STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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THE ARMY'S SOLDIER LIFE CYCLE MODEL: VALID FOR THE OBJECTIVE FORCE?

BY

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ABSTRACT

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In the summer of 2001, at the conclusion of an Army Science Board presentation on the Objective Force Soldier, the late DCSPER requested a review of the Army's human resource (HR) model, the Soldier Life Cycle Functions model. This paper attempts, in part, to respond to that request. It reviews the definition of a model and determining model validity. It highlights the known HR requirements of the Objective Force and future developments in the field of Human Resource Management. It includes an examination of HR functions and Human Resource Strategy. It reviews three HR models: the current DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model, an HR model offered by Ralph Christensen, as well as another HR model provided by Catherine Truss and Lynda Gratton. These models were evaluated against the criteria of: the ability to tie into an overarching business strategy, simplicity, interdependency of HR functions, flexibility to meet the demands of HR in the future, and the demonstration of the link between the tactical and strategic levels of management. This research offers an interim approach to an HR model for the Objective Force as the Objective Force further unfolds.

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THE ARMY'S SOLDIER LIFE CYCLE MODEL: VALID FOR THE OBJECTIVE FORCE?

In the summer of 2001, the United States Army's late Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER), attended an Army Science Board briefing entitled "Manpower and Personnel for Soldier Systems in the Objective Force." During the course of this presentation, he gained some insights regarding the human resource (HR) needs of the Army's upcoming Objective Force. As part of the discussions, he also gleaned information concerning demographics, projected behavior characteristics, and education levels of the youth who will field the Objective Force.

One of the issues discussed concerned the individual attributes, knowledge, and skills required of Objective Force soldiers. The Science Board pointed out that the soldier required to transform the Army to the Objective Force will require diverse abilities, ranging from the simple hand eye coordination required to fire a rifle to the complex (e.g. multi-dimensional problem solving). This soldier must be able to operate alone, yet possess the skills necessary to build teams and facilitate group collaboration. Technological fluency will set him apart from his adversary.[1]

The Science Board concluded its presentation by pointing out that the Army has yet to focus on the recruiting and training requirements necessary to meet the needs of the Objective Force. It made its point by using the current DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model (the HR model that the Army has used since the early 1980's) to highlight the challenges that must be addressed in recruiting, assigning and sustaining the soldiers of the Objective Force.[2]

These discussions, while calling for action in some aspects of Army HR, piqued a deeper concern on the part of the DCSPER. At the conclusion of the presentation, he turned to his Strategic Planner and remarked, "We need more study on whether or not the Army Soldier Life Cycle functions model is valid for the 21st Century."[3] In making this comment, he took the matters presented by the Science Board beyond recruiting, assigning, and sustaining soldiers. The issue for the DCSPER became how to approach holistic human resource management (HRM) for the Objective Force.

To meet the desire for a comprehensive assessment of the Army's current HR community requires much study. This research should be considered an interim step in that great undertaking as it explores options for an HR model that the Army can use in its transition to the Objective Force. This paper provides some background on the use of models and how best to determine their validity. It then examines the future of the field of HR, to include the implementation of a human resource strategy (HRS) as well as HR's underlying functions. In

offering alternatives for an interim HR model for the Objective Force, it examines the current DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model and two other HR models found in the current literature. The models selected for analysis resulted from an examination of no less than 15 HR constructs. Their inclusion in this paper attests to their ability to stand alone as models since they do not require specific knowledge or understanding of a unique corporation or industry.

WHAT IS A MODEL?

For the scientist, a model is a tool that assists in making predictions in experiments.[4] Ben Franklin used a model in this way when he validated his hypothesis that canal boats travel slower in shallower water. By constructing a model of a boat canal wherein he could adjust the water level while sustaining the force required to move the boat, he concluded that boats, in fact, did travel slower in shallower water. His efforts did not explain why the depth of the water affected the speed of the boat, just that this event did take place. (Further research revealed the cause of this phenomena. Room must exist for the water displaced by the boat's hull to move from the front to the back of the boat).[5]

For the problem solver, a model becomes a concrete representation of an abstract problem. Mathematicians, physicists, and architects often turn to models to help them in their daily work. Whether dealing with simple algebraic equations, attempting to explain the vast reaches of the cosmos or demonstrating spatial relationships, they rely on models. Their work frequently involves dealing with matters that have complex interdependent relationships or elements that do not progress in a linear fashion. Diagrams and other graphic products often display the results of their work.[6]

For individuals in their daily lives, models aid with planning. Few make transportation arrangements without thinking of how much time it will take to get from one location to another. The model distance = rate x time provides a framework to help plan. So, too, those who concern themselves with their weight know all too well that weight gain is a function of exercise and caloric intake.

For business managers, models can provide:

- Better process understanding
- Process control
- Predictions of future process performance
- Measurement of the effects of process change
- Process management and improvement[7]

Organizational behavior experts see models as a map people use in their daily reasoning. They represent, in essence, the interaction between people and process.[8]

In the field of human resource management (HRM), there are three types of models:

- Normative. Models that map how the HRM process should work. Often times these models show a linkage between the organization's overarching strategy and its human resource strategy. This type of model is the one normally discussed in the literature.
- Empirical. HR models derived from empirical research. These models seek to take into account both the internal and external environment in which the organization operates. They are relatively scarce. (The Army, however, has used this type of HR modeling in developing plans for its drawdown in the early 1990's.)[9]
- Conceptual/theoretical. Models that attempt to explain the existence of an HRM system based on analysis of a series of variables. These limited-in-scope models only work in growth industries with a white-collar, labor-intensive, work force.[10]

Additionally, any HR model should address these five key aspects of HRM: [11]

- External environment. The opportunities and constraints in which an organization must perform its HRM.
- Business strategy. The overall strategic aims of the organization that both affect and are affected by the HRM process.
- Internal environment. The organizational context in which HRM operates, including structure and culture.
- Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM). This includes both the human resource strategy (HRS) and the practices or functions of HR managers.
- Outcomes. The notion of what comes out of the process of SHRM.

WHAT MAKES A MODEL VALID?

With models operating at numerous levels, we must then ask what makes a model valid. The intuitive answer to the question is, "does it work?" Does it do what it was intended to do? For Ben Franklin, his model demonstrated time and again that a boat pulled with the same force would move at differing speeds depending on the depth of the water that it occupies. For the problem solver, if the matter at hand is either resolved or people are enabled to better grasp the issue at hand, the model has accomplished its mission. For families who look to models to assist in daily living, the model has achieved success if they get the help afforded by it. For the business manager, the model has validity if it does one of the five things highlighted above. The

organizational behaviorist also feels that if the model facilitates the understanding of the team, it has proven its usefulness.[12]

Critical thinkers have added to this field and judge a model's success or failure based on whether or not it is coherent, logical, realistic and practical.[13] They, too, concern themselves with the issue of whether the model possesses the depth and breadth to address the matter.[14] Models should also pass the test of simplicity and usefulness, taking into consideration the perspective of the audience for which they were developed.[15]

The field of Human Resource Management struggles with what criteria should apply to its models. The challenge is two fold -- one of determining what makes a model successful and the other being how to measure the model's effectiveness. Determinations of whether an HR model achieved its aims vary greatly depending on the location of the individuals making the determination. (Management's view of an HR model's success or failure might be quite different from that of labor.) The time lag between formulating a human resource strategy and observing its results further complicates assessments of an HR model's effectiveness.[16] Notwithstanding the challenge of "validating" an HR model, it can still serve as a construct to better understand the process of HRM.

Based on the literature, the Army's HR model for the Objective Force should then be a normative model that explains how the HR management process works in light of the Army's Objective Force Strategy. It should be simple and useful and highlight HR efforts in light of the Army's internal and external environments. It should include HR functions and some notion of the outcomes of the HR process. In order then to build an HR model for the Objective Force, it becomes important to understand the environment in which it must operate. This includes not only the future HR concerns of the Objective Force, but also the future of HR. From this understanding the focus can shift to an Objective Force HR model.

FUTURE HR CONCERNS SURROUNDING THE OBJECTIVE FORCE

The Army's White Paper on the Objective Force outlines what the Army requires of its soldiers in the future. They will: know and live the Army values, be disciplined, be physically tough and mentally conditioned for combat, have perseverance, demonstrate competence in doctrine, and possess the will to win. Additionally, they must be expert in the use of emerging technologies and trained for a full range of operations. Furthermore, they must have the "moral determination to kill our enemies as readily as alleviate the suffering of innocents."[17]

To date, little else has been prescribed by the Army's leadership as to the requirements of the human aspects of the Objective Force. Others in the HR field have, while not specifically

highlighting the Objective Force, provided some additional insight on the challenges that await the Army in the field of HRM.

Curtis L. Gilroy and W.S. Sellman, in an article submitted for the 2010 Army Conference on "Future Soldiers and the Quality Imperative," touched on the aspects of the Army's internal HR environment by noting these concerns:

- The Army must recognize the fragile nature of the "All Volunteer Force" and never take it for granted. The Army, too, must maintain constant vigilance for signs of personnel "hollowness," understand the balance between enlistments and the civilian labor market and keep watch over significant indicators. (In 2015 the Army will have a smaller pool of potential recruits than it does today.)[18]
- The Army must continue to focus on "quality" and seek to determine how much it will pay for this attribute in light of how much it can afford.
- The Army must focus on resources to sustain a quality force. If that means placing more recruiters in the marketplace in order to obtain quality soldiers who are willing to go the distance in the Army, so be it.
- The Army must use substantive analyses for personnel management policy formulation. This means it must continue to build models and simulations in recruiting, selection, assignment and retention that are defensible in theory and in practice.[19]

John Butler, in his paper for that same conference, offered some additional insights about the Army's external environment that will also affect society during the fielding of the Objective Force.[20] He notes that society will continue its shift from industrial age to information age. He believes that Gen Xers will replace Baby Boomers in corporate leadership positions. He senses that innovation will play a large role in an organization's success. He also highlights the fact that females will continue to play a more dominant role in the workplace.

In contrast to these intuitive ideas, Butler provided some projections about the future that may present some challenges in developing an Objective Force HR strategy. "... Intuition ... long accepted in sports, will be recognized as a powerful management tool....vision, which is unsupported by data, will be accepted as a legitimate tool of management."[21]

Gilroy and Sellman, along with the Army Science Board, also call for the implementation of motor skills testing for the Objective Force.[22]

The absence of clarity about the HR aspects of the Objective Force complicates the development of an Objective Force HR model. Furthermore, future developments within the HR community also impact the effort.

THE FUTURE OF HR

Stern and Associates, a California based HR consulting firm, noted that many have called for the elimination of HRM. They state, "HR has built a 'functional' fortress, ripe for the reengineering wrecking ball."[23] They believe HRM only deals with a multitude of sub-specializations (e.g., compensation, benefits, training, employment) and sub-sub-specializations (e.g. international compensation, health care insurance, computer assisted learning and psychological testing). They argue that in this regard, HR provides no value added to the organization. In light of this, Stern and Associates has called for a renewal of the HR department. This effort requires a holistic undertaking in order to outline all the connections between HRM and the activities and processes of a business enterprise. In their view, HR managers must play an essential role in an organization as they support their customers (both internal and external). HR must also operate in an environment of service, quality and productivity.[24] They have not been alone in their thoughts.[25]

Wayne Anderson agrees with Stern and Associates' assessment of HR. He also argues that while HR has a valid need to exist, it must reexamine itself in order to succeed in the future. He believes that HR managers in the 21st Century must focus on three things:

- Basics. HR still has the lead in recruiting, hiring, paying, developing, motivating, utilizing, and terminating individuals. (He argues that contracting out these types of functions may not solve the HR challenge of tomorrow.)
- Ombudsman Role. HR will continue to work with employees and management in reviewing, counseling, conducting confidential discussions, or working other people issues. HR's primary role, however, remains that of supporting management to execute the organization's strategy.
- Integration. This involves melding together finance, operations, and people in a manner to enhance an organization's competitive advantage.

Anderson's bottomline, "... if [HR] can't articulate a specific strategy or objective for every HR practice, principle, program, or process, [HR] should stop doing it immediately." [26] This effort must be undertaken at every level of the organization so that valid HR strategies exist at both the strategic and tactical levels. He feels that whatever people programs and practices an organization uses "... they must be aligned with business strategy and ... be supported by management...."[27] When management opts to implement people strategies, HR must provide the right tools and tactics to accomplish the effort.[28]

Miles and Snow echo Anderson's approach that HR must link with the organization's overall business strategy and offer these four principles for HRM: [29]

- HR managers must know conceptually the HR functions.
- HR departments must understand strategic planning and continually participate in the planning process to assess the probable demand for their units' services and help line executives trace the human resource implications of their strategic decisions.
- HR departments must build strategies that match the organization's strategy.
- HR departments must act as the organization's internal consultant in matters of organizational structure, management process and organizational change and development.

As HR changes in the coming years, it will need strategies and operations at the tactical and strategic levels. Any HR model for the Objective Force should then include this aspect and provide for and link HRS at both the tactical and strategic levels.

HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY

As the Army seeks to develop its Objective Force, HR leaders must not lose sight of the fact that the Army will use transformation as a vehicle to the Objective Force. To accomplish transformation requires a juggling act. Enhancements to current HR operations must take place while the Army evolves different and/or new ways to conduct HR business across both the strategic and tactical operations of the Army. The challenge for the Army's HR community today becomes one of developing an HR model and an HRS that has the flexibility to adapt to an emerging Objective Force strategy.

For the Army to field its Objective Force, it must link its overarching strategy with its HRS. Army leaders repeatedly articulate that the Army <u>is</u> its people. An HR model can demonstrate this by showing a set of decisions or factors that shape and guide the management of HR functions in an organizational context. The model can directly relate to the business strategy and focus on the formulation and alignment of human resource activities to achieve the organization's objectives.

HR literature describes HRS as consisting of three concepts: the decisional concept, the HR issue/action concept, and the HR priorities concept.

The decisional concept refers to developing key HR goals, programs and policies in support of the business strategy. For example, if the business strategy focuses on becoming a low cost producer, then the HRS may become one of obtaining higher performing employees in an attempt to reduce the number of overall employees which, in turn, reduces cost.

The HR issue/action concept focuses on businesses fostering an environment in which line managers make expeditious HR decisions that impact the organization's overall success. (Decentralized HR then becomes the critical aspect of implementing the organization's strategy.)

The HR priorities concept outlines the set of identifiable HR activities that align an organization's HR efforts with its strategic business goals. These HR priorities define the organization's orientation and its attitude toward its employees. They also guide the development of HR plans that deal with the personnel aspects of basic business issues. For example, in innovative organizations, core HR priorities might include employee risk taking, initiative, teamwork and high competence. The priorities become the basic factors guiding and configuring the HR system (acquiring, developing, rewarding) in response to business needs.[30]

Not only must an HR model for the Objective Force contain an HRS, it must also contain HR functions.

FUTURE HR FUNCTIONS

"Traditionally, HR has been responsible for transactional and administrative activities such as recruitment, employee record keeping, compensation and benefit administration, and dealing with employees' queries."[31] In laying the foundation for an Objective Force HR model for the Army, HR literature offers another approach. It outlines both the traditional HR functions that have sustained HR departments through the years and then provides further insights as to how HR must change to meet the demands of a new strategic environment.

According to Joseph Martocchio, HRM involves: recruitment, selection, performance appraisals, training, career development, labor-management relations, employee termination, and the management of human resources within the context of legislation.[32] Caruth and Handlogten view HRM functions as: personnel research, staffing, compensation, employee and labor relations, safety and health, and training and development.[33] The Michigan School of Business focuses on these HR functions: selection, performance, appraisal, rewards and development.[34]

With corporations adjusting to new business strategies and creating organizations that add value to shareholders, customers, and employees, chief executive officers (CEOs) have turned to HR for recruiting and selecting the right people. Corporations also rely on HR for improving the capabilities of the work force, managing and paying for results, and maintaining the succession of management. All this must be achieved while sustaining the professional skills and talents of the individuals in the organization. Specifically, HR functions in the evolving

marketplace focus on these key areas: recruiting; training and development; performance management; compensation; organizational development; global programs; and diversity.[35]

According to David Weiss, in transforming organizations, HR managers have to do more. He argues that the traditional HR activities such as recruiting, employee relations, compensation, and training are necessary but not, in and of themselves, sufficient to help changing organizations thrive.[36] See Figure 1 below for his Hatch, Match, Dispatch outline of HR functions.

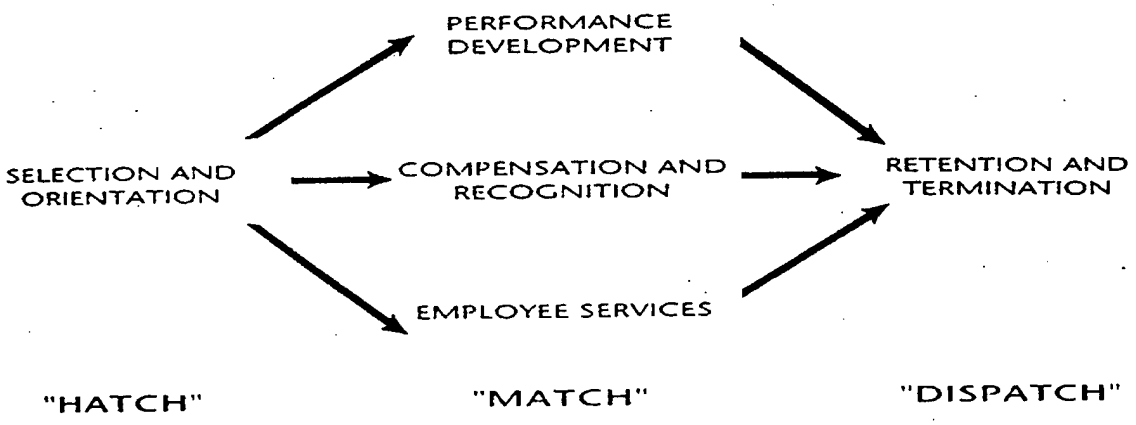

FIGURE 1. DAVID WEISS, HATCH, MATCH, DISPATCH HR FUNCTIONS

Weiss also believes that if HR departments are to retain their worth, they must concentrate on providing strategic value that helps the company gain relative advantage.[37] In the midst of adapting a mindset to this new way of doing HR, added emphasis also gets placed on what can be outsourced and what can be automated. This enables HR departments to add value to an organization and reduce costs in non-value-added areas.[38]

As organizations transform, HR specialists must continue their practice of working with managers to review, counsel and conduct confidential discussions with employees regarding balancing their needs and desires with those of the organization. No longer can they operate as the corporation's centralized policy police force giving bureaucratic responses to initiatives from other departments; they must migrate onto the management teams of the business divisions. These HR professionals in this support role must then stay focused on the mission of executing the business strategy. They must communicate vision and values and demonstrate the ability to produce and execute HR alternatives.[39]

Where once upon a time, HR's recruiting and staffing efforts consisted of placing newspaper ads, conducting interviews and following up on resumes, the focus has shifted to the

future. HR must now forecast staffing requirements and develop capabilities to support the strategic plan. It must work to enhance programs to sustain or support the organization as the employer of choice. HR must also identify key organization and individual competencies to support the business and make plans to hire and develop the right people.[40]

It remains clear that no matter the strategy and its supporting HR model, the Army must perform some basic HR functions in support of its Objective Force. To begin, these include: recruiting, hiring, paying, developing, motivating, utilizing and terminating individuals.[41] The interaction of these functions must also be taken into consideration as any HR model takes shape. As in the current DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model, no HR function can be designed without having implications upon others.[42] The Army's HR professionals in the future must also serve as communicators of vision. They must maximize the use of automation and outsource functions as required. They, too, must remain connected to soldiers and their families. With this understanding of the functions that Army HR must provide for the Objective Force, the challenge becomes determining a Human Resource Strategy (HRS).

Having addressed the future of HR, an HRS, and HR functions, the components to construct an HR model for the Objective Force are now in place. Before going ahead in this effort, however, it is important to first review the Army's current HR model.

THE DCSPER SOLDIER LIFE CYCLE FUNCTIONS MODEL

The concept of Army Life Cycle management resulted from a series of Inspector General studies in the late 1970s and early 1980s that highlighted an Army deficient in its systematic approach to managing change.[43] In order to correct this shortfall, the Army developed the Army Life Cycle Model. This model, portrayed in Figure 2, highlights a continuous cause and effect relationship between the following elements operating within an Army unit: force management; acquisition; training; distribution; deployment; sustainment; development; and separation.[44] Force management, sitting at the top of the continuum, initiates the Life Cycle Model and drives the management of change.

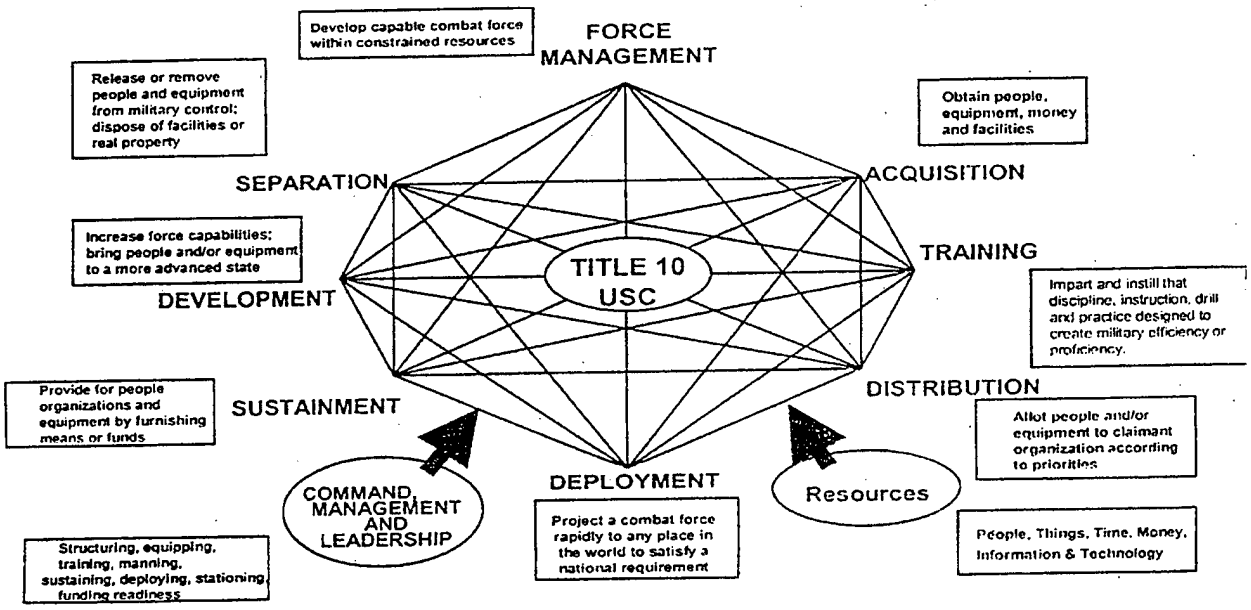

FIGURE 2. THE ARMY LIFE CYCLE MODEL

The DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model, Figure 3, operates along the same line as the Army's Life Cycle model. It addresses the interaction of the following aspects of human resource management: personnel structure; acquisition; distribution; development; deployment; compensation; sustainment; and transition. The Army sees these functions as interconnected, where change in any one area has a direct impact on all the others.[45]

The Army is not the only place this model exists. The Life Cycle construct also has roots in the business literature where it attempts to explain that organizations develop over time.[46] (In this regard, the concept of life cycle is one of growth and development as organizations progress through the stages of development, start-up, expansion, consolidation, or diversification.) The argument for life cycle management surrounds using the model as a road map to identify organizational transitions as well as pitfalls businesses should seek to avoid as they grow in size and complexity. A useful life cycle model should provide a

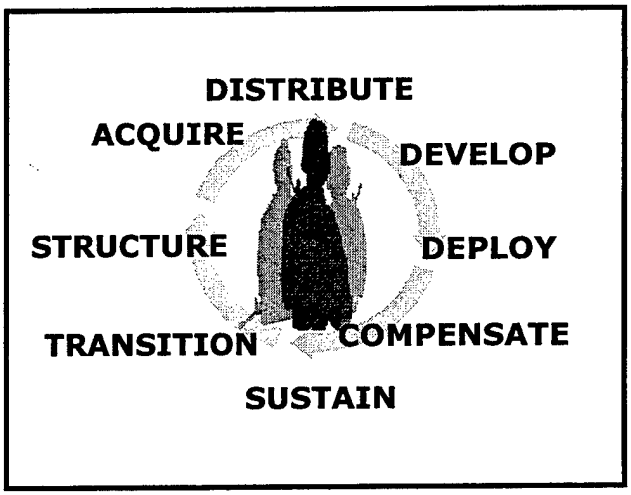

FIGURE 3. DCSPER SOLDIER LIFE CYCLE FUNCTIONS MODEL

timetable for adding levels of management, formalizing organizational procedures and systems, and revising organizational priorities.[47]

In recent years, business has shied away from the use of the life cycle management construct. Through the years, academic research has failed to validate the principle that businesses in fact grew or developed in the manner articulated by the Life Cycle Model. In light of this shortfall, many in the business world have argued against the use of the life cycle model.[48] In the Army, however, many still believe that life cycle models help manage the complexities and interdependencies of its multiple systems and sub-systems. In light of this, the challenge now for the Army's HR community becomes finding an HR model that meets its needs as it fields the Objective Force. The HR literature offers some alternatives from the Army's current approach.

MODELS OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

> ... human resources management is largely about integration and adaptation. Its concern is to ensure that: (1) HR management is fully integrated with the strategy and the strategic needs of the firm; (2) HR policies cohere both across policy areas and across hierarchies; and (3) HR practices are adjusted, accepted, and used by line managers and employees as part of their everyday work.[49]

Models, as suggested previously, offer a means to visualize this approach. Figure 4 outlines an HR model offered by Ralph Christensen. He explains his model this way:

> Every business exists in a given business environment which provides the opportunities and challenges; it also provides the resources to capitalize on the opportunities to overcome the challenges. From that environment, leaders establish a vision of what role they want to play in that environment. With the vision in mind, they also establish a strategy. The strategy expresses the specific path the organization will take from the array of possible paths available to fulfill the vision. Every strategy assumes certain organizational capabilities – those abilities demonstrated by the system as a whole which [*sic*] differentiate it from others. Building organizational capability requires very specific talent or competencies. This is the connection between the competence of people and the overall business direction. *This is the vertical link between people and the business.* No Human Resource management effort should be entertained without a clear understanding of the connection between it and the business needs.[50]

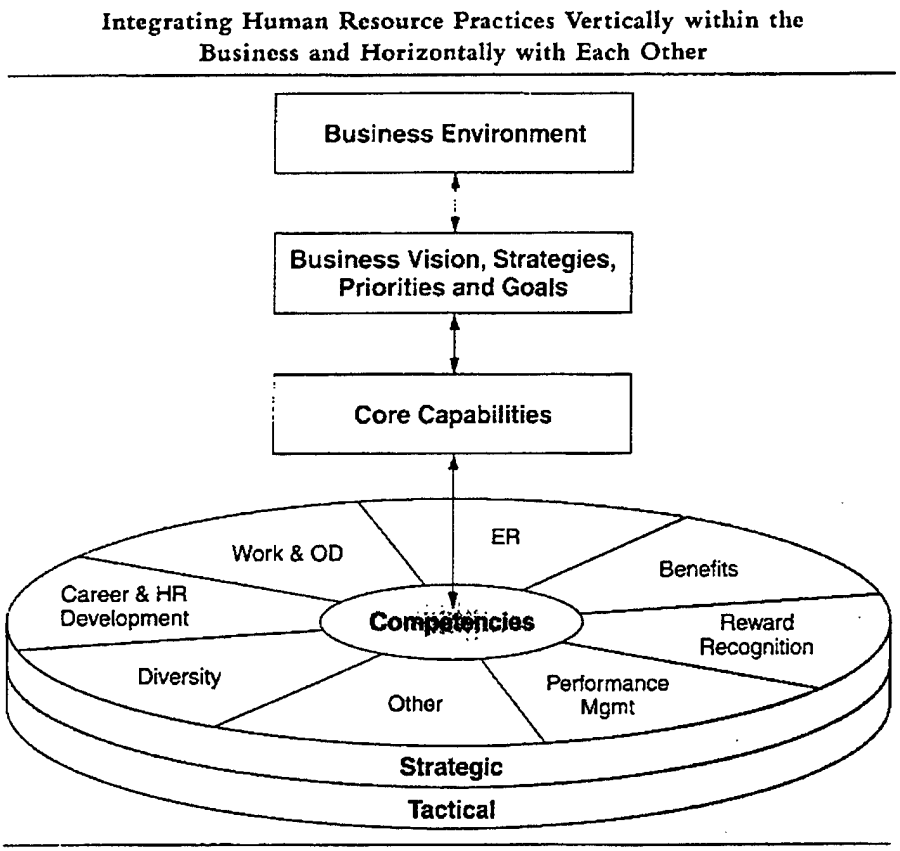

FIGURE 4. CHRISTENSEN MODEL

Christensen further highlights that every HR process, tool, or technology should leverage talent to fulfill the organizational vision. HR initiatives should also be integrated horizontally with each other. The final point of the model highlights the distinction, yet interconnectivity, of the strategic and tactical aspects of human resource management.

Catherine Truss and Lynda Gratton offer yet another model shown below at Figure 5. In their model, they acknowledge the impact of the external environment at both a general and organizational-specific level. A dotted line represents the boundary between the organization's internal and external environments and indicates a "...cybernetic relationship between the organization and its environment."[51] The left side of the model highlights those "...broad factors of politics, law, economics and society that impact on the management of people."[52] Their term "intended business strategy" includes the articulated strategic objectives pursued by the organization. It is related to what they call "intended human resource strategy" via their concept of the "strategic context." The latter refers to the aspects of the internal organizational environment that impact on the formal strategy of the business and its HR system, and includes its structure and culture.[53]

'Intended human resource strategy' implies that there may be a difference between articulated HR strategic objectives and the actual practice of human resource management in the organization. This intended strategy is what the organization may attempt to link to its business strategy. Lines connect this strategy with both the 'strategic HRM context' and the 'realized human resource interventions.'

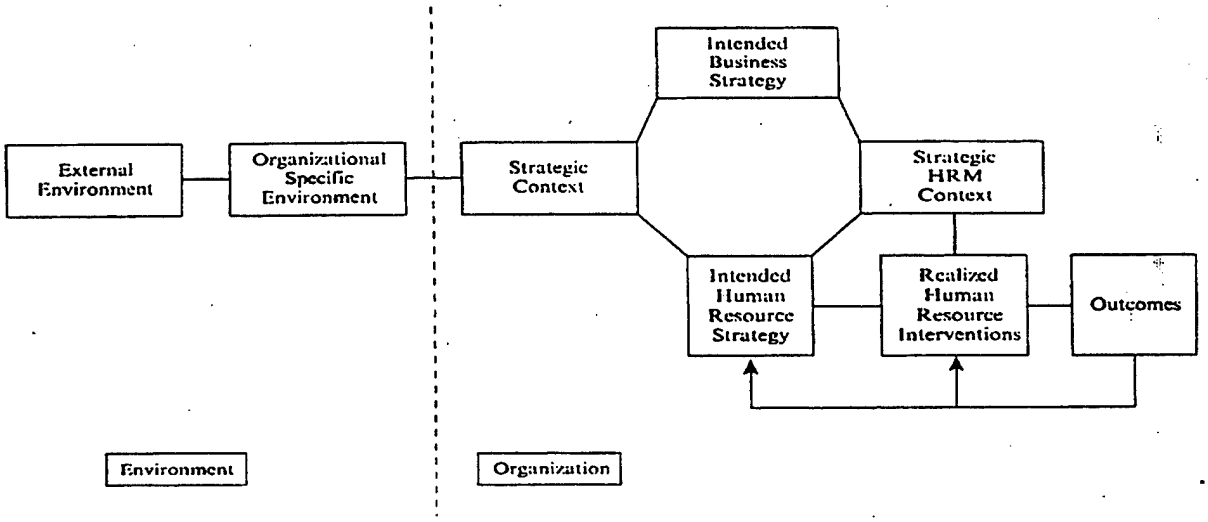

FIGURE 5. TRUSS AND GRATTON MODEL

The 'strategic HRM context' includes the HR department leadership and structure and HRM staff expertise. As it is affected by all the other variables in the model, it occupies a central position.

The 'realized human resource interventions' are those HR activities that take place within an organization regardless of whether or not they are articulated. Truss and Gratton focus their attention on the activities of line managers in this area as well as these HR activities: recruiting, selection, training and development, rewards, appraisals, etc.

The outcomes of the process are then fed back into the model, which again impact on 'realized human resource interventions' and the 'HR strategy'. All the lines in the model are intended to symbolize a two-way relationship; the feedback loop underscores the circular nature of the process.[54]

These last two models attempt to demonstrate that the role of HR ties directly to the strategy of the business. The Christensen model implements HR programs and policies across all levels of the organization while acknowledging the linkage between the various HR functions.

Truss and Gratton's model highlights how important the concept of feedback becomes to the whole HR system. These models clearly outline the connectivity between business and HR strategies.

These HR models provide alternatives to the current DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model and offer alternatives to help the Army's HR community transition to the Objective Force. The challenge now becomes one of looking back on the material presented in order to assess an HR model that best meets the future needs of the Army.

MODEL COMPARISON

With the Objective Force still on the horizon and the future of HR (including the demographics and attitudes of forthcoming generations) still developing, the late DCSPER's concern surrounding the Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model remains valid. The material presented in this paper offers a means to compare the models. The Army's HR model for the Objective Force should:

- Be a normative model that explains how the HR management process works in light of the Army's Objective Force Strategy. (Meeting this requirement presents a challenge in light of the limited information available on the Army's Objective Force. In light of this constraint it becomes essential that whatever HR model the Army adopts, it must be flexible enough in order to adapt to evolving Objective Force strategies.)
- Be simple and useful and highlight HR efforts in light of the Army's internal and external environments.
- Be inclusive of interdependent HR functions and include some notion of the outcomes of the strategic human resource management (SHRM) process. (As outlined, these future HR functions include: recruiting, hiring, paying, developing, motivating, utilizing and terminating individuals.)
- Address the demands of a new generation and the changes HRM will make in its roles and functions in the years ahead.
- Demonstrate an HR link between the levels of management from the strategic to the tactical and from the tactical to the strategic.

All these models (the current DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model, the Christensen model and the model offered by Truss and Gratton) meet the normative requirement. The Christensen and Truss and Gratton models demonstrate connectivity between HR strategy and the organization's overarching strategy. While not as explicit, the Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model does relate back to the strategy of the Army Life Cycle

Model. Any of the models can adapt to cover new developments in Objective Force HR strategy. No one model stands out from the other against this first criteria. (Given the downfall of organizational life cycle theory previously noted, the strategy used to develop the Soldier Life Cycle Model remains suspect).

The three models also meet the second criteria as they acknowledge the environment wherein an organization conducts its HR operations. The models are also simple, yet the Truss and Gratton model is not easily understood at first glance. It fixates on the continuous information feedback that takes place in HR operations and strategy implementation. While this in fact may be what transpires in an organization, the model's lines do not allow for ease of comprehending the authors' intent. The Christensen model does provide for a simple means to communicate HR strategy. It fails, however, to highlight the critical aspects of the unrealized consequences of feedback to the organization in light of the "unintended outcomes" of an HR strategy. The Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model does not highlight the environment in which it operates. (While the environment may be understood in the case of the Army's model, it is not nearly as explicit as in the other two.)

Concerning the third criteria for the models, functions and outcomes of the HR process, the Truss and Gratton model again falls short. While it clearly acknowledges the role HR functions play in HRM, it does not completely highlight what the functions need to be nor does it acknowledge the linkage between the functions. Christensen and the Army models, on the other hand, clearly delineate HR functions and highlight their interdependent relationships.

The model of Truss and Gratton explicitly acknowledges the outcomes of the HR process, while Christensen's and the Army's model do not. The challenge with HR outcomes, however, is the lag time between strategy implementation and visible results. (Given the Army's current policies of promoting from within, mandatory up or out and retirement at 30 years of service, none of these models offer any predictive ability. The Army will have to continue to develop these types of models in support of its HRS.)

Regarding the fourth criteria of implementing HR strategy in the future, all but the Army's model demonstrate potential. By clearly highlighting environment, Christensen and Truss and Gratton recognize the dynamic environment in which HR operates. Christensen's model affords more clarity regarding environment and offers more flexibility in dealing with the HR functions by delineating them and simply offering a category called "other." The Army's model is not nearly as explicit in recognizing its environment as the other two and furthermore it hand-cuffs itself by limiting the number of HR functions it portrays.

Regarding the fifth criteria of demonstrating the impact of HRS across the layers of an organization, only the Christensen model addresses this concern. Addressing this aspect of HRM is key to the Army. As it continues to transform, operational HR will decline and the link between the tactical and strategic HR becomes critical.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ARMY

In light of this assessment, the Army would be well served to look closely at the Christensen model as a tool during the transformation to the Objective Force. The model does not greatly depart from the DCSPER's Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model but offers insight for HR policy makers on a method to connect the Army's Objective Force strategy with a corresponding and supporting HR strategy. Clearly, however, it is not a panacea for an HRS for the Army. Given the embryonic nature of the Objective Force, no HR model can now totally outline a process that meets the demands of Army HR in the future.

From available models, the Army will be hard pressed to find either an HRS or an HR model that will answer all the demographic and as of yet unknown challenges presented by the fielding of the Objective Force. Much work remains in this area of endeavor as the Army continues to work through the HR functions it will perform in the future as well as its HRS.

CONCLUSION

In the summer of 2001, the late DCSPER heard from the Army Science Board that the knowledge, skills and attributes required by the Objective Force Soldier might require changes in the Army's execution of its HRM efforts. To this end, the DCSPER requested a review of the Army's HR model, the Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model. This paper attempted to respond to that request. It reviewed the definition of a model and how to determine model validity. It highlighted the known HR requirements of the Objective Force and future developments in the field of HRM.

This research paper focused on three HR models: the current DCSPER Soldier Life Cycle Functions Model, an HR model offered by Ralph Christensen, as well as another HR model provided by Catherine Truss and Lynda Gratton. These models were evaluated against the criteria: the ability to tie into an overarching business strategy, simplicity, interdependency of HR functions, flexibility to meet the demands of HR in the future, and the demonstration of the link between the tactical and strategic levels of management. The Christensen model afforded the best response to these criteria and is offered as a model for the Army to consider as it seeks to field the Objective Force. It appears more viable at capturing the HR challenges of the

internal and external environments. It, too, better demonstrates the linking of an HR strategy within the context of an overall strategy. Additionally, it demonstrates a connection between the strategic and tactical levels of the organization currently missing in the Army model. In light of these attributes and its flexibility, the Christensen model better meets the demands of the Army as it deals with HR in the future.

Validating a human resource management model for the DCSPER will not be easy. Challenges abound in determining whether or not a human resource management model works, as it must account for the Army's internal and external environment while also integrating the actions of both strategic and tactical human resource managers. While this research has helped further the discussion, the Army must continue developing a Human Resource Strategy that underpins its effort to field the Objective Force.

WORD COUNT = 6,324

ENDNOTES

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[23]Stern and Associates, "Beyond Human Resource Boundaries: The Whole World of Business Management," available from < http://www.hrconsultant.com/review>; Internet; accessed 26 November 2001.

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