In Search of Meaning and Content of Strategic Human Resource Management for Teaching and Learning Purpose

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Abstract

Though Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has become a specialized course in the education of Human Resource Management (HRM), a serious consideration of the current body of knowledge of SHRM reveals a theoretical gap that exists in ascertaining meaning and content of SHRM for teaching and learning purpose, particularly in Sri Lankan context, perhaps in Asian context. This non-traditional but systematic research paper was written to accomplish three objectives: (1) to present definitions of SHRM given by authors of authoritative generalized and specialized textbooks and make a brief descriptive analysis about the definitions explored; (2) to identify and mention various dimensions or aspects of SHRM; and (3) to introduce an adequate and relevant content of SHRM which is useful for teaching and learning purpose particularly in developing country context. The desk research strategy was the strategy adopted for this study and one non-scientific method called authority was applied to carry out the study. 14 textbooks on General HRM having a separate chapter on SHRM and 8 specialized textbooks on SHRM were utilized for the study. An analysis of the contents of writing in defining and logical judgement of the author were executed. 22 contents of defining of SHRM were identified and presented. The analysis of the definitions yielded a list of 18 specific dimensions or characteristics of SHRM suggesting 18 ways of viewing HRM strategically. As topics to be included in a typical syllabus of a course titled SHRM, 15 general items were identified and mentioned.

Key Words: Definition, Learning, Strategic Human Resource Management, Teaching

Introduction

Organizations are indispensable for us as they produce various goods and services needed and wanted by us. Success of any organization largely depends on how it is managed. Managing involves effective and efficient utilization of all the available resources in order to achieve established organizational goals. Success of Organizational Management (OM) does cause to realize the expected success of the organization. It is a well-known fact that HRM is one of the most important functional fields of Organizational Management (Opatha, 2021). Like other fields such as Accounting and Engineering, HRM is being recognized as a prestigious and significant professional field (Arulrajah and Opatha, 2012). It is reiterated that HRM has been a well-recognized profession and a well-established academic discipline being interesting, exciting, and challenging (Opatha, 2019[1]). HRM has already been recognized as a critical branch of the discipline of Management Studies. Opatha and Amaratunge (2021, p. 1) define: *"The discipline of Management Studies (MS) or Management Education (ME) is an extensive and popular field of studies and broadly refers to the system of teaching (1) knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the art and science of managing organizations successfully, (2) ways of managing effects from various external forces, (3) ways of managing organizational impacts on the planet and people, and (4) the characteristics, duties and responsibilities, competencies, careers, and career development of various managers who manage organizations."* As a matter of fact, HRM is being taught and learnt as an essential course for any Business Administration, Management or Management-related Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree as well (Opatha, 2019[2]). Opatha (2021, p. 16) writes: *"Indeed, it is a compulsory course in most of the Degrees of Doctor of Business Administration being offered by recognized universities in Sri Lanka and abroad. It is in fact that there are Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees, and Doctoral Degrees specializing in HRM. Apart from Degrees there are professional programs in HRM. Consequently, at any time of consideration there are a considerable number of students, employees, and professionals studying HRM."* At present Sri Lanka has 17 state universities and about 12 private universities. Almost all the universities teach HRM at least as a course or a subject and there are academics who are specialized as well as generalized ones in the field of HRM. As far as the subject or academic discipline of HRM is concerned, there are several established sub fields or branches some of which include Strategic HRM, International HRM, Sustainable HRM, and Human Capital Management. Among the sub fields or branches, Strategic HRM (SHRM) is of importance.

It is indispensable for the academic or teacher to secure a good and right competence of meaning and content of SHRM. Similarly, it is essential for the student or learner to obtain a sound understanding in respect of meaning and content of SHRM. You being a reader of this article may be an academic in HRM. Let me ask the following questions from you.

1. What is the real and distinct meaning of SHRM?
2. Is there a universally accepted definition or meaning of SHRM?
3. What is the exact content of SHRM to be taught?
4. Are you really confident (having self-efficacy) to teach a separate specialized course or module in SHRM?

5. Do you really perceive that there is a certain content of SHRM that is significantly different and separate from the content of traditional or general HRM to be taught?
6. Is there a sufficient content of SHRM to teach as a separate course or module that has to be delivered in at least ten lectures (to the students who have learnt HRM by taking several specialized courses)?
7. Do you have sufficient, relevant, and useful applications (cases, critical incidents, skill builders etc) in SHRM for the purpose of teaching or instructing?

According to my observations, there are HRM academics and HRM professionals who work as Visiting or Part-Time Lecturers having lack of self-efficacy, ambiguity, and lack of competence. In some cases, specific, distinct, and sound course syllabuses in respect of courses or modules on SHRM are not available. In fact, by the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, I also had a problem of finding a generally accepted meaning of SHRM and a sufficient and distinct content of SHRM for the teaching purpose. One reason was that there were no textbooks exclusively on SHRM, and another reason was that the articles which had been published about SHRM in those years were not sufficient to deliver several lectures in SHRM. If you have a highly specialized competence in Personnel Management or traditional HRM, it is more likely that you are keenly interested in getting acceptable and valid answers for the questions I asked above.

There is no doubt that one of the pioneering textbooks on SHRM is the one written by Professor J.A. Mello titled *Strategic Human Resource Management* first published in 2002. In the preface he (2002, p. v) writes: *"…I was not able to find an appropriate text. Although I found the market flooded with a variety of HR texts, none was a true text in strategic HR. Certain texts had the word "strategic" in their titles, but none provided a truly integrative framework that linked HR practices and programs with the process of strategic management. At best, these books contained a cursory chapter that addressed strategic HR and then abandoned the concept in subsequent chapters in favor of more traditional coverage of HR from the perspective of "personnel administration." At worst, they had no content that related to strategy at all."* In his fourth edition (2015) he writes (p. xii): *"Scholarly HR-related publications continue to thrive, while practitioner-oriented management publications—traditionally dominated by articles focused on marketing and finance—are publishing an increasingly significant number of articles on human resource management, particularly strategic aspects of HR. Within the academy, there continues to be a significant increase in the number of HR-related articles in journals focused on general management and even those related to strategy."* Thus, currently it is possible to observe that a considerable number of textbooks, scholar books, and articles related to SHRM have been published. When considered the current body of knowledge of SHRM, there is a theoretical gap in ascertaining meaning and content of SHRM for teaching and learning purpose, particularly in Sri Lankan context, perhaps in Asian context. Furthermore, it is interesting and scholastically curious to engage in a study of this nature.

Objectives
I set three objectives for writing this theoretical research paper and they are:

1. To present definitions of SHRM given by authors of authoritative generalized and specialized textbooks and make a brief descriptive analysis about the definitions explored.
2. To identify and mention various dimensions or aspects of SHRM.
3. To introduce an adequate and relevant content of SHRM which is useful for teaching and learning purpose particularly in developing country context.

Method

This research paper is non-scientific as it was based on a study carried out by using a major non-scientific method called Authority. According to Davis and Cosenza (1985) and Nazario-Romero (2016) authority is a non-scientific method of acquiring knowledge and it refers to a method of seeking answers from authority or experts on a specific subject. The research strategy adopted for this study was the desk research strategy. In order to accomplish the first objective of this research paper, a rigorous attempt was made to explore the definitions given by experts who are in this context highly and appropriately qualified textbook authors in HRM. Critical and prescriptive approaches were not utilized for dealing with the explored definitions and only a descriptive approach was adopted. In order to select textbooks, I applied the following criteria:

1. Authority: an authoritative textbook was defined as a textbook written by a highly and appropriately qualified person or a team of persons that shows a lot of theoretical and practical understanding. Only such authoritative textbooks were utilized.
2. Language: Only textbooks written and published in English Language were used.
3. Availability: Only textbooks which were physically available to the author in the form of virtual mode or hard copy mode were used.
4. Nature: Books which were published in HRM but not having a separate chapter on SHRM and books which do not contain sufficient standard works for studying HRM without covering essential basics were not considered.
5. Generality: Generalized textbooks in HRM with at least one chapter in respect of SHRM were considered.
6. Specialty: Specialized textbooks with more than one chapter in respect of SHRM were used.

Total number of books on HRM which were examined for selecting the sources for this study were 50 and all were available to the author. The number of textbooks in General HRM having a separate chapter on SHRM which were utilized for the study were 14. The number of specialized textbooks on SHRM which were utilized for the study were 8. For accomplishing the second objective, the contents of writing in defining SHRM published in the textbooks were analyzed. Logical judgement of the author was made by examining the contents of topics of the textbooks and sub topics of the relevant chapters in order to accomplish the third objective. Exhibit 1 presents information that includes the names of the author or authors, year of publication, country of publication, either generalized or specialized of the textbooks used for this paper. The relevant years of the recent editions of some textbooks utilized to confirm the previous defining are further given.

Exhibit 1. Information about the Textbooks used for this Study

No.	Author/s	Year	Country of Publication	Generalized or Specialized
1	Armstrong	2003, 2014	UK	Generalized
2	Fisher, Schoenfeldt, and Shaw	2006	USA	Generalized
3	Beardwell and Claydon	2007,2017	UK	Generalized
4	Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright	2007,2010	USA	Generalized
5	DeNisi and Griffin	2008	USA	Generalized
6	Opatha	2009	Sri Lanka	Generalized
7	Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy	2010, 2016	USA	Generalized
8	Mathis and Jackson	2011, 2017	UK	Generalized
9	Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson	2011, 2020	UK	Generalized
10	Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, and Bulmash	2013	Canada	Generalized
11	Bohlander and Snell	2017	USA	Generalized
12	Aswathappa	2017	India	Generalized
13	Dessler	2017, 2018	USA	Generalized
14	Nankervis, Baird, Coffey, and Shields	2020	Australia	Generalized
15	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna	1984	USA	Specialized
16	Greer	2001	USA	Specialized
17	Mello	2002, 2015	USA	Specialized
18	Anthony, Kacmar, and Perrewe	2006	USA	Specialized
19	Schuler and Jackson	2007	US	Specialized
20	Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher	2012	UK	Specialized
21	Azmi	2019	UK	Specialized
22	Armstrong	2021	UK	Specialized

Definitions of SHRM

A definition is a statement making a concept/construct clear and distinct (Opatha, 2003). It includes a statement that attempts to convey the meaning of a term. Here the term is SHRM. A special matter is worthy of mentioning here that there is no intention of doing a critical examination of the definitions. Only the descriptive approach was applied by giving due respect to all the authors whose writings were instrumental for writing this research paper (not applying critical approach as well as prescriptive approach).

Armstrong (2003), who is a British author, defines SHRM as a term describing an integrated approach to the development of HR strategies that will enable the organization to achieve its goals. This is in his book titled *A handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*, the 9th edition. He (2003, pp. 105-106) writes: *"Strategic HRM is concerned with the relationship between human resource management and strategic management in the firm. Strategic HRM*

refers to the overall direction the organization wishes to pursue in order to achieve its goals through people. It is argued that, because intellectual capital is a major source of competitive advantage, and in the last analysis it is people who implement the strategic plan, top management must take these key considerations fully into account in developing its corporate strategies. Strategic HRM is an integral part of those strategies." Thus, SHRM exists when strategic management is done by linking it with HRM in a firm. SHRM is the overall direction pursued by an organization to achieve its goals through its employees. According to him, the fundamental aim of SHRM is to generate strategic capability by ensuring that the organization has the skilled, committed and well-motivated employees it needs to achieve sustained competitive advantage. In a latest edition of the book written by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) titled *Amstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management,* its 13th edition, SHRM has been defined as an approach that defines how the organization's goals will be achieved through people by means of HR strategies and integrated HR policies and practices. Thus, HR strategies and integrated HR policies and practices are formulated and implemented to achieve goals of the organization. The fundamental aim of SHRM remains the same.

The textbook written by Fisher, Schoenfeldt, and Shaw (2006) carrying the title *Human Resource Management* has a separate chapter on SHRM in which a separate distinct definition has not been formulated. However, they presented two definitions from Walker (1992) and Clark (1993) and they are: (1) SHRM is concerned with the promotion of efficiency and profitability; and (2) SHRM centers on how organizations can improve their competitive performance by considering and utilizing their human resources more effectively. Fisher et al (2006, p. 49) write: *"These definitions seem straightforward, but there is considerable debate about what "helping managers maximize the contribution of employees" or "utilizing their human resources more effectively" really involves. A number of theoretical models have been developed to explain exactly what SHRM requires in an organization and the processes by which SHRM contributes to the bottom-line success of a firm."* The three authors discuss four theoretical perspectives such as universalistic, strategic best-fit, configurational, and resource-based. According to the universalistic perspective, there is one best way to manage employees and SHRM is the process of transforming traditional HR practices into a limited set of 'correct' HR procedures and policies. According to the strategic best-fit perspective, SHRM is about matching specific HR practices to the firm's overall business strategy. The configurational perspective states that various bundles of HR practices go together and, collectively, can improve business performance. The resource-based perspective states that SHRM gives rise to organizational success by enhancing a firm's ability to acquire, develop, utilize, and retain employees with high competence levels relevant to firm activities.

Beardwell and Claydon (2007) wrote a separate chapter (the second chapter) of the book titled *Human Resource Management: A Contemporary Approach* on SHRM and have not given a specific definition of SHRM. They (2007, p. 35) write: *"Indeed, it becomes clear that whether the focus of SHR practices is on alignment with the external context or on the internal context of the firm, the meaning of SHRM can only really be understood in the context of something else, namely organisational performance, whether that be in terms of economic value added and increased shareholder value; customer value added and increased market share or people added*

value through increased employee commitment and reservoirs of employee skills, knowledge and talent." Their writing under introduction to SHRM implies that SHRM makes contributions to organizational performance through increased competitive advantage and added value. Further SHRM practices focus on alignment with the external context or the internal context of the firm. SHRM is more than traditional HRM 'tagged' with the word 'strategic' meaning that it occurs in the 'strategic' context. They presented four approaches which make HRM strategic. They are: (1) the best-fit approach (the close relationship between strategic management and HRM, vertical integration, i.e., HR policies and practices are closely linked with the business objectives); (2) the configurational approach (to have a set of HR practices which are vertically integrated to the business strategy and horizontally integrated with each other for the purpose of gaining maximum performance or synergistic benefits); (3) the resource-based view (to focus on the internal resources of the firm as a key source of competitive advantage, rather than focusing on the fit between the firm and the external business context, human resources that are scarce, valuable, organization-specific and difficult to imitate become key strategic assets); and (4) the best-practice approach (adoption of certain 'best' HR practices would result in enhanced organizational performance, manifested in employee commitment, satisfaction, lower levels of absenteeism and turnover, higher levels of skills and therefore higher productivity, enhanced quality and efficiency). The eighth edition of the book published in 2017 also presents the same which confirms the original defining.

Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2007) discussed SHRM exclusively on a chapter (2nd chapter) of the textbook titled *Human Resource Management: Gaining A Competitive Advantage.* They have defined SHRM as *"the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals."* Further in the summary for the chapter they write that a strategic approach to human resource management seeks to proactively provide a competitive advantage through the company's most important asset: its human resources. A business organization exists in an environment of competition and it has to use physical, organizational, and human resources to compete with other competitive organizations or firms. Thus, the role of SHRM is to ensure that a firm's human resources which include the experience, skill, and intelligence of employees provide a competitive advantage. SHRM takes a strategic approach to managing people at work. When the HRM function is integrally involved in Strategic Management process, SHRM exists. The authors' writing under the introduction to SHRM points out that SHRM gives input into the strategic plan, both in terms of people-related issues and in terms of the ability of the human resource pool to implement particular strategic alternatives; identifies what types of employee skills, behaviors, and attitudes are needed to support the strategic plan; and develop programs to ensure that employees have those skills, behaviors, and attitudes. Their 8th edition of the book (2013) gives the same definition. It is possible to mention here that the definition of SHRM remains as a confirmed definition by the same authors.

DeNisi and Griffin (2008) in their textbook with the title *Human Resource Management* wrote the fourth chapter on the competitive environment. In fact, the chapter is devoted to the SHRM. There is no specific definition of SHRM given by the authors. They (2008, p. 105-106)

write: *"A significant trend in recent years has been for human resource managers to adopt a strategic perspective on their job and to recognize the critical links between organizational strategy and human resource strategy. In this way, it may be possible for an organization to gain a competitive advantage through its management of human resources. …under this new view of human resource management, the human resource manager's job is to help line managers (at all levels) achieve their strategic goals. In this way, the human resource manager adds value to the organization by providing expertise concerning how to use the firm's human resources to accomplish its objectives and gain competitive advantage."* This writing suggests that SHRM is about linking critically HR strategy with organizational strategy, and it involves utilizing human resources to achieve strategic goals of line managers and gain competitive advantage. SHRM starts with an understanding of the organization's purpose and mission and influence of its top management team and culminates with the HR Manager serving as a strategic partner to the operating divisions of the organization (DeNisi and Griffin, 2008).

Opatha (2009), the author of this research paper wrote a separate chapter (21st) on SHRM in his textbook titled *Human Resource Management: Personnel*. He (2009, p. 904) defines: *"It is about development, implementation and on-going maintenance of personnel systems so that the organisation will be able to achieve a competitive advantage or enhance the competitive advantage for a prolonged period of time. It is about formulation and implementation of HR systems which generate appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes, appropriate behaviours such as presence, punctuality, managerial activities etc and appropriate (expected) results (quantity and quality of work) of employees at all levels so that the organisation will be able to achieve vision, mission and strategic goals. The purpose of SHRM is to generate or enhance competitive advantage or support achievement of strategic business needs/goals."* Thus, SHRM refers to formulation, implementation, and constant maintenance of HRM systems in order to create or enhance a sustainable competitive advantage for the organization. It exists to support to achieve strategic needs of the organization. Further, strategic aspect of HRM has four features (1) HRM is a broad approach to managing people at work based on a philosophy of HR; (2) HRM is a major source of competitive advantage. It links to competitive advantage of the organization significantly; (3) HRM policies/functions cohere within themselves and with other functional fields of organisational management; and (4) HRM is fully integrated with the strategy and strategic needs of the organisation.

Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy (2010) in their textbook titled *Managing Human Resources* does not present a definition of SHRM in the relevant (first) chapter title of which is "Meeting Present and Emerging Strategic Human Resource Challenges". Though certain strategic aspects of HRM are discussed in the chapter, a direct defining of SHRM is not found. A careful examination of the content of the chapter reveals that they have discussed various strategic aspects of HRM under the label *Strategic HR Challenges*. One of their previous editions of the same (4th, 2006) too does not present directly a definition of SHRM. However, they have used the terms Human Resource Strategy, Human Resource Tactic, and Strategic Human Resource Planning. They (2010, p. 2) define: *"A **human resource strategy** refers to a firm's deliberate use of human resources to help it gain or maintain an edge against its competitors in the marketplace. It is the grand plan or general approach an organization adopts to ensure that it*

*effectively uses its people to accomplish its mission. A **human resource tactic** is a particular policy or program that helps to advance a firm's strategic goal. Strategy precedes and is more important than tactics."* Thus, two terms such as *strategy* and *tactic* have been used. Strategy is a foremost or central plan or a course of actions adopted to accomplish the organizational mission. Tactic is a particular program to promote or push on a strategic goal of a firm. Further, they (2010, p. 22) write *"To be successful, firms must closely align their HR strategies and programs (tactics) with environmental opportunities, business strategies, and the organization's unique characteristics and distinctive competence. ... The process of formulating HR strategies and establishing programs or tactics to implement them is called **strategic human resource (HR) planning**. When done correctly, strategic HR planning provides many direct and indirect benefits for the company."* This writing indicates that SHRM is strategic human resource planning. It is a process that deals with formulating HR strategies and establishing HR tactics to implement them. Further, it is a close alignment of HR strategies and tactics with environment opportunities, business strategies, the organization's unique characteristics and distinctive competence. A recent edition of the textbook published in 2016 presents the same defining.

Mathis and Jackson (2011) in their textbook titled *Human Resource Management* presents a separate chapter on SHRM in which it has been defined as the use of HRM practices to gain or keep a competitive advantage. Thus, SHRM is for gaining a competitive advantage or keeping a competitive advantage already gained. Further they write that SHRM deals with the contributions that HR strategies make to achieving organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage and how these HR contributions are accomplished. They specified an important element of SHRM and it is to develop processes in the organization that assist to align individual employee performance with the organizational strategic objectives. Their writing indicates that HRM practices such as talent acquisition, talent deployment, talent development and rewarding talent channel employee efforts toward the organizational bottom line. A latest edition of the textbook written by the same authors and additional two new authors (Mathis, Jackson, Valentine, and Meglich, 2017) provides the same definition of SHRM and presents an important assertion that HR should be a strategic partner by providing aspirations to a company and functioning as an inspiration for strategic planning. HR Manager should aspire in ways that support strategy and inspire others to support strategy.

Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011) who are British academics wrote a comprehensive textbook on HRM with the title *Human Resource Management* and that has a separate chapter (third) on SHRM. They do not define SHRM directly. In other words, it is not possible to find a distinct definition of SHRM. However, one summary proposition given by them (p. 73) is that *"It is more helpful to focus on the concept of strategic HRM than on HRM strategy as the former directs us to consider strategic thinking and a strategic orientation, rather than a 'strategy' which is written down and exists as a physical entity."* This indicates that SHRM is adoption of strategic thinking in HRM and is having a strategic orientation. Further they discuss three theoretical perspectives of SHRM, i.e., universalist or best practice; contingency or fit; and the resource-based or human capital view. In the latest edition of the textbook published in 2020 the same has been presented.

Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, and Bulmash (2013), who are Canadian authors, present a definition of SHRM in the first chapter (which is about SHRM) of their book titled *Canadian Human Resource Management*. The definition is that SHRM is systematically linked to the strategic needs of an organization's mission, strategies, and success while meeting the needs of employees and other stakeholders. Further they write that SHRM is a value driven, proactive focus on how best to deploy HR tactics (methods, procedures, or systems) to enable an organization of any size to achieve its goals. Thus, SHRM is integration of HR strategies and systems to support the strategic needs of the organization. They stress that every employee and every HRM system should generate value for the organization.

Bohlander and Snell (2017) whose textbook is *Principles of Human Resource Management* define SHRM in chapter 2 (Human Resources: Strategic Planning) as the pattern of human resources deployments and activities that enable an organization to achieve its strategic goals. They (2017, p.44) write: "*First of all, **strategic planning** involves a set of procedures for making decisions about the organization's long-term goals and strategies. In this chapter, we discuss strategic plans as having a strong external orientation that covers major portions of the organization. The plans especially focus on how the organization will position itself relative to its competitors to ensure its long-term survival, create value, and grow. **Human resources planning (HRP),** by comparison, is the process of anticipating and providing for the movement of people into, within, and out of an organization. Overall, its purpose is to help managers deploy their human resources as effectively as possible, where and when they are needed, to accomplish the organization's goals. **Strategic human resources management (SHRM)** combines strategic planning and HRP. It can be thought of as the pattern of human resources deployments and activities that enable an organization to achieve its strategic goals.*" This writing directly shows that SHRM combines HRP and strategic planning. Strategic planning is a major component of Strategic Management and HRP is a major component or function of HRM. Thus, SHRM makes HRM linked with Strategic Management through HR planning. A careful examination of the entire chapter reveals that SHRM occurs when HRP is performed by combining with strategic planning.

Aswathappa (2017), who is an Indian academic, defines SHRM in the third chapter of his book titled *Human Resource Management* as the process of developing practices, programmes and policies that help achieve organizational objectives. According to him, HRM programmes, policies and practices need to be aligned with organizational strategies. Here organizational objectives should be strategic objectives of the organization.

Dessler (2017) wrote a chapter on HRM Strategy and Analysis in his textbook titled *Human Resource Management* (fifteenth edition) and in the chapter defines SHRM as formulating and executing human resource policies and practices that produce the employee competencies and behaviors the company needs to achieve its strategic aims. Further he (2017, p. 74) writes: "*The basic idea of strategic human resource management is this: In formulating human resource management policies and activities, the manager should aim to formulate policies that produce the employee skills and behaviors that the company needs to achieve its strategic goals.*" A company has its strategic goals realization of which requires particular employee

competencies and behaviours which are created, maintained, and enhanced by HRM policies and activities. Hence, SHRM is there to produce the employee competencies and behaviours needed to achieve the organization's strategic goals through relevant HRM policies and practices. The same defining of SHRM is available in the Indian version of his book with Varkkey (2018). His latest edition published in 2020 presents the same confirming the original defining.

An Australian textbook written by Nankervis, Baird, Coffey, and Shields (2020) with the title *Human Resource Management: Strategy and Practice* was examined. In the glossary, there is a definition for the term SHRM. It is *"A coordinated and integrated approach to HRM which ensures that HRM strategies and processes are aligned with broad organisational goals and strategies."* There is an emphasis for a need for HR plans and strategies to be formulated in line with the organizational strategies and objectives. SHRM should have the focus of contributing to organizational success by ensuring that HR strategies and policies support desired organisational outcomes.

The above-mentioned sources are general HRM textbooks including a chapter on SHRM or with a strategic approach. Next is the defining of SHRM done by the authors of specialized textbooks. Specialized means a book written exclusively for SHRM or having several chapters or all the chapters with regard to SHRM.

Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984) wrote a book titled *Strategic Human Resource Management*. In this book, it is not possible to find a direct and distinct definition of SHRM. According to the first chapter which is on the external context of HRM, technological environment (information processing and automation), economic environment (stagflation, declining productivity, and service economy), social environment (demographics of baby boom, narcissism (individualism), professional labour force, and highly education people), and political environment (interest-group politics, global interdependence, demands for participation, and concern for equity) result in three strategic issues faced by all actors in the operating core of the nation such as industry revitalization (a focus on the decaying industries and the necessity for rebuilding infrastructure), quality of life (a continuing concern with the conditions of work, the tradeoff between family, leisure, and career), and distributive justice (an awareness of the inequities in the social system in the distribution of the two primary scarce resources: money and power). These strategic issues generate the need for SHRM. According to the authors, the emergence of SHRM is a reflection of the converging (coinciding or connecting) trends mentioned above. They conclude that the cutting-edge organization concerned with innovation, productivity, and competitiveness will want to respond with a well-developed and systematic process of SHRM. Their second chapter is on a framework for SHRM according to which, HRM is an integral part of strategic management. They (1984, p. 35) write: *"This framework elaborates the traditional view of how a firm should think about strategic management by including human resource management as an integral tool that managers can use in the strategic arena of their organizations."* Further they write that the critical managerial task is to align HR systems (selection, appraisal, rewards, and development) so that they drive the strategic objectives of the organization.

Greer (2001) wrote a book titled *Strategic Human Resource Management* which deals with the interaction between strategy and human resources, as approached from a general managerial perspective. There is no specific definition given by Greer though some classic definitions given by other authors have been utilized in writing. However, in the summary he (2001, p. 150-151) writes: *"More organizations are recognizing that their human resources provide a source of competitive advantage. This recognition, along with increased environmental uncertainty, greater pressure to control costs, and increased governmental regulation, have elevated the strategic role of human resource management. As a result, there is growing involvement of human resource management in strategy formulation. Where human resources are an organization's source of competitive advantage, human resource management has a critical role of providing "up-front" input in the corporate level strategic planning process. Human resource planning provides another important linkage with organizational strategy by providing input on the availability of critical labor and by adding lead time to deal with shortages and surpluses of employees. Other strategic inputs of the human resource function include environmental scanning and competitive intelligence."* This writing suggests that SHRM is a significant contributor to strategy formulation in an organization. HR planning is critical in contributing to the organizational strategy. According to him, in general, the goal of SHRM is the effective application of human resources to meet organizations' strategic requirements and objectives.

Mello (2002) wrote a specialized textbook for SHRM and its title is *Strategic Human Resource Management*. Though the entire book is about SHRM having 14 chapters presented with strategic focus, an introduction to SHRM was given in chapter 4 with its title THE EVALOVING/STRATEGIC ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. Mello (2002, p. 100) writes: *"Taking a strategic approach to HR management involves abandoning the mindset and practices of "personnel management" and focusing more on strategic issues than operational issues. Strategic HR management involves making the function of managing people the most important priority in the organization and integrating all HR programs and policies within the framework of a company's strategy. Strategic HR management realizes that people make or break an organization because all decisions made regarding finance, marketing, operations, or technology are made by an organization's people."* In his view, the mind set of Personnel Management needs to be relinquished or given up in order to practice SHRM. Personnel Management has a focus on operational issues but SHRM has a focus on strategic issues. Strategy, very simply, is how the organization intends to achieve its goals (Mello, 2002). Owing to SHRM the function of managing people at work gets the most important priority in the organization because all the organizational decisions are made by the employees of the organization. Mello (2002, p. 100) defines clearly: *"Strategic HR management involves the development of a consistent, aligned collection of practices, programs, and policies to facilitate the achievement of the organization's strategic objectives. It considers the implications of corporate strategy for all HR systems within an organization by translating company objectives into specific people management systems. The specific approach and process utilized will vary from organization to organization, but the key concept is consistent; essentially all HR programs and policies are integrated within a larger framework facilitating, in general, the organization's mission and, specifically, its objectives."* Thus, SHRM is about creating a set of consistent and

aligned HRM systems or programs leading to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization. It is strategy-driven managing people at work. It has translating company objectives into specific HR systems. His subsequent editions of the book (2006 and 2015) present the same without any change suggesting the original defining of SHRM is confirmed. The third edition was published in 2011 and which I could not physically observe but I believe that there was the same.

Anthony, Kacmar, and Perrewe (2006) wrote a book with the title *Human Resource Management: A Strategic Approach.* Fifth edition and sixth edition were available physically to the author of this paper. The first chapter is on the strategic approach to HRM according to which the strategic approach to HRM applies the concept of strategy to managing a firm's human resources and the concept of strategy has been defined as the formulation of organizational missions, goals, and objectives, as well as action plans for achievement, that explicitly recognize the competition and the impact of outside environmental forces. With a surprise that it was found that the authors did not give a distinct definition of SHRM. An examination of the sixth edition (2010) also does reveal so. However, the first chapter presents six key elements which exist in the strategic approach to HRM. These key elements have also been considered by the authors as characteristics. They include (1) explicit recognition of the impact of the outside environment, (2) explicit recognition of the impact of competition and the dynamics of the labor market, (3) long-range focus (3 to 5 years), (4) choice and decision-making focus, (5) consideration of all personnel, not just hourly or operational employees, and (6) integration with overall corporate strategy.

Schuler and Jackson (2007) edited a book on SHRM and they (2007, p. xiii-xiv) preface: *"The second transformation, as the first transformation, has built on, rather than replaced, the preceding knowledge base of the discipline. This transformation is based upon the recognition that, in addition to coordinating human resource policies and practices with each other, they need to be coordinated, or linked, with the needs of the organization. Given that these needs are reflected in discussions of the major issues and directions of the organization, i.e., the strategy of the firm, this transformation of "human resource management" came to be known as "strategic human resource management."* According to the authors of the book (in fact the editors) over the past years there were two major transformations: the first one from being the field of 'personnel management' to being the field of 'human resource management' and the second one from being the field of 'human resource management' to being the field of 'strategic human resource management'. When HR policies and practices are linked with the strategy of the organization SHRM comes to play. In Chapter 10 of the book the authors present a quarter-century review of HRM in the US. They (2007, p. 216) write: *"In sum, strategic human resource management is about:*
- *Vertical integration—understanding the organization and its context;*
- *Horizontal integration—creating coherent HRM systems;*
- *Demonstrating effectiveness—showing how HRM systems affect organizational performance;*
- *Partnership—HR professionals working cooperatively with line managers as well as with nonmanagement employees."*

According to the authors, the first task of SHRM, i.e., vertical integration is essential to do the next task of SHRM, i.e., developing a coherent HRM system. For this vertical integration HR policies and practices need to be aligned with an organization's strategic objectives. When HR policies and practices are aligned to form a coherent system, horizontal integration is achieved. Demonstrating HRM effectiveness involves the use of monetary criteria and satisfying multiple stakeholders. Partnership involves a concept called HR Triad. It is to describe the three key partners involved in effective HR partnerships, i.e., employees (and union representatives), line managers, and HR professionals.

The book written by Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012) has the title *Strategic Human Resource Management*. Although the book is a specialized one on SHRM it is not possible to find a distinct definition developed by the authors in the chapters. Five definitions of SHRM given by other authors with the authors' interpretation have been given in Chapter 5 which is on the foundations of SHRM. In the chapter the authors (2012, p. 99) conclude: *"Ultimately, there are useful elements to both views; as Boxall and Purcell (2008) argue, it is helpful to differentiate between the surface level and the underpinning layers of SHRM. At the surface level, where we are concerned primarily with HR policies and practices, there is certainly merit in trying to adopt best-practice approaches, for example, to use generally advocated approaches to interviewing. However, there is also an underpinning layer, where the focus is more on the particularities of the organization, on examining how the overarching approach to SHRM contributes to organizational success, and it is here that the contingency framework may be most usefully applied."* Thus, there are two elements, i.e., surface level and underpinning layer. Surface level is concerned with HR policies and practices which are best for all organizations while the underpinning layer is concerned with linking HR strategies with business and corporate strategies. The former is about the universalist approaches which suggest that there are best practices to be adopted by all organizations. The latter is about the contingency approaches which suggest that HRM strategies should fit with organizational strategies and other organizational factors.

Azmi (2019) in her book titled *Strategic Human Resource Management* defines that SHRM is basically concerned with the integration of HRM with the strategic management process. She points out that SHRM is a term that is being widely used in the literature of Management. According to her, SHRM generally involves applying employees effectively to meet an organization's strategic objectives.

Armstrong (2021) published the 7th edition of its original book titled *Human Resource Management: Strategy & Action*. The title of the seventh edition is *Amstrong's Handbook of Strategic Human Resource Management*. He (2021, p. 1) defines SHRM in Introduction: *"SHRM focuses on the need to ensure that the organization's goals are achieved through its human resources by means of the integration of HR strategies with the business strategy and with each other. It is based on the fundamental proposition that the human resources of an organization play a strategic role."* SHRM is about improving business performance through strategic people management. It is concerned with HR strategies and their fitting with the business strategy of the firm and the fitting among HR strategies. On page 38 he writes: *"The*

fundamental purpose of strategic HRM is to generate strategic capability by ensuring that the organization has the skilled, committed and well-motivated employees it needs to achieve sustained competitive advantage. It has two further aims: first, to achieve fit or integration – fitting or aligning HR strategies vertically with business strategies and integrating HR strategies with one another – and second, to provide a sense of direction in an often turbulent environment so that the business needs of the organization and the individual and collective needs of its employees can be met by the development and implementation of coherent and practical HR policies and programmes." Thus, SHRM is for achieving sustained competitive advantage. Further it is about meeting not only the organizational needs, but individual and collective employee needs through HR policies and programmes which are coherent and practical.

Dimensions or Aspects of SHRM

A careful examination of the contents of writing in defining SHRM (hereafter, for easiness, 'the definitions' is used for 'the contents of writing in defining') was done and it reveals that though the definitions given by various authors are dissimilar, they become similar to an extent that is more or less. At least one aspect of the content domain of the meaning included in the definitions become convergent. Basically, SHRM is the application of certain strategies and tactics for managing employees in an organization to achieve its strategic needs (vision, mission, and strategic objectives).

Refer to Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3. Exhibit 2 presents dimensions or aspects derived from the definitions given in the general HRM textbooks while Exhibit 3 presents dimensions (also called characteristics) derived from the definitions given in the specialized SHRM textbooks. In this context dimension, aspect or a characteristic refers to a feature that is belonging typically to the definition (Opatha, 2021).

Exhibit 2. Dimensions derived from the Definitions given in General HRM Textbooks

No.	Author/s	Dimensions or Aspects
1	Armstrong (2003)	1. Developing HR strategies which will enable the organization to achieve its goals. 2. Taking HR considerations fully into account in developing corporate strategies.
2	Fisher, Schoenfeldt, and Shaw (2006)	1. The universalistic perspective (there is one best way to manage employees and SHRM is the process of transforming traditional HR practices into a limited set of 'correct' HR procedures and policies). 2. The strategic best-fit perspective (SHRM is about matching specific HR practices to the firm's overall business strategy). 3. The configurational perspective (various bundles of HR practices go together and, collectively, can improve business performance). 4. The resource-based perspective (SHRM gives rise to organizational success by enhancing a firm's ability to

		acquire, develop, utilize, and retain employees with high competence levels relevant to firm activities).
3	Beardwell and Claydon (2007)	1. The best-fit approach (the close relationship between strategic management and HRM, vertical integration, i.e., HR policies and practices are closely linked with the business objectives). 2. The configurational approach (to have a set of HR practices which are vertically integrated to the business strategy and horizontally integrated with each other for the purpose of gaining maximum performance or synergistic benefits). 3. The resource-based view (to focus on the internal resources of the firm as a key source of competitive advantage, rather than focusing on the fit between the firm and the external business context, human resources that are scarce, valuable, organization-specific and difficult to imitate become key strategic assets). 4. The best-practice approach (adoption of certain 'best' HR practices would result in enhanced organizational performance, manifested in employee commitment, satisfaction, lower levels of absenteeism and turnover, higher levels of skills and therefore higher productivity, enhanced quality and efficiency).
4	Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2007)	1. To ensure that a firm's human resources which include the experience, skill, and intelligence of employees provide a competitive advantage. 2. The HRM function is integrally involved in Strategic Management process.
5	DeNisi and Griffin (2008)	1. Linking critically HR strategy with organizational strategy. 2. Utilizing human resources to achieve strategic goals of line managers and gain competitive advantage.
6	Opatha (2009)	1. A broad approach to managing people at work based on a philosophy of HR. 2. A major source of competitive advantage. 3. HRM policies or functions cohere within themselves and with other functional fields of organisational management. 4. Fully integration of HRM with the strategy and strategic needs of the organization.
7	Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy (2010)	1. SHRM is strategic human resource planning. 2. A close alignment of HR strategies and tactics with environment opportunities, business strategies, the organization's unique characteristics and distinctive competence.

8	Mathis and Jackson (2011)	1. Using HRM practices to gain or keep a competitive advantage. 2. Developing processes in the organization that assist to align individual employee performance with the organizational strategic objectives.
9	Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011)	1. SHRM is adoption of strategic thinking in HRM and is having a strategic orientation. 2. Universalist or best practice perspective. 3. Contingency or fit perspective. 4. Resource-based or human capital view.
10	Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, and Bulmash (2013)	1. A value driven, proactive focus on how best to deploy HR tactics (methods, procedures, or systems) to enable an organization of any size to achieve its goals. 2. Integration of HR strategies and systems to support the strategic needs of the organization.
11	Bohlander and Snell (2017)	Making HRM linked with Strategic Management through HR planning.
12	Aswathappa (2017)	Aligning HRM programmes, policies and practices with organizational strategies.
13	Dessler (2017)	Producing the employee competencies and behaviours needed to achieve the organization's strategic goals through relevant HRM policies and practices.
14	Nankervis, Baird, Coffey, and Shields (2020)	Aligning HRM strategies and processes with broad organisational goals and strategies.

Exhibit 3. Dimensions derived from the Definitions given in Specialized HRM Textbooks

No.	Author/s	Dimensions or Aspects
1	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984)	1. Being an integral part of strategic management. 2. Aligning HR systems (selection, appraisal, rewards, and development) so that they drive the strategic objectives of the organization.
2	Greer (2001)	Linking human resource planning with organizational strategy.
3	Mello (2002)	Creating a set of consistent and aligned HRM systems or programs leading to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization.
4	Anthony, Kacmar, and	1. Explicit recognition of the impact of the outside environment. 2. Explicit recognition of the impact of competition and the dynamics of the labor market.

	Perrewe (2006)	3. Long-range focus (3 to 5 years). 4. Choice and decision-making focus. 5. Consideration of all personnel, not just hourly or operational employees. 6. Integration with overall corporate strategy.
5	Schuler and Jackson (2007)	1. Vertical integration (understanding the organization and its context). 2. Horizontal integration (creating coherent HRM systems). 3. Demonstrating effectiveness (showing how HRM systems affect organizational performance). 4. Partnership (HR professionals working cooperatively with line managers as well as with nonmanagement employees).
6	Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012)	1. Having HR policies and practices which are best for all organizations. 2. Linking HR strategies with business and corporate strategies.
7	Azmi (2019)	The integration of HRM with the strategic management process.
8	Armstrong (2021)	1. Achieving sustained competitive advantage. 2. Fitting HR strategies with the business strategy of the firm 3. Fitting among HR strategies

An attempt was made to build a list of dimensions or aspects of SHRM based on the dimensions presented in Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3. Dimensions which were thought to be similar or same were removed in order to avoid the duplications. Some dimensions were modified so that they could be more understandable or lucid. Furthermore, it should be noted that the dimensions have been given in the list by not following the order of presenting them in the Exhibits.

1. SHRM is a broad approach to managing people at work based on a philosophy of HR.
2. SHRM involves the consideration of HRM as a major source of competitive advantage. It is about using HRM practices to gain or keep a competitive advantage.
3. SHRM includes integrating HRM into Strategic Management. It is incorporation of HRM into Strategic Management process.
4. SHRM is aligning HR Strategy (HRS) or strategies with Corporate Strategy (CS) or strategies.
5. SHRM is aligning HR Strategy (HRS) or strategies with Competitive Business Strategy (CBS) or strategies.
6. It deals with linking HR planning with Organizational Strategy (OS).
7. It includes aligning HR systems (selection, appraisal, rewards, and development) so that they drive the strategic objectives of the organization.
8. It involves formulation and implementation of various bundles of HR practices which go together and, collectively, can improve business performance.

9. It is about producing the employee competencies and behaviours needed to achieve the organization's strategic goals through relevant HRM policies and practices.
10. SHRM is the adoption of one best way to manage employees and it is the process of transforming traditional HR practices into a limited set of 'correct' HR policies, procedures, and practices.
11. It has an explicit recognition of the impact of the outside environment including an explicit recognition of the impact of competition and the dynamics of the labor market.
12. It is about focusing on the internal resources of the firm as a key source of competitive advantage, rather than focusing on the fit between the firm and the external business context. It is acquiring and keeping employees who are scarce, valuable, organization-specific and difficult to imitate.
13. It includes HRM policies or functions that cohere within themselves and with other functional fields of Organisational Management.
14. It shows how HRM systems affect organizational performance.
15. It has an approach of partnership, i.e., HR professionals should work cooperatively with line managers as well as with nonmanagement employees.
16. It has a long-range focus (3 to 5 years).
17. It has choice and decision-making focus.
18. It has a consideration of all personnel, not just hourly or operational employees.

The above listed 18 dimensions can be considered as the dimensions or aspects or features of SHRM for study and research purpose. Thus, it is possible to consider HRM in multiple ways from strategic perspective. If a question like "what is strategic in HRM?" is asked, what would be the answer. The answer must have a certain content that derives from the above-mentioned 18 dimensions. Logically it is possible to mention here that these multiple ways or dimensions are the specific aspects to be taught by the relevant teacher under the course or subject called SHRM. Thus, SHRM can be viewed as:

1. A broad approach to managing people at work based on a philosophy of HR.
2. A major source of competitive advantage.
3. An integral part of Strategic Management process.
4. As a systematic attempt to align or link HR Strategy with Corporate Strategy.
5. As a systematic attempt to align HR Strategy with Competitive Business Strategy.
6. As a practice of linking HR planning with Organizational Strategy.
7. As an approach to aligning HR systems (selection, appraisal, rewards, and development) in order to drive the strategic objectives of the organization.
8. As a system involved in formulation and implementation of various HR bundles to improve business performance.
9. As a process of producing the employee competencies and behaviours needed to achieve the organization's strategic goals through relevant HRM policies and practices.
10. As one best way of managing employees with a limited set of 'correct' HR policies, procedures, and practices.

11. As an adjustment effort of fitting HRM with the impact of various forces of the outside environment.
12. As a process of acquiring and keeping employees who are scarce, valuable, organization-specific and difficult to imitate.
13. As a process of making HRM policies or functions coherent within themselves and with other functional fields of Organisational Management.
14. As a process of measuring how HRM systems affect organizational performance.
15. As an approach of partnership among HR professionals, line managers, and nonmanagement employees to do HRM.
16. As a long-range focus.
17. As having choice and decision-making focus.
18. As a managerial work for all personnel.

Teaching Content

The above-mentioned dimensions identified from an analysis of the definitions of SHRM will become teaching or learning units or lessons of the content of SHRM. Thus, 18 units or lessons become available. Under the content of SHRM defining SHRM, differentiating it from HRM or PM, and importance of SHRM should be included in addition to the eighteen dimensions. Based on my experience of teaching it is good to teach SHRM after teaching General HRM. By General HRM I mean Personnel Management (PM) which includes traditional aspects of managing people at work. Generally accepted teaching and learning content of PM includes introducing the field of HRM, an analysis of HR Department, and HRM functions. There are 18 functions of HRM starting with job design and ending with labour relations (Opatha, 2009). After reading for general HRM the student will be in a better position of understating SHRM. Thus, a course on General HRM is a prerequisite for a course on SHRM. I believe that teaching SHRM can be performed in three different ways: (1) as a topic in a course titled HRM; (2) as a module in a course titled Advanced HRM; and (3) as a separate course titled SHRM. When SHRM is taught as only a topic, 3-hour lecture is believed to be sufficient. In case of a module of SHRM, doing several lectures becomes essential and at least five lectures (each in 3-hour) are recommended to be done. When SHRM is taught as a separate full course, then more than five lectures will be needed to be done. At least 10 lectures will have to be delivered. Based on my experience and understanding SHRM is to be taught as an advanced module or course for students who specialize in HRM. It can be taught as a topic for students who do not specialize in HRM.

A specified course content was developed by basing on the relevant literature and it is given in Exhibit 4. This course content can be recommended as a typical content or brief syllabus of a course on SHRM.

Exhibit 4: A Specified Course Content

Number	Specified Teaching or Learning Unit/Lesson	Source/s
1	Introduction to SHRM (Definitions of SHRM, Features or Dimensions of SHRM, Importance of SHRM or Reasons for Managing Employees Strategically etc)	Anthony, Kacmar, and Perrewe (2006); Opatha (2009); Azmi (2019)
2	SHRM Environment (Business Environment, The Systems Concept, External, Internal, and Global Environments)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Greer (2001); Mello (2002); Azmi (2019)
3	Strategic Management (Models of Strategy, The Process of Strategic Management, Creativity & Innovations and Privatization as Components of Strategy, etc)	Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012); Mello (2002)
4	Theoretical Perspectives of SHRM (Universalistic approaches, Contingency Approaches, and Resource-based Approach)	Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012)
5	Integration (Incorporation of HRM into Strategic Management process, The Role of HRM in Strategy Formulation, Implementation, and Evaluation, etc)	Greer (2001); Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2007); Opatha (2009)
6	Alignment (HR Strategy, Organizational Strategy, Corporate Strategy, Business Strategy, The Alignment Model by Stewart and Brown, etc)	Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2007); Stewart and Brown (2009); Opatha (2019[3])
7	Coherence (Coherence among HRM Schemes, Coherence between HRM Schemes or Functional Strategies and Other OM Fields, Coherence between HRM Functional Strategies or Schemes and the External Environment)	Guest (1989); Schuler (1992); Opatha (2009); Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy (2012); (Opatha, 2019)
8	Strategic Staffing (Strategic Workforce Planning, Strategic Recruitment, Strategic Selection, and Strategic Hiring & Induction)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Mello (2002); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012); Azmi (2019)
9	Strategic Performance Management (Strategic Choices in Performance Management Systems, Merit System, Parity System, The Appraisal System as a Strategic Control, Strategies for Improving Performance Management Systems, etc)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Mello (2002)

10	Strategic Human Resource Development (Strategic Training, Strategic Development, Strategic Career Management, Unlearning and Relearning, etc)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Mello (2002); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012); Azmi (2019)
11	Strategic Rewards Management (Relationship to Strategic Planning, Design Options, Structural Decisions, Process Issues & Reward Administration, Reward System Congruence, Managerial Compensation, Designing an Effective Compensation Strategy, etc)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Mello (2002); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012);
12	Strategic Labour and Employee Relations (Strategic Issues in Labour Relations, Productivity Management through Quality of Work Life Programs, etc)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Mello (2002); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012); Azmi (2019)
13	SHRM and Performance (Findings of Research on the Impact of SHRM on Performance, Evaluation of HRM-Performance Research, the Practicalities of Measuring SHRM Outcomes, HRM Audit, etc)	Schuler and Jackson (2007); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012)
14	Global Dimensions (Global Presence and Global Competitive Advantage, HR Strategy in International Context, Reframing Global Mindset, and Other Aspects)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Mello (2002); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012); Armstrong (2021)
15	Other Issues (Productivity and Quality Improvement, Digital Strategy, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Employee Engagement, Knowledge Management, Management of Change, and the Reality of SHRM)	Fombrun, Tichy, and Devanna (1984); Mello (2002); Truss, Mankin, and Kelliher (2012); Armstrong (2021)

It is important to draw the attention to item 15 in Exhibit 4. At an academic setting where there are only two HRM courses to be read by students then item 15 (Other Issues) can be taught and learnt in a course titled SHRM. However, at an academic setting where there are many HRM courses to be read by students (e.g., students specializing HRM, reading for a Degree in HRM), it is suggested to include item 15 in a course titled Contemporary HRM. The reason is that to include the items from 1 to 14 given in Exhibit 4 in a course titled SHRM is adequate. If a kind of order for teaching purpose is sought to the above specified content, the given numbering as they are can be used. It means that the first lecture is to be delivered in respect of item 1 and then the second lecture on item 2 and so on.

Concluding Remarks

A systematic attempt was made to explore and analyze a collection of definitions of SHRM, to identify specific dimensions or aspects of SHRM, and then to find a right content for the purpose of teaching and learning SHRM. Thus, there were three objectives established for writing this non-conventional research paper. I believe that these three objectives could be achieved filling a performance gap in the teaching and learning of SHRM in a developing country context, particularly in Sri Lanka. The relevant writings on defining of SHRM in 22 textbooks were identified and presented. The analysis of the definitions resulted in identifying 18 specific dimensions or characteristics of SHRM. Thus, in 18 ways it is possible to view HRM strategically. 15 general items were identified and mentioned as topics to be included in a typical syllabus in respect of a course titled SHRM. I believe that the paper is of utility for academics and professionals who are supposed to teach SHRM. The paper is instrumental in delivering an increased understanding of defining SHRM in detail to teachers in SHRM. When the lecturer acquires an increased understanding in defining it will lead to increase his or her clarifying dimension of lecturing behaviour, which significantly and positively impacts on student satisfaction of learning (Opatha, 2020). Indeed, the paper is of utility for students to learn the overview or the 'Big Picture' of SHRM.

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