THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER IN SPAIN

His contribution to develop the Spanish management

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I. INTRODUCTION* **

Competitive position of an individual company depends in a great level on its managerial skills. Managerial basic tasks consist, first, in the effort to discover the company's own potentials¹, that is, where lies the differences with its competing companies. And, secondly, it has to discover the potentials existing in its environment, and comparing them with its own strengths define the correct strategy to arise up, to the greatest possible degree, those potentials underlying in the surrounding markets and environments.

We could say then, that the company's success is determined by two factors: first, its own potentials, and second, the skill to discover and choose the market's work division where this company reacts much more efficiently than its competitors according to the described

* Empirical data presented in this essay correspond to a first analysis about the on-going research as ACE project of European Union, coordinated by Prf. Karl Ackermann (University of Stuttgart), taking part as well, Prf. Shaun Tyson (University of Cranfield), and Prf. Mihalik (University of Bratislav). A final publishing of the whole research will appear in a near future. In this essay, we just show the results related with the Human Resource situation in Spanish firms.

** We acknowledge to AEDIPE and to his president Mr. Pedro Blázquez the excellent collaboration supply through the business project completion and the contribution made by the human resource managers in the Spanish firms.

¹ García Echevarría, S., Púmpin, C.: Dinámica empresarial, Madrid 1990
particular qualities. In an open and competitive economy, each Corporation appears as the starting point to build and design its competing capacity.

In a closed, home-oriented economic system, as the one suffered by the Spanish economy’s developmental stage in the last three decades state-ruled macroeconomics organisation, together with a strong public administration, have exerted a great dominance interfering direct or indirectly in the economic and business functions and processes. In this cases managerial role is related to the administration of resources at his disposal, and of those environmental conditions and markets defined by the public administration and its administrative institutions.

In addition, in a closed traditional system, legal and administrative structures determine strongly the assignment of all the production factors; and even, the acquired vices or misuses have a great effect in the disposal and the way to deal with these resources, once they are upon the company’s sphere. This fact carries high direct and indirect costs; as, lack of mobility, flexibility, motivation, etc., certainly reducing company’s and managers capacity to shape up those production factors.

The former picture have an important influence on all the resources needed by the companies, both finance and personnel related, but particularly to the later ones. Labour laws as well as the same Public Administration with its regulatory body, determine extensively human resource disposal at the enterprise. As a consequence, day-to-day practice shows how companies have just dealt with the Administration of their staff without considering the management sphere.

Therefore, the change from a closed system as at the Spanish case, to an open one, affects the business and social institution, that
undertake increasingly the tasks of structuring and managing human resources.

Hence we face a key challenge: give a dominant role to the human resources in the business institution and, at the same time, a key role emerge with a great challenge: the human resource manager.

The human resource head has to leave behind his administrative role (law regulations adviser) to become a manager, being able to transmit to his/her staff the business requirements to expand the existing potentials.

II. HUMAN RESOURCE NEW PERSPECTIVES IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

The change process in business design, affecting most of the organisations, have an immediate effect on human resource within those organisations. Traditionally, the explained issue of shaping human resource within industrial processes did not catch Business Economy Science's attention until 1950 decade. In the early fifties Prof. Erich Gutenberg\(^2\) outline the relevance and need of a greater integration of human resource perspectives in the economic analysis.

He makes some distinctions between:

* **Subjective conditions**, having to appear in order to assure a set of individual conditions to bring out more efficiently the assigned tasks.

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* Objectives conditions, having to appear all around the specific activity.

* The way human resources are promoted and rewarded.

Therefore, this business-economic research about human resources, deals mainly with technical, social and economic attitudes and effects, basically, to a work-place-oriented perspective and the relations around.

It is the first time the human resource issue is studied from the economic frame giving a broader perspective than the mere based in a technical-economic analysis.\(^3\)

The research takes place in parallel with the generalisation, mainly in Europe, of labour legislation.

Traditionally, the HR department has suffered a relatively low weight within the Spanish business structure. The strong public intervention in the issue has slowed a business necessity concerning to HR management, just developing a legal and administrative function that could deal with different problems.

However, executive boards have always taken them as trustworthy elements in those issues affecting companies payment systems and administration of payroll tasks. The fulfilment of business top managerial decisions have required reliable managers, with generally, long experience on the job, and this fact has not been the case when dealing with the traditional requirements to HR Managers.

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Their roles, within the business and economic activity in the company have been relatively low, taking more or less as a consultance nature in legal and administrative issues.

A 93,4% of the researched Spanish firms maintain a formally established human resource department located in top hierarchical levels, therefore, it is not expected a radical change in their position within the organisation in the coming years.

Human resource function is, then, consolidated within the Spanish firm, which is reinforced with the fact that a 70,5% of the HR managers belong to the top level within the company (Board of Directors), and a 25,5% to the second level.
POSITION IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY
OF YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER

SPAIN

25.5%

70.5%

0.3%

3.8%

☐ BOARD OF DIRECTORS  ☐ LEVEL 2  ☐ LEVEL 3  ☐ LEVEL 4

Figure 2

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MANAGER OF HUMAN RESOURCE

SPAIN

50.0%

21.5%

10.8%

3.3%

4.3%

HR-FUNCTION REQUIRES FROM MY WORKING TIME

☐ A VERY SMALL PART  ☐ SMALL PART  ☐ ABOUT 50%  ☐ ALMOST THE WHOLE PART  ☐ ALL

Figure 3

10
We should also outline how in 82% of the researched companies, the HR manager is fully oriented to the HR function.

All these features make interesting to analyse the HR managers figure, their specific characteristics, their development, and their future projection within the Spanish managerial context, as well as the role played by the HR management.

III. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER IN THE SPANISH FIRM

The following trends define the HR managers within the Spanish firms:

* We observe in Figure 4 how 92,1% of the HR managers are male. The low appearance of women in HR responsibility positions shows a slow changing trend, which is reflected in the slightly higher female participation among those younger than 40 years.\(^4\)

* The HR manager is relatively young, 73% of them being between 31 and 50 years old, which implies a completed generation change in this area. The arising problem is the fact that these human resource heads have to take on the task of designing and developing the structure and change of human resource in the Spanish companies. The uncertainty lies in the potential skills of those new HR-heads.

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\(^4\) García Echevarría, S., del Val Núñez, M.T., Cea D'Ancona, F.: Sistema de valores de los estudiantes de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Alcalá de Henares 1994
The remarked generation change is reinforced by the fact that a 72% of the HR managers have stayed in their job for more than three years, assuring a high growing potential to those young managers, which should be used.

On the other hand, the Spanish human resource manager is a person with a college degree background. Most of them with a degree in Law studies (32%). Those with a psychology degree attain a significant representation. However, Business and Economics studies are located in a secondary degree.

Consequently, we could deduce three basic statements:

There is a clear legal academic-background dominance, coming from those with law studies as from the ones with business and economy degrees. Labour
law and HR administration remain as reference point to a larger extent. Legal requirements are still high in the day-to-day departments' tasks about HR management. Hence, this is still a prior issue.

A second worry, becoming evident in the last years, is the recruitment issue and the way to control and cut off the great influence of repeated social conflicts in the Spanish industry during the last five years. These facts could explain the important presence of the psychologists in HR-departments. Worries about recruitment and conflict, together with communication explain the high presence of psychologists in human resource processes.

![UNIVERSITY DEGREE SPAIN](https://i.imgur.com/3Q5Q5Q5.png)

**Figure 5**

Economy and business academic background is relatively low within the context of HR-Heads. The
reasons lie in the lack of university programmes in business faculties about human resource economic vision; and in a second term in the lack of economic mentality in human resource management once in the real business life. Thus, both at an academic and at a business level we find an important deficit in the economic perspective of human resource management.

However the Business and Economics students would like to work in the HR sphere. The Law studies dominance comes as a consequence of the weight given to legal issues in the human resource department.

* An additional 42% of the HR manages have finished a Postgraduate course, 78% of them MBA programmes and a 22% of them a doctorate course. It is remarkable how those younger than 40 years tend to complete MBA programmes.

Therefore, we may conclude that the HR managers start their professional career with a high degree of academic training, which reinforce the idea that Spain “punishes”, in general, non academic training and rewards formal academic titles. That is why HR managers estimate their own academic background in order to develop their professional career. We may ask whether HR managers valúate the acquired knowledge or the fact of receiving a “college award”.

Besides, the HR managers have reinforced their training position, 47% of them receiving frequent additional training within the job. However, the external training, within the job, sponsored by the company is not so frequent, covering just a 32% of the HR managers.
HELPFUL FOR FULFILLING YOUR HRM-JOB
SPAIN

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

☐ NO IMPORTANT ☐ LESS IMPORTANT ☐ IMPORTANT ☐ VERY IMPORTANT

Figure 6

SPECIAL TRAINING FOR THE HRM-JOB
FREQUENCY
SPAIN

ON THE JOB OFF THE JOB (INTERNAL) OFF THE JOB (EXTERNAL)

☐ NONE ☐ LESS ☐ SOME FEW ☐ SOME ☐ FREQUENTLY

Figure 7
The great effort made by the Spanish firms to improve the HR managers qualification has been oriented to the external training, 61% of them receive frequently this form of improvement.

Summarising, we may affirm that the HR manager is "made" through external training, as well as, partly, on-the-job, meanwhile offering less attention to internal training schemes.

Nearly two thirds of the analysed HR managers consider that the received additional training has helped them to deal with their jobs. However, it should be outlined that those with a low additional training consider that its contribution is low, while those receiving a more intense training valuate it more positively. Which shows how additional training will only be efficient if it is done regularly, the

![Figure 8](image_url)
opposite will just suppose a resource wasting. This fact should be taken into account by the HR departments when planning their training programmes.

Most of the HR managers start their professional career within the Human Resource department, and just a 26% of them come from other business activities, being those older than 50.

Consequently, we may affirm that the HR manager follows a "chimney" career, that is, a career within the HR area.

![Figure 9](image.png)

However, one of the weaknesses of the Spanish managers is their lack of international experience, just 16% of the HR managers have worked as expatriates. This lack of international experience appears as
a restrictive feature of the Spanish managerial profile, and reflects a value in Spanish corporate culture.

At the same time, we could remark the importance given to professional experience as the basis of their everyday activity.

Figure 10

In the area concerning their career, only a 33% of them consider themselves as having achieved their professional top ceiling, while a 67% of the HR managers think that their actual situation is just an intermediary step in their business career, which means they expect to suffer further upwards changes.

5 García Echevarría, S., del Val Núñez, M.T.: Cultura Corporativa de la empresa española, Madrid 1993; García Echevarría, S., del Val Núñez, M.T.: El directivo de la empresa vasca, Bilbao 1993
6 Surprisingly Spanish companies offer few practices programmes, what it is a contradiction to the human resource managers opinion about important of the experience and practice.
IV. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS CONTRIBUTION TO SPANISH BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

A basic feature to seize HR managers position within the Spanish business corporate world, deals with the participation degree and their share in decision processes.

The main characteristic is that in a 50% of the analysed companies, the human resource manager takes part at a strategic level in the following areas.

* Human Resource Planning
* Recruitment
* Training
* Rewards and salaries
* Industrial relations
* Management development process.

![Decision Making in HR-Function](image)

**Figure 12**

However, we should remind that decisions in the human resource area still remain highly centralised, as we can observe in Figure 13. This is a key aspect when having to redesign a new management in the HR sphere.

We should also observe how the Spanish HR manager thinks that the skill related with their jobs requirement are not innate, and he also valuates to a low degree the "learning by doing" process. A 60% of the managers think that a good HR head should be a generalist and not a specialist in HR issues. Just a third of the researched managers
consider they should achieve a higher influence level within the board, which means, that even if they stand in top posts, their influence and power is not enough within the company.

There is, then, an overall opinion about the skills and abilities that should have the HR manager to adopt a business manager position further than the traditional functional approach; or to put it in other way, the necessary skills to make the HR manager a general executive in the corporate business activity of the firms.
Related with the targets and feasibility in the HR management process, the HR manager considers as his main objectives:

* Higher qualified HR staff 32.8%
* Better information 26.6%
* More support/acceptance by the board of directors 25.9%

A 16.4% of the analysed managers would prefer a higher decentralisation in the HR department, while a 16.1% prefer a higher decision capacity and a 9.5% hire more personnel for their departments.

Figure 14
The empirical data shows how the HR departments do not need more back office staff to fulfil new activities, but more qualified, open minded and strategically oriented personnel in order to break up the traditional controlling and administrative functions that have covered until now.

The HR manager considers that the most feasible targets to achieve are:

* More support/acceptance by the board of directors 56,1%
* More decision-making power 47,5%
* Higher qualified HR staff 28,5%
* Better information 25,9%

The former empirical data about the feasibility as the higher decision power, show us once again how the HR area is embraced with a deep reorganisation within the corporate structure, aiming to get a real top executive consideration within the Spanish companies.

HR manager is conscious about the necessity to improve his staff's skills if he/she wants to achieve those targets. The necessary skill profile would be the following:

* Adapting capacity to change processes 81,3%
* Future vision 80,0%
* Deeper Knowledge in specific HR functions 69,8%
CAPABILITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF YOUR HR STAFF

IMPORTANCE

SPAIN

Figure 15

We find a set of secondary values defined as,

* Experience in other areas.
* Experience in line-tasks.
* International experience

Globally, we may deduce that the HR manager does not valuate as positive to follow a cross-career, nor to attain line-related skills. He/she prefers to develop a chimney career maintaining a *back office* spirit, which will reduce his chances to develop a corporate profile as business manager.
spirit, which will reduce his chances to develop a corporate profile as business manager.

Following Gutenberg\textsuperscript{7}, we may conclude the following requirements\textsuperscript{8}:

* A \textit{mutative change}, in the requirements to HR managers in the following values:

- Adapting capacity to change processes.
- Future vision.
- Greater knowledge in HR specific functions.
- A great computer literacy.
- Skills to develop line-managers in everything related to HR management.
- Experience in other business areas.
- Skill in foreign languages.
- International experience.

* A \textit{step by step} change when:

- Highly specialised knowledge in a sort of HR functions.

The described empirical data reinforce the perception that the Spanish HR manager knows where he wants to arrive and by which means, but in many cases he does not know how to arrive to the end.

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{7} Gutenberg, E.: \textit{Grundlagen der Betriebswirtschaftslehre - Produktionstheorie}, vol.I, 24\textsuperscript{th} ed., Berlín 1983
\textsuperscript{8} An analysis of symmetry (Mc Nemar) and homogeneity has been made in order to determine the changing pattern.
Corporate culture\textsuperscript{9} could appear as an appropriate way to deal with this changing process, as well as through training programmes. This second strategy would not find many obstacles according to research data, that shows a great acceptance from the same managers to everything related with training, even more in their mid-careers.

Therefore we have to define which should be the mainlines in training programmes.

\textsuperscript{9} del Val Núñez, M.T.: Cultura Corporativa de la empresa en España y su potencial estratégico, Madrid 1994
V. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TRAINING PROCESSES FOR HUMAN RESOURCES' HEADS IN SPANISH COMPANIES

Training becomes the key aspect in the breakdown process in the human resource area. Training improves the knowledge and talents of those human resource-heads having to face the change process.

As previously described, training orientation should be based on two main areas:

* A greater knowledge and development as business manager, with a global view and integrated in the business strategy.

* As specific manager of human resource area, a management orientation rather than an administrative one.

And, which are the training contents that should be implemented in human resource heads improvement programmes?

Training programmes as reference to the business environment

Figure 17 shows the great weight given to business environment by human resource heads, as a relevant area in their training.

The basic statements of this profile should be the following:

* First, we have to outline the importance of "business environment". The human resource heads should start their
training with a correct knowledge of environment matters (87.21%).

* A second aspect, with the same importance as the coming three, refers to the necessity of training programmes in employment laws (76.39%).

**Figure 17**

* Knowledge about economic factors defining labour market trends is another important area (77.8%).

* Training, at the same time should include the knowledge of social and cultural factors defining company's future (76.39%).

* Technology, and particularly, potential new work division forms, should be included as important areas for human resource heads training (67.21%)
This Figure shows the existence of three main areas that define the training programmes of human resource managers.

* First, and the most important, the business environment, social and economic, area.

* With a significant weight, legislation conditions.

* As well, with a relevant importance, the social and cultural challenges in social evolution.

* Everything affecting new work divisions.

The weight given to the areas related to business environment, carries out a training profile oriented to a generalist manager figure, as pointed before.

And which should be the knowledge about the specific human resource area?

Figure 18 shows clear priorities about training programmes in the concrete human resource area; so that we clearly could define a business design in this area.

The following patterns should be outlined:

* Human resource strategy with a positive value of 97,71%, and with an excellent value of nearly an 80%. There is a clearly defined trend about the importance of training programmes in human resource strategic management and the integration of this management within the global business strategy (91,15%).
* Human resource planning with a 95.08%

* Labour costs, calculation processes with an 88.53% appear as a fourth basic area.

Joining both profiles, we obtain the following patterns:

* As manager, he/she should dominate strategy, management and planning.

* In a second stage, everything concerning the application of this basic knowledge to the sphere of human resource management.

Excellent values attain such a level, that we could say that these principles are fully accepted by human resource heads. Consequently, these values should represent the foundations in all training processes.
Which set of knowledge should have human resource heads concerning to human resource theories?

The basis of human resource management should appear in the training profiles as basic aspects in all the designs. Figure 19 shows the preference and the existing knowledge level about different basic values concerning to human resource theories.

* Motivation with an 83,93%, as key factor in competitive human resource management.

* Communication and co-operation, as basis of organisation processes with an 83,28%.

* Organisation with an 80,33%

Those three elements: motivation, communication and organisation constitute the singular pieces that define "lean management" models. Lean Management requires staff integration in the project.

There is a second level, with a high relevant valuation that comprises:

* Leadership with a 78,69%

* Knowledge about basic theories on human resource management and applied models with a 69,18%

* Learning theories with a 61,90%
As we can infer, the first group of values are fully assumed as basic contents in training programmes for human resource managers, while the second group achieve a lower position. We should outline the low weight given to learning theories, as a sign of the traditional Spanish culture that should be modified.

We could conclude that, future training profile covers the deficits in Spanish companies.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The former empirical research helps to determine the main features of HR managers is Spanish corporations.

1. The generational change has already taken place among the HR Heads, with a slow female integration.
2. Today's Spanish HR manager has a university degree, with a dominance of law studies, psychology, sociology and industrial relations, with a small share of economists.

3. The Spanish firms have located the HR Manager, formally, in the highest organisational level; although they have not acquired a complete managerial capacity.

4. The weight of training within the HR department together with the lack of knowledge about other business areas, limit the role of HR managers to the classic personnel-related functions.

5. The Spanish firm predicts a significant change in HR managers role, meaning a radical breakthrough in their training needs, managerial skills, and professional development.

6. Surprisingly, the Spanish HR manager shows an identical profile and self-perception in all the researched companies. It has resulted impossible to identify two groups of managers. There is an absolute identity in the thinking, evaluating and developing ways in the HR area.

7. The trend towards a differentiation among the HR management sphere, and the development of potentials and integration in the business of the traditional HR functions, is becoming a clear fact. The weight of HR management within the general business process is clearly increasing, which leads the HR managers to a cross training need, and to a greater knowledge of the other business areas.

8. In the coming years, the business adapting processes will start from the HR area, more than from other functional ones as finance, marketing, production, etc.
It is all about a new perspective of business adapting processes, as well as new organizational designs, and individual values in corporations.
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PROYECTO FID
LOS NUEVOS DISEÑOS ORGANIZATIVOS
Y
CAMBIO DE VALORES EN LA EMPRESA

EL PORQUE DEL CAMBIO

* Europa y su dimensión.
* La internacionalización como consecuencia del proceso de integración.
* La dinámica de la división del trabajo.
* Los cambios de las organizaciones empresariales (son consecuencia).
* Crisis en empresas de más de 50 años debido a errores de management.
* La empresa española.

LA SITUACION COMPETITIVA ACTUAL

* Capacidad competitiva internacional
* Cash - flow/ inmovilizado neto
* Coste de personal/ volumen de ventas
* Coste personal en la industria del automóvil
* Amortización/ inmovilizado
* Factor Recursos Humanos  Motivación de los trabajadores
* Factor Recursos Humanos  Incentivos laborales
* Factor Recursos Humanos  Flexibilidad laboral
* El nivel social
* Criterios clave para el funcionamiento de las instituciones: lo económico y lo social.
* Barreras artificiales & barreras naturales
LA NUEVA CONCEPCIÓN EMPRESARIAL

* Cultura corporativa: dimensión interna y dimensión externa.
* Corporación sistema de valores: legitimización.
* La empresa como corporación.
* Las tres dimensiones del éxito empresarial.
* Ventajas como consecuencia de la cultura empresarial.

LOS CAMBIOS DE VALORES COMO EXIGENCIA DEL ÉXITO EMPRESARIAL

* Organización en un sistema abierto
* Organización tradicional.
* Organización moderna.
* Sistemas organizativos clásicos
* Empresa lean
* Lean management significa
* Valores preferenciales del directivo en la empresa española

FID= UN PROYECTO PARA EL CAMBIO EMPRESARIAL

* FID= proceso de cambio
* FID= competitividad
* EL FID como producto
* EL FID como proceso
* EL FID como resultado
* Proceso de cambio
* Lo que no se debe hacer
* Los instrumentos del proceso de cambio
* Conceptualización.
CONCLUSIÓN UNIDAD DOCTRINAL

* Cambio de mentalidad
* Convergencia de los esfuerzos