Strategic HRD within companies*

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This article reports a preliminary survey that was conducted within the framework of the project on strategic human resource development (HRD), in which for various aspects of organisations the effects of strategic HRD are explored. The aim of the survey was to explore some conditions that are important for HRD policymaking in companies, and to investigate the relationship between various specific aspects, and the results of HRD programmes. The study involved 107 large companies in the industrial, financial and public service sectors.

1. Conceptual framework

This research fits within the framework of literature on strategic HRD. Bergenhene-gouwen, Mooijman and Tillema, for instance, describe strategic HRD as 'training members of an organisation in such a way that they have the knowledge and skills needed within the context of the (changing) objectives of an organisation' (1992, 11). Central to this, is that HRD programmes have to be aligned to the organisation concerned. An important issue therefore when implementing strategic HRD, is how best to give form to this 'alignment', which we conceive of as the strategic element. A crucial factor in all of this is HRD policy making: the process of drawing up general objectives for the organisation's HRD programmes. This process, in which various stakeholders can participate, results in specific agreements being made regarding the design and development of programmes at organisational level and the implementation of them at work level. Wognum (1995b) identified four aspects important to HRD policy development. Broadly speaking, these are: 1. reasons for HRD; 2. policy level; 3. the alignment process; and 4. methods and technical considerations. These aspects are investigated in six case studies, and information is collected on HRD policy making processes on the one hand, and training effectiveness on the other

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hand. In these case studies, HRD policy making is conceived of as an essential condition for evaluating HRD effectiveness in a meaningful way. The outcome of the studies correspond with the theory of comprehensive evaluation of HRD projects as postulated by Brinkerhoff (1989). He stated that the first step in the process towards comprehensive HRD evaluation is to assess the needs for, and objectives of, an HRD programme. That is to say, the outcomes of HRD policy making should first be evaluated, because if these conditional aspects are not assessed, then the importance of evaluating outcomes of HRD projects has little relevance. In the aforementioned case studies (Wognum, 1995b), however, it was not empirically established whether HRD policy making influences HRD effectiveness. In this survey an attempt is being made to see whether there were certain indications for this.

As is already mentioned in the introduction, a distinction is made between various aspects of HRD programmes that are important for strategic HRD as a whole. First of all, the specific field of HRD programmes, such as accounting and finance, management techniques, production processes, health and security, marketing and public relations. There are various classifications of specific fields, including those from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) (1995). There may be differences concerning specific areas. Wognum (1995a) established that the choice of HRD programmes in a particular field can vary according to sector of economy, company structure or size. Mulder and Witziers (1997) indicated that with regard to HRD programmes for professional development, both participation and reported career effects vary for each specific field.

Secondly, the job level of those participating in HRD projects. Relevant literature shows that these workers participate in HRD to a varying degree and in various ways. The CBS surveys repeatedly showed that it is the more highly educated workers (in higher job positions) who more often participate in training activities than less qualified employees (in lower job positions).

Thirdly, the HRD climate within organisations. This appears to be an important variable that largely determines the variation in the effectiveness of HRD programmes. Bates, Holton III and Seyler (1997) demonstrated the importance of introducing the climate factor in the study into transfer of HRD. Adding the climate variable to their model, had a significant influence on the validity of their instrument on transfer measurement.

Fourthly, the reasons for participating in HRD programmes, which can vary enormously. On the basis of contributions by Brinkerhoff (1987) and Rossett (1987), Wognum (1995b) identified five major reasons for HRD, including the continuation of existing programmes that are partly aimed at introducing new workers to the organisation. The reasons can be summed up into the following categories: to resolve problems (ie. in relation to workers' performance), to improve certain working practices (without there being specific performance problems) and to change or renew the company situation. Earlier research showed that the degree of willingness to invest in HRD correlates strongly with the reasons for HRD (Mulder, 1993).

Fifthly, the targeting of specific groups. HRD programmes can be aimed at individual workers, groups, teams, departments or even entire organisations. The process of HRD policy making according to this aspect, also varies enormously. Regarding individual HRD, the study and leave arrangements normally in force in most large organisations, generally suffice. However, it is more complicated where HRD programmes are aimed at teams or entire organisations. In such cases the concern is mainly with translating strategic departure points into the varied working practices of all those involved. As part of HRD effectiveness research it is important to search for the percentage of variance explained by these distinctions.

2. Research question

The research question of this study comprises two parts. Firstly the descriptive question, concerning important conditions for HRD policymaking in companies. The second more explorative question is about the relationship between various specific

aspects of strategic HRD within companies. Are there differences relating to the various aspects, ie. the specific field content of the HRD programmes, the job level of participants, the HRD climate of companies, the reasons for participating, the specific target groups and HRD effectiveness?

More specifically, it is interesting to explore whether the vertical integration of policy processes at different levels influences HRD effectiveness. Theories based on the systems approach often plead for a harmonisation of HRD policy making processes at various levels of the organisation. Though often worded in different ways, virtually all system theorists opt for cohesion at strategic, tactical and operational levels (Gilbert, 1978; Banathy, 1991; Romiszowski, 1981; Rummler and Brache, 1990; Swanson, 1994). Decision making at strategic level has to be translated into tactical and operational levels. When this does not happen, it is highly likely that HRD programmes will be ineffective. Earlier empirical research has established that a true integration of policy processes at these levels is extremely limited within companies (Mulder, Akkerman and Bentvelsen, 1989; Wognum, 1995b).

3. Methods and data source

A national database (from the Association of Chambers of Commerce) of large companies (more than 500 employees) from the industrial, financial and commercial services sectors is used for this survey. Research has shown that in absolute terms the greatest effort in HRD programmes is made within these specific sectors (Mulder et al. 1989).

The database comprised 231 addresses. Independent subsidiaries of larger companies were included in the database as separate companies. All companies were then phoned to establish the person responsible for HRD programmes, which led to 35 addresses being excluded. In 30 of these companies the person responsible for HRD was also responsible for HRD at other branches of the organisation; in four companies there was no person responsible for HRD, and in one company the survey was considered irrelevant. Conversely, there were companies where the responsibility for HRD was spread across several employees—each one being responsible for a specific area of the organisation (these areas were not included separately in the database). In total 219 employees responsible for HRD were selected from 196 addresses from the database.

Data were collected using a written questionnaire, mailed to the 219 respondents, consisting of questions, among other things, on company structure, number of employees, respondent's job level, the position of the HRD function, structure of the HRD department, respondent's work domain, number of employees working within this organisation, and changes that have taken places to the company and the HRD function since 1990. There were also two sections with questions about HRD programmes in relation to two specific fields, ie. automation and social skills, which included the job level of participants, type of HRD, reason for HRD, specific target groups, contribution of the HRD project to the planned results and the number of workers participating. A third category consisted of 12 statements on HRD climate and included the perceived importance of HRD, the willingness to invest in it, and the intentions to take part in HRD decision-making processes. There was also a concluding question about the willingness of respondents to cooperate on a follow-up study.

The data were collected in autumn 1996, and 139 questionnaires were returned (a 63 per cent response rate) of which 32 were incomplete. The remaining 107 responses (49 per cent) were used for the analysis. Most questions had pre-coded answers, while verbal replies were analysed and then categorised. When processing the data, simple descriptive analyses, and analyses of variance were used.

4. Results

In the following section the findings of the survey are presented. Section 4.1 describes some background data of the respondents, and the results of the descriptive research question. After that the explorative part of the survey will be described in section 4.2.

4.1 Results of the descriptive section of the preliminary survey

Responsibility for HRD
The respondents are responsible for HRD within the companies. They hold various job descriptions depending on the organisation concerned. More than 40 per cent are head of the HRD department or HRD manager, almost 30 per cent are an HRD officer or co-ordinator, while nearly 8 per cent are HRD consultant. In total 70 per cent of respondents have a specific HRD position, 18 per cent work in personnel and organisation departments, while the job description of 5 per cent is unknown.

Job level
The majority of respondents (71 per cent) placed themselves at middle-management level, while this was 12 per cent at top-management level; 90 per cent of those also saw themselves in a staff position, but only 9 per cent in a line function (two respondents indicated that they had a dual position). Nearly two thirds of respondents worked in companies with 1,000 or more workers, while one quarter were employed in organisations with 5,000 or more workers. Only 4 per cent worked in companies with less than 500 workers. This confirmed the intention to aim this survey at mainly large companies.

The position of the HRD function within the company
Almost three-quarters of HRD functions are part of a staff department. About one out of ten of the HRD functions have their own separate department. In only two instances is the HRD function part of the line. The remaining ones have different places within the organisation. This implies that the findings of the survey are mainly confined to HRD functions that fall under staff departments. The survey shows that this function still has a dominant position within the organisation, despite it often being maintained that the HRD function is decentralised and thus incorporated into the line. This fact corresponds with the finding that 9 out of 10 respondents reported only a centralised HRD department (around 60 per cent) or a centralised and decentralised department (27 per cent). In only 4 per cent of cases was there only a decentralised HRD department (the remainder fall under the category 'other').

Changes within the organisation and to the HRD function
Many companies were experiencing changes, relating both to the organisation as a whole ie. their structure, policy, processes, product and/or service as well as the HRD function itself. Table 1 illustrates the correlation between organisational changes and changes in the HRD function.

Table 1: Relationship between changes to the company as a whole and to the HRD function

	Changes within the company		
	No	Yes	Total
Changes to the HRD function			
No	21%	6%	27%
Yes	17%	56%	73%
Total	35%	62%	100%

N = 107

This correlation was tested using the Chi-square test corrected for continuity. The value of the Chi-square (for natural totals) is 20.4 (with 0.1 degree of freedom); p (two-sided) <0.000. This implies a clear relationship between changes to the organisation as a whole and to the HRD function.

Changes and HRD activities
It is interesting to explore whether the changes to an organisation correlate with the level of HRD activities. The results show that 93 per cent of the companies that experienced change were still engaged in HRD activities in the specialised areas investigated by the study. The other companies, which according to respondents remained unchanged, were 100 per cent actively engaged in HRD programmes in the same sectors. Thus it seems there are a few companies where changes occurred without this having an impact on HRD programmes in the automation and/or social skills sectors. It can also happen of course that organisations are so preoccupied with the changes taking place (ie. reorganisation) that there is little interest for HRD programmes (at least in these specialist areas). In uncertain times, companies are less inclined to take investment risks and individual workers are probably more interested in their future position within the organisation.

Participation according to specific sector and job level
Various target groups could participate in HRD programmes in the automation and social skills sectors. In this study job functions were divided into three categories: lower management (LM), middle management (MM) and the operational core (OC). Participation in HRD programmes varied among companies: 60 per cent of these took part in both types of HRD; 18 per cent only in automation programmes; 7 per cent only in social skill-related programmes and 7 per cent took part in neither (no data is available for 9 per cent of companies surveyed).

In most organisations there was a wide participation in programmes, whereas in others participation was limited to one or two job categories. In two out of three companies all categories of workers took part in automation programmes, whereas for social skills this was limited to one out of two. In 10 per cent of organisations two categories of workers participated in automation programmes whereas the figure was double for the social skills sector. In 5 per cent of companies, only one category of workers took part in automation programmes. For social skills programmes the percentage was slightly higher (7 per cent). Thus there is slightly more participation at all job levels in automation programmes than in social skills projects. This is understandable seeing that most automation projects affect many of the company's processes and thereby workers' jobs at all levels. The same may also be said for certain social skills programmes like working in teams, the introduction of performance appraisals throughout the company, and a broader approach to management skills in general or situational leadership skills in particular. Various organisations, when modernising their company, introduce innovations integrally and start HRD projects at the different job levels to support these.

The specific types of HRD programmes
The type of programmes in the automation and social skills sectors in which the various categories of employees took part was also studied. The results present a diverse picture. On-line programmes included working with various software programmes and operating systems, while social skills related to for instance management techniques, team training, customer friendly behaviour, and presentation techniques etc.

Contribution of HRD towards the planned results
It was investigated whether the contributions of the HRD activities (in both the automation and social skills sectors) in achieving the intended objectives were related to each other in any way. According to the correlation Table (Table 2) this is not the case. The contribution of the automation programmes in achieving the intended objectives for the three-job levels (LM, MM, and OC) correlate highly with each other,

Table 2: Spearman correlation table showing the contributions of the HRD programmes to the intended objectives according to specific sector and job level of participants (LM = lower management, MM = middle management and OC = operating core)

	Automation			Social skills	
	LM	MM	OC	LM	MM
Automation					
MM	0.887*				
OC	0.758*	0.781*			
Social skills					
LM	−0.085	−0.006	−0.037		
MM	−0.049	0.076	0.016	0.693*	
OC	0.131	0.140	−0.022	0.678*	0.540*

Job level within the organisation

* $p < 0.01$ (2-sided)

as do the social skills ones. However, correlations between the contributions of both HRD sectors were negligible.

Reasons for HRD
Table 3 shows the reasons for setting up HRD programmes for the various target groups.

The findings show that most organisations introduced HRD as part of changes and innovation within the company (in relation to a desired or anticipated future situation)—particularly in the automation sector—and only to a very small degree to help resolve problems within the existing situation. There was also considerable participation in programmes that were aimed at improving the existing situation, although this applies more to the social skills rather than the automation sector.

Focus on target groups
Table 4 shows the percentage of respondents, according to target groups, who participated in automation and social skill HRD programmes. These findings show that most HRD is aimed at groups, teams and departments. HRD for entire organisations is the second largest category, followed by individual HRD. What also emerges as far as the differences between the two sectors are concerned, is that automation programmes are aimed more at the entire company, whereas social skills programmes are geared more towards teams, groups or departments—many are also undertaken by individual middle managers.

Table 3: Percentages of respondents according to the reasons for setting up automation (Auto) and social skills (SocS) programmes for the three job levels (LM = lower management, MM = middle management and OC = operating core)

	Auto MM	SocS MM	Auto LM	SocS LM	Auto OC	SocS OC	Average
Resolve problems	1	1	5	1	7	6	3.5
Improvement	24	42	28	47	30	38	34.8
Change/innovation	75	54	67	49	63	53	60.2
Other	–	3	–	3	–	4	1.7

N = 107

Table 4: Percentage of respondents concerning focus on target groups participating in automation (Auto) and social skills programmes (SocS) for three job levels (LM = lower management, MM = middle management and OC = operating core)

	Auto	SocS	Auto	SocS	Auto	SocS	
	MM	MM	LM	LM	OC	OC	Average
Individual	29	39	26	26	22	27	28.2
Team/group/department	25	38	30	51	37	45	37.7
Entire organisation	47	24	44	23	40	29	34.5

N = 107

Results of HRD programmes: an indication of their effectiveness
The final point in this descriptive section of the preliminary study concerns how far the HRD programmes contribute to the intended solution of identified performance problems, improve the existing situation or change it in relation to a desired or anticipated future situation. In short, how effective is the HRD programme in the light of these objectives (as perceived by the respondents). The question was answered using a five-point scale (1 = not at all; 5 = to a high degree). Table 5 sums up the findings.

These findings show that, according to respondents, automation-related HRD programmes made a slightly better contribution towards the intended goals than social skill programmes. Generally, both sectors made a positive contribution.

4.2 Results of the explorative section of the preliminary study

Background data of respondents
First of all it was investigated whether indeed there was a relationship between respondent-linked factors and the contribution of the HRD programmes towards the intended results. In relation to respondent-linked factors, a distinction was made according to job level, position within the company, the position of the HRD function, and the structure of the HRD department. According to a Spearman correlation coefficient analysis, no correlation was found between job level of the respondents and the reported contribution of HRD towards the intended results. The highest value was 0.22 (ns). There was also no significant relationship between the respondent's position within a company and the perceived contribution of HRD. Respondents in a decentralised line position did not report better HRD results for the organisation than those in a staff position. While this does not say anything directly about their own personal effectiveness, it is an interesting result, because for reasons of better HRD effectiveness the HRD responsibility of a company is often decentralised, and together with this management gets more HRD tasks. This study, however, found no

Table 5: Average of the contribution of the HRD programmes in the automation and social skills sectors to the intended solution for the three job levels (LM = lower management, MM = middle management and OC = operating core)

	MM	LM	OC	average
Automation	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.9
Social skills	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7

support for this premise. The same result was achieved from an analysis of variance, whereby the way in which the HRD function was organized was the independent variable, and the contribution of the HRD programmes the dependent variable. The way the HRD function was organized fell into one of three categories: part of the staff department, part of the line department or an independent department. A simple analysis of variance produced no significant difference between the departments ($p > 0.336$ for all F values). Regarding the structure of the HRD department, it was either centralised, decentralised or a combination of both. In order to test the differences between centralised and decentralised organisations, companies were selected that had this type of HRD structure—though only 4 per cent of these did in fact have a decentralised department. Notwithstanding, a simple analysis of variance was carried out on the data and similar to the aforementioned results concerning the way the HRD function is organised, there were no significant differences ($p > 0.170$ for all F values).

Company changes and HRD climate
Is there a relationship between company changes and HRD climate? This is indeed true in the sense that where no organisational changes were reported there was a more positive HRD climate ($t = 2.03$; $p = 0.046$). More specifically, the findings show that the respondents from lower management of these companies perceived HRD training as more important for the running of the organisation (item 25) ($t = 2.11$; $p = 0.037$). The HRD department in these companies also had a more positive image (item 28) ($t = 2.42$; $p = 0.037$) and respondents also reported that middle management would rather not reduce HRD budgets (item 29) ($t = 2.08$; $p = 0.040$). No significant differences between changed and unchanged companies were found for the other items on the climate scale.

HRD climate and HRD results
Is there a relationship between HRD climate and the contribution of HRD towards the intended results? This is not the case. While there is a slight trend in this direction, the differences are extremely small (varying from 0.1 up to and including 0.2 on the five-point scale for the results of the HRD programmes; the difference in one case is −0.01). The largest difference is for the automation programmes of middle management, namely 0.33 ($t = 2.44$; $p = 0.018$). This result was confirmed by a correlation analysis of the same data (see Table 6). In this analysis the job levels are characterised differently ie. top management, middle management and lower management.

In Table 6 three of the nine different rank correlations are statistically significant. The percentage of explained variance in each case however is small and not higher than 9 per cent. In certain social-scientific studies this would be considered sufficient or a lot, but in this survey it is interpreted as being of small/minor importance. Considerably higher correlations would be expected.

Correlation between climate variables
Finally, the correlation between climate variables at the different job levels: seven out of nine rank correlations were statistically significant (see Table 7).

Here the proportion of explained variance between the variables with the highest correlation coefficient is limited (18 per cent). About the same conclusion can be drawn as from the previous table, i.e. the correlation is of minor importance. Therefore there is some but few correlation between the three variables (perceived importance of HRD for the organization, willingness to invest in HRD and involvement in HRD decision-making processes) at each of the three job levels. This means that in companies where HRD is considered important, the willingness to invest in HRD and to participate in HRD related decision-making processes is limited. This is increasingly the case where it concerns the lower management levels within the company. Even where companies are willing to invest in HRD, they are not always prepared to be actively involved in HRD related decision-making. Such a situation is not hopeful for the vertical integration of HRD policy processes, for it implies that the departure points of an HRD policy are only integrated to a limited degree into operational and practical applications. On the basis of these findings it can be stated

Table 6: *Rank-correlation coefficients for HRD climate variables and results of automation (Auto) and social skills (SocS) programmes by job level. The response categories of the negative item numbers were re-coded from positive to negative*

| | | Results | |
	item	Auto	SocS
Top management			
1 Perceived importance to organisation	32	0.238	0.181
2 Willingness to invest	24	0.271*	0.112
3 Decision-making-involvement	−27	−0.007	0.238
Middle management			
1 Perceived importance to organisation	−35	0.146	0.298
2 Willingness to invest	−29	0.266*	0.071
3 Decision-making-involvement	26	−0.046	0.251*
Lower management			
1 Perceived importance to organisation	−25	0.185	−0.001
2 Willingness to invest	−31	0.039	−0.025
3 Decision-making-involvement	34	−0.025	0.161

Table 7: *Rank-correlation coefficients between climate variables lay to job level. (The response categories of the negative item numbers were re-coded from positive to negative)*

	item	Perceived organisational importance	Willingness to invest in HRD
Top management			
1 Perceived importance to organisation	32		
2 Willingness to invest	24	0.422*	
3 Decision-making-involvement	−27	0.286*	0.324*
Middle management			
1 Perceived importance to organisation	−35		
2 Willingness to invest	−29	0.285*	
3 Decision-making-involvement	26	0.199*	0.239*
Lower management			
1 Perceived importance to organisation	−25		
2 Willingness to invest	−31	0.094	
3 Decision-making-involvement	34	0.383*	−0.072

that there is little correlation between the perceived importance of HRD, the willingness to invest in HRD activities and the desired involvement in HRD decision-making.

5. Conclusions

It is obvious that the research group chiefly comprises HRD professionals from large companies in the industry and service sectors, so that the findings are mainly related to these segments of the business community.

The survey findings in relation to the specific areas of automation and social skills show both sectors differ enormously. Noteworthy is the fact that there is a close

relationship between the HRD results of each sector for the three job levels. As was expected, there is no underlying relationship between the specific fields. It was appropriate to include both field contents in the study seeing that the differences in effects have implications for determining the results. Specific evaluation procedures for specialist fields should be employed to determine the actual effects of the HRD programmes.

Many companies serve a whole range of target groups with their HRD programme. If HRD is given in a specific area this will be undertaken by representatives of the various job levels throughout the company. This applies in particular to automation HRD rather than to social skill programmes.

The main emphasis is on HRD programmes for changing and renewing purposes, while improvement-related programmes come a close second. Here there is a noticeable difference between the specific fields in that the former type of HRD programmes is found more often in the automation sector, while improvement programmes occur more frequently in the social skills sector.

The results in relation to the targeting of HRD programmes to specific groups also confirm the preceding impression. Automation HRD is often aimed at the company as a whole, whereas social skill programmes are more geared to teams. About one in four respondents reported HRD aimed at individual employees. There were however a few exceptions to this general picture.

The effectiveness of the HRD programmes was measured by asking respondents to assess the contribution of the programme to the intended objectives on a five-point scale: the minimum contribution was 3.7; the maximum 4.0. This is a reasonable/good result in the light of other research into the impact of HRD on companies (Mulder and Witziers, 1997). It is obvious that in the follow-up study more detailed attention needs to be given to the effectiveness of the HRD programmes.

It may be cautiously concluded that no correlation exists between HRD effectiveness and the job level of respondents, the position of the HRD function (staff or line) and whether it is a centralised or decentralised department. The findings do not support the pleas for embedding the HRD function into the company line structure as a means of enhancing its effectiveness. Further research however will make it clear whether more detailed measuring of HRD effects produces the same result.

A relationship exists between HRD climate and changes within companies. Noteworthy is the fact that a more favourable HRD climate was reported in companies where there had been no changes within the last few years. In such companies lower management perceive HRD as being more important, the HRD department had a more positive image and middle management were reluctant to reduce HRD budgets.

While there is a correlation between HRD climate and the contribution of the HRD programmes towards the intended results, it is a weak one. Only seven of the nine correlations between climate variables and job level were statistically significant. However, these are in most cases too small to attach any importance to them.

6. Considerations for further research

From the findings (Table 7) it can be cautiously concluded that many organisations appear to experience difficulty in harmonising HRD policy processes. This can be deduced by the fact that the respondents are variously active at various levels within the organisation and their level of work is not immediately compatible. In other words, the vertical integration of HRD policy processes is often problematical. Integrating these processes at strategic, tactical and operational levels does not occur automatically. It can only be achieved through various processes of strategic integration. Integration, as was shown in research by Wognum (1995b), can be effected along two deductive and inductive lines. Via the deductive line the organisational strategy can be translated into the operational HRD level and from the inductive route and the operational level integration is sought with the strategic policy of an

organisation. Methods and techniques have been developed for both ways of working. For the deductive manner of working these are mainly methods and techniques related to organisational theory (ie. theories of intervention), whereas the inductive style of working uses methods and techniques based more on HRD skills, including the strategic aligning of HRD organisations as developed within strategic HRD marketing (Gilley and Eggland, 1992) and design methodology. Regarding the latter, Kessels (1993) for instance has propagated working according to a relational approach in addition to the systematic approach. Both approaches combined will result in a more successful HRD approach, better aligned to the goals and problems within an organisation. In both of the aligning strategies, a vertical integration of policy processes assumes a positive attitude on the part of higher management to take part in HRD issues.

Middle and lower management should also have a positive attitude towards HRD participation. As part of the decentralisation of the HRD function, management is increasingly required to fulfil HRD activities. In certain cases, as part of learning in the workplace, they are required to give their own employees instruction. If it is indeed true that competencies give a competitive edge and the best way to invest in these competencies is when the manager himself/herself acts as instructor, this is in sharp contrast to what happens in practice. Mulder (1992) reported that using managers as trainers was not without its problems and that the essential conditions for HRD-time, motivation and expertise were not always fulfilled. Thijssen (1997) also supports the criticism of the manager as trainer. He argues that the manager has too little time for this activity, is not trained for this role and is not paid for the task. These issues are the subject of further research.

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