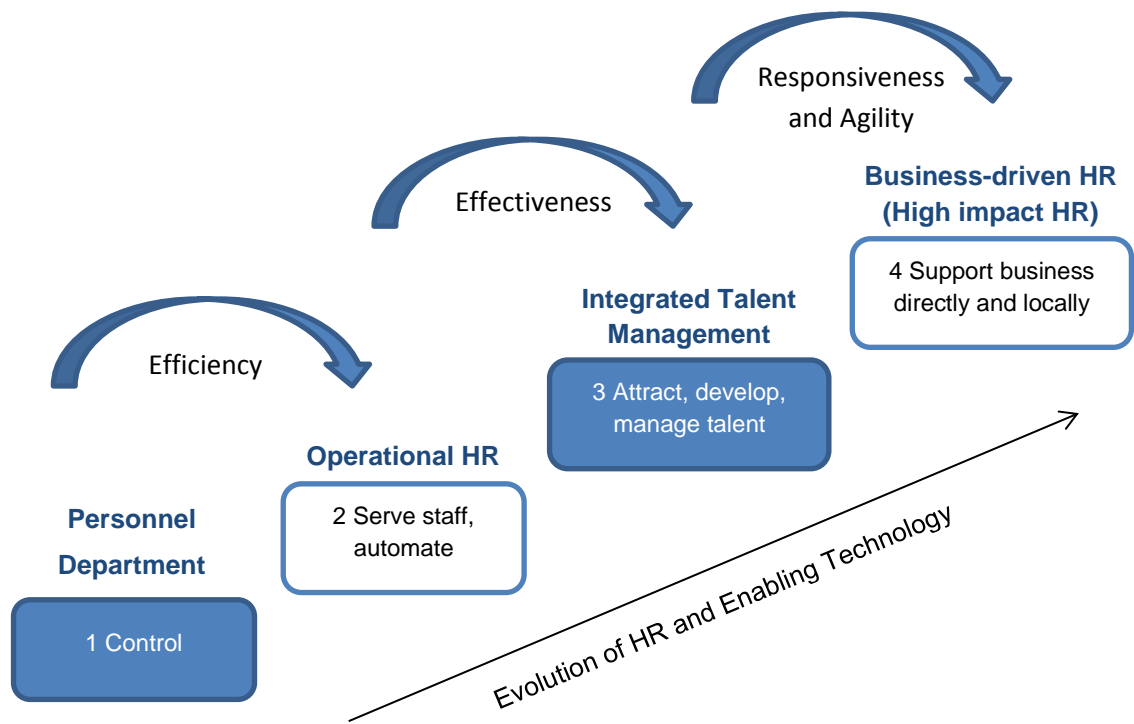


Figure 3. Four phases of HRM (Persin 2015, 5)

According to Bersin (2015, 6), there are four phases in the evolution of HR and enabling technology: personnel department, operational HR, integrated talent management and business-driven HR. The first three roles are supported by Analoui's (2007, 4-5) description of the history of the development of HRM. During the first phase of HR, personnel department aims to control personnel of a company's human resource (Bersin 2015, 6). This is followed by operational HR serving staff and automating HR processes (Bersin 2015, 6). During the third phase, the focus of integrated talent management is on attracting, developing and managing talent (Bersin 2015, 6). The fourth phase, business-driven HR, is the most recent one and it aims to support business directly and locally without forgetting about the global aspects either (Bersin 2015, 6).

The figure 3 shows how the purpose and mission of HR change when companies move from phase to phase. When moving from phase one to phase two, companies focus on efficiency. This means that companies set up service centres, rationalize the generalist positions and appoint business partners to reduce inefficiency in service delivery. HR aims to deliver services efficiently. As companies move from phase two to phase three, they concentrate on effectiveness of driving talent programmes. Most of the companies Bersin by Deloitte talked with during the research were somewhere between phases two and three in Figure 3. During this transaction, companies are heavily focused on building inte-

grated programmes to attract and retain top people, drive a compelling employment brand, improve and align the performance process, and better manage and transform learning and development. They now measure the efficiency and success by 'quality of hire', 'time to fill', 'training utilisation' and 'leadership pipeline'. Also new are in focus in embracing new technologies (often social and network based) in order to extend the company's brand, connect people, facilitate learning and collaboration, and build leadership. (Bersin 2015, 5-6.)

At phase four the trend changes and only 5–10% of the companies which were researched (Bersin 2015, 5-7) had reached this new phase. At this phase companies focus on something unique. They have all the basic elements of well-performing HR like a strong HR service delivery capability built and their talent programs have been optimized for the past three to five years but still there is something to be improved: local responsiveness and agility. For example, recruiting is shifting towards 'network recruiting', where employment brand, candidate relationship management, the use of analytics to define who are the best candidates and strong and local relationships with hiring managers are drivers for success. In order to be effective in recruiting, HR professionals must understand the precise jobs, management styles and culture of the team they support. Also learning is shifting towards digital learning environments where individuals can learn independently, decide between formal and informal learning and their training is integrated into their career management and professional goals. This requires thinking locally. That is why the essence of high-impact HR is to focus on changing the operating model to be less centralized and more 'coordinated but distributed' into the business. There are fewer generalists and more specialists who are located closer to business where they can drive the most value. This is done by implementing well-designed self-service systems to let people manage their own HR 'transactions' and put more of HR's budget into specialized skills. (Bersin 2015, 6-7.)

Other special elements high-impact HR organizations have are (Bersin 2015, 7):

- They build 'networks of expertise', where specialists know each other and share best practices while using common tools whenever possible, not 'centres of expertise'. The centre of expertise is small and focuses on technology platforms and standards – not centralised services.
- They have senior-level HR business partners with local control. These local HR professionals partner directly with local line leaders and they integrate solutions and serve as consultants about HR matters.
- These organisations have strong internal technology groups to build common platforms and they build strong analytics teams centrally. Compensation analytics, engagement

analytics, retention analytics and all the other analytics teams are brought together into a core central group that can help understand and plan the future of the company's talent needs.

- They have internal groups that concentrate on developing HR professional, research, and tools and methods in order to ensure the quality of HR function.
- They have chief human resource officers with a special focus on the business and delivering on business outcomes, not only operating HR as an efficient service provider.
- They focus on effectiveness and outcomes, not just efficiency.” It was researched that before getting effectively to phase 4, these high-impact HR organisations must go through phases 2 and 3 before – because otherwise they become highly inefficient.

As seen from the Josh Bersin's results, the HRM function can have a different importance for an organization and therefore also its role changes. Another theory explaining the role of HRM and how HRM is delivered in an organization is the three-legged stool model by Ulrich (1997, 1998). According to the model, HR function has three possible roles: HR shared service centres, centres of expertise and strategic business partner (Armstrong 2012, 35). Also Bersin (2015, 5-7) refers to these roles in his theory. One leg of the stool is HR shared service centres. It is an administrative service center which handles all the routine 'transactional' services across the business, which includes such activities as payroll, recruiting, absence monitoring and advice on dealing with employee related issues like discipline. The second leg, centers of expertise, specializes in the provision of high-level advice and services on key HR activities. The focus is on design rather than transactions and line managers are the customers of the managers and specialists who work in this stool. The most common expertise areas according to CIPD survey (2007 in Armstrong 2012, 35) on the changing HR function are training and development, recruiting, rewards and employee relations. The third leg consists of strategic business partners. HR business partners are often generalists, who report to the line managers and indirectly to HR. They don't get involved in transactions, but instead their aim is to link the business with appropriate HR programmes by acting as consultant and planners. HR business partners help line managers to reach their goals through efficient strategy formulation and execution. They normally work at business units or departments. (Armstrong 2012, 35-36.)

The overall role of HR professionals, and then HR function's too, varies widely according to the extent to which the HR professional are generalists or specialists, the level at which they work, the needs of the organization, the view of senior management about their contribution, the context within which they work and their own capabilities. Dave Ulrich (1998) has been one of the theorists defining the roles of HR, and according to some of the theo-

ries there is a strategic role, a business partner role, innovation role, change agent role, and facilitators and coaches roles available for HR professionals. For many HR practitioners their most important function is to deliver service, which includes transactional activities such as recruitment, training and other HR processes, but also the other roles should be noticed. (Armstrong 2012, 38.)

When HR has a strategic role, at a strategic level its role is to formulate and implement HR strategies, to contribute to the development of business strategies, and to work alongside their line management colleagues and provide on an everyday basis continuous support to the implementation of the business or operational strategy of the organization, function or unit. The strategic contribution of HR advisors and assistants is to contribute to HR strategies within their own speciality even though they are mainly responsible for delivering effective HR services within their function and not responsible for the formulation of HR strategies. Within the business partner role HR professionals are strong supporting and working along the line management and getting involved with them in implementing business strategy and running the business. Their main duty is to add value both financially and from the HR perspective. The third role, a strategic and proactive one, is to innovate – to introduce new processes and procedures they believe will increase organizational effectiveness, based on the evidence-based management approach meaning that the case for innovation should be established by process of analysis and diagnosis. The fourth role of HR is to act as the change agent implementing strategy and strategic change by providing advice and support on the introduction and management of different types of change. (Armstrong 2012, 39-41.)

2.2 Structures of HRM

In organization design, the analysis of structure covers the number of levels in the hierarchy, how activities are grouped together, the extent to which authority is decentralized to divisions and SBUs, where different functions are placed in the structure and the relationships which exist between different functions and units (Armstrong 2012, 147). Particular attention is often given to the way in which units communicate and cooperate with one another, which activities are grouped and decentralized and the span of control of managers. These elements are relevant also to understand how HR function acts within an organization. Besides, HR function has a structure of its own. This sub-chapter begins with a description of HR systems which helps to understand the context of which HR processes are a part of. This is followed by structural elements affecting on HR systems and through that to HR processes as well.

2.2.1 HR systems

As mentioned in Chapter 2.1.1., according to some definitions, HR's role is to implement a company's strategy. In order to implement it, there is a HR system (Becker & Huselid 1998, 95). The HR system explains how HR philosophies, external and internal environment, human capital management, corporate social responsibility, HR strategies, policies and practices, and different HR processes are interrelated. According to Armstrong's definition (2012, 32), "the HR system contains the interrelated and jointly supportive HR activities and practices which together enable HRM goals to be achieved". In the HR system HR processes and other HR activities meet the 'bigger picture'.

The HR system has six main component parts: HR philosophies, HR strategies, HR policies, HR practices, HR programmes and HR processes (Monks & McMackin 2001, 58-59). HR philosophies describe the underlying values and guiding principles adopted in HRM (Armstrong 2012, 32). HR strategies refer to the definition of "the direction in which HRM intends to go in each of its main areas of activity" (Armstrong 2012, 32). Tyson (1995, 89) suggests that HR strategy is the way in which a set of ideas, policies and practice are brought together and which management then adopts in order to achieve a people management objective. Tyson (1995, 89) also defines that HR policies are "the official guide to action" and practices are "any informal process or norm in management which has the sanction of custom, but which is not codified or written". In practice, HR policies provide guidelines for HR defining how specific aspects of HR should be applied and implemented (Armstrong 2012, 32). Some of the theories end the list of the components here. However, Schuler (1992, 24-26) adds two more elements: HR programmes and HR processes. HR programmes are "co-ordinated HR efforts specifically intended to initiate, disseminate and sustain strategic organizational change efforts necessitated by the strategic business needs" (Schuler 1992, 24). HR processes are the methods in which "all the other HR activities are identified, formulated and implemented" (Schuler 1992, 26). HR processes differ from HR practices so that they are done by more systematic way rather than an ad hoc manner (Gratton & all 1999, 22). HR processes are more about procedural reality than a philosophical rhetoric (Gratton & all 1999, 22).

As can be seen from the Appendix 2, the components of the HR system are interrelated and as whole together with the different roles of HRM, they result in delivering HRM. HR philosophies with external and internal environment create the base for HR strategies, policies and practices which then guide and define the areas of HR activities a company uses and furthermore the HR processes. The areas of HRM are also described in Appen-

dix 2. How this all is put together in practice was explained through three-legged model and others described earlier in this chapter.

2.2.2 Structural factors affecting the HR systems

In real life, the structure and functioning of an HR function is not so simple. As seen from Appendix 2, external and internal environment affect to the HR system. Lepak and Gowan (2010, 14-19) defined three main internal and external factors effecting on company's primary HR activities: organizational demands, environmental influences and regulatory issues. Organization demands refer to the fact that organizations are all different; their strategy, company characteristics, organizational culture and employee concerns create a unique internal environment for each organization. Also the external environment influences on the organizational needs. There are different trends in labour force, technology, globalization, and ethics and social responsibility and also the regulation gives its own spice for running primary HR activities.

This paper is concentrates on internal analysis as mentioned in Chapter 1.4. Boxall and Purcell (2011) defined some structural elements which have an effect from the structural point of view to HR systems and through that to HR processes. These are described below. Boxall and Purcell (2011, 60-80, 282-290) refer to these factors as 'the complications to HR strategy'.

Structure of an organization and centralization and decentralization

First complication for HR strategy in real life is linked to the structure and control of multinational companies such as Halton Group is. When talking about a firm's strategic HRM models, an organization is often seen as a single unit, an independent entity engaged in a single kind of activity. In reality, however, the multinational firms are large and diverse and they operate across boundaries including various kinds of activities. When HRM is seen as the management of employees and work of an organization, in multinational firms it is important to have a closer look at the impact of ownership and control on workplace HR system. The questions related to the control and ownership are often about centralization and decentralization such as to what extent multinational firms centralize or decentralize their decision making and with what implication, and if corporations should seek to integrate the different businesses they own, or treat them as separate entities but try to manage them better than if they were wholly independent. (Boxall & Purcell 2011, 282.)

These questions are typical for multinational companies and the organization can choose between decentralization and centralization of their operations. There are two fundamental approaches to manage SBUs or operating units. One is to emphasize financial control and keep the SBUs very close to the center and often each other. The other one is to emphasize collaboration and knowledge sharing and to build synergies between SBUs. In tight financial control companies corporate executives focus on the setting and monitoring of financial targets for SBUs while minimizing administrative controls on other areas of management. This is typical for Anglo-American enterprises where budgets are negotiated or imposed annually, planning is short-term oriented, and performance is monitored frequently. This decentralization of operating decisions, but strong, centralized control over budgets, effects on HR as well. In this model the general managers of operating units have a greater autonomy over many aspects of HRM and this can provide more tailored HR solutions for the company but also some challenges. When the budget is done with a short-term profit focus, there is a tendency to cut off the overhead costs and outsource. In HR's case this may mean cutting down the budget from training and development and other HR activities with a long term vision when trying to maximize the profit of the company in a short term, if there is not a reserved area for HR priorities in the budget. This is often the case in operationally decentralized organization. Another issue which can arise when an organization is much decentralized is that the management development can suffer if managers beyond the head office have contracts of employment with the operation company, not with the corporate, because then the employees aren't considered as a corporate resource. (Boxall & Purcell 2011, 287-288.)

The alternative approach is to have knowledge and technological links between divisions in order to create synergies. Then the leaders can manage these linkages to add value, if they wish to do so. This may mean vertical integration along the supply chain or alternatively be pursued through a process of building and spreading product or process innovations and creating then inter-business relationships. This requires organizational practices which focus on knowledge creation and sharing. This means that managers instead of simply thinking of their own territorial interests will be encouraged to communicate more frequently and assist one another. Achieving efficiently working cross-business synergies requires new structures and some kind of alignment in business operations and in HRM as well as high levels of commitment to employees and suppliers. This means it requires higher levels of investment in the human resource and HR specialists to support it. Also HR departments need to be more generously staffed in order to have more time to pay attention on management and employee development and to be concerned with the transmission of innovative practices across the group. (Boxall & Purcell 2011, 289-290.)

HR strategy depending on the employee groups

Secondly, having different employee groups in an organization has an effect on HR systems. It is wrong to assume that a firm would have only one uniform HR strategy which is suitable for all occasions to guide the management of the work and employees of a firm. The HR strategy might vary between different HR systems within a firm. Even though, there might be some common HR practices overlapping across HR systems within an organization, such as common ways of handling leave entitlements or dealing with personal grievances, there are also substantial differences across HR systems. Because the aim of each HR system is to organize the work and to manage the employment of a major workforce group, according to Boxall and Purcell, it is quite common for there to be one HR system for management, another for core operating workers, and one or more models for support workers and specialists. (Boxall & Purcell 2011, 67.)

Also Charles Handy's Shamrock organization theory supports Boxall & Purcell's statement of HR systems varying according to the workforce group. According to Charles Handy's (2002, 72-75) Shamrock Organization theory there are three types of employees: core employees, the contractual fringe and the flexible labour force. Besides, there are customers that do the work. All the employee groups have different needs, different contractual arrangements, a different set of expectations and they also have different kind of commitment. They have to be managed in different ways. (Handy 2002, 72-75.)

By core employees Handy refers to the most important employees of the company who are well-qualified people, often professionals, technicians or manager, and they are hard to replace. The core employees have normally permanent contracts and they are highly committed to the company and its results. In return, they are often well compensated and have some guarantee for their future. They are often representing a certain role and not willing to change it as well as they feel that they are the experts of the field, acting like consultants, and not willing to be commanded.

The second type of employees according to Handy is the contractual fringe. As the core is small, there must be people who do the jobs. Therefore, there are people who are specialized for a job and should be able to do better job than core employees for less cost. These individuals will be self-employed professionals or technicians who often might have worked as a core employee but were outsourced or preferred the freedom of self-employment. These employees are paid for results instead of time and are subcontracted by another company. The core company often has only the control over the results, not how the work itself is done. (Handy 2002, 73-74, 77-78.)

The third leaf is the flexible employees, part-time workers and temporary workers who are according to Handy (2002, 74) the fastest growing part of employment scene. These employees are normally hired to answer to the peaks in demand. They are easily as contemporary help. The companies don't often expect much from them and they are given little attention to. However, they should be taken seriously because they have potential in them. Many of the part-time or temporary employees are working like that by choice, not because of necessity. They have skills which can be developed, commitment to give, talents and energies to offer if they are needed. Flexible workers are described to be more committed to the job and work group rather than to a career and to the organization. Their motivation is often linked how they are treated at the company and how much effort it is put to their induction and training for example. (Handy 2002, 74-75, 79-80.)

2.3 HR processes – HR in practice

This subchapter is going to discuss the definition of the HR processes covering the variation of the understanding and the difficulties in defining the term. This is followed by defining the processes which will be analysed in the case company later in this paper. Each of the separate HR processes will be covered by defining the process and its common steps or sub-processes and by explaining the importance of the process for an organization.

2.3.1 Defining HR processes

Process management defines a process to be “a set of logically related activities and resources needed to transform inputs to outputs” and “any activity or change can be described as a process” (Laamanen & Tinnilä 2009, 121). So each process must have a goal which it will facilitate to happen. When combining this definition of a process with the definition of HRM, HR processes can simply be considered to be the processes related to human resource management of an organization. However, as covered in the earlier subchapter, according to the HR system approach the HR processes can be defined as the way in which HR activities are identified, formulated and implemented while having the emphasis on practice and embedded processes which are systematic and have a procedural reality (Monks & McMackin 2001, 59). When these two approaches are combined, we can say HR process to be a systematic way to organize (identify, formulate and implement) a HR activity in practice.

HRM process is sometimes used in literature as a term to describe the HR systems. Therefore, it is important to understand that when talking about HR processes in this pa-

per, a HR process and a HRM process differ from each other. The HR processes are referred as a part of a bigger entity, the HR system, and they cover different areas of HR activities in a systematic way, while HRM process is the bigger entity of managing employees. The HR processes enable the goals of the HRM process to happen.

2.3.2 Areas of HR activities

HR processes are most of the time linked with an area or a topic of HRM. These definitions for HR processes include the fact that HRM includes several HR activities within the HRM function. As seen in Figure 4, according to Shivarudrappa, Ramachandra & Gopalakrishna (2010, 18) the HRM processes includes several activities and in this thesis those activities are called HR processes. In Figure 4, the first four steps of HRM process, HR planning, recruitment, decruitment, selection, aim to identify and select competent and skilled employees. Once this is done, the process is followed by orientation, training and development, carrier development, and compensation and benefits which help the competent new employees to adapt to the organisation, ensure that their job skills and knowledge are kept current, develop appropriate carrier development activities and provide efficient and effective reward systems. According to Shivarudrappa, Ramachandra & Gopalakrishna (2010, 18) the last step of the HRM system is performance appraisal which aims to identify performance problems and correct them. HR function must also maintain satisfactory labour relations through industrial relations. As mentioned also earlier in this chapter, also in this model there are external factors like economic, political and legal factors.

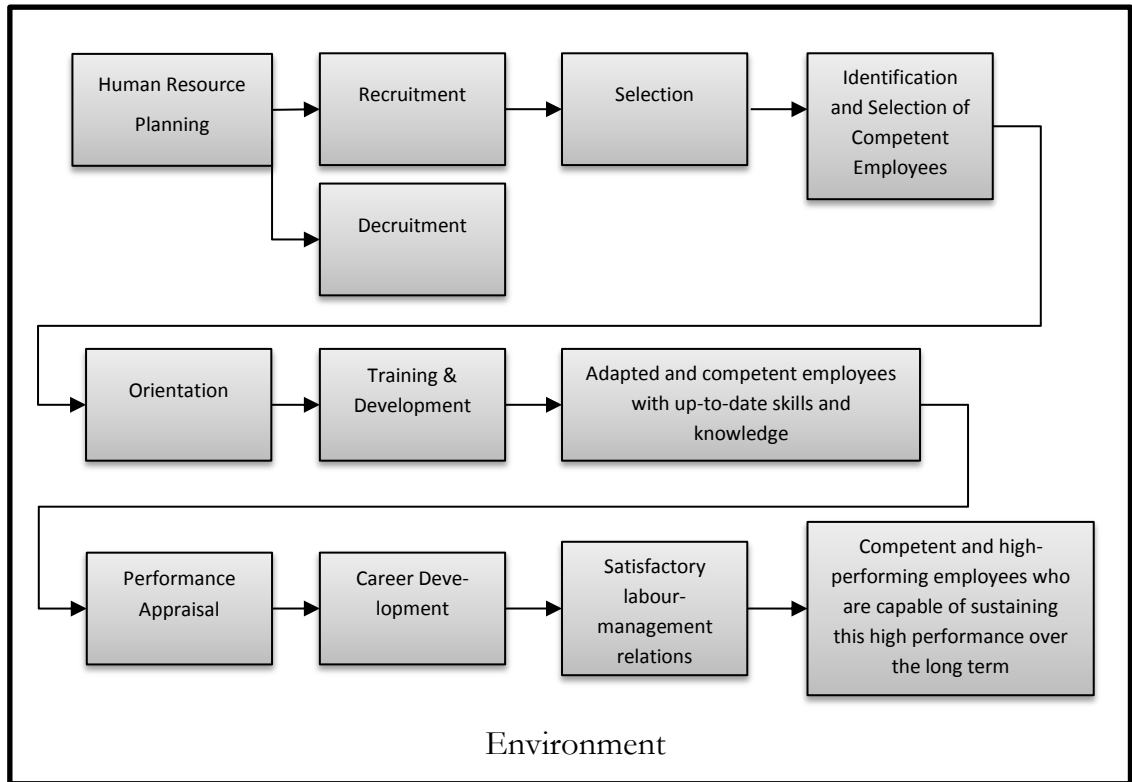


Figure 4. HRM process and its activities (Shivarudrappa, Ramachandra & Gopalakrishna 2010, 18)

Another, simple way to think of HR processes is to group them according to the functions of human resource management. These functions are staffing, performance management, training and development, rewards and benefits, health and safety, and employee-management relations (see Figure 5). (Phillips & Gully 2014, 7-8.)



Figure 5. HRM functions (Phillips & Gully 2014, 8)

Lepak and Gowan have a multilayer approach to the HR activities. They (2010, 9) define the primary HR activities to be:

- work design and workforce planning
- managing employee competences
- managing employee attitudes.

According to them, the primary activities are the blocks of the HRM process. These activities include specific practices within them which should be aligned with each other. The items of the alignment can be seen in the Figure 6. (Lepak and Gowan 2010, 13.)

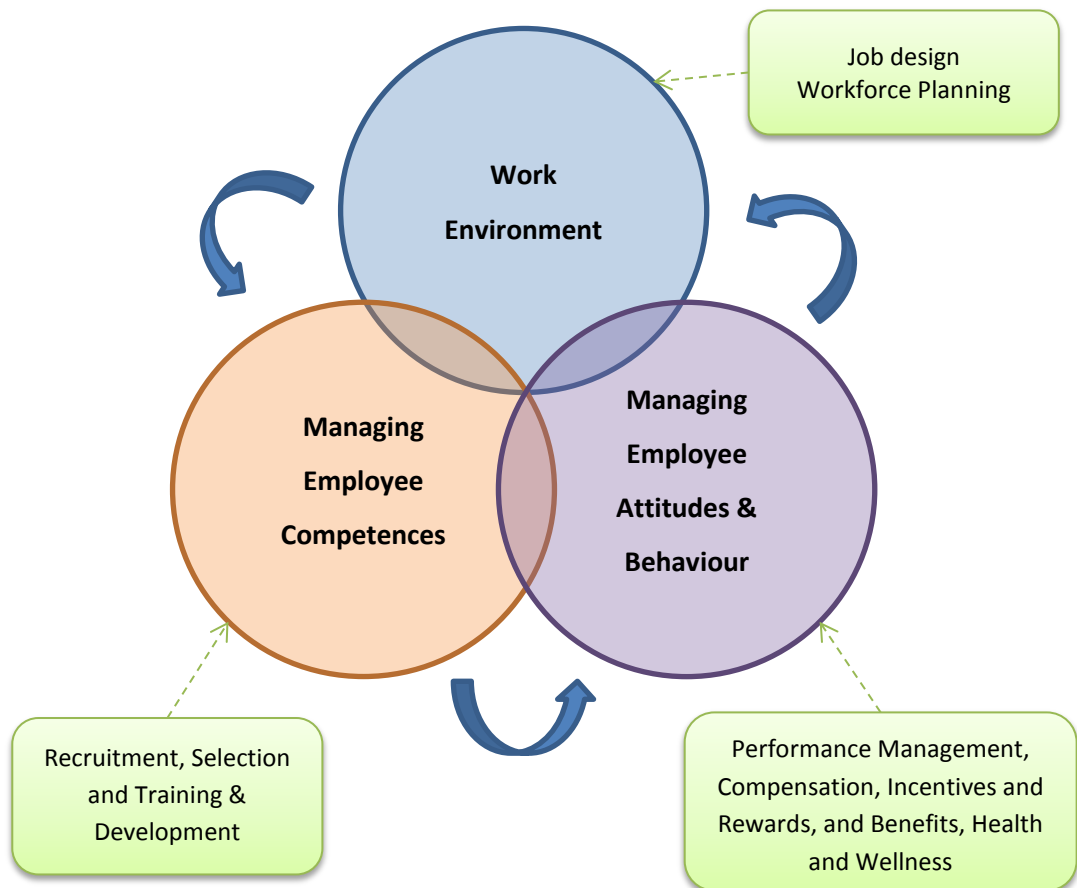


Figure 6. HR primary processes and their internal alignment (Lepak and Cowan 2010, 13)

Work design and workforce planning include such sub-processes as job design and workforce planning. Managing employee competencies includes recruitment, selection and training and development processes. Managing employee attitudes and behaviours includes performance management; compensation, incentives and rewards; and employee benefits, health and wellness as the sub-activities. (Lepak and Gowan 2010, 13.)

Appendix 2, where the HR system is also explained, offers one way to group HR activities and through that also HR processes. There the activities are divided into five main categories: organization, people resourcing, learning and development, reward management and employee relations. Below, there are 25 other areas of HRM which all are in a way or another interrelated.

As can be concluded from the several multilayer approaches to HRM processes and HR function in general, it is hard to define what kind of processes HRM includes (in total). In this thesis I don't cover all the possible processes related to HRM but chose the primary ones for a business at general level. The selection is based on the secondary research made through browsing several books, articles and other academic HRM papers.

2.3.3 HR processes covered in this paper

Armstrong's (2012, 33) figure of HR system (Appendix 2) is one of the most detailed visualization of the areas of HR activities at the generic level suitable for group level analysis which should not be biased by different external environments in different continents.

Yet, I chose to create my own research framework for HR processes in order to answer the research question setting of focusing on group level HR processes. Because this paper targets the company's group level, all small HR processes were excluded and some HR processes were categorized under a bigger one. For example, pay, benefits and rewards can be seen as separate areas of interest, but still they are all grouped in this paper under compensation and rewards. The aim was to combine the theories on areas of HR activities mentioned earlier in this chapter, and consequently create a unique way to approach the dilemma of the paper. The current framework aims to cover the most important areas of HRM related to HR processes. As the nature of HR processes is to be procedural and systematic with an application to practice, topics like engagement and organizational development were excluded from this paper, and processes more related to employee lifecycle were chosen to be in use. Also areas with a high interplay with local legislations were excluded. This refers to most of the employee relations matters. In general, the processes that were chosen add some value at the group level of the company and can also be operated globally or at least have global strategies, policies and practices related to the topic.

As could have seen from Figures 4, 5, and 6, there are similar processes involved within HRM: strategic recruitment & selection, induction as a part of staffing, training and development, performance management, compensation and rewards, HRM & HR planning, and health and safety. Training and development was transferred to more generic approach which is coming from talent management and that is why called learning and development. Also wellbeing was added to expand the view of health and safety based on Armstrong 2012 and other writers. These are processes which are done in a way or another in most of the organizations and can therefore be called primary HR activities. That is why these processes are also included in this research paper. Besides Figures 4, 5, and 6, career management and succession management, and exit management were added as a process to the key HR activities as they have been mentioned in several sources (as an example Armstrong 2012, Sarma 2008), with different wording. Themes and processes related to employment law, contracts, industrial relations, employee involvement and participation, work place democracy and discipline and grievance are ex-

cluded from this paper as they are much to the local legislation and local practices and this kind of approach isn't in the interest of the commissioning company and then demarcated from the topic. The processes included in the paper can be seen as a whole in Figure 7 below.

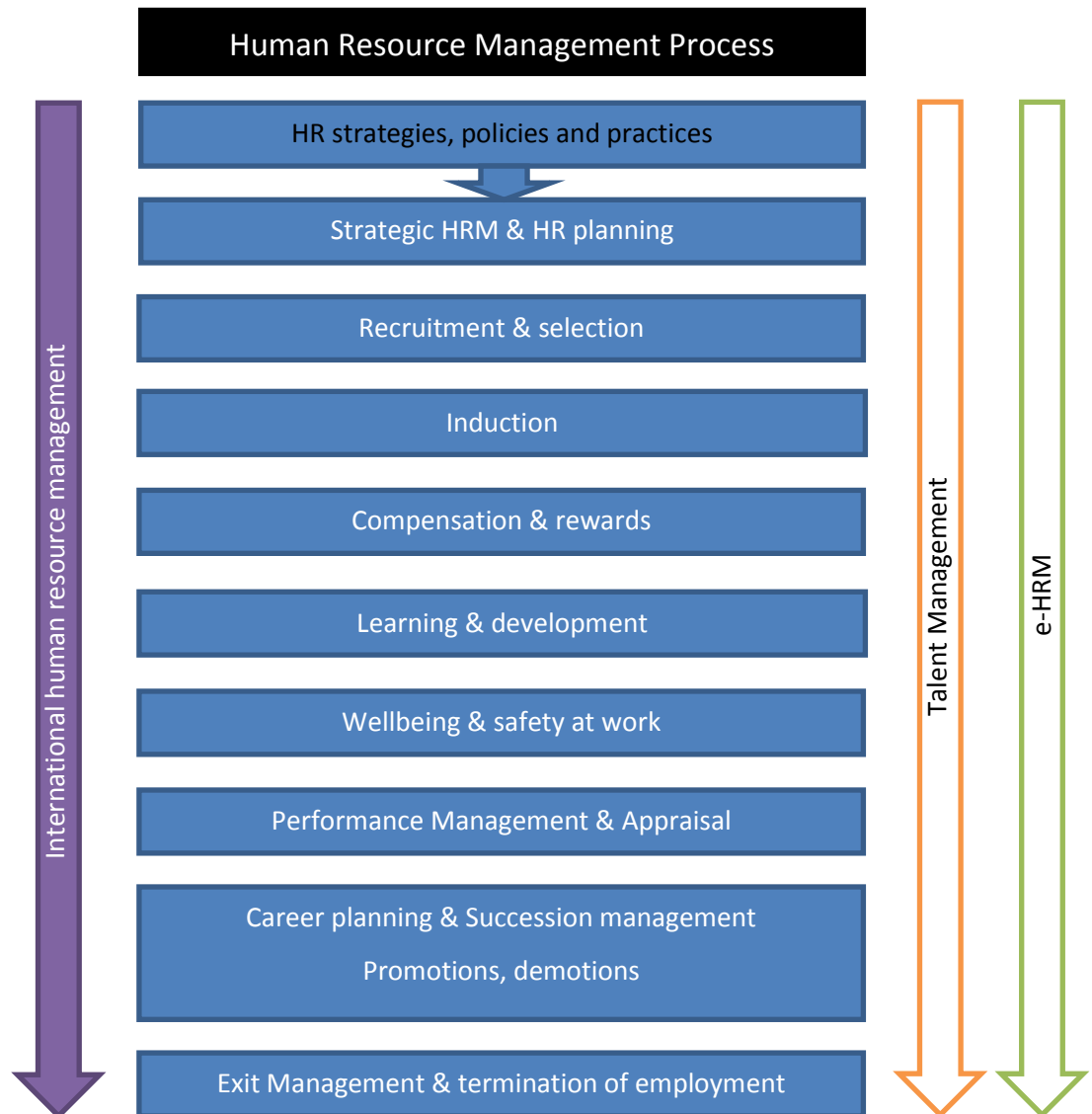


Figure 7. HR processes covered in this research.

Besides the primary activities, which are also part of the personnel management of an organization, there are also different processes which are linked to the status of the HRM in an organization (Chapter 2.1). Therefore this research is also covering the following processes, which are represented in several academic books related to HRM (like Armstrong 2012, Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006): talent management, e-enabled HR and interna-

tional human resource management. These processes cover the primary HRM activities from a different aspect and for that reason they go along with the primary processes.

2.3.4 HR processes in details

Each of the processes covered in this thesis research have their own importance for the success of an organization's HRM process. Below, all of the processes are explained in details with the definition, possible sub-processes or elements they include and with the explanation why a certain process is essential to be in use. The processes are interrelated, parts of the HRM process which aims to attract, motivate and retain employees, so some of the processes may overlap with each other.

Strategic HRM & HR planning

Strategic human resource management (Strategic HRM) can be defined to be the pattern of planned human resource activities which are intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals (Wright and McMahan 1992, in Analoui 2007, 19). It is often seen as the integration of two strategies, business and human resource, to achieve the objectives of the organization and this will result in the creation of a competitive advance through the personnel of a company (Analoui 2007, 20). If human resource management is aimed to include to the strategy and HRM strategy to be produced, then some HR planning is needed.

HR planning is a process which predicts and maps out the impacts of a business strategy on an organization's human resource requirements and this is reflected in planning of skill needs as well as total headcounts (Price 2007, 614). The aim of human resource planning (HRP) is to ensure that organizational objectives are met through the development and implementation of a human resource strategy. The human resource planning can be defined from two perspectives: the hard and soft approaches to HRM. In the hard approach the focus is in numerical indicators, such as number of staff in different grades, labour turnover and stability, which provide numerical indicators for workforce planning. The soft approach is also taken into the count, this mathematical model can be seen as a sub-set of the broader HRP approach. The soft approach broadens the perspective to think more strategic, have less focus on numbers and to take account of the competencies and skills of the employees together with the HR policies and practices needed to meet strategic objectives of the organization. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 90)

The process of strategic HR planning includes:

- External and internal investigation and analysis
- Forecasting to determinate an HR imbalance or 'personnel gap'
- Planning, resourcing and retention activities
- Utilization and control through HR techniques, policies and IT.

(Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 90-91).

There are different kinds of techniques for forecasting the need for workers at various points in the future and it often requires information about the past and the present, and assumptions about the future of the organization. The goal of forecasting is to determinate how many and what type of employees an organization will be needed in the future. This kind of actions are often also called workforce planning. Some methods for forecasting are extrapolation, projection, employee analysis and scenario building. These methods forecast from the present situation. Alternatively, methods, which describe how many employees are needed in each job in the organization and what each employee needs to in that job, can be used. Examples of these methods are Delphi technique, unit-based forecasting, top-down analysis, ration analysis and regression analysis. Each organization chooses the best methods for their own needs and information available. (Analoui 2007, 114-115.)

Taking a proactive approach to positioning the employee in an organization to maximize the firm's competitive advantage has several benefits. The key benefits of establishing a strategic human resource management system and of having HR planning according to Analoui (2007, 113-114) are as follows:

- Build a cross-functional approach for dealing with people management issues.
- Identify the 'high leverage' core people strategies that will provide maximum advantage to the organization.
- Focus your human resource department practices on outcomes and efficiencies rather than activities and bureaucracy.
- Provide a quantifiable base for measuring the 'people edge' value-added benefits to customers, the organisation and to employees themselves.
- Provide the basis for intelligent 'people edge' budget and resource allocation decisions.
- Ensure people strategies are actively executed.
- Provide the basis for managed organizational change.
- Ensure everyone is 'singing the same tune' in relation to people management within the organization (i.e., attune people's hearts and minds towards satisfying the customer).

(Analoui 2007, 113-114.)

These strategic HRM decisions affect then to other HR processes.

Recruitment & Selection

After knowing what kind of employees an organization needs at the strategical level, it is time to attract and hire the right people. This process, which aims to attract appropriately qualified candidates for a particular position from which it is possible and practical to select and appoint a competent person or persons, is called recruitment (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 143). Recruitment is then followed by selection which is a process which aims to select, appoint and induct a competent person or persons by the application of appropriate techniques and methods. However, as can be seen already from the description, these processes are interdependent and can be seen as one process with sub-processes as following:

- **Attraction** including pre-recruitment activities such as job analysis, the use of recruitment methods and responding enquiries
- **Reduction** meaning filtering, screening and shortlisting candidates
- **Selection** meaning assessing, choosing and appointing a suitable candidate
- **Transition** phase where converting the successful candidate to an effective employee through pre-engagement process, induction and appraisal.

In this definition recruitment is seen as a process where candidates turn into effective employees through the recruitment and pre-engagement process. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 143-145, 196-197)

A well-managed recruitment and selection is essential for a company's performance because it matches applicant and job in order to recruit the right people to deliver business objectives and fulfil HR gaps predicted already in effective human resource planning. If the recruitment and selection process isn't successful, an organization might suffer from reduced organizational effectiveness. Inappropriate recruitment can also invalidate reward and development strategies and be expensive. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 142.)

Induction

Induction, often called as orientation, can be seen as a part of recruiting's transition process or as a part of training process. It is the process of receiving and welcoming employees when they first join an organization and giving them the basic information they need to become an efficient part of the company (Armstrong 2012, 249). The induction normally includes the following elements: introduction to the organization and workplace, departmental induction, and on-the-job induction training. According to Pilbeam and Corbridge (2006, 197) the induction process may also include the analysis of training needs, perfor-

mance reviews and access to mentoring system. Induction can be used also for other, more developed purposes, such as employee engagement. It can be a tool to introduce the new employee to company's culture, how the organization communicates and the other elements related to employee engagement (Dash 2013, 88). According to Buchen's (2006, 20) qualitative research, induction programs are the first step of both retention and professional development. The induction process doesn't only limit to the first few days but it starts may commence several months prior to starting the work and may last 6, 12, or even 24 months after until the employer and the employee are reasonably satisfied with the employment relationship (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 196).

Compensation & rewards

The word reward refers to the recognition of a person's contribution. People can be rewarded financially by pay and benefits, or receive non-financial rewards such as recognition, praise or the opportunity to develop and learn new skills. In companies, people are often rewarded for the job they are in (base pay) and optionally for the level of their performance, competence or skills (contingent or variable pay), or for their service in the job (service-related pay). Typical examples of benefits an organization might have are pension, holidays, health care and flexibility. (Armstrong 2012, 324-325, 367).

The process of deciding how people are rewarded and of ensuring that the reward policies and practices are implemented is a HRM related to process called reward management. It typically includes developing total rewards strategies and aims to make an impact on performance by contributing to high-performance culture, one in which the values, norms and HR practices of an organization combine to create a climate in which the achievement of high levels of performance is the way of life. A reward strategy is supposed to support the business strategy, provide a sense of purpose and direction, align reward processes to business needs, integrate reward and HR policies and processes, and provide guidance for reward system design and implementation. The idea of having a reward strategy is that it would lead to a reward practice and that would lead to improved individual and organizational performance. In order to ensure that reward management is carried out effectively to the benefit of the organization, companies have a reward system, which consist of inter-related processes and practices that combine. The reward system combines all forms of financial and non-financial rewards. (Armstrong 2012, 324-325, 352, 364 386.)

According to Pilbeam and Corbridge (2010, 254), "Reward is the old total remuneration concept of pay and benefits combined with non-financial recognition and motivation and applied in a contemporary HRM context". With the contemporary HRM it is referred to

difference between 'new' reward practices and 'old' ones. Traditional way of doing rewards is highly concentrated on "bureaucratic salary administration, organizational hierarchy, rigid job evaluation and grading systems, incremental progression, the lack of horizontal integration with other HR activities and the detachment of pay from the strategic objectives of the organization" (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2010, 255). The new rewards is focused on 'sending the right message' about performance and corporate values by financially rewarding contribution rather than seniority or status (Pilbeam and Corbridge 2010, 255). One approach to contemporary rewards is to use total rewards. Total rewards are a combination of total remuneration and non-financial/intrinsic rewards. Transactional rewards, which are base pay, contingent pay and employee benefits, contribute to total remuneration and non-financial rewards consist of the work itself (job design), the work experience, non-financial recognition and achievement and growth (Armstrong 2012, 367).

The aims of reward management are similar to ones of the rewards strategies. Reward management and reward system are important for a company because it aims to:

- "Support the achievement of business goals by helping to ensure that the organization has the talented and engaged people it needs.
 - Promote high performance by ensuring that the reward system recognizes and encourages it.
 - Support and develop the organization's culture by linking rewards to behavior that is in line with core values.
 - Define the right behaviours and outcomes by defining expectations through performance management and contingent pay schemes.
 - Reward people according to the value they create by providing for people to be rewarded in line with the degree to which they meet expectations.
 - Align reward practices with employee needs by paying people fairly for what they do and recognizing their contribution.
 - Help to attract and retain high quality people by providing competitive pay."
- (Armstrong 2012, 364.)

Learning & development

Learning and development, often also referred as human resource development or training and development, is a process which aims to ensure that employees of an organization acquire and develop the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to carry out their work efficiently and advance their careers to their own benefit and that of the organization (Armstrong 2012, 271). It is a process of ensuring that the organization has the knowledgeable, skilled and engaged personnel it needs (Armstrong 2012, 274). Learning and development have several sub-processes within the function and they are complex and varied. The processes consist of the ways in which individuals and organizations learn.

There are four different constituents in learning and development: learning, development, training and education (Armstrong 2012, 274). Learning refers to the process by which a person acquires and develops knowledge, skills, capabilities, behaviors and attitudes. This is done through gaining experience and more formal methods for learning with or outside of an organization. Development means growing or realizing a person's ability and potential for future needs by providing learning and educational experiences. The aim is to prepare an employee for additional responsibilities in different jobs, usually at a higher position (Lepak & Gowan 2010, 224). Training is the systematic process to transfer knowledge and other competencies they require to perform satisfactorily at their current positions (Lepak & Govan, 224). Education refers to the development of the knowledge, values and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than particularly in one area of work. It is important understand that learning is actions that individuals do and training is what organizations do to individuals. (Armstrong 2012, 274-275.)

These constituents affect to the components of the learning and development. The components can be seen at Figure 8 (Armstrong 2012, 275):

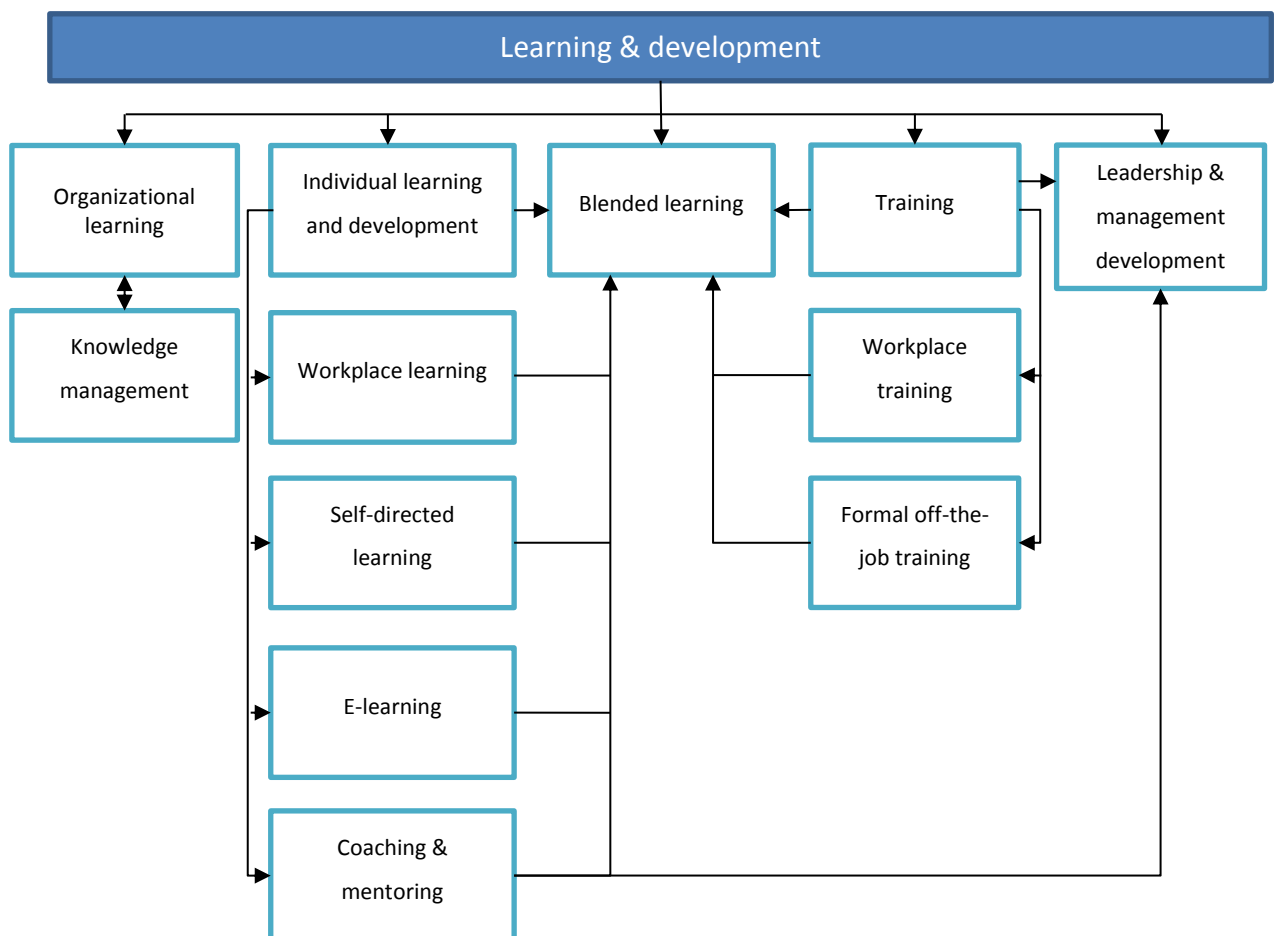


Figure 8. Components of learning and development (Armstrong 2012, 275)

An organization can choose its own approach to learning and development. One way is to emphasize organizational learning and try to create a learning organization. Organizational learning is about development and acquisition in organizations of knowledge, understanding, insights, techniques and practices in order to improve organizational effectiveness (287). In the process of organizational learning expectations are defined first and then actions taken. The actions are then monitored and reviewed and the expectations are re-defined as necessary. After the monitoring and reviewing an organization decides on corrective action as necessary and this is repeated whenever needed.

Another, commonly used method is called 70:20:10 model of learning by Michael Lombardo and Robert Eichinger (1996, in Pösö September 2014) which is for example in use in KONE. It states, that about 70 % of the learning and development happens through day-to-day tasks, challenges and practice; about 20 % in a social or exposure matter, learning and developing with and through others from coaching, exploiting personal networks and other co-operative and collaborative actions; and only 10 % happens through formal education like courses and programmes. (Pösö September 2014.)

Training is another process which organizations often have related to learning and development. An effective training process has four parts: needs assessment, design, implementation and evaluation, which are effected by organizational vision mission and values (Lepak & Gowan 2010, 225). According to Lepak and Gowan (2010, 225), needs assessment consists of organization, task and person analysis. Armstrong (2012, 290-291) approaches learning needs analysis from corporate, collective and individual area and with more detailed methods. The methods Armstrong mentions are gap analysis, analysis of business plans, analysis of human resource plans, surveys, performance and development reviews, role analysis and learning specification. The stage 2, design of the training, includes defining instructional objectives, lesson plans, principles of learning such as learning techniques, facilities, locations and trainers (Armstrong 2012, 298 and Lepak & Gowan 2010, 225). The implementation stage includes the definition of the training methods and types of training to be used. Finally, the evaluation stage evaluates reactions, learning, behaviors and results of the training (Lepak & Gowan 2010, 225-226). Learning events tend follow a similar process of having analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation phases and based on these structures organizations tend to have special learning and development programs for leadership and management. Also induction and onboarding (hiring and integration process used to acclimate new employees, especially managerial positions) can be seen as parts of training and development done within an organization (Lepak & Gowan 2010, 223-224).

Wellbeing and safety at work

Wellbeing at work exists when employees are contented with their lot – what they do, how they are treated and how they get on with others at work. The wellbeing of the personnel depends on the quality of working life provided by their employers. The quality of working life consists of different elements from the work itself and the work environment such as wages, work-life balance, and working hours and conditions. In practice employee wellbeing is about creating a satisfactory work environment, dealing with issues affecting people, and providing individual and group services. A key aspect for wellbeing at work is the health and safety of the employees besides work and job design factors. (Armstrong 2012, 429.)

There are several reasons why an employer should have a process or processes related to employee wellbeing and safety. Firstly, employer has a duty to look after their employees. There often are some minimum requirements set by a country's government to the level of the duty and besides that, companies have a social responsibility to look after their employees wellbeing from the sustainability point of view. In addition, healthy and happy employees can also benefit the company. Wellbeing of employees will increase the likelihood that the employees are engaged and committed to their work and to the organization. When wellbeing at work is applied as part of the total reward system, it will also increase the likelihood for improved performance. (Armstrong 2012, 432.)

Wellbeing of employees is linked with the work environment as mentioned earlier. The work environment covers four elements: the system of work, the design of jobs, working conditions and the ways in which people are treated at work by their managers and colleagues. In the design of work system and the jobs employees should be heard. The way people are treated is a managerial question. It is linked with the way employees' work-life balance, stress, and cases of harassment and bullying are handled by the employer. There can be policies, practices and processes linked to these challenges. For example stress can be managed by careful job design, by setting targets and performance standards, by job placement, career development, performance management processes, counselling, anti-bullying campaigns and management training. Besides, companies often offer services as lunch, sports and child care for employees in order to increase their wellbeing. (Armstrong 2012, 432-436.)

Health and safety is a big part of the wellbeing of the employees, especially it is essential for companies with blue-collar workers due to the legislation in many countries. However, the achievement of the highest standards of health and safety at work is not only im-

portant because of the duty but also because of social responsibility. If a company wants to demonstrate that the management of an organization is concerned about the protection of the company's employees from hazardous work and that this protection is provided, it is required that there are written health and safety policies done and available. The policies should include the general policy statement (declarations of intent), the description of the organization of health and safety (definition of the means by which that intend will be realized) and details of arrangements for implementing the policy (statement of guidelines that should be followed). There are three different methods to review the implementation of health and safety policies: risk assessments, health and safety audits and health and safety inspections. Many companies have also occupational health programmes, they measure health and safety performance, have health and safety trainings and investigate all the accidents to mention some of the sub-processes there can be within the health and safety related HRM. (Armstrong 2012, 439-448.)

Performance management

Performance management is a process which is tightly linked with learning and development, and compensation and rewards functions within an organization. It aims to systematically improve individual, team and organizational performance. Strategically it is designed to support the organization to achieve its business goals. (Armstrong 2012, 321-322.)

Often, performance management is seen to equal with performance appraisals but that is only one part of the performance management. According to Shields (2007, 24), there is a four-fold purpose for individuals in performance management system. Firstly, performance management can support strategic communication by conveying to people what doing a good job means and entails. Secondly, relationship-building is one of the purposes of the performance management. It aims to create stronger work relationships by bringing managers and subordinates and possibly also colleagues together regularly to review performance achievements. Thirdly, performance management aims to develop employees by providing feedback on performance as feedback as a basis for a joint analysis of strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement and in order to agree on personal development plans and potentially learning contracts. Fourthly, employee evaluation (performance appraisal) works as a basis for making decisions on job reassignment, promotion or performance-related reward. (Shields 2007, 24.)

Individual performance management typically follows the natural process of management. The performance management cycle has four steps: planning, acting, monitoring and re-

viewing. During the performance and development planning and performance agreement phase the role, objectives, competency and behaviour requirements are defined and plans are made to meet the requirements and improve performance. During the act phase the required work is carried out in order to achieve objectives by reference to the plans and in response to new demands. Monitoring refers to checking on progress in achieving objectives and responding to new ones all year long. It is advised that performance is treated as a continuous process – ‘managing performance all year around’ – rather than an annual appraisal. Review is the phase where the progress and achievements are discussed in a review meeting and actions for further development of performance are identified as a basis for completing the cycle by continuing into the planning stage. This performance cycle process involves processes within it. They are concluding performance and development agreements, performance planning, personal development planning, managing performance throughout the year, conducting performance reviews and assessing performance. (Armstrong 2012, 333-334.)

From the organizational perspective performance management aims to increase organizational capability to function effectively. The top management is primarily responsible for the management of organizational performance by planning, organizing, monitoring and controlling activities and by providing leadership to achieve strategic objectives and satisfy the needs and requirements of stakeholders. The prime long-term aim is to develop a high-performance culture at the workplace. On a day-to-day basis organizational performance concentrates to manage the normal processes of setting business goals, monitoring progress towards their achievement and taking steps to improve performance and find solutions to issues within it. (Armstrong 2012, 238-330.)

Team performance is managed by setting work and process objectives and conducting team reviews. The teams must know what is expected from them by setting performance objectives and process objectives which are then reviewed in review meetings where the teams analyse and access feedback and control information on their joint achievements against objectives and project plans. (Armstrong 2012, 331.)

Career management & Succession management, Promotions & demotions

Career management, succession management, promotions and demotions are processes or themes which are linked with employee’s development within an organization and they are complementary to each other. They aim to ensure that the organization has the flow of talent it needs.

Succession management can be seen as a part of the strategic HR planning as it aims to ensure that the business critical positions of the organization would have people they need also in the future. Career management is closely linked with succession management as it is concerned with the provision of opportunities for people to develop their abilities and their careers so that the organization has the right flow of talent it needs and they can satisfy their own aspirations.

Baruch and Peiperl (2000, in Armstrong 2012, 264) has identified the following activities to be part of career management practices in use in companies: posting regarding internal job openings, formal education as part of career development, performance appraisal as a basis for career development, career counselling by manager, lateral moves to create cross-functional experience, career counselling by HR department, retirement preparation programmes, succession planning, formal mentoring, common career paths, dual ladder paths (parallel hierarchy for professional staff), books on career issues, written personal career planning, assessment centres, peer appraisals, career workshops and upward (subordinate) appraisals. These actions aim to give guidance, support and encouragement to the employees they need to develop to their full potential, and achieve a successful career within an organization. Career management also aims to provide employee with promise a sequence of experience and learning activities that will prepare them for the career they have ahead. Normally, this is done through career planning which involves the definition of career paths – the routes people can take to advance their careers within an organization. It combines the information of organization's assessments of requirements, the assessments of performance and potential and management succession plans, and base on those create a individual career development programmes and general arrangements for management development, career counselling and mentoring. (Armstrong 2012, 262-266.)

Succession management is a process identifying successors for key posts and then planning career moves and/or development activities for these potential employees. The focus is on understanding if there are enough potential successors available, if they are good enough and if they have right skills and competencies for the future. The process is linked with the process of career management as seen from Figure 9 below:

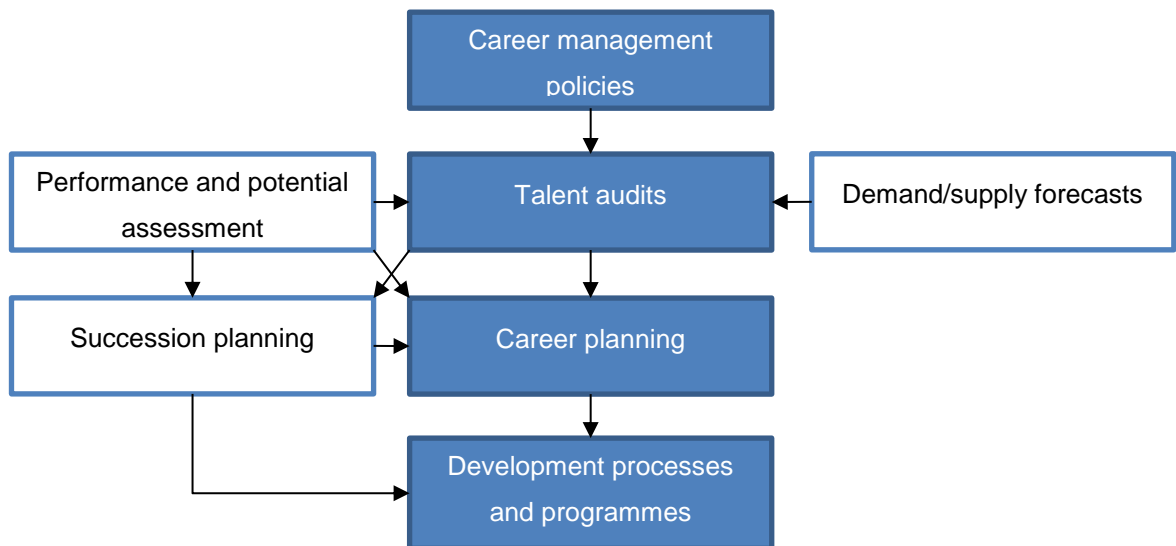


Figure 9. The process of career & succession management (Armstrong 2012, 264)

Exit management & termination of employment

Exit management and dismissals are processes related to the termination of employment. The employment can be terminated through dismissal, resignation or retirement. This function is tightly linked with local legal frameworks, especially when related to dismissals. However, the effective exit management adds value through contributing to the mission of having the right people, in the right place and at right time globally. HR's role is also to make sure that the legal framework is followed correctly in order to reduce financial and other costs associated with successful employee claims for unfair dismissals. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2010, 527.)

A dismissal process “consist of collecting relevant information, sequence of decision points and informed judgement based on a knowledge of the legal framework, the principles of natural justice and considerable skills” (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2010, 527). Dismissals can be fair or unfair when they are against the legislation. There are three main dismissal circumstances (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2010, 529):

- The employer terminates the contract of employment, with or without a notice.
- The employer terminates the contract of employment by reason of the employer's behaviour (commonly known as constructive dismissal).
- A fixed-term contract expires and is not renewed.

The process itself is quite often depending on the procedure the legislation sets. However, exit management includes also other elements. The most of the HR literature (Armstrong 2012, Pillbeam & Corbridge 2010...) discuss exit management only from the termination

of a contract point of view. This is quite a strong word to use, because in reality, companies have processes related to employees exiting a firm for natural reasons like retirement, maternity leave (for certain period of time) or simply because of switching to work in another organization. For example, European Union Agency for Network and Information Security has the following exit procedure in order to ensure the former employees to disclose any sensitive information and keep the security:

- Exit procedures should always be followed without question. The exit procedures should aim at the following, the moment you know a person is going to leave:
- removing access to systems with confidential information (changing password, revoking certificates and keys, blocking accounts, etc);
 - logging the actions of the employee leaving;
 - backing up all his work;
 - revoking his roles in incident management;
 - interviewing to hand over to the next person;
 - performing exit-interview to learn for the future;
 - announcing staff change to constituents, parent organisation, and other teams.
- (European Union Agency for Network and Information Security.)

Exit interview is a part of exit management process and it is advised to be used by HR council for the Nonprofit Sector and CIPD (2007) to mention some. Exit interviews aim to pinpoint the key areas of improvement and positivity in the organization, verify the skills and competences needed in the job one is exiting, understand why the employee is leaving and to say good-bye on good terms.

Talent management

Talent management is a process which ensures there are enough talented employees in an organization which it needs to attain its business goals. Talent management includes a set of interrelated processes which are linked with and often included in the core HRM processes mentioned earlier. The ultimate aim of the talent management is to develop and maintain a pool of talented people which ensures the organization to have the talented employees it needs. It can be done by concentrating on exclusive people or exclusive position or to inclusive people. By exclusive people it is referred to key people with high level performance and/or potential irrespective of position and by exclusive position to right people in the strategically critical jobs. These are two most common approaches to talent management. With inclusive people approach it is referred to thinking in which everyone in the organization is seen as actually or potentially talented, and given opportunity and direction. (Armstrong 2012, 256-259.)

This aim of talent management doesn't vary much from the HRM or HRD which both involve having the right people in the right job at the right time and managing the supply and development of people throughout the organization. In talent management this is done through a set of interrelated processes which aim to develop and maintain a pool of talented people. The talent management process starts with defining the business strategy and what it signifies concerning the talented people required by the organization. This provides basis for talent planning which is a process of establishing how many and what sort of talented people are needed in a company now and in the future. The talent planning sets the base for the development of policies for attracting and retaining talent and the determination of future requirements and roles talented people will carry out. If the organization uses a competency framework, it can be used in the talent planning phase for the definitions. Other sub-processes of talent management are resourcing, retention planning, succession and career planning, learning and development of which especially leadership and management development. Also talent audits and talent relationship management and performance management are tightly linked with the talent management process. (Armstrong 2012, 257-260.)

E-HRM

Electronic-Human Resource Management (e-HRM) is relatively new term and it refers to IT-supported HRM which is facilitated through the use of web technology. It allows an organization to lead, supervise and manage the human capital by automating and supporting HR processes. E-HRM is part of the contemporary issues in HRM. In theory all HR processes can be supported by IT. In practice e-HRM is most commonly used in reducing the HR professionals from the administrative tasks and as a strategic tool for e-recruitment, e-learning, e-self-service and e-development. The main advantage in using e-HRM is its efficiency in cost and time; excellent reach for employees in all the levels of an organization; better targeting for the best applicants; better employer branding; and centralized and standardised record keeping. All these elements support the strategic HRM of an organization. The tool for e-HRM is HRIS, human resource information system, which is a computerised system. It is used by an organization's HR to acquire, store, manipulate, analyse, retrieve and distribute relevant information concerning an organization's HR. HRIS supports or facilitates strategic, tactical and operational decision making, evaluates policies, practices and programs, supports daily operations and to provides information. (Analoui 2007, 325-329.)

International human resource management

According to Schuler and Tarique (2007, 717-718), International human resource management (IHRM) means doing human resource management worldwide while:

“the field of IHRM is about understanding, researching, applying and revising all human resource activities in their internal and external contexts as they impact the processes of managing human resources in organisations throughout the global environment to enhance the experience of multiple stakeholders.”

International human resource management aims to enable a firm to succeed globally through using IHRM as a competitive advantage of the company. Being successful globally means being competitive throughout the world; locally responsive; efficient; flexible and adaptable fast; capable of transferring knowledge and learning across globally dispersed units (Sparrow & Brewster 2006, in Crawley, Swailes & Walsh 2013, 6).

Some researchers argue that there is no difference between HRM and IHRM and that they basically cover the same range of activities (Crawley & al. 2013, 15). However, multinational firms face various challenges related to their employees globally which creates a need for international HRM. One of the most tangible examples of international human resource management is the expatriation process. This is linked with the other basic HR processes presented earlier in this chapter. The biggest differences between HRM and IHRM are specific issues related to adaptation and family, and expatriate career and compensation. Adaptation and family issues are related to location issues as living conditions and availability of food required; safety and health as medical arrangements; accommodation in assisting with finding and funding appropriate housing, moving and storage; travel allowances which refers to frequency of paid trips home; family challenges as pre-departure preparations for family and spouse's work permission; and children's education. Expatriate career and compensation issues tackle recruitment and selection with a need to understand the attributes and characteristics of international assignees require compared with domestic ones; performance appraisal management as the key decisions must be done on who will carry out the appraisals, where and with which criteria; compensation including what kind of package one will get when leaving abroad; training and development which includes cultural adaptation training for expatriates and opportunities for ongoing development while overseas; and career implications like “combating the likelihood of ‘out of sight, out of mind’, networking arrangements to keep in touch while away, and career planning for repatriation (Crawley & al. 2013, 16). Also other HR processes can be done from the international human resource management perspective. As an example,

international talent management and international reward management are current trends in the field of international human resource management. (Crawley & al. 2013, 15-18.)

3 Research methods

This chapter demonstrates the research design and how the data was collected and analysed. Also the validity, reliability and risk management are evaluated in this chapter. To review the research and investigative questions, please check Chapter 1.3.

3.1 Research design

This research aims to develop Halton Group's key HR processes at the group level in order to enable modelling the group's HR processes for further applications in Halton Group. An example of the further applications is that the group has been thinking of applying a human resource information system group-wide.

Before developing any processes, it is important to understand what it is to be developed and why. This is why the investigative questions 1 and 3 are researching the current HR practices of the organization and the investigative question 2 maps the wishes the HR managers and directors have for the future of the group's HRM. When we know the current status of the actions it is time to define how. Based on the current status and wishes of the future the relevant recommendations can be done.

Due to the nature of the research question and investigative questions, the research was designed to be mainly a multi-method qualitative case study for Halton Group supported by a minor survey to access needed secondary data from other countries. The study is cross-sectional since it concentrates on HR processes at Halton Group and to describe their current status. The definition of a process already says that "any activity or change can be described as a process" (Laamanen & Tinnilä 2009, 121). Qualitative research is a descriptive research method with a focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in a natural setting (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014, 11). In qualitative research is on a specific case as also in this paper (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014, 11). That is why it is more suitable for this case than quantitative approach. Qualitative research methods was a logical approach to the topic also because the case company has around 15 people working in HRM and therefore conducting a quantitative research with such a small sample wouldn't be realistic.

As seen from Figure 10, the research was designed so that it has three phases. During the first phase, secondary data was studied and researched in order to get a big picture of the company's current status in HRM and to see, which of the processes are already described. This data was then analysed by using qualitative methods. In this phase of the

research the case company was also studied through secondary resources because this research entails case company specific requirements. Secondary data was found related to IQ1 and IQ2.

During the second phase, focus group interviews were organized for the organization's HR managers and HR directors present at a global HR meeting of the group in Budapest. This phase aimed to discuss collective preferences and directions for the improvement of the Group's HRM and what kind of support would each HR manager need from the group level. The data was analysed by using qualitative analysis methods and the analyses resulted in gaining new information for IQ3.

After understanding the general level of the HRM and wishes related to the group's role, four semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted for selected interviewees in phase 3. This was done in order to deepen the knowledge about the actual HR processes and to identify the current needs for improvement. Phase 3 was designed so that it contributed to all the four investigative questions.

Investigative question 4 was replied through analysis of the IQ1, IQ2 and IQ3 and compared that with the theory presented in Chapter 2. Also phase 3 provided some development suggestions from the HR managers directly, but also they were analysed and evaluated on a case by case basis.

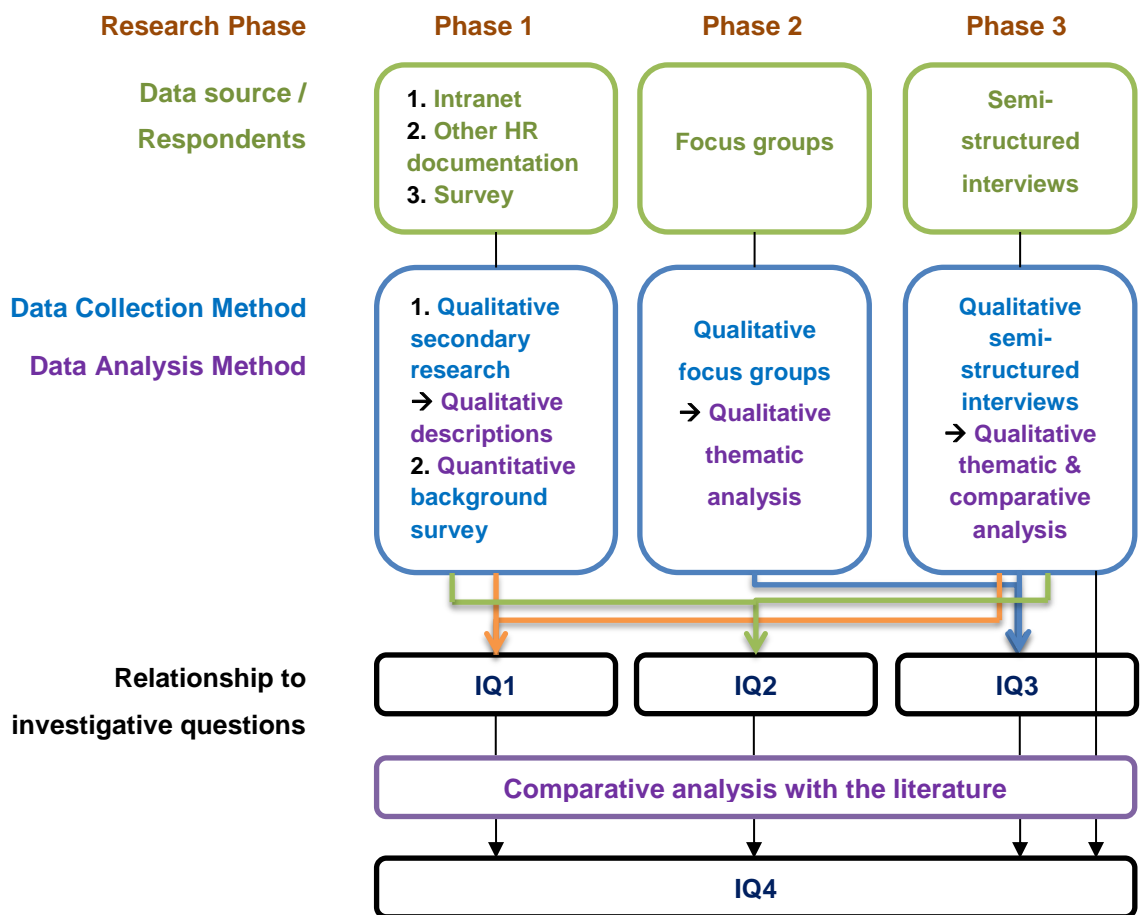


Figure 10. Research design

The research design developed during the research process and was based on the results of different phases. This is described to be the best practice in qualitative studies according to Eskola and Suoranta (2001, 15-16) because it provides a holistic way to understand a process and in a qualitative research different phases are often interrelated. If Halton Group would have had the processes ready-made and described during the first phase, the research design would have looked very different. In this research the approach was in increasing the knowledge about the current, decentralized HR processes, and in giving development suggestions for them based on the application of the theories named in Chapter 2. The knowledge was collected and deepened gradually. For example, during the first phase the secondary data was collected about all the processes possibly applicable for the organization's HRM while phase 3 concentrated on the key HR processes represented also in Chapter 2.3.3 in this paper.

This thesis is commissioned by the Halton Group and it was asked by the commissioning company that the leadership style of the company would be taken into consideration while giving the recommendations. In other words, the organizational structure and the power

structure (the organization has since been decentralized) should also be studied and used in the analysis.

3.2 Data collection

This thesis data collection included collecting both primary and secondary data. Phase one concentrated on secondary data as the background for the primary data research. The main data collection method was mixed-qualitative methods.

Phase 1

During the first phase I looked for secondary data from the company's intranet and an online data base where employees can share documents and other files. Also the group's HR director shared some of his material with me. As the organization is highly decentralized and the HR function is too, the first phase also included a mini survey in which the HR people globally were asked to mark the HR processes which they have in use or described in their geographical areas of responsibility (please see Appendix 3 to see the survey). The elements of the survey were based on theories and the practice within the company. Firstly, the HR managers and directors were asked to send me a list of HRM related processes they can think of, and then these lists were combined with processes defined in two HRM books studied for the purpose: Dressler (2015) and Pilbeam & Corbridge (2006). Four out of twelve HR people sent their current processes to the researcher. Also other literature was browsed and studied but these two books gave a good overview on the areas of HRM and that is why were used in the creation a structure for the grouping of the HRM processes.

Phase 2

The second phase of the research was qualitative focus groups. The focus groups were run as a workshop at a face-to-face HR meeting in Budapest within the employees who have some key HR roles within the global organization. There were 12 people present in the focus groups and these people were divided into three groups. The participants had different levels of involvement in HR related issues as there were HR directors, HR managers and other staff who manage HR as part of their other duties example in finance, payroll or other administrative duties. The groups were formed so that each group had at least one HR manager in them in order to ensure that the terminology and the topic would be clear for each group.

The aim of the workshop was to define the key HRM processes at the group level. The interviewees were asked to discuss in groups and define the key HRM processes at Halton Group. To ease the task, the participants were offered a list of HRM processes created in phase one. They then chose the processes they thought to be the most important at the group level of the organization from the strategic and industry & organizational structure points of view (please see Appendix 4). This process was facilitated with the following questions:

- Define the HR key processes of Halton Group (and their sub-processes if needed).
- Explain why you consider them to be the key processes?
- How do these key HR processes contribute to key business processes?
- Which of these key HR processes should be similar internationally and that is why described at group level?
- Why/Why not?
- Are there other processes which you see that should be guided from the group level?
- Loose or strict guidelines?

The idea was to discuss about the processes at the general level at first and then see Halton Group's group level specific wishes. However, in the end, these two aspects were discussed at the same time by the groups. The groups discussed the questions independently after clarifying the terminology and the purpose of the workshop. As I could not follow all the three discussions at the same time and the time available for the workshop was limited, the participants were asked to report their discussions by writing them to the forms which were prepared for the purpose. They then shared their thoughts with the others before wrapping the workshop up.

Phase 3

In the third phase I conducted four qualitative semi-structured interviews. The interviewees were chosen to show diversity and to be known for engagement with the HRM issues. In order to have an idea about the diversity of the HRM function worldwide, the interviewees were from different countries and different types of units. Halton has three different types of HR professionals: group level HRM, local HR managers/directors in bigger units and people who work in HRM in smaller units and have several roles within the unit. One of the respondents for this part was working at the group level and the others in three different SBUs globally of whom one had several roles within their SBU.

One of the four interviews was done face-to-face and the rest were done over Microsoft Lync. All of them were recorded and notes were written while interviewing. The interviews

lasted from two hours to two and half hours. The interview questions were sent to the interviewees at least two days before the interview. A list of definitions for the terms used in the interview was sent with the list of the questions. The language of three interviews was English, in one of them the interviewee answered in Finnish even though the semi-structured questions were in English. The style of the interview was relaxed and quite informal because I wanted to create an open and sharing atmosphere for the respondents to feel free to talk also about the negative experiences and share their criticism in order to define the key areas for development. We even made jokes and laughed together with some of the interviewees. As sensitive information was shared and I wanted to protect a participant's identity, those interviews aren't written word for word and attached to the paper even though the detailed notes were taken.

The interview had 15 themes. The interview was structured so that it started with the background questions and questions about the organization and HRM process in general. This was followed by questions about HR processes defined in Chapter 2.3.2. These HR processes defined in the earlier chapter created the items for the research tool (Appendix 1). All the chosen HR processes were researched by asking process by process how a process is done, implemented and communicated, if there are strategies, policies or practices related to a process, if a process varies depending on the employee group and what is the HR's role in a specific process. The last part of the interview was called conclusion and it included questions related to HR processes at the general level, e.g. how the HR processes could be developed. The questions can be found from Appendix 5. Besides these questions, the interviewees were asked specifying questions in order to clarify I had understood their saying in the same way and that more specific information was collected.

3.3 Analysis methods

The secondary data, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were analysed by using qualitative thematic analysis answering the IQs. Secondary data, as it was qualitative data in the written form, was read and then grouped according to IQs. So was the data from the workshops. If a part of the data was related to IQ1, it got a tag A; if it was related to IQ2, it got the tag B and so on. This information was then analysed by IQs. During the interviews, notes were taken and the interviews were recorded. The records were listened and more notes were written during the analysis phase in order to ensure the accuracy of the notes, fulfil them, and to have direct quotes for the results and ensure the quality of the research. The conversations aren't attached in this thesis in order to protect interviewees' anonymity because some sensitive information was collected. Also some of the opinions could be shared freely. After that, the same analysis process was applied to the interviews then to

the secondary data and focus group analysis. When enough descriptive results were collected and for example the descriptions of how a HR process was done in a country, the results were compared with each other and conclusions were done. These differences are the key to understanding the areas for development and that is why there were used two different forms to analyse the results (Appendices 6 & 7).

The little survey was analysed by counting how many of the processes were used or described and by how much of the respondents. These processes were then ranked in order to see which of the processes are in focus of the organization and which are not and where. The huge list of the processes within their sub-processes was then transferred to the same form with the research tool and compared if the data supported the data received from the other phases of the research.

The analysis on IQ4 was based on the comparative analysis of the processes with the existing theories. The IQ4 also concludes the results of the IQ1, IQ2 and IQ3.

3.4 Validity, reliability and minimizing risks

Validity and reliability are terms linked with the trustworthiness of a research. Validity measures how accurately the data collection methods measure, what they are supposed to measure and to which extend the findings are really about what they profess to be about (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007, 614). With reliability it is referred to which extend the data collection techniques will produce consistent findings, if other researchers would make similar observations and conclusions or if there is transparency in how sense was made from the raw data (Saunders, Lewis & al 2007, 609). These are linked to the discussion about forms of bias within qualitative research. As this research has mainly been qualitative, this chapter is concentrated on bias, risks and requirements related to qualitative research and its analysis.

The validity and reliability are harder to measure in qualitative research than in quantitative research because in the qualitative research the researcher plays a crucial role in the whole research process. Especially the analysis can be sensitive to the risks related to validity and reliability of a research (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 210) because several interpretations must be done. First, the interviewee interprets a phenomenon and this is followed by interpretations made by the researcher about the material and then when writing a report which is then interpreted once more by the reader (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 141). The report normally includes only the most essential information understood by the researcher (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 141) and that is why there is a risk of missing some

essential piece of information from the interpretations. (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 141, 208-213.)

The interviewer can easily affect the research reliability. The interviewer's comments, tone or non-verbal behaviour may have an effect on the responses he or she gets. This is called interviewer bias. In this paper the researcher tried to minimize the risk of interviewer bias for the reliability of the paper in different ways. First, it is important to understand assumptions one might have. Before running the semi-structured interviews the researcher understood that she assumes that different areas of HRM can and should be developed to be done better. These assumptions were based on the earlier phases of the research and the studies in HRM. The philosophy of HRM the researcher may affect the set of questions and from which approach the situation is approached. This risk was reduced by recording all the interviews and reviewing them during the analysis phase so that the researcher actually listened carefully what the interviewee said, not only assuming what an interviewee meant with it.

Reliability is linked with the credibility of a research (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 211). This means that the researcher must make sure that the interpretations done by the researcher are similar with the respondent's interpretations. I therefore asked during the interviews more detailed questions and sometimes even the same question in different words about the same topic in order to make sure that I had understood the respondent's statement right. Most of the time the interviews agreed with my interpretations but once they explained their idea from the different point of view.

Besides taking notes and records and repeating questions the interviewees, the interviewer bias was reduced by careful planning and preparations. The level of knowledge of the participants was thought beforehand as well as level of information supplied to the interviewees, appropriateness of location, attentive listening skills, the scope to test understanding and approach to recording data. The interviewees were chosen to be representative part of HRM professionals working for the company while having a good knowledge about the local HRM practices. In a case of not being familiar with the terminology used in the interviews the interviewees were provided a list of definitions well before the interview took place. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the outfit was the casual office outfit as should be when working at the headquarters, and through Microsoft Lync because the interviewees were abroad and then conversations could have been recorded within the program. Attentive listening skills were shown by asking more detailed questions and making sure I had understood their statements right by summarizing what they had said. Also the face-to-face interviews were recorded. This planning also

supported the validity of the research as it prevented from major mistakes of the topic of the interview for example turning to subject irrelevant for the research and that appropriate data was collected. Also possible culture differences and especially language challenges were taken into consideration and the research pattern with definitions was sent to the interviewees beforehand and the mother tongue of the respondents was used if possible in order increase the understanding between the respondent and interviewer. During the focus groups the participants had also definitions next to the questions in order to make sure that everybody was answering to the same question.

During the analysis the interviewer bias was reduced by doing analysis in little parts and representing the results in a way that the reader can also analyse their validity themselves. The researcher also discussed about the topic and the results with her colleagues in HRM, both academic and practicing, asking their opinions and she also discussed with the CEO and other people about the HR processes.

Also interviewee might be sensitive to bias. Therefore, the risk of not getting truthful answers or the respondents not answering freely: the risk reduced by creating a relaxed atmosphere assuring that the sensitive information would be reflected in a neutral and anonymously in the report.

There have been challenges which can affect to the validity of the research. Firstly, the topic is very wide and it must have been therefore demarcated very tightly. If seeing only the research question, one could assume that the findings don't cover only the development of HR processes but also the structure of HRM. However, HR processes are only part of a bigger HR architecture as explained in Chapter 2 and then if the whole HR architecture isn't functioning properly, neither the HR processes can. When understanding the theory behind the HR processes also the findings are considered to be valid especially in this case study. Also other research methods can be seen as valid and logical approach to the case company's situation. The research aimed to develop the HR processes at group level. The group level has a strategic importance at the geographical level too, as it is supposed to coordinate operations in all group's geographical locations. The geographical coverage was considered when designing the research as the focus group participants came from the most important areas of HRM covering three, four continents. Also the interviewees were from different countries covering how the roles of different-sized units often vary.

4 Findings

In this chapter the results of the research are presented investigative question by investigative question. The data was analysed according to the research design. First, the current HR processes are discussed research phase after each other and some trends are concluded in the end. Investigative questions two and three are analysed similarly. Investigative question four analyses the themes of the first three investigative questions from the development point of view based on the theory. It also shares other development suggestions for HRM process of the case company.

4.1 Current HR processes

The IQ1 aimed to research the current HR processes within Halton Group. The processes were researched at the group and other levels of the organization and they are covered research phase by phase at the chapter.

4.1.1 Phase 1

Phase 1 of the research concentrated on secondary research of HR documentation already existing and available, and therefore the global and Finland-country-specific intranets were researched as well as another database in which the HR people can share documents with each other. The group's HR director also provided a framework he has used to demonstrate the areas of responsibilities between different levels of the organization and the public webpage of the company was researched. The purpose was to study documents related to the group's HRM process, HR processes and to HRM's role within the business.

In the global intranet, there were descriptions of two global HR processes: Halton medals and leadership development program. Halton medals and Halton certificates of honour are categorized as a part of remuneration. On the page, it is explained what the Halton medals are, why they are given, and how the process works. Also a list of the medallists can be found on the page. The leadership development programme part covers what the purpose and target groups are, how the application process goes and what the requirements are. Also the programme is described including the development activities and development methods and possible career paths within the program explained.

The global intranet guides the reader to find more information from the local intranet pages about:

- Communication

- Competence Management
- Continuous Improvement
- Employee Benefits
- Health Care and Safety
- Labour Legislation
- Leadership
- Leisure Activities
- Recruitment
- Remuneration
- Travelling
- Vacations
- Work Rules
- Employee Handbook
- Superior Handbook

In practice, on the Finnish intranet pages, there is information about benefits for employees, vacancies, travelling, wealth and safety, health care, access control, hobbies and other employee services. Also the superior handbook can be found. Nothing related to higher level HR processes.

In the HR database there were not really any data related to HR processes, only employer data like employment agreements, survey results and so. The public webpage didn't include any section of HRM or personnel, nor did it have any references to HR processes of the company either.

The paper, which was provided by the HR director, represents the division of HR processes between group, SBA, region/unit, team and individual levels. This paper indicates that the nature of the group HR is strategic and guiding through setting policies and guidelines.

On the paper the group level processes were:

- leadership development model
- succession planning guidelines
- salary and bonus policy
- guidelines for assessment of employees
- rewarding (Halton Medals)
- strategic competence development
- recruiting process and guidelines
- HR mission and vision components.

On SBA level there were listed strategic competence management, succession planning, guidelines for position & job evaluation, HR strategy, performance management, organization structure and role management, salary & bonus plans and HR processes. The SBU or region level is responsible to succession planning, recruitments, payroll process, occupational health care, common trainings, employee wellbeing, union & representative cooperation, communication, performance management and safety at work. Also at the team level, performance management and succession planning are continued besides HR processes related to job descriptions, model for early support and intervention, resource management, and development discussions and feedback. At the individual level, the private information, working hours and continuous learning should be the responsibility of individuals.

When reflecting this model through the HR processes framework (Chapter 2.3.2), all the areas of HRM seemed to be covered in a way or another. Strategic HRM and HR planning activities are in use at group and SBA level and also at the region/unit level, if succession planning is considered as a strategic planning activity. Recruiting is considered at the group and unit levels. Also team level is involved in the formation of job descriptions. Induction processes are not specified at any level. Rewarding is touched at the group level while compensation is covered at SBA and unit levels. Regarding to training and development, development is covered through leadership development model and strategic competence development at the group level, common training are done at unit level. According to this model, safety at work is covered at unit level as well as wellbeing at work. Performance management is one of the only areas of HRM covered at all the levels; at group level the guidelines for assessment of employees are presented while SBA and unit levels should cover performance management in general and teams to operate development discussion and feedback while at the personal level individuals should have continuous learning. Career planning and succession management activities are done at group level (succession planning guidelines), SBA level (organizational structure and role management and succession planning) and at unit level (succession planning). Exit management and dismissals are not marked to any level specifically. Group level also included some elements of talent management and strategy.

Phase 1 included also a mini survey of the current HR processes in use or described within the organization. It revealed that the least practiced processes of HRM are linked with strategic HRM and HR planning, communications, international HRM, talent management, competence management and career management. The most practiced HR processes according to this survey were training and development, definitions on job requirements, wellbeing and safety, managing dismissals and other forms of terminating contracts, man-

aging leaves, performance appraisals and compensation and benefits policies. However, most of the processes were lacking descriptions but were in practice in one or more countries.

In the survey, the respondents received a list of 118 HR processes and they marked the processes they have in use or described within their own geographical areas. The list of processes can be seen in Appendix 3. I had six replies in total of which two were from the same country. From the attachment it can also found the information about the most and least practised HR processes within the company. The processes which got only 0 or 1 references in the survey they are marked with red, 2 with yellow. Those are the processes which are not in use or described at all or only in one-two place. The total possible score would be having 12 references if a process would be in use and described in all the respondent countries. In this survey the highest scores were 7 references and therefore the highest scored processes with 5-7 references are marked with green. The fact, that the highest score was 7, indicates that the group's HR practices are decentralized and most likely not following the same structure.

Obviously each company doesn't need to practice all kinds of HR processes available, but from the results can be seen which ones might provide possibilities to be improved if they fit to the goal of the HRM of an organization. More analysis of the HR processes fit to the case company can be found from the analysis of IQ4.

4.1.2 Phase 3

Phase 3 research the current HR processes through a semi-structured qualitative interview done for four HR people of the company. The interview included questions about each of the chosen HR processes. The structure of the interview is attached as Appendix 5. It asked if there is a process in use, what the steps of the process are, how it is described, how it is communicated and if the process depends on employee group. Besides, the interviewees were asked to describe at which level of the organization the process is conducted. Also other group level activities were researched specifically by asking about the group level strategies, policies and practices. There were differences between different respondents' answers.

Strategic HRM and HR planning

The first topic was strategic human resource management and HR planning. None of the respondents specified any strategies at group or other levels. Some people said that they

don't know of any, and some that there is no any. One mentioned the employee engagement surveys and wellbeing programmes as group level strategies. Another respondent stated that employee surveys are group level practices, and that is what the definition (Chapter 2.2.1) also supports. Yet, people guessed there should be HR strategies at some levels of the organization of which they were not aware of, even though they could not mention any which refers that there are none at group level at least.

HR planning activities are better in place than HR strategies but they are not implemented systematically everywhere. Every respondent mentioned some HR planning activities to be in place and all of them were doing workforce planning in some form. Succession planning was done according to two interviewees but the processes were different. The workforce planning activities vary; one did them week by week and one did it once a need occurred. The timeframe of planning varies as well. The range is from doing the entire planning ad-hoc basis to having a three year rolling plan for human resource management activities. Also the planning activities the units do are different. The three year rolling plan covers employee life cycle management, talent acquisitions, performance management, leadership and development, succession management, wellbeing and exit aspects of voluntary leaving and how to improve all of these within the next years. In another unit, HR planning is done according to the budget and on need basis. They plan, which resources are needed to reach the financial targets. They also have team level HR planning which concentrated on competences of a team. This is linked with succession planning activities they do within the unit. At group level, there is a personal action plan for personal use only, no systematic HR planning activities in place.

HR policies and practices were a bit more common than HR strategies for the company to have. They are at different levels. At group level, there are policies related to compensation (bonus plan) and leadership development as well as the values of the company which were provided by the group. Two of the interviewees mentioned, that they don't know any group policies. It was mentioned that there are sometimes policies related to international assignment contracts. However, the respondent working at group level stated there are none of those. What comes to regional and local level, policies can be found from two out of three units. The policies the interviewees mentioned were related to recruiting, performance indication surveys, posting jobs, performance management, implementation of group training and wellbeing surveys.

Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection processes of different units are quite similar. Recruitment is done based on a need and it is normally run by HR. Internal recruitment was seen as a value-adding action to the process. The process followed quite well the following structure in all the countries:

1. Define the need
2. Job description to be written and posted
3. Screening resumes
4. Shortlisting
5. Interviews
6. Selection

According to two interviewees, the process could also optionally go as follows:

1. Define the need
2. Job description to be written and posted
3. Screening resumes
4. Shortlisting
5. Assessment tools e.g. performance indicator survey
6. First interview
7. Second interview and possibly other tests
8. Selection

However, also differences could be found especially related to the selection methods. Firstly, the selection criteria and driving principles differed between units. Some emphasized the competences of the applicant and their fit for the specific position while some emphasized the role of managers in the consultancy of the fitting person to the team and some focused on Halton Values in choosing the right person. Also people's career potential was one of the guiding principles mentioned. Secondly, the assessments were carried out differently. There were different analysis tools in use and some didn't use any of them.

There was also differentiation in how the process was communicated and whether the recruitment process depends on an employee group. For communicating this process, interviewees had used face-to-face meetings and having a description in an employee handbook. Some stated that everybody knew the process already as they have done it themselves as a candidate, so it isn't communicated in any special way. The HR's role was described to be the coordinator of the whole process, also often the one who is implementing it. According to two of the interviewees the recruitment and selection process

may vary even between individuals and at least between blue-collar and white-collar workers while two of the respondents did not make the process differently between different employee groups. Also only one of the interviewees mentioned job grading and compensation to be based on that as a step of the recruiting process.

Induction

There is an induction process in all the units/regions interviewed. Most of the induction processes are done at local level and include an introduction to the company, document and form reviews and filling, and an introduction to actual position. Besides, there are also other elements and steps within the process which differ between units. Some of the interviewees said that they have following elements included in their introduction process:

- health and safety policies and training
- meet and greet –events
- going through the employee handbook with HR (policies)
- practical arrangements like reimbursement, cell phone, keys and other position specific features
- Getting familiar with practices like dress code, working hours etc.

Besides, there were also elements which are used in only one of the units:

- basic product training
- production processes for white-collar workers
- history of a local business
- individual IT sessions.

One of the interviewees didn't have any written document such as figures of the company.

Also the length of the induction process varies as well as the role of HRM. Sometimes HR is the one running the entire introduction, sometimes it is done through emails, trainings, videos, reading and other tools, and sometimes line managers share responsibilities of the induction. HR works often as a coordinator in the process. In three cases out of four, the process varies between employee groups, especially between the white-collar and blue-collar workers. One of the respondents also stated that the induction process differ a lot according to the length of the contract and the job or position.

Compensation and rewards

Compensation and rewards processes vary noticeably between different units and group level. Especially the way in which the pay is defined varies.

The compensation process at unit level went as followed according to two participants:

1. Market research before individual starts working
2. Tailor it back to their experience, their ability to do the work, their education, and how much coaching is required
3. Match it with other roles which are similar in the scope of responsibility and to the number of people you manage etc.
4. Market checks once a year for inflation etc. for both blue-collar and white-collar workers.

HR & department managers are often the ones collectively defining the pay. However, not all the units base the compensation on a 'market price' combined with the job description and job grading. The compensation process also differs between employee groups. Some have bonus system in use and some type of pay is available only for certain employee groups. For example in one the units the blue-collar workers have variable pay while white-collar workers don't. Also merit pay was mentioned. For two of the units the pay raises were discretionary, not based on inflation, and done once a year during the pay reviews. The group stated that they have a bonus model framework in use, but none of the local level interviewees mentioned it.

The Group has two rewards: Halton Medals and Halton Diplomas. They are given to very makeable people at the company. The processes are described on intranet. Otherwise, rewarding and benefits is defined locally. Local rewards are often given on an ad hoc basis. The actual benefits vary between units. Benefits and rewards mentioned by the interviewees were:

- Healthy Christmas goodie bags
- Loyalty rewards
- Little rewards like dinners, certificates, good job -cards for different types of activities
- Informal rewards by managers
- Merit-base in the end of the year if goals met
- Continuous feedback process from a colleague to another one
- Birthday cards
- Summer ice creams, picnics, Christmas parties, barbeques.

In one unit specially, the benefits were chosen in order to support the wellbeing at work. Rewarding was done more through different programmes than processes.

When the interviewees were asked about the policies and practices related to compensation and rewards, it turned out that they mostly don't have written policies, especially related to benefits and rewards. Only the policies on employee loyalty recognition system, payroll, bonuses and Halton medals and diplomas were mentioned as examples by individuals. One stated that their compensation and rewarding policy is tightly part of larger entities like wellbeing. The processes were implemented in various different forms like ice cream day, events that promote teamwork, picnics, barbeques and Christmas parties. The communication of the process for employees happened by various methods: in induction process, before it happens, by emails, word of mouth, and as a surprise. For line managers it was communicated by having a talk between HR & department managers, and having little meetings about employees' performance, pay rates and what is going to happen. According to two of the respondents, the processes didn't vary between employee groups. However, two stated that what defines the pay may vary between employees and also merits and bonuses differ between the employee groups. One of the respondents stated that the reward process itself doesn't have a difference between employee groups but the timing may vary.

Learning and development

At the group level, there is a leadership development programme: Halton Career. Halton Career programme has four strategic competences: leadership, customer orientation, global leadership and innovation. The goal of the programme is to secure the company has talents it needs also in the future for its business critical positions and that there is a next generation of leaders within the organization. The last of the programme lasts about three years. The detailed programme description and criteria can be found from intranet.

The role of Halton Career varied between units. One of them thought it to be crucial while others didn't mention it without asking about their opinion about the programme. One argued that it is not on the agenda of HR there because the programme does not include many participants from the unit. Other stated that the employees in the unit prefer different type of training for leadership. There the employees are more likely to change the workplace than maybe in other units and that is why they appreciate transferable, recognized leadership skill trainings that they can use also later in their career.

At local level, the learning and development aspects are commonly tighten with performance appraisals. Performance appraisals are the place where training needs are discussed. Otherwise, trainings and other learning is organized mainly ad hoc-basis when a need occurs or if an employee asks for a training. One of the respondents also added that there are also obligatory trainings for the employees. How trainings are organized vary. For analysing training needs there was mentioned having a training matrix or base them on performance index analysis. One of the respondents has a training matrix which includes information about who needs training, who is trained and who are trainers. Training analysis can also be done when performance index analysis are done, if the organization changes. After the needs for training are analysed, then a learning agreement is often written if the training is organized outsourced and the training takes place afterwards.

The trainings might be organized in-house or outsourced. Obligatory trainings for accounting for example are often done externally but some units do for example in-house health and safety trainings. Also one unit has in-house product training which is systematic. Otherwise, language courses and professional trainings were mentioned as examples of trainings. One of the respondents was very much interested in the opportunities e-learning platforms could provide.

Organizational learning or development is generally not applied at group or local level, even though there was one interviewee who stated that they practice it by need basis, for example if there are organizational changes. One unit also has also a policy that there should be at least two people who can do a job in order to minimize risks if a person leaves the organization. This can be seen as organizational development because the employees are supporting and learning from each other. It is also some kind of succession management activity.

When interviewees were asked about HR's role in the process the answers differed. In general, HR's role is to be a coordinator of the training process and the party that makes sure that the legal requirements are met. HR is also often the one who measures if there is a need and budget for training. Besides, HR's role is to document that training happened and take care of other administrative aspects of the process. According to two of the interviewees the process doesn't differ between employee groups and two stated it does between white-collar and blue-collar workers.

Wellbeing and safety

Wellbeing and safety at group level is mainly concentrated on wellbeing campaigns. Group has also set the guidelines for wellbeing surveys which units then implement. The units are responsible for health and safety of the employees and also for the implementation of wellbeing practices. At the general level the trend is that some units focus more on wellbeing and some on safety and health practices.

The health and safety is very local process and is taken very seriously in all the departments. Most of the units have health and safety aspects included into other HR processes like in recruitment process, induction and have health and safety as a theme to trainings. HR's main role in safety is to make sure the legal requirements are met and to monitor trends of safety within the company as well as to set and meet policies. Otherwise, how health and safety is organized vary between units. In one unit, there are health and safety officers with whom HR works closely with. In another unit HR concentrates on monitoring trends. In the third one, HR buys and budgets different safety and health equipment for the workplace like defibrillators and trainings for its use, first aid training, blood pressure measurer and work clothes. Local HR arranges occupational health care when required by law and it takes care of safety plans and occupational safety and health policies. One of the units has a set of policies related to safety about:

- Documenting accidents, requirements for wearing and for safety in general
- Respect for workplace, harassment, how investigation would happen
- How to stop working when there is an unsafe practice
- Documenting incidents
- Timeframes
- Internal report for first aid and others, monitoring trends on safety and organize trainings based on those.

Health and safety process is communicated in all the units during the induction, verbally, in written forms like emails and on whiteboard. Besides, units have different ways to communicate it which are: in employee handbook, right after the accident or when the person is in the condition when they can adapt it, during the recruitment process or in intranet.

At group level wellbeing is done through campaigns. There is no regularity in them though. At local level wellbeing is practiced mainly through little nice things like barbeques, teambuilding nights, lunch and learning events and healthy snack packs. The type of which kind of activities each unit goes vary. One of the units is clearly concentrated on

wellbeing of employees and they have wellbeing projects, healthy snack packs, seminars and other actions which support health. For wellbeing, the same unit have wellbeing assessments every second or third year and based on that they make an action plan which covers financial wellbeing, health, relieving stress, dealing with family and priority issues, exercise, mindfulness sessions and other ones. Another unit base their wellbeing actions on wellbeing survey organized by group level. Based on the survey, the HR manager identifies the areas for development and reacts to them at personal level. Other wellbeing activities are linked with benefits and rewarding actions as mentioned before in this chapter. The communication of the wellbeing process and practices is done differently in different areas. The ways they mentioned were by email, by having paper on the board and on one-on-one meetings to collect personal feedback four times a year, and through monthly newsletter. An interesting fact was, that in the unit where they had more wellbeing actions taken they also bought some of the training sessions and so from external provider.

Performance management and appraisals

Halton Group's performance management focuses on performance reviews. Group has a form for appraisals which is used in the units. The review is done normally twice a year, but one unit does it three times a year. The implementation of the performance appraisals varies. Even though there are differences in the implementation of the reviews, it was possible to identify the following steps of the process from three of the interviews:

1. HR contacts managers and guides them
2. Managers do the performance review meeting by a deadline
3. Managers deliver the data for HR
4. HR does the comparative analysis
5. Actions taken according to the results.

The actions, which are taken then, vary. In some units, performance appraisals are used as the base for HR planning, for planning trainings for example. This process is facilitated through an online platform which guides the line managers how to react in different situations and collects the information for HR for analysis and HR planning. The managers have an access to the systems to give feedback all year long, not only once a year. If the performance is not at the right level, a process of improvement plan takes place.

The units, which have their annual performance reviews done twice a year, they use the appraisals normally as a checkpoint for checking the compensation and benefits and training needs too. However, there is also one unit in which HR doesn't really pay any role in performance reviews but the line managers run the reviews. They fill in the Group docu-

ments, but no documents is collected or used for later analysis. For them, the process is between the managers and individual employees.

Career planning and succession management; Promotions, demotions

In this state the answers varied a lot. Two of the respondents said they don't have any processes related to the theme, one said it is linked with the other processes and one had finely detailed processes, policies and practices. However, all the respondents thought that this area should be one of the key ones of HRM and they are willing to develop their own processes, policies and practices. Also all of them emphasized the importance of internal recruitment if a position is about to open.

The process provided by one of the units followed pretty much this structure:

1. Recognizing the need: e.g. someone is about to retire
2. Communicating about opening position for internal interest. If no interested people, headhunting inside where HRM might propose someone to the position based on the assessments made earlier
3. Checking capabilities based on documentation and information that is provided by manager, employee about their interest
4. Assess how it fits to the profile HR has
5. Shortlisting by managers and HRM based on the assessments
6. Looking at the potential of moving that person there: timeframes, skillsets, need of training
7. Training the internal employee to the new position if not in rush, if in rush, recruiting outsourced.

Exit management and dismissals

Exit management process was not identical among the countries. However, it was possible to find similar elements among countries. Three of the units have exit interviews of which at least two use the form even though the exit interviews are not required by the group level. This is operated fully by HR in all the units.

Otherwise, the termination of a contract is very local process because it is often tightly linked with the local legislation. If a person leaves the company, it can happen voluntarily or involuntarily.

Most of the other information that was received wasn't comparable. The interviewees explained the reasons why an employment would be terminated but only one of them explained the processes done after the decision of the termination. This might be, because often the termination of a contract is tightly linked with the local legislation. If a person leaves the company, it can happen voluntarily or involuntarily. For one of the respondents the question was only hypothetical as the unit has so low employee turnover rate.

Talent management

The units have talent management practices but it is not centralized or systematically done. However, the HR people do recognize the in-house talents and are willing to give them career opportunities and promotions. There are no actual competency frameworks in use, but one of the units has a competency framework, which is based on the database collected during the assessment phase of the recruitment and checked again during the appraisals. Another unit has the training matrix which they could use as the base for talent management.

At group level, Halton Career is a process supporting the talent management. However, only one of the interviewees mentioned it when asking about talent management practices.

E-HRM

The role of e-enabled HRM is small in Halton Group in general. Most of the respondents didn't have any overall HRIS in use. For only one of the interviewees HRIS has a high importance and it is used for "everything" in the unit as she mentioned. It is used for personnel management like files, records and documents; recruitment; training; and employee self-service. In another unit there is a system in use in order to help with performance appraisals and two have it for payroll. At group level there is an identity system. The importance of the e-learning possibilities was emphasized by the one using HRIS already, and she wished to use an e-learning platform.

International Human Resource Management

When the interviewees were asked about international assignments, the answer varied. Two of the respondents didn't seem to have ownership over international assignments because they only received people while two said they use shorter and longer assignments. All of the respondents stated, that there is no actual expatriation and repatriation

processes, and they were not sure what are the policies related to the theme. Two of the interviewees said that they have sent people abroad and seemed more familiar with the process. However, all of them stated that international assignments are done on a case by case basis.

Otherwise, there are not many other international human resource management processes either. The interviewees mentioned Halton Career program twice and some of them wished to have international recruitment possibility.

4.1.1 Conclusions

As a conclusion it can be said, that during phase 1 it was found out, that there is no really secondary data available related to the HR processes even though some of the countries might practice the researched areas of HRM. The data, which is available, is often not up-to-date or followed-up. This is said, because the processes that were defined at the secondary data as HR processes a level of the company were not actually in use according to the replies in phase 3. The mini survey, which was conducted for all the HR managers present in the focus group, defined that organizational design, strategic human resource management and HR planning, HR communications, talent management, and career planning and succession management are the key areas of improvement as they are in use the least within the organization. Also phase 3 results support this idea, as there were no more activities found relating to those processes on phase 3.

However, an interesting finding is that not all the data was consistent between phase 1 and phase 3. Two of the repliers said, that they didn't have a process in place in phase 1 when they had to choose the HR processes they had in practice, but then they did explain the process when asked in person in phase 3. This might be caused by language barrier as on phase 1 the respondents didn't have time beforehand to prepare for the survey or the respondents might have not been familiar with the term used. This might also have been out of sheer negligence.

Phase 3 showed that even if there would be a HR process in place in a unit, it doesn't mean that the processes would be the same all over the organization. In point of fact, the HR processes units have in place vary notably and the group HR doesn't have a remarkable role in HR processes, as the group level HR processes were mentioned only a couple of times in the interviews. It really demonstrates that the organization is decentralized and the HR managers have the freedom to run their own activities as they wish. This can be seen to result in variation how HR processes are carried out. The HR managers have

the focus on different areas of HRM as they wish. One can focus on learning and development while another is focused on administrative HRM and the third one on wellbeing at work.

During the analysis on phase 3, it was found that there were more differences than similarities in the HR processes. Besides, it was quite challenging to find actual steps of the processes. The HR managers tended to describe different activities which were in place but they were not described according to the systematic approach HR processes in regard to the definition (Chapter 2.3.1) has. When the systematic approach is missing, this results often in the lack of follow-up and documentation. Also the measurability seemed to be missing from the processes as none of the interviewees indicated measuring as a step in a process. When reporting, documentation, measuring and follow-up are missing, this risks the quality of the activities. Besides, it seemed that the possible differences in employee groups were not considered by all the interviewees.

4.2 HRM's current role at the group level

Given that the HR processes of the company should be developed at the group level, it is important to understand the current role of HRM at group level and what group level HRM even means. I therefore started to research this IQ3 by secondary data research followed by discussions with the colleagues and finally finished by interviewing the selected HR people in phase 3. This part of the research aimed to investigate the kind of roles and structures Halton Group has within its HRM and especially the group's role in them.

The data is analysed by using theories mentioned in Chapter 2.1 and 2.2. Particular attention is given to the way in which units communicate and cooperate with one another, which activities are grouped and decentralized and the span of control of managers. The roles of the group reflected through Bersin's model (Chapter 2.1.2).

4.2.1 Phase 1

In the IQ2, the same secondary data was used as already presented in IQ1 in Chapter 4.1.1. The secondary data does not really answer to the fact on how units communicate and coordinate with one another, nor does it really explain which activities are grouped and decentralized and the span of control of managers. This is because there is no organizational chart available or other structures described in a written form. The only references to how the activities are grouped and decentralized were a sentence at the

webpage and the figure about the levels of HRM activities. The sentence defined the structure between group and SBA levels goes as follows:

“Halton Group coordinates the strategy, the strategy process, and leadership development of the company as a whole. Halton Group's three business areas - Halton, Halton Foodservice, and Halton Marine - are responsible for their global strategy and development, and for its business including sales.”
(Halton Group 2014a)

The paper indicates that the nature of the group HR is strategic and guiding through setting policies and guidelines and the activities seem to be decentralized. The line managers seem to have quite much of control over the processes as teams and individuals have a set of responsibilities. The HR processes which were defined to be at the group level were:

- leadership development model
- succession planning guidelines
- salary and bonus policy
- guidelines for assessment of employees
- rewarding (Halton Medals)
- strategic competence development
- recruiting process and guidelines
- HR mission and vision components.

The other HR related information which can be found from the webpage is the number of employees and where they are located. Also the name of the HR director is mentioned. The fact that the HR director is part of the board of directors indicates that the importance of HRM should be acknowledged by the company.

For more detailed description of the secondary data, please refer to Chapter 4.1.1.

4.2.2 Phase 3

Phase 3 interviews were much more fruitful for understanding the roles and responsibilities of HRM function. There were separate questions about the roles and structure of HRM at both personal and organizational levels because the secondary research did not provide information enough. At personal level, the interviewees were asked about their job description, role and position within the organization.

At the local level, HR managers and directors were mainly having a generalist position. All of the respondents of the SBU levels managed daily operations. Some of them had ad-

ministrative role mainly, some of them more strategic by participating in some project at group, SBA or regional level. Depending on the size of the unit, there might be the same person handling several areas like finance or IT besides their HR position. That said, the roles may vary a lot within the same title. The respondents were directly responsible to their units and reporting to a head of a unit and not to the group. So to speak, they were more responsible for the HR of their own SBU and through that to SBA than for the support of the whole organization. Some of the respondents pointed out that they can work for months without communicating with the group or other HR professional in the organization. This applies especially to the ones who don't run any group level projects. Due to the lack of cooperation between the units or between the group and units, the HR processes also varied to some extent. The general trend, however, was that the

Ones who were involved in group level activities also describe the role of group HRM to be different from the ones who are not directly involved in them. While some of the respondents didn't have any contact with Group or other HR professionals of the company for long periods of time, others had a clear vision of the communication structure between Group and units. The communication was described to happen in two ways: by group communicating with units and units reporting back to group which then checked that the activities done at the local levels match matched with the policies and processes there was , and that there is no duplication of work. However, from the other interviews I understood that this kind of structure hasn't been in place for the last year or even longer.

4.2.3 Conclusions

As a conclusion, it can be said that in general, the HR managers and directors act in a generalist role doing all the HR activities which were done at local level. The same people normally operate a HR business partner role in their local organization. The amount of strategic HRM vary a lot between people, some has some strategic elements included to their job while others operated mainly administrative role mainly. When reflecting this setting through Dave Ulrich's model of the roles of HR professionals (referred in Chapter 2.1.2), HR professionals seem to act between strategic role and a business partner role, while innovation role, change agent role, and facilitators and coaches roles don't seem to be covered at local level at least.

When the matter is reflected through the three-legged stool model (referred in Chapter 2.1.2), it can be seen that role of a unit's HR vary between units. One of the respondents stated to be doing all the routine 'transactional' services across the business, which includes such activities as payroll, recruiting, absence monitoring and advice on dealing

with employee related issues like discipline. These are direct examples of the issues handled by administrative service centers. The form is not a center alike though, because the HR professionals are alone in the units and there is no much cooperation between them. Meanwhile, the job description of some of the HR professional is suitable to be described as HR business partner role as HR business partners are often generalists, who report to the line managers and indirectly to HR. However, the HR professional in the units are involved in transactions.

When the descriptions of the group level HRM activities are combined with the local ones, it can be analyzed through Bersin's model (Chapter 2.1.2) and find out that in the evolution of HRM function, Halton Group's HR practices would set between second and third phase. There is a talent program in place but otherwise the focus is on operational HR serving staff and automating HR processes instead of being on integrated talent management.

The interviewees were also asked to describe the structure of the organization's HRM function and place themselves in besides the questions about the role of group HRM and its responsibilities. An interesting finding is that when the respondents were asked to describe the structure of the HRM, they described their position within the unit/region and I had to ask separately them to describe how their roles reflected towards the group. Besides, it was found out that there is no common policy on titles in HRM. People, whose job description is HR generalist role, may be titled as HR director or HR manager even though they would be reporting for their own unit only. This is a result of decentralization of the HRM function. Some of the respondents also named people who don't work for Halton Group but for a SBA as a part of the group HR. This is understandable, because also the interviewees found that "the organizational structure is very confusing", as one of the respondents stated. On paper, there is only one person working for the group's HRM, but in practice, some people have informally shared practices. This is result of a highly decentralized structure which makes some people to question the role of the group and may cause conflict if needed to work according to guidelines set by the group.

Another key finding of the role of the group level HR is that even though it was stated at the secondary data that it should have a strategic, guiding role, phase 3 analyses disagreed with it. It has strategies, policies and practices for the processes which were listed at the secondary data, but the implementation of those varied significantly between units. Therefore, the communication was identified to be one of the key areas for development.

4.3 Group HR's wished role in the future

Phase 2 aimed to research the preferences of the HR managers and directors of Halton for Group HRM's role in the future. This was done through researching their ideas and opinions about the HR processes which group should be doing and describing at group level. Phase 3 included some questions about how the selected interviewees thought the role of HRM at group level should be within the organization. Some of the respondents were content with the current situation and didn't want to take anything to chance, some wished the Group could take more responsibilities in policy making and support and the creation of consistency through the Group.

4.3.1 Phase 2

In phase 3, the following processes were listed of being the key processes at group level by the focus groups:

- HR planning
- Workforce planning
- Recruiting: set of analysis tools
- Reward management (referring to compensations, benefits and rewards)
- Leadership & high potential employee development
- Wellbeing at work
- Performance management
- Succession planning
- Talent management
- Competence management
- Managing Global Human Resources: global staffing, selection, training, expatriation & repatriation process
- Expatriate and repatriate management
- Communication
- Employer branding
- Integration of new company after mergers and acquisitions
- Whistleblowing

Performance management, competence management, communication and global human resource management with a special focus on expatriation and repatriation process were mentioned by two or three groups out of four. So these are the processes which should be highly considered to be developed. This list demonstrates that the HR managers and directors would wish the group to have some kind of role in most of the processes which are

researched in this paper if not in all of them. The last four processes are not researched in this paper according to the demarcation (Chapter 1) and induction and exit management were not mentioned in these ones. However, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, communication in HRM must be one of the key areas of improvement at group level. Based on the comments received why a process is important, the competence management, talent management, succession planning, workforce planning and training and learning processes can be seen interlinked because they all were chosen as a key process in order to ensure that the company has talent or competences in the future.

A general trend in the explanations of why a certain process is important and how it contributes to business processes was that motivation, and how these processes ensure the future perspectives, were emphasized. Guidelines and frameworks were seen as positive improvement. The groups hoped for more consistency through guidelines for communication, recruiting, competences and employer branding. Also other mentioned processes were seen to be beneficial to have guidelines or a framework set by the group. Words, which were continuously repeated in the reasoning why a process is important were equality, motivation, create consistency, contribution to business processes, productivity, future needs and framework. Based on this, it can be seen that the group's role is hoped to be creator of consistency and equality throughout the organization in order to ensure the productivity and well-operating business processes and to have motivated, well-performing employees.

4.3.2 Phase 3

The results of the interviews are in line with the development suggestions realised in phase 2. Based on the analysis made in IQ1 and IQ2, the key areas for development go along with the ones proposed by the HR managers and HR directors in phase 2. Besides, there came up several individual development suggestions. It was proposed, that the structure of HR should be revised and HR could be centralized at SBA level. This was linked with the perception that decision making was much slower at group level. This could be more evident while citing an example at Halton Group's, where a decision was made and it took five years to implement. It was also stated, that communication should be increased amongst different units and between the group and the units. At least two of the interviewees also wished to have more international human resource management processes. All the respondents wished to have a process for expatriation and repatriation in order to have some consistency. Also international and internal recruitment system would be positively received.

4.4 Development suggestions

This sub-chapter describes the development suggestions concluded for Halton Group. It starts with the general development suggestions for HR processes followed by development suggestions process by process. The chapter is finished with recommendations how to improve the structure of the HRM function and the role of the group level HRM at Halton Group in order to support ensure high-level HR processes in the business.

4.4.1 The HR processes to be developed

Even though, the HR processes vary a lot between units, it is possible to make some general recommendations considering them. Below there is a list of the general suggestions for development followed by development suggestions for every HR process separately.

General development suggestions considering all the HR processes

First, I would increase consistency of the HR processes between units by setting guidelines at group level. These guidelines could be HR strategies, policies or practices as well as other forms of communication like process descriptions and workshops. The strategies, policies and practices should then flow from the group level to the other levels of the organization. However, this doesn't happen without an effort. It is not enough to have only guidelines or process descriptions, but there must be an implementation process for them. Organizing trainings for HR professionals or involving them into the designing process might be steps in a process which help the implementation. Currently, there are some guidelines at group level, but not everybody is aware of them or HR managers don't use them for other reasons. This results to the HR processes varying remarkably among the units. The recommendation is based on the analysed need at group level, and also for the wishes of HR professional within the organization.

Also the systematic approach, which is typical for the nature of HR processes (please see the definition of HR processes in Chapter 2.3.1), is missing. It seems that there are individual activities within processes which do not form a systematic entity. If it is wished to have a systematic approach to HR processes, which would deliver measurable, effective outcomes, it would be important to define the input and aimed output of a process. After, the steps should be defined. Besides, the process should be documented, followed-up, and measured. These are elements, which are missing at the moment but would be bene-

ficial to be created into activities which are currently in place. The HR processes in general should be monitored, accessed, measured and re-viewed.

Thirdly, it would be recommended to make the HR processes to be customized for different employee groups. According to the results, some of the units already did consider and some did not consider the differences between employee groups. As mentioned in the Chapter 2.3.4, Handy points out that different employee groups have different needs. That is why it is advisable to think whether there is a need to have variation between the HR processes based on the employee groups. For example, the recruitment process of a summer worker at the factory could be lighter and have less assessment tools used than the recruitment of a manager.

Also the roles and responsibilities between the HR and line managers should be defined. Defining actors of a process and their responsibilities decreases hassle from the process and the need to look after people. This is also a matter of quality. In some HR processes, like in recruitment, there are steps which would require exceptional professionalism. For instance, the HR function could be responsible for the assessments.

Considering the HR processes individually, comparative analysis, with the theory presented in Chapter 2.3.4, provides more points for development.

Strategic HRM & HR planning

Strategic HRM is one of the key areas to develop at group level. Currently, there is no systematic approach to strategic HRM at group level. There is a HR strategy at group level, but it is not really implemented. Therefore, I would recommend Halton Group to apply the process of strategic HR planning for its yearly plan in order to ensure that organizational objectives are met through the development and implementation of a human resource strategy. For example scenario thinking would a powerful tool to use. HR planning helps to predict the possible challenges and close personnel gaps. As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.4, HR planning process should include:

- External and internal investigation and analysis
- Forecasting to determinate an HR imbalance or 'personnel gap'
- Planning, resourcing and retention activities
- Utilization and control through HR techniques, policies and IT.

Some units already had forecasting done through their workforce planning actions, and especially the retention activities were missing throughout the Group.

Recruitment & selection

In regard to recruitment and selection, the main area of improvement is to harmonize the steps, recruitment channels, ways to assess, HR's role and the methods of communication. This can be done by setting group level and local level strategies defining these issues. The Group should also agree on the assessment tools used in recruitment as one of the interviewees wished. Also communicating the process for line managers plays an important role in the process besides the actions mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Induction

The induction process includes some elements, but not all are similar in all the countries. In order to ensure, that everybody have equal basic knowledge when they start working and in order to create some basis for corporate culture, Halton Group should harmonize the elements of induction process and have a set "must-have" elements within the process. Some basic induction material for the company for example could be created at group level. When reflected with the theory, Halton Group could systematically use introduction for more developed purposes, such as employee engagement. It can be a tool to introduce the new employee to company's culture, how the organization communicates and the other elements related to employee engagement as mentioned in Chapter 2.3.4.

Compensation & rewards

With the compensation and rewards, the process should be analysed more carefully and some standards set in order to ensure equal and fair treatment of employees. The Group could define what kind of measures should be in use. The guidelines existing should be communicated better for the units and revised in order to ensure they are up-to-date. This reward strategy could then be combined with a total rewards strategy in order to make an impact on performance by contributing to high-performance culture, one in which the values, norms and HR practices of an organization combine to create a climate in which the achievement of high levels of performance is the way of life (Chapter 2.3.4). The new rewards is focused on 'sending the right message' about performance and corporate values by financially rewarding contribution rather than seniority or status, which a goal Halton Group could consider of having as well. Group level rewarding, Halton Medals, were not so recognized by the units, so it would be beneficial to measure how efficient they are for employees performance or if the system could be renewed somehow. Benefits could stay

to be decided at the local level, but linking them with a bigger strategy, as wellbeing strategy, would be a thing to consider.

Learning & development

In learning and development, the focus of Halton Group is in training of the employees. And the training needs are analysed based on the performance appraisals. However, in order to create an effective training process, it must have four parts: needs assessment, design, implementation and evaluation, which are effected by organizational vision mission and values. Currently, the level on which the needs assessment, design, implementation and especially evaluation are done, vary. All the countries don't have a systematic approach towards the appraisal process as a tool for needs assessment. Actually, one of the interviewees stated, that the results of the reviews are not even analysed by anyone. Also, if the company wishes to move towards a holistic talent management approach, it would be important to recognize other areas of learning and development. Organizational learning, knowledge management, individual learning and development, and leadership and management development are examples of the potential processes related to learning and development (Chapter 2.3.4). Halton Group has tackled the question of leadership development by having Halton Career programme. It would be recommended to consider also other areas of the learning and development at group level. Especially having in-house product training and self-learning could be organized and promoted more. I would also consider an option to implement 70:20:10 learning model in the company.

Wellbeing & safety

Related to wellbeing at work, I would recommend cooperation between units in order to increase the knowledge sharing. I believe that it would be beneficial for the company if the units share their best practices related to wellbeing at work. Group could coordinate this process. Also at the health and safety, there could be a person, for example a quality health and safety –officer, coordinating the processes. Risk assessments, health and safety audits or health and safety inspections can be used to measure health and safety. Even though there are local legal requirements, there is currently no person who would know safety issues or set safety requirements around the Group.

Performance management

The performance management process of Halton Group is highly focused on performance appraisals of individuals and optionally teams. The organizational development aspects

are not on focus. The guidelines for the appraisals are provided by the Group. In order to improve the performance appraisal process, the process should be harmonized. The goals of the process should be defined more carefully because currently there is disagreement on benefits of the appraisals, and line managers should be trained to the process similarly. The process should flow from top to bottom of the organization. Now only one of the respondents mentioned it as the way of implementation. In order to ensure the quality of the implementation of the appraisals, Halton Group would have an option to require data from its units, because currently the process is implemented with varying results. As mentioned in the theory framework (Chapter 2.3.4), performance appraisals are only one part of the performance management process. Besides, personal development plans and feedback systems are parts of the performance management process, and it supports strategic communication by conveying to the personnel their effectiveness. Also Halton Group could consider on how to create a feedback system, as there is no systematic approach to feedback globally.

Career & Succession management

Succession and career management are among the key HR processes to be developed at group level. The employees at the group level are often the managers and directors in critical positions for the whole organization. Therefore, succession management processes should be implemented at group level and systematically implemented to the SBA and unit levels as well. The process should be systematic rather than on an ad hoc basis like it is currently. The succession management process should at least include analysis on the business critical positions and individuals. As the theory in Chapter 2.3.4 proposes, the focus should be on understanding whether there are enough potential successors available, if they are suitable enough, and if they have right skills and competencies for the future. Also a substitute planning is a process recommended in order to prevent from crisis situations at work if someone is not able to come to work. These could be supported by a matrix including the key positions and competences needed for them.

When the potential individuals are identified, the career management activities at the individual level can be implemented smoothly. Halton Group has already performance appraisal as a basis for career development. Also Halton Career programme is in place. Theory suggests that there are several ways of doing career management in practice: posting regarding internal job openings, formal education as part of career development, performance appraisal as a basis for career development, career counselling by manager, lateral moves to create cross-functional experience, career counselling by HR department, retirement preparation programmes, succession planning, formal mentoring, common

career paths, dual ladder paths (parallel hierarchy for professional staff), books on career issues, written personal career planning, assessment centres, peer appraisals, career workshops and upward (subordinate) appraisals. Halton Group could pick its favourite ones out of them for implementation. However, career planning activities should be put in place before the implementation process.

Exit management

The results indicate that the exit management of Halton Group equals to exit interviews. It was not shown clearly, if all the units use the same form or not. If not, the Group could define the form which is in use and ensure that it includes all the elements needed for understanding the reasons why one is leaving and for getting ideas for improvement. Concerning the termination of employment, the processes are local and guided by local legislation. However, the Group should have policies related to dismissals and other types of terminations of a contract. This is important especially when there is an international team because if a line manager runs the process in a foreign legal environment, the process might be run wrong, which results easily in legal consequences. Therefore, HR's role should be emphasized as it is the party who know the local legal environment the better than an average employee. If an exit is known already beforehand, in such cases as retirement, there should be a process to transfer the tacit knowledge and plan the future using succession and talent management approaches.

Talent management

One of the key findings related to talent management was that there is no systematic talent management approach, even though it was identified as one of the key areas of HRM at group level. Talent management should be a set of interrelated processes which aim to develop and maintain a pool of talented people in order to ensure there are enough talented employees in an organization which it needs to attain its business goals as stated in Chapter 2.3.4. The units have elements of the talent management but they are not organized in a systematic way and there is no talent pool in use. That is why emphasis at group level should be in aiming to have a talent management approach in its interrelated HR processes and the emphasis should be in talent planning which sets the base for the development of policies for attracting and retaining talent and the determination of future requirements and roles talented people will carry out as pointed out in Chapter 2.3.4. Otherwise, the talent management process should combine resourcing, retention planning, succession and career planning, learning and development of which especially leadership and management development, talent audits, talent relationship management and perfor-

mance management. Halton Group has Halton Career which touches succession and career planning, learning and development of which especially leadership and management development, and performance appraisals as part of the performance management. Other elements are not yet in place, but it would be recommendable to develop them.

E-HRM

As mentioned in Chapter 2.3.4, e-HRM, the use of computer technology within the HR function, has five different goals: efficiency, service delivery, strategic orientation, manager empowerment and standardization. Applying an e-enabled human resource management system, several processes from HR planning and managing diversity to expenses and administrative activities can be performed. In Halton Group there is no HRIS in use at group level, but this would be recommendable. HRIS would be beneficial for group level in order to improve the quality of information available, to reduce administrative burden on HR function, to improve services to employees, to make HR measurable at group level, and to have modern, more flexible approach towards learning and development through an e-learning platform as emphasized by one of HR managers. HRIS could be used in HR planning, recruitment and selection, induction and all the other HR processes defined in this paper.

International HRM

One of the key recommendations for the Group would be to take a stronger ownership over the international human resource management processes. Currently, there is no international HR processes in addition to Halton Career and some HR programmes or policies like a wellbeing campaigns and performance appraisal guidelines done globally. Especially a need for expatriation and repatriation process was emphasized by the participants. I therefore would recommend Halton Group to have an expatriation and repatriation process or processes defined and described. The approach of defining and measuring the compensation and rewards globally would bring additional value especially when the teams are international. I also would think talent management from a global approach and define the specific issues related to adaptation and family, and expatriate career and compensation (mentioned in Chapter 2.3.4).

4.4.2 Group HR's role in HR processes

The secondary data indicate that the nature of the Group HR is strategic and guiding through setting policies and guidelines. When reflected with the answers of phase 3, the

role may be different in reality. The interviewees couldn't name many group level HR strategies, policies or practices and some admitted that they didn't have any idea what happens at group level. Based on these factors, I would recommend group HR to take a stronger role in strategic HRM by creating strategies, policies and practices and create a follow-up system for them. And when implementing a process, the HR strategies, policies, practices and processes should also be communicated more clearly as some HR professional in units didn't simply know what group HR does. Also, a relevant idea could be to include the other HR professional into group level HR processes as developers of them.

The group could aim to have some form of role in all the key HR processes. The role could be guiding and strategic one as the secondary data showed. The group HRM should ensure the quality of the HR processes between countries. Then for further development the key HR processes should be defined so that they support group strategy. If the business aims to improve its HR activities to the next level, I would, based on Bersin's theory of the evolution of HRM, be concentrating on the development actions of strategic human resource management and talent management while increasing the consistency in and communication about already existing processes. Having focus on increasing effectiveness of HRM by focusing on attracting, developing, managing talent would be the next logical steps in the development of the HRM function according to the model. The current talent practices should be evaluated, and based on that, make improvement plans and create new ones with the right focus which would also support the vision of having innovative, customer-oriented employees Halton Group needs. At the least, group's role in basic HR processes that linked tightly with talent management should be clarified, and those processes could be harmonized in order to ensure the quality of the processes. Also the motivation and retaining part of the talent management should be thoroughly reviewed as none of the interviewees seemed to concentrate on it.

Besides, I would suggest the Group to improve the communication and involve the local HR professionals more on the group level processes. There were strong indicators that the Group's role was minimal due to strategic decisions of the business management, and also because of not having a shared ownership over the group level issues. People felt responsible only for their units and not to for the group. This could be changed by adding reporting to the group level or by increasing the communication between HR professionals and by reconstructing the structure to some extent. As the respondents seemed to have their own interest areas of HRM and focus on certain types of actions, everybody could have an area of expertise which would be their responsibility at group level in order to increase the ownership over the processes and to the common goals at the group. A practical proposal for increasing the communication between units would be monthly HR meet-

ings with relevant content and agenda so that there are also participants in them. If this, or some other kind of information sharing network would be in place, it could prevent HR managers from being alienated. As one of the respondents said:

“You know what is so sad; you are the only person outside of this business that I’ve talked about HR for I don’t know how long. You are the first person I can actually talk about these things, that is odd.”

A well-functioning group level HRM would then ensure the quality of the HR processes to be the same, as now all the HR actions and much person-dependent. As one of the respondents said “I have only my background as my tool to run HRM in my unit”. The guidelines could also work as a tool to ensure quality through giving people tools to run processes efficiently despite of the different competences of the individuals. Also if HR professionals should be introduced to the HR strategies, policies and practices of the business especially when a new professional starts and this would be easier with a consistency.

For explaining why the mentioned key HR processes should be similar internationally and that is why described at group level, I want to refer a focus group’s explanation:

“Many processes that are listed in there can have a framework set out so that they provide guidance to the local level and draw attention of each unit that they may add value to their operations. Having guidelines especially for smaller units which may not have the resources to carry out all the functions would be beneficial. This would essentially serve as an information sharing network between the units so that the work (where applicable) is not duplicated.”

5 Discussion

This chapter concludes the research by presenting the key findings of the research and by providing some essential recommendations for the case company. This is followed by the evaluation of the trustworthiness of the research, thesis process and one's own learning. Some further research topics are also provided.

5.1 Key findings

HR processes can be defined as the way in which HR activities are identified, formulated and implemented while having the emphasis on practice and embedded processes which are systemic and have a procedural reality. The research found the systematic, procedural reality to be rare in most of the HR activities done globally. HR activities were in place but they were not done in a systematic form in which the goals, steps and actors of a process would be clearly identified. This might be due to the lack of planning, documentation or follow-up of the HR processes. However, the everyday HR activities took place and were working quite efficiently. This could be attributed to the motivation and high performance of the individual HR professionals. Alternatively, workforce planning, recruiting, induction, performance appraisals, succession management, the group level programmes and exit interviews are examples of systematic HR processes which were mentioned by the interviewees.

Secondly, HR processes tended to differ between the Halton Group's units in the ways they were identified, planned and implemented. Also the HRM function's role and the way in which the process was communicated to the employees vary. This was a result of the decentralized HRM function as the HR managers and directors at the unit level have the freedom to run their own HR activities as they wish.

The decentralization also resulted in the HR professionals having a strong ownership and responsibility over the HR activities they practice at the unit level, but less feeling of engagement towards the group level. Actually, one of the interviewees argued that the group doesn't have a role in her actions and there is no communication between the unit level and the group level HRM. The decentralization also affected on the quality of the HR processes since there were no systematic ways to plan, implement, measure, develop and review the HR processes at the group level.

As the decentralization is one of the most visible characteristics of the structure of the HR function, the roles of the HR professionals vary according to the needs of a unit and the

role an individual HR professional has decided to take. Most of Halton Group's HR professionals are generalists who act between being a strategic HR business partner for the unit they work at and HR practitioners whose most important function is to deliver services. Working as a HR practitioner includes transactional activities such as recruitment, training and other HR processes. Results indicated that the HRM function's role globally was operational; it aimed to deliver services for staff efficiently after rationalizing the generalist positions and appointing business partners to reduce inefficiency in service delivery. If Halton Group wishes to move to the next phase of the evolution of the HRM function, the next step would be to focus on effectiveness of driving talent programmes.

5.2 Recommendations for Halton Group

The aim of this paper was to offer development suggestions for HR processes with the purpose of enable the modelling of HR processes at group level for further applications. This requires HR processes to be harmonized at group level. A systematic approach towards HR activities should be adapted at all the levels of the organization and HR processes be described at group level if a global HRIS is a wish of the executive team. Optionally, human resource information systems could be local. Nevertheless, the HR processes should be harmonized at the group level in order to ensure universal quality of HR processes globally.

The role of group level HRM in Halton Group should be strategic and guiding. Systematic strategic human resource management practices and HR planning activities should take place at group level in order to define the strategic directions to be taken in the whole organization considering the human resource management. I would also recommend Halton Group to identify the kind of talent pool it wants to have and what kinds of actions are needed to support this goal. When this goal is defined, it would be easier to set goals for talent management, career and succession management, employer branding and employee engagement.

In order to implement the strategic decisions taken at group level, Halton Group should clarify the structure of HR function and set up a communication structure between the group and units in a way in which ensures the two-way communication flow between the Group and other levels of the business. Currently, there is a gap in the flow of strategic HRM decisions and that is why the structure of HR function should be clarified by identifying the responsibilities of the actors of HR processes. For example, what should be done in HRM and why it should be done and at which level of the organization. Especially the role of SBA level HRM should be considered. One way to organize the structure is to

share the responsibilities between the HR professionals globally. There are individuals with different areas of interest and expertise within the existing structure, so the Group could benefit from the talents it has more by them working both as experts at the group level and strategic business partners at local level. In the beginning, the communication could happen through monthly HR meetings where the global HR team discusses the best practices, challenges and news in a structured way. Also some reporting structures could be beneficial.

For further development suggestions concerning the development of HR processes, please refer to Chapter 4.4.

5.3 Trustworthiness of the research

The trustworthiness is harder to measure in qualitative research than in quantitative research because in the qualitative research the researcher plays a crucial role in the whole research process. Especially the analysis can be sensitive to the risks related to validity and reliability of a research (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 210) because several interpretations must be done. First, the interviewee interprets a phenomenon and this is followed by interpretations made by the researcher about the material and then when writing a report which is then interpreted once more by the reader (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 141). The report normally includes only the most essential information understood by the researcher (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 141) and that is why there is a risk of missing some essential piece of information from the interpretations. (Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 141, 208-213.)

However, there are tools to use in order to increase the trustworthiness of a qualitative study there and to reduce the risk of interpretation, and these tools have been used in this research process. According to Mäkelä (1990, in Eskola & Suoranta 2001, 216-217) there must be enough material to be analysed and analysis to be evaluable and repeatable. This is the case in this paper. For example the analysis are described in details step by step so that the reader can follow the analysis and reasoning behind them and evaluate if the interpretations are valid or not. Also direct quotes were used to increase the reliability of the research.

Actually, the research design, preparations, application and analysis phase were all designed with trustworthiness in mind. Careful planning and preparation covering different, possible areas of bias and challenges were defined beforehand and paid attention to. The research had three research phases. In each phase the questions about reliability, forms of bias and validity questions were considered carefully. More detailed analysis of the reli-

ability, validity and risks related to this thesis can be read in the Chapter 3.4. I, therefore, believe that this thesis is a trustworthy description about the current situation of the case company's HRM and the development suggestions made for the case company are worth of consideration and beneficial for them.

5.4 Suggestions for further development and research

This paper is a limited overview of the key HR processes, roles and structures of HR function at Halton Group. It aims to explain the current situation from a managerial perspective. The topic could also have been researched from the employee perspective, which would provide more information about the quality of the HR processes in Halton Group and how satisfied the employees are with the current practices. Another element which was demarcated out of the topic was communication related to human resource management. However, the results indicated it to be one of the key areas to develop in Halton Group's HR function, so it would be a beneficial topic to be researched in the company.

Due to the paper's general nature, all the HR processes mentioned in the paper could be researched in more details if wished so. Also deeper knowledge about the roles and structures could be an interesting find. Another key area that would require further research and scrutiny would be talent management. For example identifying and determining the kind of talent pool necessary to support the business strategy of the company. Based on the recommendations made for the company, the next steps would be to define HR strategies, policies and practices at group level, to consider what kind of HR planning activities would be beneficial for the business, and to create the talent pool of the organization.

During the research process I realized, that it was very hard to find definitions for a HR process and for group level HRM. From the academic point of view, it would be interesting to define the terms and provide terminology which is not actively researched in the field. It would also be interesting to research, if the research design of this paper could be applied to other case companies as well.

5.5 Evaluation of the thesis process and one's own learning

As a conclusion, I would say that the entire thesis process was educational. I was able to learn how to apply a wide range of theories into a challenging, real-life business case and to learn to overcome challenges which occurred during the process. The thesis process followed the gradual progress of the research design and is therefore relevant and well-designed to answer the challenges qualitative research often has. There is only one factor, which I would do differently if I was to conduct the thesis process again: the inter-

views. The qualitative interviews took from two to two and a half an hour per person and if I was to do them again I would have done them in two parts in order to prevent interviewees from becoming tired.

The second challenge was the commissioning company wished me to define the key HR processes to be researched instead of being provided with the list of the key HR processes to be researched at group level. I found out that it was very challenging, firstly, to find a definition of a HR process, and secondly, to identify which of the HR activities are HR processes. I therefore had to research what a HR process means, what kinds of HR processes there are and based on that create my own research tool in order to identify the key HR processes at group level in Halton Group. This, however, was one of the most fruitful elements of learning within the whole thesis process as the creation process required to study several sources and compare them to find the perfect fit for researching the case company's HR processes. As the prior theory about the topic was limited, the definition of HR processes would have already been enough of the scope for bachelor thesis. But I wanted to provide something useful for the company and that is why the paper is larger in scope and more detailed than bachelor theses traditionally are.

My third challenge was linked with the data collection. When I started the project, I thought it would have been enough to research the secondary data and run the focus group interviews. Unfortunately, there was no significant amount of secondary data available and data collected from the focus group interviews was limited. I overcame the challenge by applying the gradual progress of the research design and doing semi-structured qualitative interviews in order to gather more data.

In the end, I believe I approached the problem setting from an innovative perspective and succeeded in providing an accurate description of the current situation of the HR processes at group level in Halton Group. Moreover, I believe the paper provides applicable solutions to the challenges faced by the case company.

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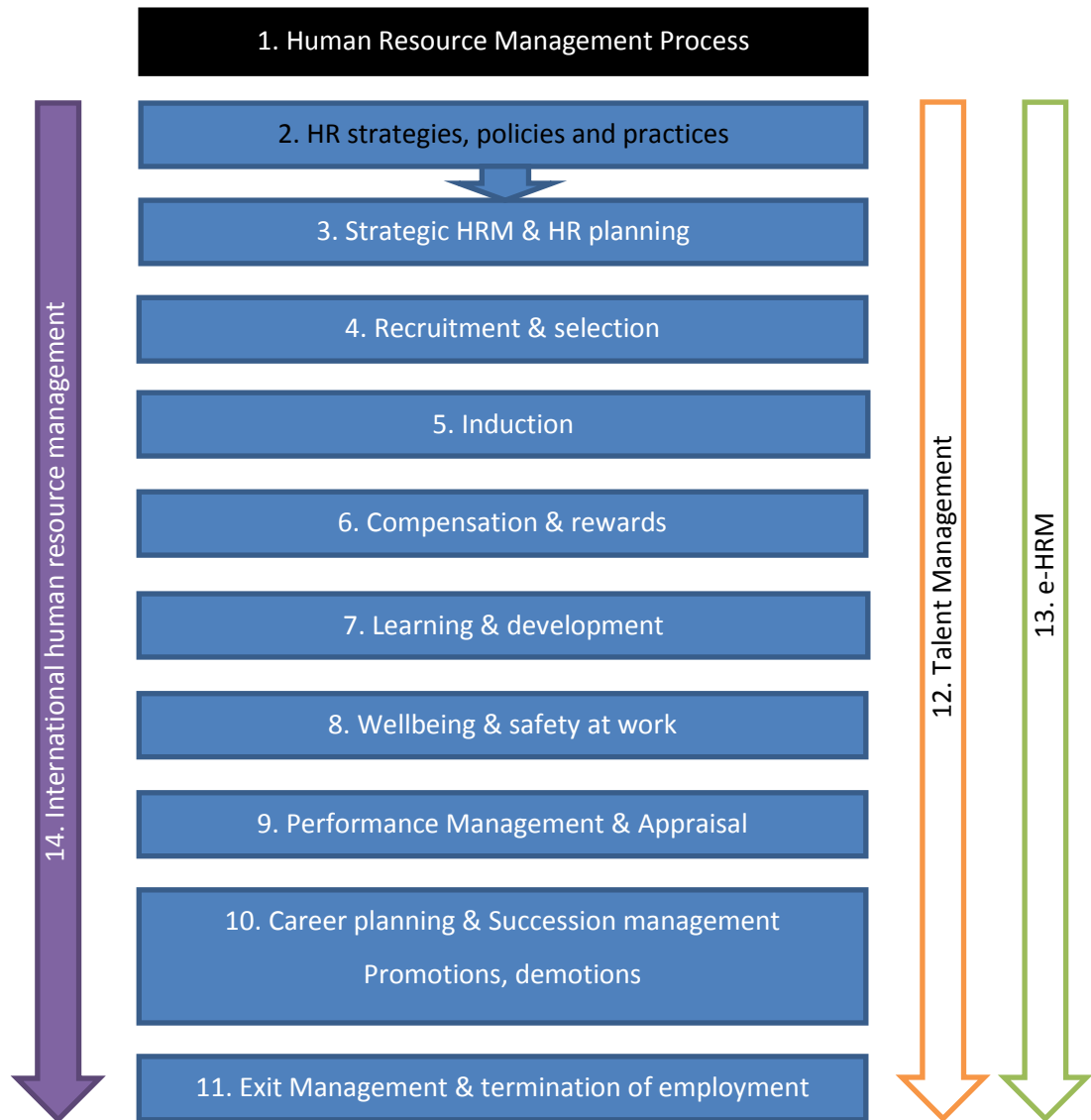
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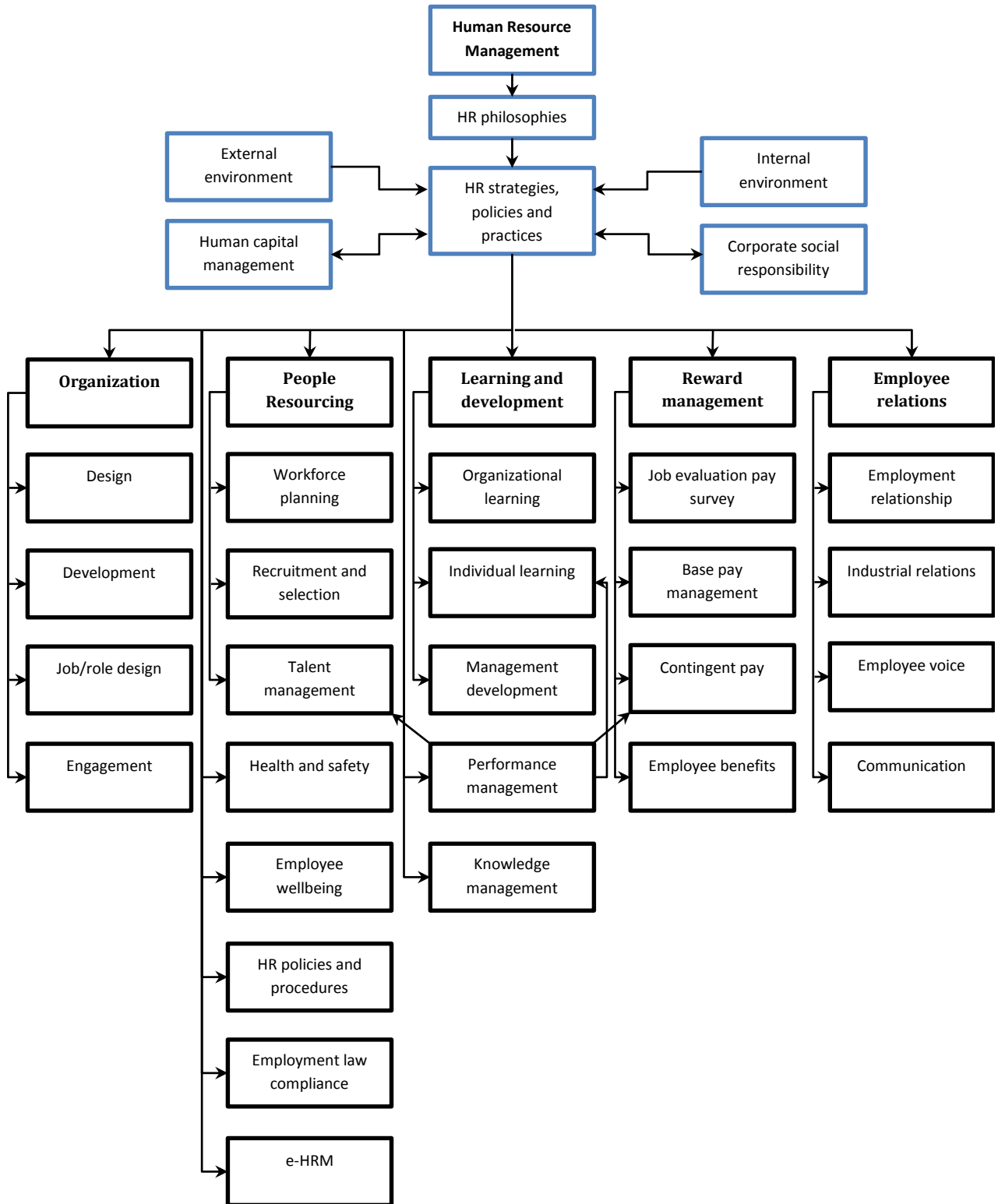
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Appendices

Appendix 1. Research tool



Appendix 2. HR system



Appendix 3. List and status of the HR processes used in the survey

PROCESS	Status
HR strategy	
Organizational design & HR planning:	
Process of HR planning	Red
Workforce planning	Yellow
Scenario planning	Red
Succession planning	Red
Labor turnover	Red
Personnel survey	
Budgets for fixed & variable staff costs	
Communications:	
Employer branding	Red
Communication policy	Red
Corporate Social Responsibility policy	Yellow
Electronic Communications policy	
Environmental policy	
Social Media policy	Green
Resourcing:	
Recruitment policy	
Recruitment	Yellow
a. Executives	Yellow
b. Whitecollar workers	
c. Bluecollar workers	
Selection	
Induction	Green
Competence management:	
Competency framework	Red
Core competencies	Yellow
Skills gap analysis	Yellow
Assessing competencies	Yellow
Competence evaluation	Yellow
Talent review	Red
Training & development	Green
Competence development	
Performance management:	
Career planning	Red
Defining organizational aims	Red
Setting unit, team and individual objectives	
Training and development plans	
Performance appraisals	Green
Processes for measurement & assessment	Red
Regular feedback	Green
Integration of reward strategies	Red
Personal development plans	

Managing substandard performance	
Management of absence	Green
Defining job requirements	Green
Reward management:	Blue
Compensation & benefit policy	Green
Compensation:	White
Pay plan	Red
Pricing managerial & professional jobs	Red
Pay for performance & incentives	Yellow
a. Individual employee incentive & recognition programs	Red
b. Incentives for managers and executives	Yellow
c. Team & Organization-Wide Incentive plans	Red
Benefits:	White
Unemployment insurance	White
Vacations & holidays	Green
Sick leave	Green
Severance pay	Red
Supplemental Unemployment Benefits	Red
Insurance benefits	Green
Retirement benefits	White
Personal services & family-friendly benefits	Yellow
Flexible benefits programs	Red
Employee services	Red
Total rewards policy & practices	White
Talent management:	Blue
Training, development & learning management	Red
Leadership development	White
Recruitment - ensuring the right people are attracted to the organization.	White
Retention - developing and implementing practices that reward and support employees.	Red
Employee development - ensuring continuous informal and formal learning and development.	White
Leadership and "high potential employee" development - specific development programs for existing and future leaders.	White
Performance management - specific processes that nurture and support performance, including feedback/measurement.	Yellow
Workforce planning - planning for business and general changes, including the older workforce and current/future skills shortages.	Red
Culture - development of a positive, progressive and high performance "way of operating".	Yellow
Change management:	Blue
Downsizing	Red
Mergers & acquisitions	Red
Company culture	Red
Intergration of new company (new)	White

Managing Global Human Resources:	
International staffing	
Selecting International Managers	
Avoiding Early Expatriate Returns	
Training & Maintaining employees abroad	
Ex/Repatriate management	
Employment related processes:	
Managing employee turnover & retention	
Managing employee engagement	
Career management	
a. Career management programs	
b. Career planning workshops and career coaches	
c. Mentoring	
Employee life-cycle career management	
a. Making promotion decisions	
b. Managing transfers	
c. Managing retirements	
Cooperation	
Cooperation committee etc	
Managing dismissals	
a. Unsatisfactory performance	
b. Misconduct	
c. Lack of qualifications for the job	
d. Changed requirements of the job	
Wellbeing at work / Health & Safety	
Management of Health and safety at work regulations	
Strategic management of wellness	
Developing a wellness strategy	
Well-being at work	
Equal Opportunity	
Flexible Working	
Working time management	
Employee services (hobby clubs, dining facilities...)	
Hobby clubs	
Company Vehicles	
Dining facilities	
Vehicle Tracking System	
Expenses	
Recreation	
Employee data management	
Managing leaves	
Maternity	
Parental Leave	
Paternity Leave	
Shared Parental Leave	
Difficult situations	

Absence Control	
Adverse Weather	
Alcohol & Drugs	
Bullying & Harassment	
Disciplinary & Grievance	
Emergency Time Off	
Whistleblowing	
Process for termination of contracts:	
a. Dismissal	
b. Redundancy	
c. Retirement	
d. Resignation	
e. Ill health	
Training, development & learning management	

Appendix 4. Workshop slides

Defining key HR processes

In groups (30 min):

1. Define the HR key processes of Halton Group (and their sub-processes if needed)
2. Explain why you consider them to be the key processes?
3. How do these key HR processes contribute to key business processes?

Note. If you have a deeper conversation if a process should or should not to be included into key processes, please kindly explain that as well on the paper.

Enabling Wellbeing

Please consider these aspects when defining the key processes:

1. Industry & organizational structure point of view:
"Key HR processes in global technology organization at group's level"

2. Strategic point of view:

Strategic HRM:

= an approach to managing human resources that supports long-term business goals and outcomes with a strategic framework.

Halton

Analysing the key HR processes

Discuss in the groups and write down (15 min):

1. Which of these key HR processes should be similar internationally and that's why described at group level?
2. Why/Why not?
3. Are there other processes which you see that should be guided from the group level?
4. Loose or strict guidelines?

Based on these questions, are there some processes to be added/removed from the key HR processes?

→ Defining the key processes which should be described

Enabling Wellbeing

Halton

Appendix 5. Interview questions

HALTON GROUP'S HR PROCESSES - QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Background:

What is your name and title at Halton?

How long have you worked at Halton?

What is your role/position within the organization?

What is your job description and what are your main duties at work?

Could you please describe (or even draw) the structure of the organization's HRM and place yourself in there? At which levels of the organization are you working at?

What do you consider to be the role of HRM in the company?

HR strategies, policies & practices (group level):

What kind of group HR strategies do you have at group level?

What kind of group HR policies do you have at group level?

What kind of group HR practices do you have at group level?

Who are responsible and involved in the formation and communication of the group's HR strategies, policies & practices?

What do you consider to be the role of the group/headquarters in HRM?

Strategic HRM & HR planning:

Do you have HR strategies at other levels of the company? At which levels of the organization?

If so, please describe them.

What kind of HR planning activities do you do?

Recruitment & selection:

What is your recruitment & selection process alike? (Actions, actors, etc)

Do you have common policies and practices related to the recruitment & selection? At which level of the organization?

How is this process implemented?

How is this process communicated?

What is HR's role in the process?

Does the process vary depending on the employee group?

Induction:

What is your induction process alike? (Which elements does it include? Who conduct it? Who participate in it?)

Do you have policies and practices related to induction? At which level?

How is this process implemented?

How is this process communicated?

What is HR's role in the process?

Does the process vary depending on the employee group?

Compensation & rewards:

Do you have a process or processes related to compensation & rewards? If yes, please describe them.

Do you have policies and practices related to compensation & rewards? At which level?

How is this process implemented?

How is this process communicated?
What is HR's role in the process?
Does the process vary depending on the employee group?

Training & development:

What kind of process or processes do you have related to training & development? Please describe them.

Do you have policies and practices related to training & development? At which level?

How is this process implemented?

How is this process communicated?

What is HR's role in the process?

Does the process vary depending on the employee group?

Wellbeing & safety:

What kind of process or processes do you have related to employee's wellbeing and safety? Please describe them.

Do you have policies and practices related to wellbeing and safety? At which level?

How is this process implemented?

How is this process communicated?

What is HR's role in the process?

Does the process vary depending on the employee group?

Performance Management & appraisal:

What kind of process or processes do you have related to performance management or appraisal? Please describe them.

Do you have policies and practices related to performance management? At which level?

How is this process implemented?

How is this process communicated?

What is HR's role in the process?

Does the process vary depending on the employee group?

Career planning & Succession management; Promotions, demotions & dismissals:

Do you have a process or processes related to career planning? Please describe them.

What about suggestion management?

What about promotions, demotions and dismissals? Do you have common shared policies and practices related to these processes?

How are these processes implemented?

How are these processes communicated?

What is HR's role in the processes?

Do the processes vary depending on the employee group?

Exit management:

What kind of process do you have related to exit management? Please describe it.

Do you have shared policies and practices related to exit management? At which level?

How is this process implemented?

How is this process communicated?

What is HR's role in the process?

Does the process vary depending on the employee group?

Talent management:

Do you do talent management?

Do you use a competency framework?

Do you have global talent programs and how are they conducted?

What are the goals of talent management?

e-HR:

What's the role of e-enabled HR in your actions?

Do you use any HRIS (Human Resource Information Systems)?

If yes: Which system? In which processes?

International Human Resource Management:

Do you make use short or long international assignments?

Do you have expatriation and repatriation processes? Please describe.

What are the goals of these assignments?

What other international/global HR processes do you have if any?

Conclusion questions:

Have you any HR processes that you can outsource?

What do you consider to be critical points for the HR for organizational success?

What are the key points to develop?

What works well right now?

What kind of extra resources would you need to improve the processes if any?

Appendix 6. Sample 1: Forms used in the analysis – interviews

HALTON GROUP'S HR PROCESSES - QUALITATIVE RESEARCH								
Theme	QUESTION	Respondent A	Respondent B	Respondent C	Respondent D	Similar in all the countries	Similar in 2-3 respondent countries	Different
Group HR strategies, policies & practice	7 What kind of group HR strategies do you have at group level?	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx		-There is no any	One said: employee engagement surveys and wellbeing programs -> ei strategia mutta practice enemminkin?
Group HR strategies, policies & practice	8 What kind of group HR policies do you have at group level?	xxx	xxx	xxx			-two people don't know them -arvot	-only group mentioned guidelines related to bonus plan, leadership development (enemminkin ohjelma)
Group HR strategies, policies & practice	9 What kind of group HR practices do you have at group level?	xxx	xxx				-Employee surveys 5 choices for excellence training -wellbeing competitions -values / the Halton way	
Group HR strategies, policies & practice	10 Who are responsible and involved in the formation and communication of the group's HR strategies, policies & practices?	xxx		xxx			-Auli was mentioned even though she is officially working for Halton Oy -Susanna mentioned too for communication	-One didn't know who's in charge & "I think..."-käyttö
Group HR strategies, policies & practice	11 What do you consider to be the role of the group/headquarters in HRM?	xxx	xxx	xxx		-Most of the people think it's confusing		
SHRM & HR planning	12 Do you have HR strategies at other levels of the company? At which levels of the organization?	xxx	xxx		xxx	-No HR strategies	-Policies can be found from two out of three units: one regional level, one country level Policies: recruiting, PI surveys, posting jobs, PM,	
SHRM & HR planning	13 If so, please describe them.	xxx						

Appendix 7. Sample 2: Forms used in the analysis – comparative analysis

PROCESS	ELEMENTS	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	CONCLUSION
HR strategies, policies, practices	Strategies at group level	-There is no any HR strategies at group level		-No HR strategies -Some little things from group level
	Policies at group level	-Units don't know them -Halton values	- Only group mentioned guidelines related to bonus plan, leadership development (more of a program than a policy) as group level policy	
	Practices at group level	-Employee surveys -5 choices for excellence training -wellbeing competitions -values / the Halton way	-Not everybody could name some processes	
	HR strategies at other levels	-No HR strategies		
	HR policies at other levels of the organization	-Policies can be found from two out of three units: one regional level, one country level Policies: recruiting, PI surveys, posting jobs, PM, implementation of a group training, wellbeing surveys...		
	HR practices at other levels	-Information can be found below process by process		
Strategic HRM & HR planning	Process	-Every unit has some kind of HR planning activities -Units have workforce planning -Succession planning in some units	-Different succession planning processes -Workforce planning activities vary -Different HR planning activities -Time frame in planning: adhoc basis vs three year rolling plan for the function -three year rolling plan for the function -What is it based on: budget, surveys, need...	-No actual HR planning processes
Recruitment & selection	Process	-The basic structure: 1. Define the need 2. Job description to be written and posted 3. Screening resumes 4. Shortlisting 5. Interviews 6. Selection	-Second round of interviews -What kind of assessments are in place	What is common: the basic structure, pre-selection, recruitment happens based on need What is different: some steps, channels, how assessment is done and what kind of factors is accessed, selection methods, selection criteria, if there are policies, communication, actors, HR's role, if it varies between employee groups or not
	Implementation	-Need-basis -Not documented	-Assessment tools -Selection criteria	
	Policies & practices		-Some have local policies, some don't	
	Communication	-Communicated by practice (by running the project)	-Some have an employee handbook where policies & practices written in it, some don't have any written communication	
	HR's role within the process	-HR coordinates the process -Decisions made in cooperation with line managers -Act as a contact person	Other responsibilities mentioned (not in use everywhere): -without HR nothing is done (part of each step) -contact person for external partners and platforms -responsible for PI reports and organizational fit	
	Variation between employee groups		-Doesn't vary in two units, in two other ones it varies between blue and whitecollars and even between individuals related to testing -In one country the policies and practices differ in shop floor because of the worker union.	
Induction	Process	-Common elements in all units: introduction to company & introduction to the actual work with line manager/supervisor -Elements in most of the units: health and safety policies/training; meet and greet; going through the employee handbook with HR (policies); common forms, practical arrangements like reimbursement, cellphone, keys and other position specific features; dresscode, working hours etc.	-Elements/steps, which are unique: basic product training; production processes for white collars; history of local business; individual IT sessions -One doesn't have any written documents of the company, figures or anything	What is common: some of the elements, similar steps partly, no group level activities mentioned What varies: steps of the process, content, length, availability written of policies and practices, documentation, communication, HR's role, variation between employee groups
	Implementation		-Length & content vary, also actors, somewhere HRM has a bigger role than elsewhere -One unit uses changing methods for implementing the process: introduction emails, training, not in one shot, watching a video, presentation, reading, CHANGING the method, within the first 3 days -Some have policies, most of them don't	
	Policies & practices			
	Communication	When documented/communicated: -By email when a new person starts -Employees go the process themselves through when hiring them and learn then how it is done -Handbook with policies and practices for managers	-Somewhere well documented, somewhere not at all	
	HR's role vs. line managers		Everybody described the role differently: - Not sitting in all the inductions - Documents, IT, phone - FIN: blue-collars - done at the factory, white-collars - HR has a role - Facilitate everything - Making sure it happens = coordinator	
	Variation between employee groups		Yes & no: -Varies between blue and white collars -Differs according to the length of the contract and the job/position -Doesn't vary	
	Others	-No one mentioned any group level processes		