

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CHALLENGES OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT IN THE SAFETY AND SECURITY SECTOR EDUCATION AND
TRAINING AUTHORITY (SASSETA)

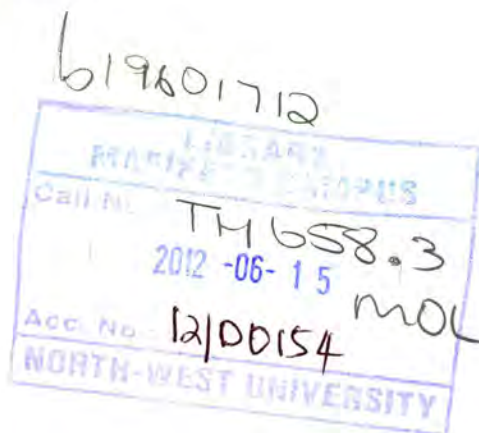
By

Stephina Pulane Molefi

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for Master of Business Administration
in the Graduate School of Business and Government Leadership at the North
West University, Mafikeng Campus.

Supervisor : Professor L Ehlers

Date : 10th November 2011



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank God for the grace, strength and wisdom He gave me to complete this study. Academically I wish to thank my research supervisor, Professor Lukas Ehlers for the valuable guidance, contribution and support towards the completion of this study.

My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to my beloved husband, Molefakgotla Alex Molefi, who has been my source of inspiration, guidance and support, always praying and encouraging me to perseverance during the challenging times of my studies- your efforts have not been in vain! I also wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my children, Tumisang, Thabang and in particular, Gaopalelwe Olaotse, for their understanding, patience, prayers and support in times during which I could not be part of them as a result of my studies. My colleague, Fezeka Madyibi-Oduro, thanks for your prayers, and assistance with the compilation of the final research documents. May God bless you all!

Finally, I wish to thank the Chief Executive Officer of SASSETA, Mr Zongezile Baloyi and the Senior Managers for allowing me to conduct the study in this organisation and consistently supporting me with the required resources towards the completion of this programme. My wish is that the findings and recommendations of this study contribute to the achievement of the legislative mandate and strategic objectives of SASSETA.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges in the implementation of the strategic human resource management functions and practices in SASSETA. The study investigated the impact of organisational structure, the positioning and reporting lines on the ability of the Human Resource Professionals to become strategic business partners.

The study further investigated whether the Human Resource Practitioners possess the relevant competencies that contribute towards the achievement of the strategic objectives of SASSETA. The findings and recommendations of the study are made and will be presented to the Executive Management Committee of SASSETA.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In addition to the definition of terminologies used in the chapters of this study, the following definitions are provided, to give more clarity to the reader of this document:

Human Resources refers to the Human Resource Department structure.

Human Resource Professionals refers to the Human Resource Managers, Consultants and Practitioners collectively

Human Resource refers to the activities, functions, processes and programmes performed in the Human Resources. (For example, the human resource development). The terms is also used to denote the people (i.e. employees), in which case, it is clarified in brackets.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the challenges of implementing strategic human resource management practices in the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA). The focus of the study is on the challenges faced by the Human Resource Department in playing its strategic partner role in order to contribute to the achievement of the overall strategic objectives of SASSETA. The impact of the structural positioning of the Human Resource Department and the readiness of the Human Resources Practitioners to become strategic business partners are also investigated in the study.

The new approaches to strategic human resource management are investigated through literature review and recommendations are made to address the challenges uncovered and conclude this study.

The chapter comprises of the background to the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the design methodology, the significance, scope and organisation of the study.

1.2 Background to the study

The Human Resources has been on a journey, evolving from its traditional administrative personnel role, to becoming a strategic partner to the core business of organisations. The journey has been more of a direction, than a destination, tracking the evolution of the Human Resources over decades, from the traditional administrative personnel management role, to becoming a strategic partner to the core business of organisations, in response to increasing demands facing organisations today (Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005:15).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

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According to Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schulze (2008), the strategic partner role of the Human Resources focuses on aligning the Human Resource strategy, policies and procedures with the business strategies and the execution thereof.

The change of the discipline from personnel to strategic human resources ushers in new approaches to the management of people as critical assets to be leveraged in the achievement of business results. The Human Resource Professionals want to add value, contribute in meaningful ways to line managers and employees in organisations as well as to customers, communities, partners and investors outside the organisation, hence the need for partnerships with line management at a strategic level (Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005:15). However, the Human Resource Department has been the target of organisational forces that discount its value and want to send it back to its administrative beginnings. At other times, progress has been slowed by cynics who doubt that the Human Resource Professionals can overcome this legacy and fully contribute at a strategic level (Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005:15).

As a result of the above challenges, most Human Resources Departments remain both reactive and administrative and have not yet started to sensitise and engage the core business on the value that can be derived from their involvement in the strategic business processes. For as long as these challenges exist, the benefits and strategic use of the Human Resources within organisations will remain an after-thought (Brewster, Carey, Grobler, Holland and Warnich, 2008:74). Further to this, Human Resource Professionals are often kept in the shadows and not involved when critical decisions affecting the human resources (i.e. employees) are made, allowing others to take critical decisions on matters that require their active participation and guidance.

Based on the above background, it is necessary to investigate the challenges faced in the implementation of strategic human resource management in organisations. The study was conducted in SASSETA. The findings and recommendations on how to address these challenges in order to enable the Human Resource Practitioners to play their expected roles and contribute towards the achievement of SASSETA's strategic objectives will be presented to the Executive Management for implementation.

1.3 Problems statement

Literature shows that the Human Resources has evolved from its traditional personnel administration role to becoming a strategic partner with the core business of the organisation, thereby contributing to the achievement of the strategic objectives of organisations (Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schultz, 2008:562). Although there is a plethora of information on the evolving role of the human resources and the value that can be derived from the strategic partnership between business and the Human Resources, there are organisations that still cling to the traditional view of the human resources. This lack of understanding of the strategic role, partnership and contribution creates challenges for the Human Resources Professionals to perform their roles, rendering value-adding services and contributing to organisational performance and competitiveness.

In SASSETA, the Human Resources reports to the Senior Manager responsible for Corporate Services, who is also responsible for the Marketing and Communication Departments. The position of the Manager responsible for the Human Resources is in the middle management level and the Human Resources Manager is responsible for the traditional, administrative personnel functions. The grouping of the Human Resources Department with the other diverse and disparate functions in the Corporate Services reflects a lack of understanding of the role of the Human Resources as a business partner to the core business of SASSETA and creates challenges for the implementation of strategic human resource management in SASSETA.

As a business partner, the Human Resource Professionals should play a part in the strategy formulation processes, designing the human resources practices to make strategy happen, specifying leadership behaviours consistent with the business strategy and facilitating the strategy implementation processes (Smith, 2008).

As custodians of the Human Resource policies and practices, they should be able to envision not only what will, or may happen, but translate this future into the present talent and organisational choices. In envisioning the future, they should shape today's human resources practices in such a way as to anticipate and respond to the economic, technological, demographic and global trends. (Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005). However, with its current positioning, the Human Resources is excluded from participation in the key decision making processes of SASSETA and this creates an impediment in its optimal functioning and direct contribution to the achievement of organisational goals.

The exclusion of the Human Resources from participation at a strategic level may lead to its inability to influence organisational processes relating to the management of the human resources at the right level. Decisions flowing from the strategic planning processes are communicated to the Head: Human Resources by the Senior Manager: Corporate Services as directives or final instructions for implementation, which continues to hamper its optimal performance and expert advising on human resources management processes. As indicated earlier, this further keeps the Human Resources entrapped in the performance of traditional administrative functions that add minimal value to business results, denying it a platform to engage with the Executive Managers on the value of partnering with them for the achievement of organisational objectives.

This organisational level study seeks to identify the challenges posed by this traditional view to the role of the Human Resources and how these affect its contribution towards the achievement of strategic objectives. The study further investigates the readiness level of the Human Resource Professionals to

assume their strategic partnership roles and become true partners with the core business of SASSETA.

The study ends by making recommendations on how the Human Resources can be brought to the centre of the decision-making processes, where it can play its strategic business partnership role, perform the value-adding functions and contribute towards the achievement of business results and competitiveness.

1.4 Aims and objectives of the study

1.4.1 Aim

The main aim of the study is to investigate the challenges faced by the Human Resources Professionals in implementing the strategic human resources management practices, thereby being business strategic partners. Findings are presented and recommendations made on measures to implement to enable it to play this role to the benefit of SASSETA.

1.4.2 Objectives

To reach the aim, the following objectives were set:

To investigate whether the organisational design, positioning and reporting lines of the Human Resource Department create challenges for the implementation for the performance of the strategic human resource management functions in SASSETA;

1.4.2.2 To investigate whether the strategic human resource roles are played in the in the creation of strategic partnerships between the human resources and the core business of SASSETA;

1.4.2.3 To investigate the readiness of the Human Resource Professionals to function at a strategic level, contributing towards the achievement of the strategic objectives of SASSETA;

1.4.2.4 To propose measures to address the challenges identified through this study.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study provides an investigation of the challenges in the implementation of the strategic human resource management functions and practices in SASSETA. Although the study specifically focuses on SASSETA, there are many organisations that still do not understand the strategic role of the human resources and therefore, continue to downplay its contribution towards organisational success.

In the light of this, the information collected through this study is meant to contribute towards creating an understanding of the contribution of the Human Resources towards the achievement of the business strategic objectives if it is allowed to partner with line departments at a strategic level, being part of the strategy formulation processes and translating the business strategy into strategic human resources programmes and activities, for the organisation's survival and competitiveness.

1.6 Research design and methodology

1.6.1 Research design

Research design is the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions as validly, objectively, accurately and economically (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000:450). It constitutes the blueprint to the collection, measurement and analysis of data. (Donald and Schindler, 2003:146).

Research design further sets up the framework for the study of the relations between variables and therefore, provides information on what observations to be made, how to make them (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000:450). In this study, the research design phase provides information on the sample selection and

size, data collection methods and instruments to be used, procedures and ethical requirements to comply with during the study.

1.6.2 Research methodology

Research methodology explains the way the study is going to be carried out, outlining the methodology to be used in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. (Badimo, 2007:5). In this study, a questionnaire will be used to collect information from the sample population. The data analysis and interpretation process is explained in section 1.7 below.

1.7 Data analysis

Data collected was analysed using a computer programme, SPSS, to reflect the responses and the relationships between these, if there are any on the challenges in the implementation of strategic human resource management in SASSETA. Tables and graphs were used to represent the responses and also, to assist in the interpretation of the data collected. Findings were presented and recommendations made, based on the analysis and interpretation of data.

1.8 Scope of the study

This study will focus on the challenges of implementing strategic human resource management in SASSETA. The participants in the study will be the executive managers, senior managers, divisional heads, the Human Resource Professionals and the clerical staff of SASSETA.

The participants in the study were the executive and senior managers, the divisional heads, the Human Resource Professional and the senior administrative staff in SASSETA.

The choice of the above participants (sample population) is based on their involvement in the strategic human resources functions, practices and services and are therefore, familiar with the issues and challenges that the study intends to cover. Their participation enable the study to identify the challenges and make informed recommendations on the role of the human resources as a strategic partner to the core business of SASSETA.

1.9 Organisation of the study

This study is divided into five chapters as follows:

1.9.1 Chapter One: Introduction and organisation of the study

Chapter one provides an introductory discussion of the research problem. It comprises of the background to the study, the problems statement, the aims, objectives and significance of the study. Research design and methodology and the scope of the study are briefly explained in chapter one.

1.9.2 Chapter two: Literature review on strategic human resource management

Chapter two provides insight into existing literature on the role of the human resources as a strategic partner in modern organisations, the roles that the Human Resources Professionals need to play and the platform that line management need to afford the human resources to ensure the achievement of strategic objectives and competitiveness.

1.9.3 Chapter three: Research design and methodology

Chapter three describes the type of study undertaken, the methods used to conduct the study, the rationale behind the choice of the methods and how the entire study was conducted.

1.9.4 Chapter four: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

Chapter four describes the tools used to investigate and interpret data collected on the study. Data is then presented by means of graphs and tables.

1.9.5 Chapter five: Summary, findings, recommendations and conclusion

The chapter summarises the study by indicating the findings, making specific recommendations for implementation, deduced from the literature review and concludes the study.

1.10 Conclusion

The chapter has provided the roadmap to be followed and specific areas of focus to dwell on to conclude the study. The logical flow of information in this chapter provides the reader with insight on how the proceeding chapters are structured to contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject matter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A comprehensive literature review was undertaken on the nature of strategic human resource management functions, practices and processes, its contribution towards the improvement of business performance and ultimately, the achievement of strategic objectives. The competencies that the Human Resource Professionals need to possess to be able to become true strategic partners to business, playing value adding roles in ensuring the alignment between the human resource strategy and the business strategy are also critically looked into in this chapter.

The literature review process also looks into trends regarding the structure, reporting lines and positioning of the Human Resource Department to ensure its ability to perform its strategic business partnership roles effectively. The chapter further looks into the required readiness levels of the Human Resource Professionals to transform from the performance of the traditional, internally focused roles to broadening their knowledge and understanding of the business they are in, the environment, competition and customers of their organisations, looking at ensuring that the human resources practices performed enable their organisations to manage these effectively, are also discussed.

Literature review also looks into the responsibilities of line management in ensuring that the strategic partnerships between business and the human resources are created, with each partner playing their roles to ensure their success, to the benefit of the organisation.

The chapter closes with the Dave Ulrich's model of the modern roles and competencies required for the Human Resources Practitioners to become strategic business partners.

2.2 The traditional role of the human resource management function

The human resource management as a field of study originated when a person started to perform labour, in cooperation with, or on instruction of, another in a specific environment (Ehlers, 2011:6).

Before we focus on the traditional role of the human resource function, it is important to provide the background to the evolution of this field, indicating the various roles played in each era. According to Brewster, et al. (2008) the human resources management field evolved through the following faces:

2.2.1 Historical developments in the human resource management field

According to McKee (as quoted by Brewster et al., 2008:3), the Human Resources has evolved through the following phases over time:

2.2.1.1 The legalistic period: (1960s-1970s). This is the period during which legislation in the social and employment areas were promulgated, which further regulated the workforce beyond the union contract and workplace rules. This era led to the emergence of the training and development as a separate, specialized and vital role of the human resources function. In the early 70s, the first Human Resources Information System (HRIS) was introduced. This was implemented on a computer to manage the salary database.

2.2.1.2 The organic period (1980s) This period ushered in processes such as globalization mergers, acquisitions, re-engineering and down-sizing in organisations. As a result of these changes, the Human Resource Management function faced challenges such as an increasing diverse workforce, an increase of awareness of work and family issues, cost and profit centres as important issues for consideration by the human resources function, the implementation of command-and-control policies and procedures to guide the organisations in responding appropriately o the

turbulent working environment. This period is regarded as the height of the human resource management specialisation.

2.2.1.3 The strategic period (1990s). This period saw the emergence of strategic thinking and planning as prominent activities to embark upon, in order to deal with the continual change facing corporate organisations. During this period, organisations experienced challenges on how to design organisational structures that would drive their strategic objectives and ensure their competitiveness and survival in the marketplace. With a plethora of organisational structures, ranging from hierarchical to matrices and networks, it was difficult for organisations to make the right choices and they therefore, turned to the human resources to assist them in their struggle to remain competitive. In this way, the human resource management function played an active role in determining the future direction of organisations. Organisations therefore, started to recognise the human resources management function as their strategic partner and elevated this function to report directly to the Chief Executive Officer, enabling it to interact directly with the Board of Directors.

2.2.1.4 The catalytic period (beyond 2000): Based on the trends described above, the author predicted that that the role of the human resource management would be characterized by an increase in cross-border employment, diversity issues, with the workforce that will be comfortable in working with people from other cultures, the use of just-in-time employees, continued mergers and acquisitions, leading to increased outsourcing of administrative functions, the a more selective approach by employees regarding their careers, etc.

The above complexities are an indication that the good old days of human resource management are over and the human resource will emerge as a critical factor in the development and maintenance of an organisation's competitiveness (Brewster et al., 2008:3). Also, these trends show that that the human resources have, through different eras, been influenced by different external forces that required responding through the performance of

specific and relevant functions to meet these challenges. This led to the evolution of its role from a simple, traditional and internal focus to a holistic and therefore, strategic focus that responds to the external environmental factors affecting the competitiveness and survival of the business.

2.2.2 The traditional human resource management roles

The discussion on the traditional role of the human resource management function will focus on outlining the following areas:

2.2.2.1 The administrative human resource management level

According to Ehlers (2011), the administrative human resource management activities are the transactional administrative functions, performed at an administrative level, with the aim of establishing, defining and controlling the employment relationships. An understanding of the legislative framework that have an impact on the employment relations, such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Labour Relations Act, the Employment Equity Act, etc. Compliance with the requirements of these laws is crucial to avoid a contravention of the minimum requirements for employment.

According to Ehlers (2011), these activities are mostly administrative in nature, were influenced by some or other form of document and normally contribute little to improving actual performance and behaviour of employees. For this reason, most large organisations outsource these functions in order to focus on the core business and the important, complex operational and strategic human resource challenges. Some of the functions performed at this level are the:

- development of employment contracts;
- salary and wage administration;
- Job analysis, job description writing;
- Job evaluation and grading processes;

- Employment record keeping; and
- Employee information services.

From the above definition of the administrative human resource management functions, it is clear that these functions are necessary to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements. However, they do not contribute directly to organisational efficiency and performance. However, the Human Resource Departments fall into the trap of focusing more on the performance of these functions, to a point where they fail to evolve to the next level of the human resource performance (Boselie, 2010:26). They tend to over emphasise compliance with the requirements of legislation and the human resource policies to a point where they become too administrative and internally focused and miss an opportunity to understand the business their organisations are in, its operating environment and the competition it faces, and so become irrelevant to the business.

The Human Resources Professional need to be careful of being trapped in this administrative level by ensuring the elevation of their departments to the performance of value adding activities (Welch, 2005:99).

2.2.2.2 The operational human resource management level

Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schultz (2008:8), defines this as a staff function of the Human Resource departments, of purposefully taking actions to assist functional managers in the optimal application and utilisation of the human resources under their control, in accordance with official organisational policy. Its focus is on the performance of the traditional human resource functions that aims at attracting, retaining, maintaining and developing the human resources of the organisation to ensure that it has the capacity to deal with the human resource challenges efficiently. According to Ehlers (2011), the operational human resource activities are aimed at meeting specific organisational objectives and are therefore, needed to support the core business of an organisation.

At this level, the focus is on the performance of some of the following human resource management functions:

- The human resource service delivery strategy;
- Human Resource Planning;
- Recruitment, selection and placement;
- Human resource development;
- Performance management;
- Occupational health and safety;
- HR service delivery; and
- Human Resource Information System.

2.3. Strategic human resource management defined

Strategic human resource refers to the long-term, top-level management decisions, choices and actions regarding the organisation's human resources architecture (i.e. the human resources management systems and functions) that are made and performed in a way that is fully integrated with the overall general strategic management of organisations (Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk and Schenk, 2003: 171). Armstrong (2009: 29) describes strategic human resource as an approach that defines how the organisation's goals will be achieved through people by means of the human resource strategies and integrated human resource policies and practices. He further explains strategic human resources as a process that involves the exercise of strategic choice, and the establishment of strategic priorities, the implementation of strategy and the strategic behaviour of the Human Resource Specialists working with their line management colleagues on a daily basis to ensure that the business goals of the organisation are achieved.



From these two definitions of strategic human resource management, it can be deduced that there is a need for integration between the strategic human resource management and the strategic objectives of the organisation if it is to add value. It is also clear that the process requires partnership between the management of the organisation and the Human Resource Professionals, whose responsibility is to ensure the translation of the business strategy into

actionable steps and implement them to achieve business results. This view is supported by Schuler (as quoted by Armstrong, 2009: 29) in defining strategic human resource management as largely being about integration and adaptation, to ensure that:

- the human resources management is fully integrated with the strategy and strategic needs of the firm;
- the human resource policies cohere both across policy areas and across hierarchies; and
- the human resource practices are adjusted, accepted and used by line managers and employees as part of their everyday work.

2.3.1 Aims of the strategic human resource management

According to Armstrong (2009), the fundamental aims of strategic human resource management are:

- 2.3.1.1 to generate organisational capabilities by ensuring that the organisation has the skilled, engaged, committed and well-motivated employees it needs to achieve sustained competitive advantage. This means that it supports the aims of strategic talent management, which are to ensure that an organisation has the right people in the right numbers at the right time in the right place, able, willing, wanting and being allowed to perform thereby giving an organisation a sustainable competitive edge in its chosen markets. (Boninelli and Meyer, 2011:361).
- 2.3.1.2 to achieve integration, that is, the vertical alignment of the human resource strategies with the business strategies and the horizontal integration of the human resource strategies. Wright and Mc Mahan (as quoted by Armstrong, 2009:32) defines the vertical integration as the linking of the human resource management practices with the strategic management process of the organisation and the horizontal integration as the coordination or congruence among the various human resource practices, to ensure a strategic fit. This means that an integrated

approach is required in the development and implementation of the strategic human resource management practices.

In the context of integration, the implementation of an integrated organisational strategy should therefore, entail the creation of the necessary architecture, including structures and the establishment of a culture 'in which all the role players actually work towards the overall mission accomplishment. According to Nel, et al. (2008: 556) the new strategic accountability of human resources management implies that the Human Resources Professionals must show that they contribute to the vision, mission and goals of the organisation.

2.3.1.3 to provide a sense of direction in an often turbulent environment so that the business needs of the organisation and the individual and collective needs of its employees can be met by the development and implementation of coherent and practical human resource policies and programmes.

2.3.1.4 to provides unifying frameworks which are broad, contingency based and integrative, providing an advantage of having an agreed and understood basis for developing and implementing approaches to people management that take into account the changing context in which the firm operates (Armstrong, 2009: 29).

2.3.2 The human resources as a strategic partner to business

In today's business environment, organizations need to be constantly evaluating their internal and external environment for challenges and opportunities to remain competitive and to sustain growth. Political, economic, social, and even psychological changes within our societies create significant impact on organizations (Ramlall, 2002:4). The knowledge revolution and the New Economy, that is, increased technological change, knowledge development, market changes and increased international competition) have brought about new forms of competition and new ways of

looking at business operations (Ehlers, 2011:10). Also, globalization, changes in workforce demographics, eliminating the bureaucracies in organizational structures, and balancing work-family issues continue to exert pressure on organisations to adapt their operations. Therefore, an understanding of the potential of an organization's resources and optimizing the output of such resources given the changes, provides the impetus for HR being the key source of creating the competitive advantage for the organization. The Human Resources is also responding to these changes by shifting from the performance of traditional control and personnel administration functions to a rational model of efficiency aimed at creating optimal fit between the human resources inputs and the productive activities of an organisation. This shift is referred to as strategic human resource management (Ehlers, 2011:10).

Organisations that consider their employees as the most valuable and strategic assets cannot afford not to have human resources functioning in a true strategic business role (Smith, 2008). According to Becker, Huselid & Ulrich, (2001). A strategic asset is defined as the set of difficult to trade and imitate, scarce, appropriable, and specialized resources and capabilities that bestow the firm's competitive advantage (Becker, Huselid and Ulrich, 2001). This view is supported by Jim Collins, who argues that people are not your most important asset, but the right people are (Collins, 2001: 41). Although Jim Collins differs with the notion that people are the organisation's most important asset, he qualifies it by indicating that '**the right people**' are. The Human Resource Professionals' role will be to use policies and procedures in a fair manner to assist line management to conduct skills audit, train and develop employees, manage their performance in manner that will ensure that the business priorities are met. They would also provide expert advice and use the Human Resources policies and procedures to manage poor performance and exit those who need to get off the bus.

Considering the above discussions, if people are the strategic assets of an organisation, they keep an organisation's competitive edge sharp. The processes pertaining to their attraction, development and retention should form part of the strategic agenda of organisations. Special efforts need to be

taken to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and competencies that the competition cannot copy and they are retained. Most importantly, this means that those members of the organisation who are charged with the human resource management functions should be positioned such that they are able to engage, influence and advice on the organisation's strategic decision processes affecting the wellbeing of these assets.

For the Human Resource Professionals, strategic business partnership means the following:

2.3.2.1 Acquiring knowledge of the business

According to Smith (2008:2), for the Human Resources to fulfil a strategic business partnership role, the Human Resource Leaders need to fully understand the organisation's business. This calls for the knowledge and understating of the core business of the organisation, the environment within which the business operates, the customers, competitors, the forces of competition and the circumstances that could influence the achievement of strategic objectives as planned. This further means that the Human Resources should no longer focus on its internal, traditional tasks but pays more attention on creating solid partnerships with key departments (e.g. finance, operations, etc) through collaborative communication efforts because this is important to becoming successful business partners. Becker et al., (2001) contend that to serve as strategic partners is not just a way for HR Practitioners to justify their existence or defend their turf. It has implications for their survival and that of the organisations that they serve. If HR cannot show that it adds value, it risks being outsourced

Welch, et al., (2005:103) states that the best Human Resource Professionals know their business to its finer detail. Such Human Resource professionals understand the tensions between the different departments and know how to resolve them; they see the hidden hierarchies in people's minds- the invisible organisational charts of

political connections that exists in an organisation, the players and the history.

2.3.2.2 Participation in the strategic planning processes

Knowledge of the business is an important step in ensuring that when an opportunity is created for the Human Resources to participate in the strategic planning processes of an organisation, it adds value. As Smith (2008) puts it, the Human Resources workforce, with its diverse internal and external customer base and the ability to touch all the levels of the organisation's environment, is suited for the critical role of a strategic business partner. HR Professionals are equipped with the knowledge, skills, abilities and talents to partner with business leaders drive the implementation of the business strategies.

Strategic planning starts with environmental scanning. This requires that the Human Resource Professional participating in this process be conversant with the environmental scanning processes, to be able to work jointly with line managers on this process, through to strategy formulation and implementation processes. According to Prahalad (as quoted by Christensen, 2006:47), participation of the Human Resource Leader in the strategic planning process will ensure that the human resource matters are integrated in the strategy development processes, with an understanding that, inter alia:

- a. talent is the engine behind the creation of all value. In other words, products and services are conceived, designed, manufactured and sold by people and therefore, the effective management of their employees and the talent base that they possess is at the source of creating value, making this a strategic issue in organisations;
- b. talent will be the source of scarcity in the future. This means that attracting and retaining people who clearly bring the right competencies (i.e. skills, knowledge and abilities) to enable the organisation to function, will be one of the greatest challenges faced by organisations. Therefore, the Human Resource Leaders need to

sensitise organisations to ensure that talent management is integrally connected to the business strategy if it (strategy) is to yield results.

- c. every business issue (problem and opportunity) is a symptom of deeper human or organisational issue. Good Human Resource Leaders have the innate ability to identify the human resource implications in every business issue and are therefore, able to guide the problem solving processes and influence decisions to address business issues.
- d. all human resources work must be directly connected to the business strategy and customer needs. Human Resource Leaders need to ensure that all the human resource work is done to ensure that the human competencies meet the organisational and customer objectives. They need to demonstrate the need to integrate the employees' needs with those of the business and customers.
- e. Line management is responsible for the human resource work in the organisation. This means that human resource leadership starts at the top of the organisation. The Chief Executive Officer, not the Human Resource Leader, is the Senior Human Resource Leader of the organisation. Whilst the Human Resource Leader will be working together with other managers, for example, the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operations Officer, on strategy formulation and implementation, systems, target setting, finances, etc, to ensure effective organisational management, he will be responsible for people management issues also. However, the Chief Executive Officer ultimately responsible for people management issues.

Smith (2008) further argues that core business strategies lead to strategic plans, organisational charts, operating plans, quantitative objectives, and ultimately to specific human behaviour and task performance. The participation of a business oriented Human Resource Professional in these processes can help design a strategic plan that balances the needs of the organisation, its employees and other stakeholders, thereby aligning the efforts of the various functions in the organisation with the business plan. This further supports the view that the Human Resource

Professionals need to have knowledge of the business in order to become true strategic partners.

Based on the arguments advanced above, Smith (2008) believes that the Human Resources Professionals as strategic partners should be the drivers of the organisations' values and therefore, the drivers of the strategic plans!

Brewster et al. (2008), further contend that when the human resources participates at a strategic level, the Senior Human Resources Professionals have an opportunity to meet regularly with their counterparts in line management to formulate and review broad human resources strategies that promote innovation, quality enhancement and cost control; they can participate fully in all top management sessions on business strategy and closely monitor that all the components of the corporate strategies are adequately implemented in all the business areas.

2.3.2.3 Alignment of the Human Resource Strategy to the organisational strategy

The Human Resource Strategy is the roadmap to be followed by both the Human Resources and the management of the organisation in ensuring that the Human Resources programmes and processes are aligned to the organisation's strategic objectives. It therefore, cannot be developed in isolation. This is therefore, a process that involves top management decisions regarding the appropriate strategies for the management of the human resources within the context of the internal and external environment (Nel, et al., 2008). This means that the development of the Human Resources Strategy is not the responsibility of the Human Resource Professionals alone, the management of the organisation needs to be roped into its development, to ensure its alignment to the strategic objectives of the organisation.

Price, (2007) argues that to properly align the Human Resource Strategy with the organisational strategy, the Human Resource Department needs to

be organised such that it can play a role in the strategic planning processes. The first step in achieving this is to recognise that the Human Resource Department and its duties are strategic assets and positioning it as such.

The achievement of the alignment of the Human Resource Strategy also requires that the Human Resource Department understands the business they are in and ensure that they fit in the strategic direction that the organisation is following. Seyeddjavadin and Zandeh (2003) argue that alignment means the Human Resource Strategy be developed from a premise of matching the philosophy, policies, programs, practices and processes in a way that will stimulate and reinforce the different employee behaviours appropriate for each competitive strategy.

Purcellin and Ahlstrand (as quoted in Seyeddjavadin and Zandeh (2003), argue that for the Human Resources to be aligned to the business strategy, it must be determined by the decisions taken on all the three levels of the organisation's strategy. In other words, it has to be determined by the decisions taken on the corporate, business and functional levels of the organisation's strategy and in this way, all the strategies and programmes regarding the attraction, development, maintenance and retention of the human resources (i.e. people) will be fully aligned with that the business need to achieve to remain competitive.

They further argue that the leadership style of the managers as they follow through the organisational goals in the context of their business environments plays a critical role in the alignment process. This means that if they receive the decisions taken on what the strategies the Human Resources need to follow to support the business strategy and makes it their business to join hands with the Human Resources to ensure that these are implemented as planned, the Human Resources Strategy will yield intended results. If they undermine the Human Resources and do not incorporate the goals of its strategy in their business and operational plans, it will not fly.

2.3.2.4 Guiding the strategic human resource planning process

Organisations have realised the need for the development of the human resource plan from a strategic perspective- linking the human resource planning practices to company strategies (Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2011:113). This has led to the emergence of the strategic human resource planning process, which is different from the traditional number crunching process of planning the human resources, which focused on annual targets of an organisation.

Grobler, et al., (2011) define strategic human resource planning as a process through which organisational goals as put forth in mission statements and company plans, are translated into HR objectives to ensure that the company is neither over nor understaffed, that employees with the appropriate talents, skills and desire are available to carry out their tasks in the right jobs at the right times. With the knowledge of business, the Human Resource Managers are able to collect and analyse organisational data, develop plans and programmes that support the vision, mission and strategic objectives of an organisation, thus becoming a valuable strategic partner to the business.

2.3.2.5 Linking succession planning and talent management

The study of Good to Great revealed shocking results that good to great leaders do not prioritise the setting of the vision and strategy in their businesses. Instead, they focus on 'getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus and the right people in the right seats'. They then figured out where to drive the bus (Collins, 2001:41). The Human Resources is equipped with the knowledge, skills and abilities to drive the succession planning process. A strategic approach would need to be followed, of ensuring that the organisation has competent employees employed in the right positions to perform the challenging but meaningful jobs to achieve its business goals.

Management succession, also referred to executive succession, has become a critical component of human resource planning. This is

because research reveals that organisations are faced with a lack of potential executive management as a result of the high turnover rates in management positions (Bhuler, 2002:87). Considering the high costs of replacing them, and the period it takes for them to adjust before they are ready to add value, a proactive and strategic approach is required in planning for succession in organisations to avoid a leadership gap.

As Bhuler, (2002) puts it, management talent is too critical to leave to chance or whim. It is therefore, important that the Human Resource Managers, jointly with the Executive Managers, embark on a systematic process of identifying and grooming a cadre of talented managers over a period of time. Through succession, measures can be implemented to ensure that key management positions that the organisation cannot afford to have vacant are filled through internal placements, as soon as they become available.

The Human Resources' role in this case would to ensure that through mentorship and coaching, cross-functional, unique, core management and leadership competencies needed to drive the organisation' strategy are developed in middle and executive management levels to proactively address this. The Human Resources Professionals are the organisation's resource in this regard because of their specialised training in such processes. Without the involvement of the Human Resources in strategic management meetings where these discussions take place, wrong decisions may be taken, lots of money and time be wasted on the implementation of development interventions that will not ensure that the organisation is ready to fill executive management positions with suitably qualified candidates expediently.

Succession planning is linked to talent management, which is also a key function in strategic business partnerships Brewster, et al., (2008:15). Talent management is a process that ensures that talented people with special gifts, abilities and aptitudes that enable them to perform effectively (Peters and Saks, 2008:14). An integrated approach would be required, to

ensure that that succession planning and talent management strategies are informed by the business strategy. They would therefore, have to be aligned to the organisational strategy and focus on the development and retention of unique talents that cannot be imitated with ease, for organisational survival and competitiveness.

2.3.2.6 The Human Resource Professionals' readiness to partner with business

The readiness of the HR Professional to respond appropriately to line management's demand in as far as strategic human resource management is concerned, demonstrating their ability to link the human resource strategy and planning processes with the overall strategic objectives, will go a long way in ensuring their recognition as business partners. Becoming strategic business partners requires a mind shift on the part of the Human Resource Professionals. They need to be ready to willingly leave their comfort zones, in which their focus is on internal, administrative processes and begin to play new roles

Literature reveals that the Human Resources Practitioners themselves have shortcomings that perpetuate the lack of understanding and appreciation of their roles in the achievement of strategic objectives (Price: 2007). Examples of these shortcomings, which led to their criticisms centre around their lack of enough working knowledge of what business is all about; they lack leadership ability, especially if they have no line management experience; they are viewed as having less interest in helping line managers resolve people related problems; they are viewed as reactive and widely unresponsive to line management needs, interest and business pressures and they are seen as fad-chasers who try to use solutions for problems in other organisations without considering the unique business objectives, corporate culture and organisation-specific politics into account.

As Christensen (2006) puts it, one of the worst things you can do is to fight for the Human Resource to have a place at the business table, succeed and then have Human Resources Managers not knowing what to do when they get there! This can set the change efforts back. The Human Resources Professionals (managers and consultants) must develop strategic business and human resources skills if they are to succeed in partnering with business successfully.

Effron, et al., (2003) indicates that the Human Resource Professionals needs to have the business acumen, that is, the ability to understand the building blocks of how the organisation, big or small, on how business makes money and survive in the competitive world. This calls for making suggestions and decisions that can help the business grow and prosper. This means that the Human Resources needs to learn to speak the universal language of business to be able to engage with line in meaningful discussions, take their role beyond behavioural coaching and beginning to coach on the business side, helping those coached to execute the company's business plan.

In some instances, the Human Resources Practitioners find themselves in difficult situations, where they are limited by the positioning of their department, as discussed earlier. The Human Resource Professionals operating under these circumstances find themselves kept in the shadows when difficult decisions are made, allowing others to make take critical decisions affecting the human capital of organisations, when they could be involved in these processes. As strategy architects, they play a large part in clarifying the strategy, designing human resources practices to make strategy happen, specifying leadership behaviours consistent with the strategy, including the customer point of view strategy, and facilitating strategy processes. As custodians of the human resources policies and practices, they should be able to envision not only what will, or may happen, but translate this future into present talent and organisational choices. In envisioning the future, they should shape today's human resources practices in such a way as to anticipate and respond to the

economic, technological, demographic and global trends (Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005).

2.3.2.7 Line management need to understand the importance of strategic partnership between the business and the human resources

The Human Resource strategic partnership is not the responsibility of the Human resource Manager alone. The whole business need to see the need to establish this partnership, to the benefit of the organisation. There is a tendency for business to undermine the position and role of the Human Resource Manager, whilst on the other hand, the Chief Financial Officer's role is considered to be more important than that of the Human Resources Manager.

According to Brewster et al.,(2008), for an organisation to function successfully, managers cannot ignore the relationship between strategic management and strategic human resource management. This relationship is not built overnight. It requires patience and persistence. In some instances, the Human Resource Professionals have to deal with situations where the relationship is non-existent because top management do not perceive a need for it. They perceive the Human Resources Professionals as 'personnel experts' and not 'experts in business', making it difficult for them to succeed in forging partnerships with business. It is under these circumstances that the Human Resources should work out strategies to ensure their strategic fit in the organisation, making sure that their there is synchronisation between their processes and the broad strategic objectives of their organisations.

2.3.2.8 Elevate the Human Resource Department to a position of power and supremacy.

According Welch, et al.,(2005:99), there is a need for organisations to elevate the Human Resource Department to a position of power and supremacy in the organisation and make sure that the Human Resource

Professionals have special qualities to help managers build leaders and careers. Jack Welch contends that the Head of Human Resource should be the second most important person in the organisation. As a former Chief Executive Officer, his view is that the Human Resource Manager should at least be equal to the Chief financial Officer for the following reasons:

- they both belong alongside the chief Executive Officer
- they both need to be given a space at the table, where decisions are made. On this note, he indicates that it is regrettable that in a lot of organisations, the Human Resource is not even in the same room with Finance.

Welch, et al., (2005) attributes the reasons for this to the following:

- a. Unlike with the other functions, the impact of the human resource is hard to quantify, subjecting it to ridicule, being referred to as dealing with "air"- the people skills
- b. The Human Resources too often gets to be pushed into a benefits administration trap, a position that over the years, the Human Resource Professionals have accepted as their main responsibility. He cautions that If the Human Resource Professionals gets stuck performing these functions all the time, its stature will never be what it should be!
- c. the Human Resource Professionals become twisted in palace intrigue, where they start to overemphasize their importance, thinking of themselves as kingmakers, because they have access to every employee's personal information, instead of listening to people's concerns brokering internal differences and helping managers develop leaders and build careers (Welch, et al., 2005: 101).

Christensen (2006) presents a different view to the one above. His argues that, in some instances, depending on the size of the

organisation, it may be necessary for the Head of Human Resources to report to the head of administration, who in the case of the public sector and parastatals, this is in most instances, the Head of Corporate Services, to ensure that the Chief Executive Officer has a reasonable span of control. His view is that what matters is the access and value of the contribution that the human resources makes that matters, not necessarily the structure and its reporting lines.

I have a different view from the one presented above because in the bureaucratic public sector organisations with hierarchical organisational structures, the above views present the following impediments for the Human Resources;

- (i) an organisational structure determines the location and placement of the decision making powers and authority in the organisation. The higher the level of the position, the higher the level of decision-making powers and access to the strategic decision-making processes and vice versa;
- (ii) there is unity of command and authority, which clearly define the reporting lines and therefore, limits the level of access one has to the immediate line of supervision. Depending on the job level, one may not be allowed to have access to key decision makers to engage with them on strategic human resource matters (Robbins, 2003).
- (ii) assignment of duties in bureaucratic organisations, where hierarchy matters, goes with the level of the position. Irrespective of how knowledgeable and skilled one is in a particular subject matter, hierarchy confines him to the next level of reporting in terms of assignment of duties and engagement on organisational processes because unity of command is the order of the day. Access for participation in higher levels is gained through approval of you principals, having followed certain procedures.

Furthermore, although one understands the reasons provided for the creation of the Corporate Services as stated in 2.3.2.8 above, this approach presents the following challenges for strategic human resource management:

- (i) the corporate service model of organisational design and structuring lumps the Human Resource Department with the other support function such as Finance and Assets, Supply Chain Management, Marketing, as well as Information, Communication and Technology departments. The danger of this situation is that if the Head of Corporate Services is a specialist in any of the areas other than the Human Resources, it is likely to find itself as a loner, not being given the attention it deserves and therefore, forever trapped in administrative and transactional functions only.
- (ii) The grouping of the human resources structure with the other diverse and disparate functions in the Corporate Services model results in its exclusion from participation in the key decision-making processes that affect the well-being of the most important assets of an organisation- its employees and creates an impediment in its optimal functioning and direct contribution to the achievement of organisational goals.
- (iii) With the exclusion of the human resources from participation at a strategic level, decisions flowing from the strategy formulation processes are communicated to the Human Resources Professionals, through the heads of the Corporate Services, for implementation as instructions, which continues to hamper its optimal contribution and expert advising on human resources management processes.
- (iv) The Human Resources will add minimal value to business results and suffer humiliation as stated earlier.

Therefore, the argument that the structural positioning and reporting lines do not have an impact on the ability of the Human Resource department to implement strategic human resources management practices does not apply in this case. Access means that the Human Resources needs to have access to the business conversations, to be able to translate the business strategy into people and organisational programmes and to be intimately aware of and conversant with the subtleties, debates and dynamics of the organisation at an appropriate level.

With regard to the reporting lines of the Human Resources, the view of Christensen (2006) is that it is rare that the Head of Corporate Services who represents the Human Resources at the business table is appropriately trained to translate the strategy into the human resources terms because of their business and skills orientation as in most instances, they are finance-inclined. For this reason, it is important that the Human Resources Department is treated as a stand-alone department, with the direct reporting lines to the Chief Executive Officer to enable it to play its strategic business role.

He further contends that organisational structure that separates the human resources from the strategic business conversations only produce administrative human resources. If the structures create an environment where HR leaders picks up the pieces second hand, piecemeal, distorted and at the discretion of the Head of Corporate Services, he will fail to make the required contribution to the business. Therefore, unless the HR Department's role is elevated and its reporting lines create direct access to strategic leadership in the organisation, its desire and efforts to play a strategic role be a futile exercise.

Brewster, Carey, Grobler, Holland and Wörnich (2008), also point out that organisations can benefit significantly by linking strategic human resources practices and systems with the strategic initiatives of the organisation unless the Human Resources Professionals are given an opportunity, in their capacity as business partners, to directly participate in strategic planning sessions, thereby influencing the strategic direction of the organisation as an

equally important and entitled member of top management, to contribute to the goal achievement and survival of the organisation, support and implement the corporate and business strategies of the organisation. Therefore, by integrating the strategic planning and human resources management practices, organisations can derive improved understanding of the implications of strategic organisational planning for human resources.

2.4 Challenges of becoming strategic partners with business

Although there is plethora of information on the benefits of strategic partnership between the Human Resource and business, there are challenges experienced by the Human Resource Professionals in implementing strategic human resource practices in organisations today and therefore, few organisations have achieved this (Smith, 2008). Some of the challenges have been presented in the preceding discussions, however, according to ANON (2007), these challenges are:

- 2.4.1 Organizations don not know what they want or need from the Human Resources.** As companies evolve and grow, the focus of HR and what management needs them to do changes. Often, there is no thought given to what are the key drivers of human performance. Being an HR strategic partner requires a clear understanding of what the HR group will do, and what they will not do.
- 2.4.2 In the absence of clear direction, HR is reduced to arranging picnics and Christmas parties.** Because there is no direction from the organization, the HR group ends up becoming a “catch-all” where all the administrative jobs fall into. Once the HR group becomes overwhelmed with useless trivia, they do not have the time or talent to conduct more vital and valuable work. Being an HR strategic partner requires elevating above mere administration.
- 2.4.3 We make HR the policy-cops.** There is no doubt that HR should be involved in the drafting of policy, but their role in enforcement should be that of an advisor, not an enforcer. It is the job of individual managers to enforce policy.

An HR strategic partner coaches, supports and advises managers through the enforcement of policy issues.

2.4.4 There is no HR business plan. HR needs to have clear deliverables and measures just like any other business. The HR business plan needs roll out of the greater organizations strategic, tactical and action plans. An HR strategic partner enables the achievement of the overall business plan through superior people practice.

2.4.5 Managers like to use HR as a scapegoat. It's much easier for managers to tell their people unpleasant news if they can pin it on someone else. Usually the target of such finger-pointing is either higher-level management, or the HR group. In either case it is inappropriate. Managers need to take responsibility for the leadership and management of their human assets. An HR strategic partner is a trusted advisor to getting this done well.

2.4.6 HR is not properly staffed. If your HR group is filled with able administrators, but not people with any real business training or experience, you will not have an HR strategic partner (although your staff picnics will probably be great).

2.4.7 HR reports through finance. The practice of having HR report through Finance is far too common. If you want an HR strategic partner, HR needs to report to the people responsible for executing the strategy. If HR isn't at the senior leadership table, then it is highly hypocritical to claim that "employees are our most important asset."

2.4.8 HR people do not know the core business. In order to provide quality, professional advice to managers in the core business, an HR strategic partner needs to understand that core business. It is not necessary to be expert, but there are many organizations where the HR people do not fully understand how the company operates, or how it manages and measures its success.

2.4.9 HR should be a place for high performers, not the company ghetto. If an organization expects outstanding performance from its HR group, it needs to staff it with outstanding people. If HR becomes the ghetto of the organization

where we put people who couldn't make it in the core business, or a place where we hire less than the best to try to meet diversity requirements, you won't have an HR strategic partner.

The Human Resources should be staffed with employees possessing special competencies to drive the strategic business partnership with line departments. Peters and Saks argue that whilst it is desirable that the Human Resource Professionals should possess the traditional human resource competencies, it is crucial that they have the in addition to traditional HR competencies, it's critical to have the capability to drive a model of strategic management that includes strategic thinking, critical thinking, risk management fundamentals, fact based decision making, and evidence based management. (Peter and Saks, 2008:8).

2.4.10 HR needs to be better at selling itself, and influencing others in the organization. An HR strategic partner is an influencer more so that s/he is a decision-maker. As such HR needs to become much better at "selling" its viewpoint. Moreover, for organizations that don't know how they should best use HR, it is up to the HR people to define and sell its role in the company. Peters and Saks (2008:14) advise the Human Resource Executives to think of themselves as influencers, to build a deep understanding of the individuals they are trying to influence, and to create a marketing plan for themselves, managing their "internal image" and building their "external brand."

2.5 Recommendations

In response to the above challenges, the author offers the following recommendations:

- 2.5.1 Have an HR business plan that is attached to the organization's strategic plan.** Without a clear focus, there is no chance of having an HR strategic partner.
- 2.5.2 Get skilled business people into HR.** If you staff your HR department like an organisational ghetto, your results will match. An HR strategic partner is a highly skilled, high potential human asset.

2.5.3 Get HR to the table. An HR strategic partner needs to be included in all important discussions. If HR is not at the table, when those discussions take place, there is no chance of maximising the human asset, and no chance of truly being a high performing organisation.

2.5 Have an HR business plan that is attached to the organization's strategic plan. Without a clear focus, there is no chance of having an HR strategic partner.

2.6 Dave Ulrich's view on strategic human resource management

According to Ulrich, et al., (2008; 3), the Human Resources require a fresh look at what it is doing in order to become a true business partner. This requires that the Human Resource Professionals assume new roles, possess competencies that ensures their relevance to the demands of business.

Ulrich maintains that for the Human resources to succeed in becoming strategic partners with business, they must perform the following roles:

2.6.1 Strategic partner role

According to Ulrich, et al., (2008), this is the instance where HR professionals are enabled to translate business strategy into action. He states that, this begins by recognising the challenges presented by performing disciplines organisational audits involving four steps namely, architecture, assessment, improvement and prioritisation. He reckons that organisational diagnosis may be performed at any level, but of importance, HR professionals should lead this exercise, as partners to line management, by way of assessing the organisation using structured questions designed to determine whether and how the organisation can accomplish its business objectives. For total effectiveness, this assessment should transcend to all the business units or functions, he continues.

Through continuous encouragement, HR practitioners add value to line and line management then share responsibility throughout the diagnosis process and successfully turn strategy into action by undertaking the following tasks:- ensuring that every business plan has an action plan ensuing from it; keeping strategic promises made to investors and employees as well as actively question HR practices to evaluate priorities and focus.

Ulrich appreciates the fact that HR professionals do not always go along with the decisions of the executive team. It is however, their role to always engage the executive and attempt to steer them towards the professional and effective norms of how organisations are created to accomplishing strategy. HR practitioners, he believe, will earn respect and credibility if they are committed to excellence and display confidence and are savvy professionals. Lastly, he highlights the functions which should be performed by HR practitioners in order to fulfil their strategic role which is; establishment of an organisational architecture that can be utilised to translate strategy into action; learning to perform effective and professional organisational diagnosis as well as having ability to set priorities for initiatives.

2.6.2 Administrative expert role

Ulrich, et al., (2008) argues that being an administrative expert requires mastery of two phases of re-engineering, being, improving processes and rethinking value creation. According to him, improving processes mean streamlining, automating and improving the efficiency of the HR practices. This entails application of the principles of re-engineering business processes to re-engineering HR processes. The second phase relating to rethinking value creation centres around HR professionals going beyond merely re-engineering processes to rethinking how work is performed. This also looks at how work is done, deciding what is not done, where and how work is done and who does it. He maintains that this is where line management can play a significant role in supporting HR re-engineering. Finally, on this aspect, Ulrich, et al., (2008) advocates that HR professionals need to learn how to re-engineer HR work, define the HR role, create a shared services HR delivery

mechanism and also learn how to measure HR results in terms of efficiency and effective

2.6.3 Employee champion role

An HR champion role, as portrayed by Ulrich, et al., (2008) is the one where professionals focus on finding the right balance between demands and resources. They also find creative ways to leverage resources so that employees do not feel overwhelmed by what is expected of them. They strongly believe that for one to become an employee champion, HR professionals must demonstrate to employees the confidence and trust of ministers, the sensitivity of psychologists, the creativity of artists and the discipline of pilots. They need to develop credibility with employees by listening, respecting their confidences and being trustworthy. One of their critical role, he maintains, is complementing the line manager's work by undertaking tasks like being the employee's voice in management discussions, assuring employees that their concerns are being heard and defining and providing resources that help employees meet the demands made on them.

2.6.4 Change agent role

In view of the fact that there is no way change can be avoided, Ulrich, et al., (2008) proposes that HR professionals should be masters of both the theory and the practice of change. They need to play a critical role as change agents through leading transformation within the HR, then to the broader community, by servicing as catalysts for change, facilitate change and assists with the design for systems for change. He continues to say, by understanding the theory and applying the tools of change, HR practitioners and line managers can see change as a friend and not an enemy, an opportunity not a hazard, a competitive advantage and not an obstacle and a source of value not a hurdle.

2.7 Conclusion

From the literature reviewed in relation to this study, it is clear that there is a lot said and written about the contribution that the Human Resources can offer to organisations if they are allowed partner with line management for achievement of the strategic objectives. However, for the purpose of this study, only literature that provided insights and learning on what the subject is about, on what it takes for the Human Resources to play their strategic business partner roles and what organisations need to do to ensure that the Human Resource Departments are well positioned to perform these tasks were considered, in order to respond to the research objectives.

Ulrich's model of the modern strategic human resource roles summarises the views presented by the different authors whose literature has been used in this literature review. The new learning, advices and trends will be used as part of the recommendations to address the challenges of implementing the strategic human resource practices in SASSETA.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information on the research design and methodology used in this study to give answers to the raised questions. The research objective is clearly stated in the chapter, with areas of focus clearly defined to ensure that the information gathering instruments are designed to collect data that will address the research question and objectives.

The chapter provides detailed information on which research instrument was used to collect data, how it was constructed, tested and administered in the study. The research population and sample used in the study, as well as the method of analysing data are also covered in this chapter.

3.2 Research objective

The main objective of this study is to investigate the challenges of implementing the strategic human resource management practices in (SASSETA). The study focuses on investigating whether the organisational design and positioning of the Human Resources on its ability to become a strategic partner to the core business, where it play its roles and contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives of SASSETA. Below are the specific objectives of the study:

- 3.2.1 To investigate whether the organisational design, positioning and reporting lines of the Human Resource Department create challenges for the implementation for the performance of the strategic human resource management functions in SASSETA;

- 3.2.2 To investigate whether the strategic human resource roles are played in the in the creation of strategic partnerships between the human resources and the core business of SASSETA;
- 3.2.3 To investigate the readiness of the Human Resource Professionals to function at a strategic level, contributing towards the achievement of the strategic objectives of SASSETA;
- 3.2.4 To propose measures to address the challenges identified through this study.

3.3 Research design

Research design is a blueprint or detailed plan of how a research study is to be completed (Babbie, Mouton, Voster and Prozesky, 2006:75). According to Leedy (as quoted by Badimo, 2007: 54), research design is the strategy, the plan and the structure of conducting a research project. This means that research design serves as a roadmap to be followed by a researcher in conducting research.

It includes an outline of what the researcher plans to do, from the writing of a hypothesis and their operational implications to the final analysis of data. In other words, it helps the researcher to plan and structure the research project, clarifying the conditions for the collection, analysis and interpretation of observed facts, the units of analysis in a manner that will provide accurate answers to research problem.

According to Babbie (2001), research design helps the researcher to narrow down choices, focusing on the perspective for the purpose of a particular study. This means that it assists the researcher to be focus the study on the important steps, methods and objectives, avoiding ambiguous, irrelevant and time wasting processes that may derail him from achieving intended results within specified time frames. It is therefore, a critical step in research.

3.4 Research methodology

Research methodology is described as the principles of how to study a phenomenon, reflecting the steps or approaches taken to link the research questions and objectives to data collection, analysis, and interpretation in a logical manner (Badimo, 2007:54). There are two types of research methodology, namely:

- 3.4.1 **Qualitative methodology:** Brynard and Hanekom (as quoted by Badimo, 2007:54) defines qualitative research methodology as a study that focuses on the commitment to see things from the point of view of the participant or the actor.
- 3.4.2 **Quantitative methodology:** This type of methodology is associated with numbers and observations, producing data by counting and measuring things (Badimo (2007:54).

In this investigative study, a qualitative research methodology has been adopted, to gather information on whether there are challenges in the implementation of the strategic human resource management practices or not, in SASSETA.

3.5 Research instruments

Research instruments are the tools used in the collection of information from the participants in the study.

3.5.1 The choice of a research instrument

In this study, a structured questionnaire was developed for the collection of data from the employees of SASSETA to elicit a response.

3.5.2 Reasons for the choice of a questionnaire as a research instrument

A questionnaire will be chosen as a relevant research instrument in this study because its aims and objectives provide the following benefits for the study as presented by Temane (2009:38):

- 3.5.2.1 It is a recommended data collection method for use in real life situations since its primary focus is on solving real life problems;
- 3.5.2.2 It contributes both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate, problematic situation and furthers the goals of social research simultaneously;
- 3.5.2.3 It is mostly used by practitioners who wish to improve an understanding of their practice and will therefore, be most appropriate in this case.
it increases validity and reliability as results can be confirmed by means of different data sources;
- 3.4.2.4 It creates new lines of thinking by the emergence of fresh perspectives and contradictions, which is what the study seeks to achieve; and
- 3.4.2.5 information collected through a questionnaire is easy to analyse, if it is well constructed.

3.5.3 Construction of the questionnaire

A research instrument has an influence on the reliability and validity of the information collected. It is therefore, important that the questions are constructed with great caution, taking into account the research problem and objectives. Bless and Higson-Smith (as quoted by Badimo, 2007: 65), recommend that the following guidelines be followed in constructing a questionnaire:

- 3.5.3.1 Pay attention to the wording of questions to be raised. This means that the kinds of words chosen and their logical sequence should be easy to understand and follow;
- 3.5.3.2 Use simple and short questions to ensure the completion of a questionnaire with ease and quickly;
- 3.5.3.3 Avoid ambiguous questions, using words that are too generic and vague as they can lead to different interpretations and misunderstanding;
- 3.5.3.4 Avoid leading questions as they may provide irrelevant and undesired responses
- 3.5.3.5 Avoid the use of complex language and use simple words that the respondents may understand and respond to.
- 3.5.3.6 Start the questionnaire with the most interesting questions to encourage participation. Putting difficult and uninteresting questions at the beginning of a questionnaire have a potential of threatening the respondent's willingness to complete it.

The above guidelines were considered in the construction of the questionnaire for the collection of data in this study and has contributed to the high response rate to the questionnaire (Refer to Annexure B).

The questions were constructed to cover the following areas, in line with the research problem and objective:

Section B questions

AREAS OF FOCUS	QUESTIONS
The impact of the structure, positioning and reporting lines of the Human Resources on the ability of the Human Resources to become strategic business partners.	Q5, Q8, Q20, Q21
The Human Resource Professionals' knowledge of the roles and responsibilities to be played in the strategic partnership with business.	Q7, Q9, Q10, Q13, Q14, Q18, Q19
The readiness level of the HR Professionals to become strategic partners with the business, implementing .	Q4, Q11, Q12, Q15, Q20.
The contribution of the Human Resources to strategic objectives currently.	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q6, Q8, Q10, Q16, Q17

The questions in section C were structured in a manner that enables the respondents to indicate the extent to which the strategic human resources management practices are implemented in SASSETA. The questions in this area are based on the categories provided above and are constructed in a manner that allows the respondent to assess the level at which SASSETA is, in understanding and implementing the strategic human resource practices and are therefore, vital for the derivation of findings and recommendations in the study.

3.5.4 Questionnaire pre-test

Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was pre-tested by requesting five knowledgeable Human Resource Managers who were not part of the study to read, complete and provide feedback on the content and level of accuracy. According to Babbie (2001:250), there is always a possibility of error in the construction of a questionnaire, irrespective of how careful the researcher would have been, in constructing it. Pre-testing a questionnaire therefore ensures the protection of a questionnaire against errors and vagueness, therefore, contributed to the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

3.5.5 Administrative procedure

A letter requesting permission to conduct a study in SASSETA was written and sent to the Chief Executive Officer of SASSETA for approval. Upon receipt of approval to conduct the study, a questionnaire was distributed to the employees of SSSETA for completion.

3.6. Research population

A research population is defined as an aggregate of elements from which the sample is actually selected (Babbie 2001: 185). To ensure that the study is manageable, controllable and completed in a timely manner, sampling is necessary. According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000:165), sampling refers to taking a portion of a population or universe as representative of that population.

In this study, a sample of the research population was used to respond to the questionnaire. Although Babbie (2000:184) argues that samples need not be representative in all respects and that representativeness is limited to those characteristics that are relevant to the substantive interests of the study, representativity was considered in this study to give all the members of the population an equal chance of being selected in the sample and therefore ensuring a good coverage of the research population.

The sample population in this study comprises of the employees of SASSETA occupying positions in the following job categories:

- Executive and Senior Managers: the participants are involved in the strategic management processes, including the approval of the structure and human resource planning processes;
- the divisional heads: the participants are the implementers of the strategic objectives at a middle management level. They are also the recipients of the human resources services;
- The Human Resource Professionals: the participants are the custodians of the human resource functions and processes in SASSETA; and

- The professional staff: the participants are senior clerks, who have an understanding of the responsibilities of the Human Resources. They are also the recipients of the human resources services

3.7 Collecting and capturing responses

Research shows that when a researcher either delivers the questionnaires, picks them up or do both, the completion and response rate is higher than when left to respondents to mail them back (Babbie, 2001:253).

In this study, the researcher developed a questionnaire and personally delivered and distributed it amongst the employees of SASSETA for completion as part of the data collection stage. The researcher had face-to-face encounters with the respondents and administered the questionnaire, to ensure immediate assistance and clarification of the respondents' concerns at the point of completion. As a result of this, 80% response rate was achieved. The details of this process are reported in chapter four of this study.

The responses were captured in the computer, using SPSS, a comprehensive IBM software system for capturing and analysing data.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques in order to derive functions and also to explore relationships among variables. (Cooper and Schindler, 2003: 87). As reported in 3.5 above, SPSS will be used to analyse the descriptive statistics, apply statistical tests, and provide reports on the responses.

The findings of this process will be interpreted in light of the data collected from the respondents. Based on the interpretations of data, recommendations will be made to the management of SASSETA on how to implement

strategic human resources management practices to improve organisational performance and achieve their strategic objective.

3.9 Conclusion

The chapter provided a detailed explanation of the approach, design, methods and steps taken in the study. It explains the research objectives, the principles that were followed in the choice, construction and administration of the questionnaire. The methods used to capture data collected and the system used to analyse the responses are also captured in this chapter. The design of this process flow is important in guiding the researcher to focus on the main objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the results, for data obtained from a structured questionnaire distributed and completed by the employees of the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA). A total of 46 questionnaires were prepared and distributed randomly to the Executive Managers, Senior Managers, Departmental Heads and clerical employees of SASSETA. A total of 39 responses were received, which represents 85% response rate of the total questionnaires distributed. The rate of non-response is 15%. According to Babbie (2001:257), this is regarded as a very high response rate for a study of this nature.

Two of the returned questionnaires were not fully completed and therefore discarded, while 37 of these were fully completed. These constituted 80% of the sample population and data analysis is based on these responses as provided by the employees of SASSETA in these questionnaires.

4.2 Implementation

The researcher administered the distribution and collection of questionnaires from SASSETA employees. The researcher did not rule out the possibilities of the overstating or understating certain aspects in the responses. However, all reasonable efforts were made to collect and capture data effectively without compromising any standards.

4.3 Presentation and analysis of data

The presentation and analysis of data is arranged as follows in this chapter:

- section 4.3.1 analyses the biographical data of the respondents; and

- section 4.3.2 evaluates the respondents' ratings on the extent to which the strategic human resource practices, roles and competencies are understood and attended to in SASSETA.

4.3.1 Biographical data

This section studies the biographic data of respondents. Six variables such as gender, age, race, qualifications, number of years in management and HR are looked at. The results are presented in figures 4.1 through 4.6 below. Descriptive statistics are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

	Gender	Race	Age	Highest qualification	Number of years in HR	Number of years in Management
Valid	37	37	37	37	37	37
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.62	1.41	2.76	3.54	1.84	2.08

As shown in table 4.1, thirty seven (37) employees took part in the study. Of the 37 respondents, averagely 1.41 is either Africans or Whites. As represented above, the average 3.54 of employees' highest qualifications. Most of them have qualifications ranging between national Diploma and Bachelor's degree. The majority of them have been in the Human Resource environment for a period between 1-5 years and in Management for about one to ten years.

Figure 4.1 presents the gender distribution of employees in SASSETA as follows:

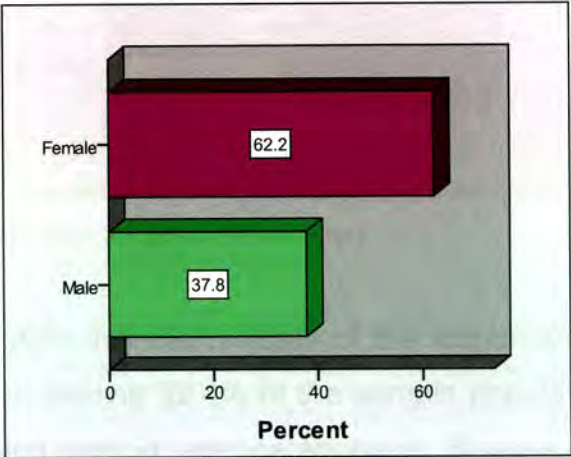


Figure 4.1 Gender of respondents

Of the 35 employees interviewed, 62.2% represents females and 37.8% represents males.

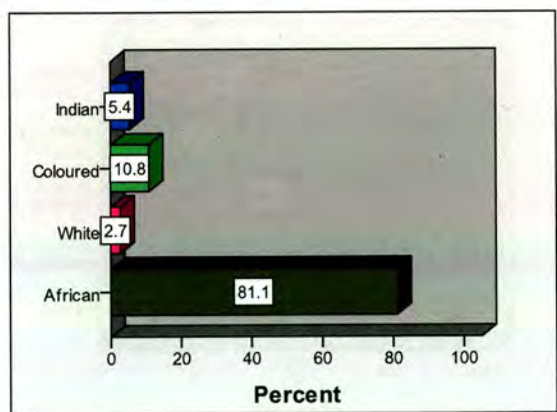


Figure 4.2 Race of respondents

This figure reveals that 81.1% of the respondents are Africans (81.1%), 2.7% are white, 10.8% are Coloured and 5.4% are of Indian race. From the above information, it can be deduced that the majority of the respondents are of African race, fairly representative of SASSETA's employment profile, which comprises of 85% Africans.

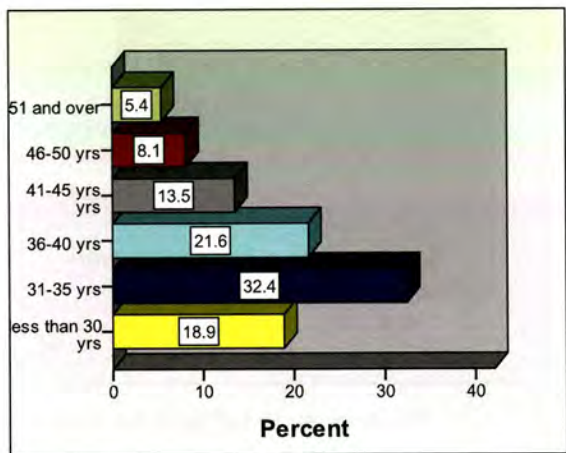


Figure 4.3 Ages of respondents

Figure 4.3, indicates that the majority of the respondents are aged between 31-35 years, representing 32.4% of the sample population. The oldest of the sample population are in age category of 51years and over, while the

youngest are in the age category of less than 30 years, signifying 18.9% of the sample population.

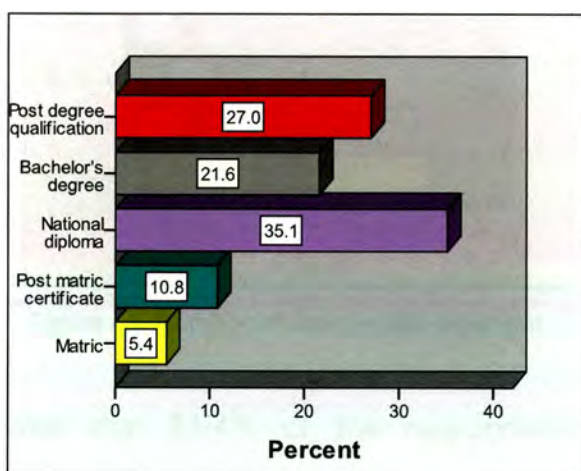


Figure 4.4 Highest qualifications

Most of the employees have National Diploma as their highest qualification (35.1%), with 27% and 21.6% representing employees with post and bachelors' degree qualifications respectively. The least educated employees are in minority and have a matric qualification.

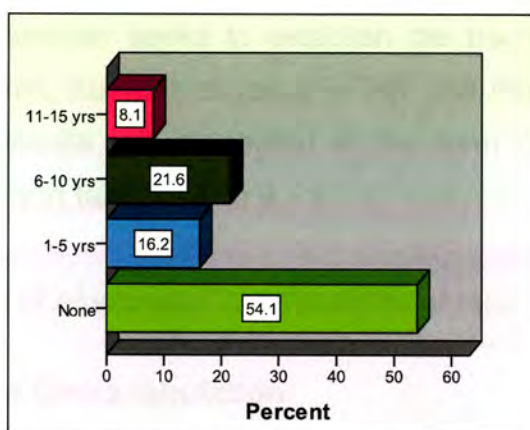


Figure 4.5 Number of years in HR

Of the 37 employees, 54.1% of them have not worked in HR department and 8.1% represent those who have been in this department for a longer time.

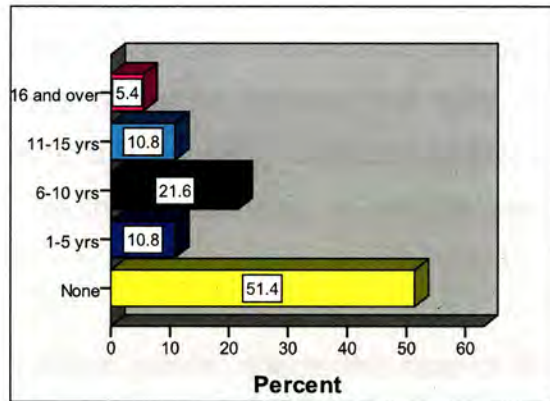


Figure 4.6 Number of years in Management

Figure 4.6 shows that 51.4% of the respondents has no managerial experience, a total of 32.4% has managerial experience ranging between 1 to– 10 years, 10.8% has managerial experience ranging from 11-15 years and only 5.4% has managerial experience of 15 years and beyond. This means that a relatively small amount of participants have vast managerial experience.

4.3.1.1 Cross tabulations

This section analyses the relationship between respondents' biographical data. The researcher seeks to establish the fraction of employees' race, age, qualification, number of years in HR and management in relation to gender. The results are presented in the form of percentages and chi-square statistics in tables 4.2 to 4.11.

The proportion of employees' race in terms of race

Table 4.2 Gender *race Cross tabulation

			Race				Total
			African	White	Coloured	Indian	
Gender	Male	Count	10	1	2	1	14
		% within gender	71.4%	7.1%	14.3%	7.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	20	0	2	1	23
		% within gender	87.0%	.0%	8.7%	4.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	30	1	4	2	37
		% within gender	81.1%	2.7%	10.8%	5.4%	100.0%

Table 4.2 shows that of the 30 African respondents, twenty of them are females and ten are males. There are no white females but only one male in the sample population. Clearly, there is a relationship between gender and race of respondents although the proportion of this relationship is not the same across different race groups.

To assess the extent to which gender affects the race of respondents, measures of association are used as an assessment tool and the results are represented in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Measures of association

		Correlation coefficient
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.248
	Cramer's V	.248
N of Valid Cases		37

Note that the results for three measures of association are revealed in table 4.3. To conclude on the strength or weakness of association between the variables, one of the following conditions apply: If the correlation coefficient lies between

- 0 and 0.1, there is little if any association;
- 0.1 and 0.3, there is low/weak association;
- 0.3 and 0.5, there is moderate association; and
- 0.5 and 1, strong association.

Based on the data in Table 4.3, it is clear that the relationship between gender and race of respondents is weak.

Table 4.5 measures of association

		Correlation coefficient
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.545
	Cramer's V	.545
N of Valid Cases		37

There is strong association between gender and age groups of employees in terms of the phi and Cramer's V coefficients. The correlation coefficients lie within an interval 0.5 and 1.

Table 4.6 Gender *qualifications Crosstab

GENDER		Highest qualifications					Total
		Matric	Post matric certificate	National diploma	Bachelor's degree	Post degree qualification	
Male	Count	1	0	4	2	7	14
	% within gender	7.1%	.0%	28.6%	14.3%	50.0%	100.0%
Female	Count	1	4	9	6	3	23
	% within gender	4.3%	17.4%	39.1%	26.1%	13.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	2	4	13	8	10	37
	% within gender	5.4%	10.8%	35.1%	21.6%	27.0%	100.0%

Table 4.4 Gender*Age Crosstab

In table 4.3, the correlation coefficients are located in the second column and they all lie within an interval 0.1 and 0.3. This implies that there is low or weak association between gender and race of respondents.

It is clear that there is a relationship between gender and respondents' qualifications. More females have national diploma and 50% males have post degree as their highest qualifications. There are no males with post matric certificate.

Table 4.7 Measures of association

		Correlation coefficient
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.459
	Cramer's V	.459
N of Valid Cases		37

As in table 4.7 above, there is high association between gender and qualifications of employees.

Table 4.8 Gender*number of years in HR Crosstab

			Number of years in HR				Total
			None	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	
Gender	Male	Count	4	3	5	2	14
		% within Gender	28.6%	21.4%	35.7%	14.3%	100.0%
	Female	Count	16	3	3	1	23
		% within Gender	69.6%	13.0%	13.0%	4.3%	100.0%
Total		Count		6	8	3	37
		% within gender	54.1%	16.2%	21.6%	8.1%	100.0%

The results in table 4.8 reveal that most of the employees, irrespective of gender, have never been in the HR department. Most of the males have been in this department for a period of 11-15 years as compared to females.

Table 4.9 measures of association

		Value
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.410
	Cramer's V	.410
N of Valid Cases		37

The correlation coefficients are moderate hence there is a moderate association between gender and number of years served in the HR Department.

Table 4.10 gender* Number of years in management

			Number of years in management					Total
			None	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16 and over	
gender	Male	Count	2	3	5	3	1	14
		% within gender	14.3%	21.4%	35.7%	21.4%	7.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	17	1	3	1	1	23
		% within gender	73.9%	4.3%	13.0%	4.3%	4.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	19	4	8	4	2	37	
	% within gender	51.4%	10.8%	21.6%	10.8%	5.4%	100.0%	

Table 4.10 reveals that there are more male employees in management positions. Of the few employees in management position in SASSETA, four are males who have been in a management position for 6 to 10 years and three are females . The same proportion of male and female employees has been in management for 16 years and more.

Table 4.11 measures of association

		Correlation coefficient
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.591
	Cramer's V	.591
N of Valid Cases		37

The measures in table 4.11 prove that there is high association between employees' gender and their duration in management.

4.3.2 Sections B and C questions

This section discusses SASSEATA employees' responses concerning the challenges of implementing the strategic human resource practices, the results are summed up are summed up in tables and figures below.

The structural positioning of HR

To ensure an effective functioning of the Human Resources as a business partner, it should

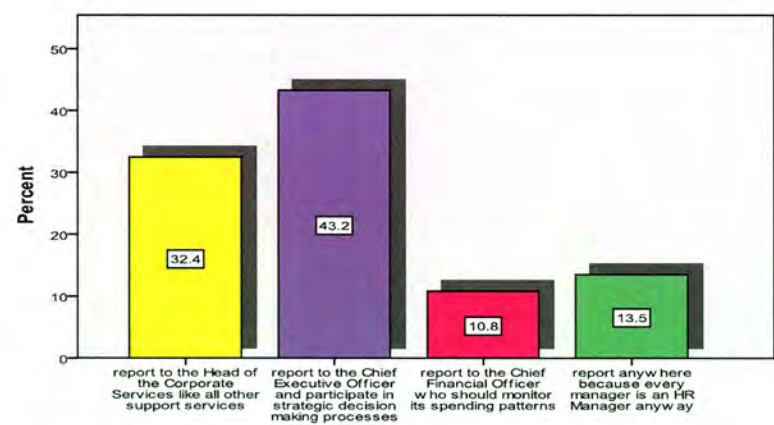
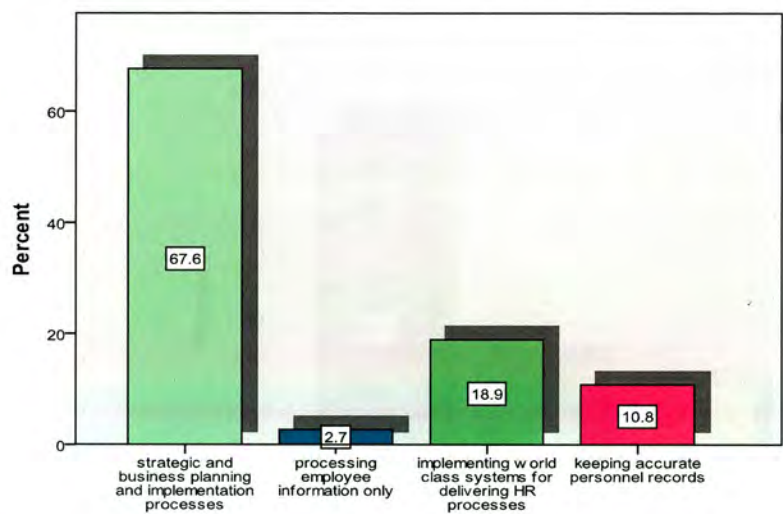


Table 4.12

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Report to the Head of the Corporate Services like all other support services	12	32.4	32.4	32.4
	Report to the Chief Executive Officer and participate in strategic decision making processes	16	43.2	43.2	75.7
	Report to the Chief Financial Officer who should monitor its spending patterns	4	10.8	10.8	86.5
	Report anywhere because every manager is an HR Manager anyway	5	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.12 shows that 43% of the respondents the respondents believe that for the Human Resources to function effectively as a business partner, it has to report to the Chief Executive Officer of SASSETA and be able to participate in strategic decision making processes. This shows an understanding of what it takes to have a strategic partnership between business and the Human Resources. It is further observed that 32.4% of the respondents think that the Human Resources should report to the Head of Corporate services, which is where it currently resides, while 13.5% indicates that the human resources can report anywhere because every manager is a human resource manager anyway.

The strategic Human Resources partnership requires that HR becomes an active partner in



		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strategic and business planning and implementation processes	25	67.6	67.6	67.6
	Processing employee information only	1	2.7	2.7	70.3
	Implementing world class systems for delivering HR processes	7	18.9	18.9	89.2
	Keeping accurate personnel records	4	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.13

Table 4.13 shows that 67% of the respondents understand the role of the Human Resources as strategic partner to business. The low response in the traditional administrative role of the Human Resources also confirms the understanding of this important shift in the Human Resources roles.

HR Professionals as strategic business partners need to

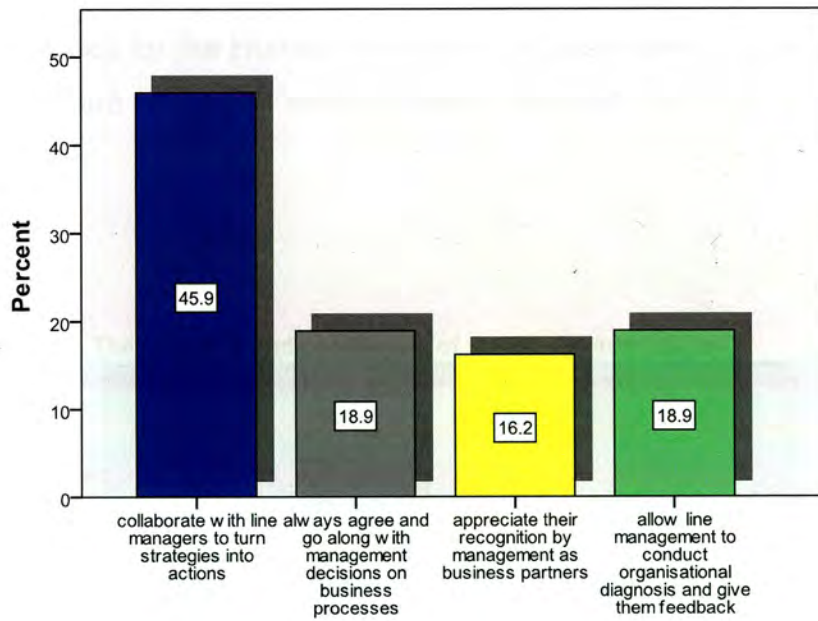


Table 4.14

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Collaborate with line managers to turn strategies into actions	17	45.9	45.9	45.9
	Always agree and go along with management decisions on business processes	7	18.9	18.9	64.9
	Appreciate their recognition by management as business partners	6	16.2	16.2	81.1
	allow line management to conduct organisational diagnosis and give them feedback	7	18.9	18.9	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.14

Responses as recorded in table 4.14 shows that 45.9 of the respondents understands the need for the Human Resource Professionals to collaborate with line managers to ensure ongoing engagements required for the success of the partnership.

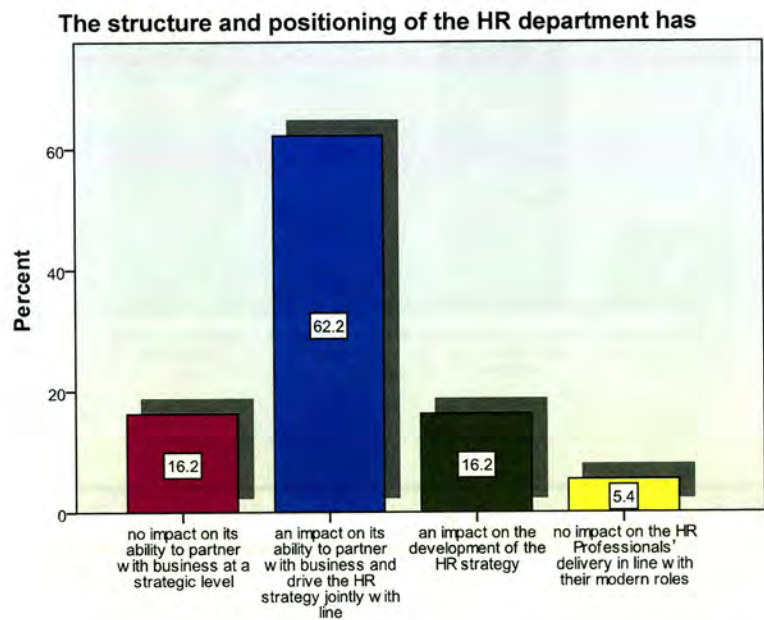


Table 4.15

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No impact on its ability to partner with business at a strategic level	6	16.2	16.2	16.2
	An impact on its ability to partner with business and drive the HR strategy jointly with line	23	62.2	62.2	78.4
	An impact on the development of the HR strategy	6	16.2	16.2	94.6
	No impact on the HR Professionals' delivery in line with their modern roles	2	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.15 shows that 62.2 % of the respondents indicated that the structure and positioning of the Human Resources has an impact on the ability of the Human Resources to partner with business and jointly drive the organisational strategy. On the other hand, 5.4% of the respondents indicated that the structure and positioning of the Human Resources has no impact on the HR Professional's ability to deliver in line with their new roles.

Roles of the HR professionals

The Human Resources should participate in the organisation's strategic processes of

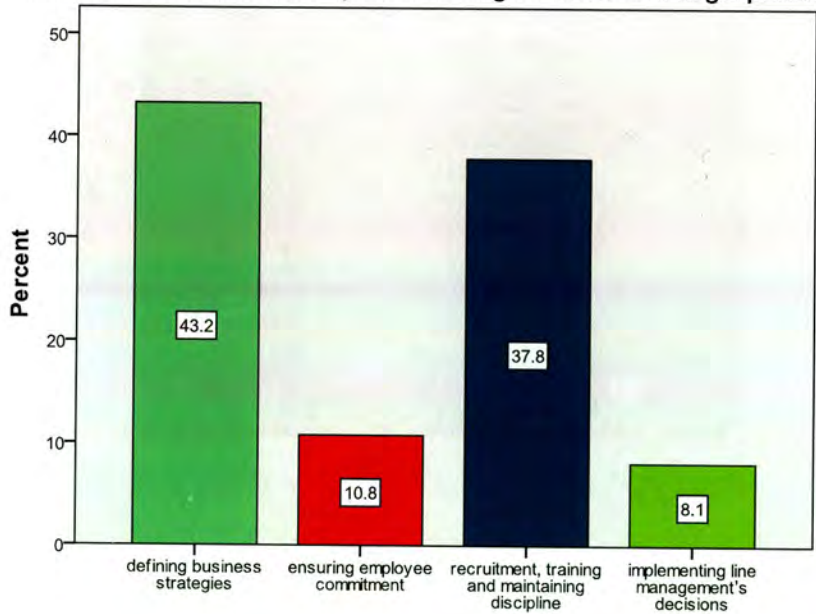


Table 4.16

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Defining business strategies	16	43.2	43.2	43.2
	Ensuring employee commitment	4	10.8	10.8	54.1
	Recruitment, training and maintaining discipline	14	37.8	37.8	91.9
	Implementing line management's decisions	3	8.1	8.1	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.16 shows that 43.2 % of the respondents indicated the need for the Human Resource Professionals to participate in organisational processes of defining the business strategy, as a strategic business partner, while 37.8 of the respondents indicated the need to focus on the traditional operational functions.

The Human Resources is a business ally when

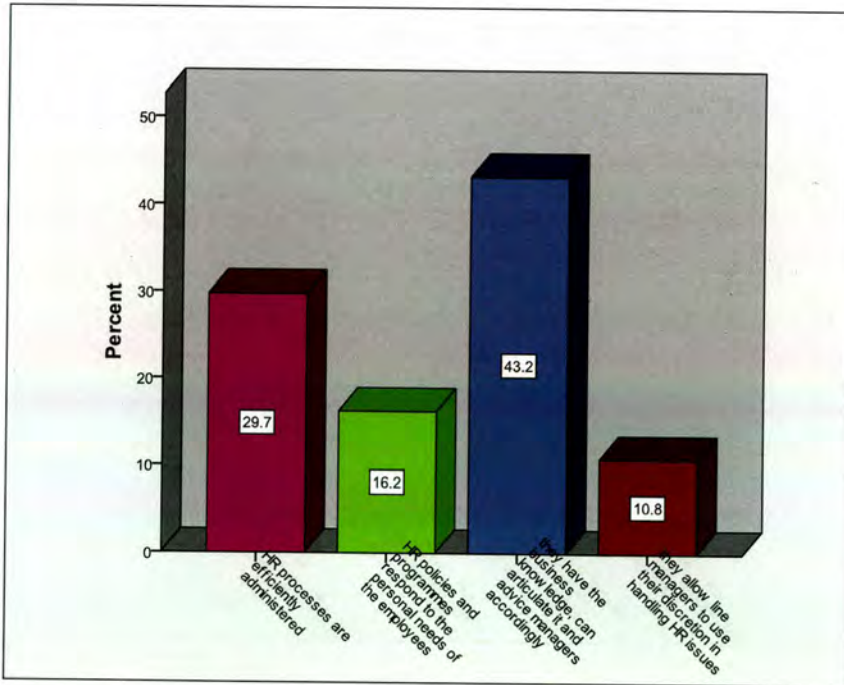


Table 4.17

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	HR processes are efficiently administered	11	29.7	29.7	29.7
	HR policies and programmes respond to the personal needs of the employees	6	16.2	16.2	45.9
	They have the business knowledge, can articulate it and advice managers accordingly	16	43.2	43.2	89.2
	They allow line managers to use their discretion in handling HR issues	4	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.17 reflects that 43.2 % of the respondents indicated that Human Resources becomes a business ally when they have all the business knowledge, articulate and advice management accordingly. Only 10.8% of the respondents indicated the need for the Human Resources to forge strategic partnerships by continuing to focus on the administrative functions.

The Human Resources Managers should focus their efforts on

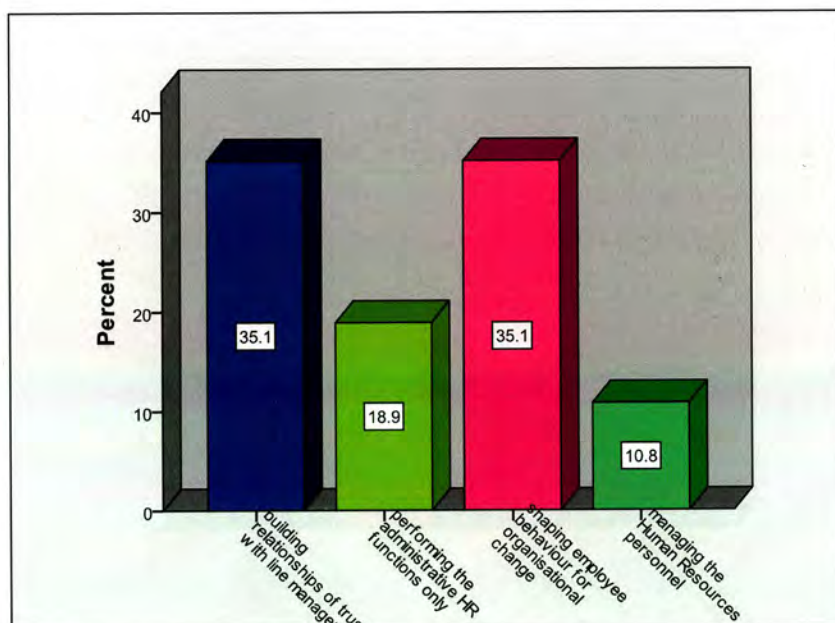


Table 4.18

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Building relationships of trust with line managers	13	35.1	35.1	35.1
	Performing the administrative HR functions only	7	18.9	18.9	54.1
	Shaping employee behaviour for organisational change	13	35.1	35.1	89.2
	Managing the Human Resources personnel	4	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.18 shows that 35.1% indicated that the Human Resource Manager should focus his efforts on building relationships of trust with line managers. Another 31.5% indicated the need for the Human Resource Manager to focus on shaping employee behaviours for organisational change.

The Human Resources' effectiveness is measured by its ability to

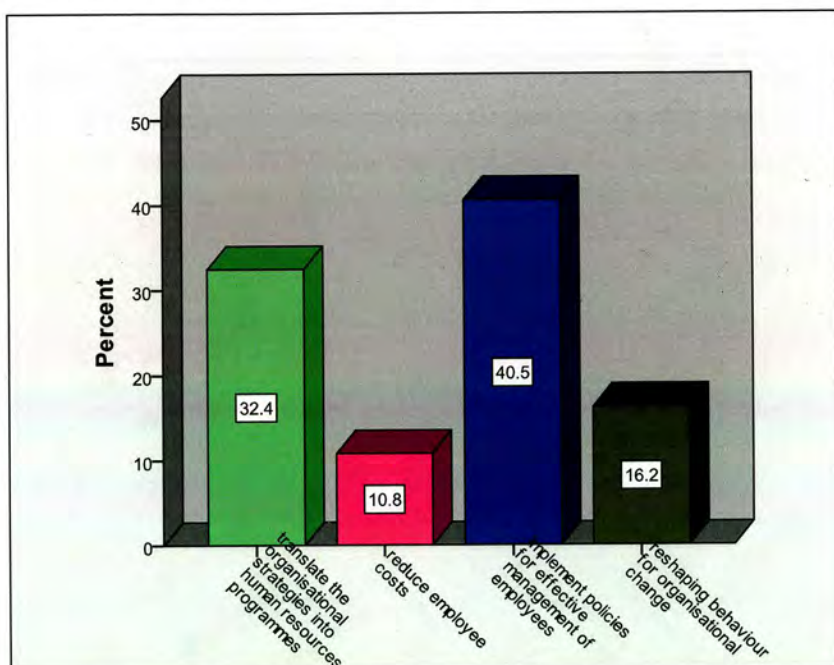


Table 4.19

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Translate the organisational strategies into human resources programmes	12	32.4	32.4	32.4
	Reduce employee costs	4	10.8	10.8	43.2
	Implement policies for effective management of employees	15	40.5	40.5	83.8
	Reshaping behaviour for organisational change	6	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.19 shows that 40.5% of the respondents said the Human Resource's effectiveness should be measured by implementing the policies for effective management of the employees.

The HR management functions' credibility comes from

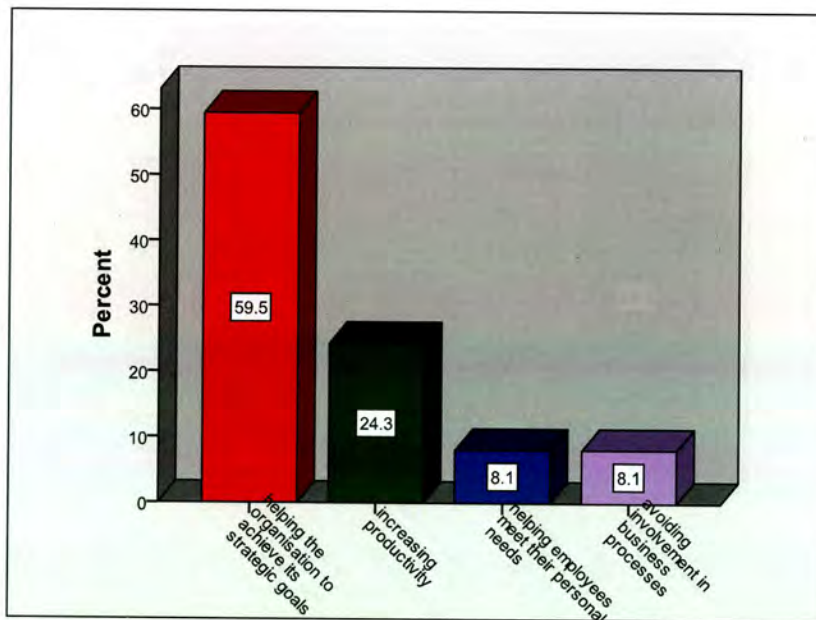


Table 4.20

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Helping the organisation to achieve its strategic goals	22	59.5	59.5	59.5
	Increasing productivity	9	24.3	24.3	83.8
	Helping employees meet their personal needs	3	8.1	8.1	91.9
	Avoiding involvement in business processes	3	8.1	8.1	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.20 shows that 59.5% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resources' credibility comes from helping the organisation to achieve its strategic objectives, whilst 8.1% indicated that the credibility comes from avoiding involvement in business processes.

As champions of competitiveness, HR Professionals need to

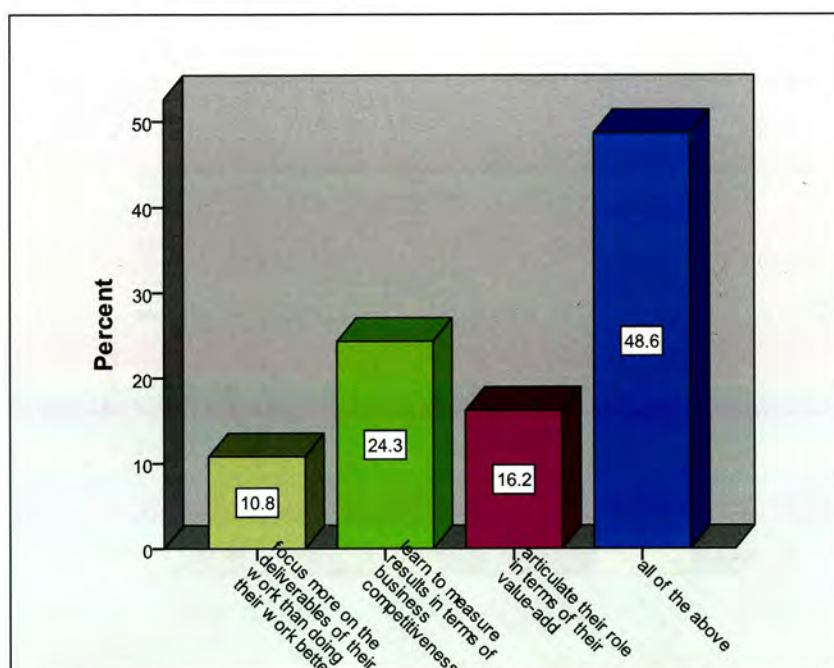


Table 4.21

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Focus more on the deliverables of their work than doing their work better	4	10.8	10.8	10.8
	Learn to measure results in terms of business competitiveness	9	24.3	24.3	35.1
	Articulate their role in terms of their value-add	6	16.2	16.2	51.4
	All of the above	18	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.21 reflects that respondents believe that for the Human Resources to become champions of competitiveness, they must focus more on the deliverables of the work than doing their work better, learn to measure results in terms of business competitiveness and articulate their value adding roles.

Human Resources Professionals act as talent developers when they

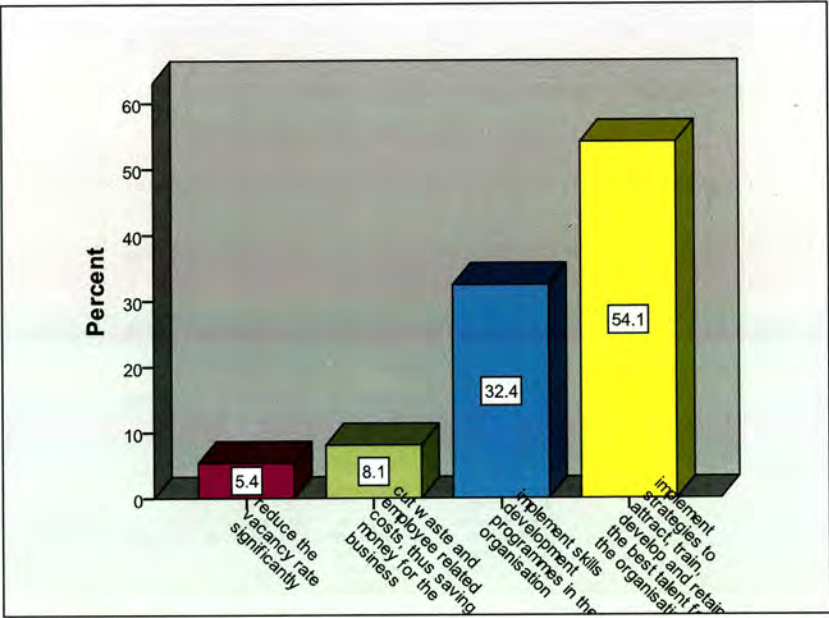


Table 4.22

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Reduce the vacancy rate significantly	2	5.4	5.4	5.4
	Cut waste and employee related costs, thus saving money for the business	3	8.1	8.1	13.5
	Implement skills development programmes in the organisation	12	32.4	32.4	45.9
	Implement strategies to attract, train, develop and retain the best talent for the organisation	20	54.1	54.1	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.22 reflects that 54.1% of the responses indicates that the HR Professionals act as talent developers when they implement the strategies to attract, train, develop and retain the best talent for the organisation. A total of 32% of the respondents when indicated that they act as talent developers when they implement the skills development programmes in the organisation.

Human Resource Professionals act as employee champions by

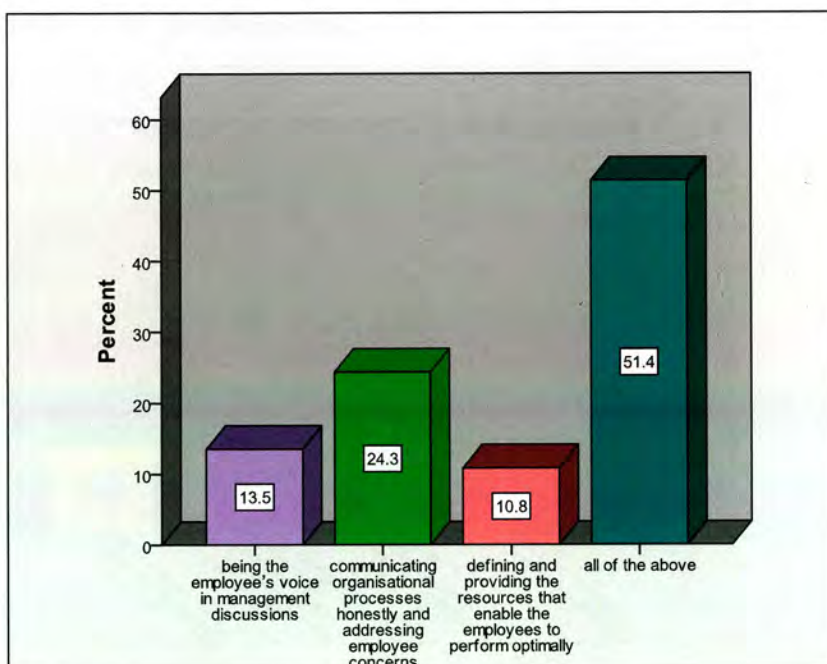


Table 4.23

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Being the employee's voice in management discussions	5	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Communicating organisational processes honestly and addressing employee concerns	9	24.3	24.3	37.8
	Defining and providing the resources that enable the employees to perform optimally	4	10.8	10.8	48.6
	All of the above	19	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.23 shows that 51.4% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource professionals act as employee champions when they become the employees' voice in management discussions, communicating organisational processes honestly and addressing employee's concerns, as well as when the define and provide resources that enable the employees to perform optimally.

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Readiness level of HR professionals

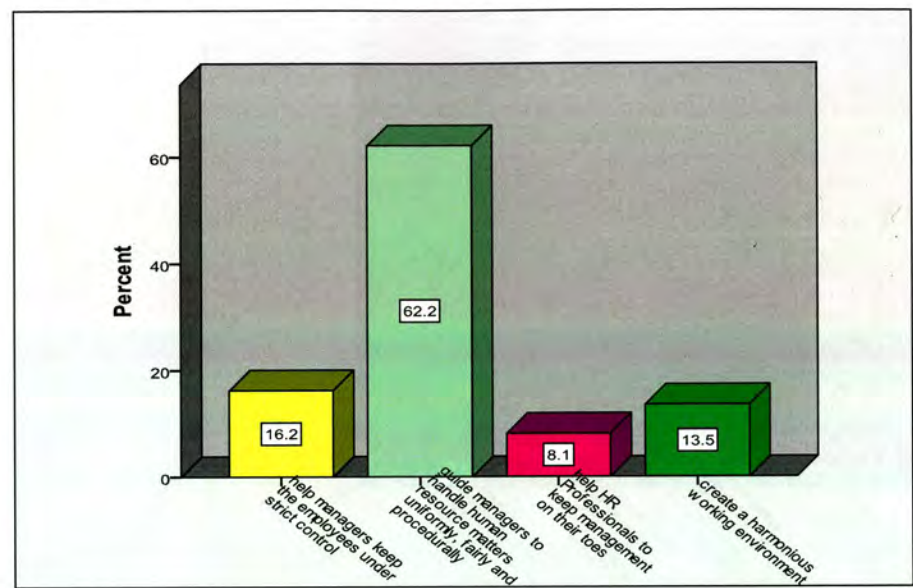


Table 4.24

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid help managers to keep the employees under strict control	7	16.2	16.2	13.5
Guide management to handle human resource matters uniformly, fairly and procedurally	20	62.2	62.2	
Help HR Professionals to keep management on their toes	5	8.1	8.1	
Create a harmonious working environment	5	13.5	13.5	
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.24 indicates that 62.2% of the respondents indicated that he Human Resource Professionals develop policies to guide management to handle the human resource matters uniformly, fairly and procedurally.

It is not necessary for the Human Resource Practitioners to

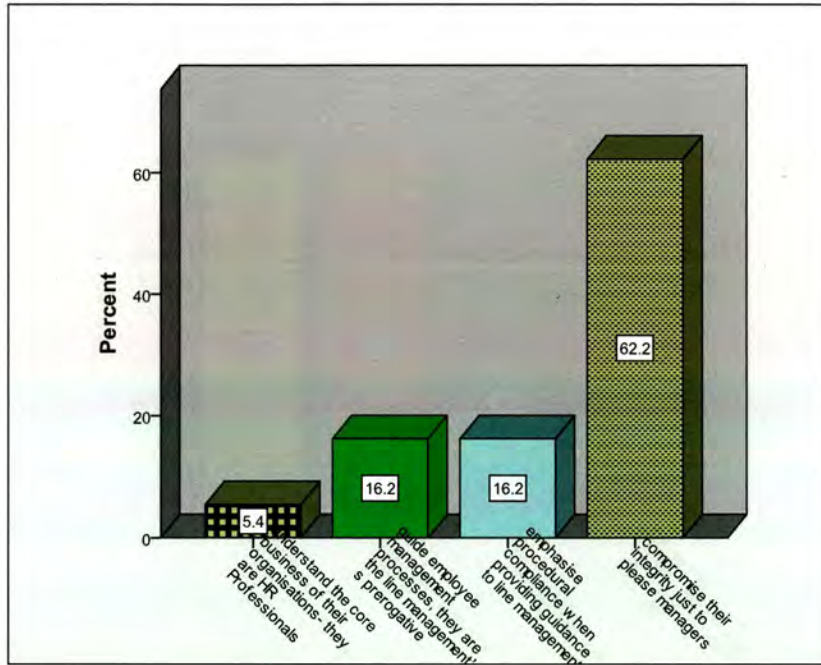


Table 4.25

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Understand the core business of their organisations- they are HR Professionals	2	5.4	5.4	5.4
	Guide employee management processes, they are the line management's prerogative	6	16.2	16.2	21.6
	Emphasise procedural compliance when providing guidance to line management	6	16.2	16.2	37.8
	Compromise their integrity just to please managers	23	62.2	62.2	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.25 indicates that 62.2% of the respondents indicated that it is not necessary for the Human Resources to compromise their integrity just to please the managers., 5.4% indicated that it is no necessary for the Human Resources to understand the core business of their organisation- they are HR Professionals.

The establishment of the Human Resource strategic partnership is the responsibility of

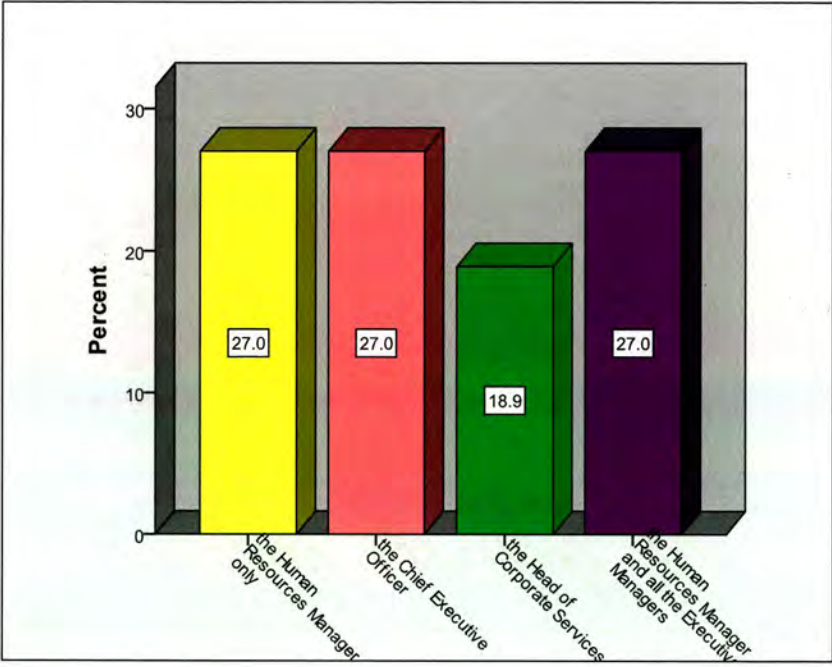


Table 4.26

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	The Human Resources Manager only	10	27.0	27.0	27.0
	The Chief Executive Officer	10	27.0	27.0	54.1
	The Head of Corporate Services	7	18.9	18.9	73.0
	The Human Resources Manager and all the Executive Managers	10	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.26 indicates that 27% of the respondents see the establishment of the strategic human resource management as the responsibility of the Human Resource Manager only, another 27% sees this as the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer and yet another 27% see this as the a joint responsibility of the Human Resource Manager and all the Executive Managers.

Partnership between business and HR requires that HR Practitioners to be able to

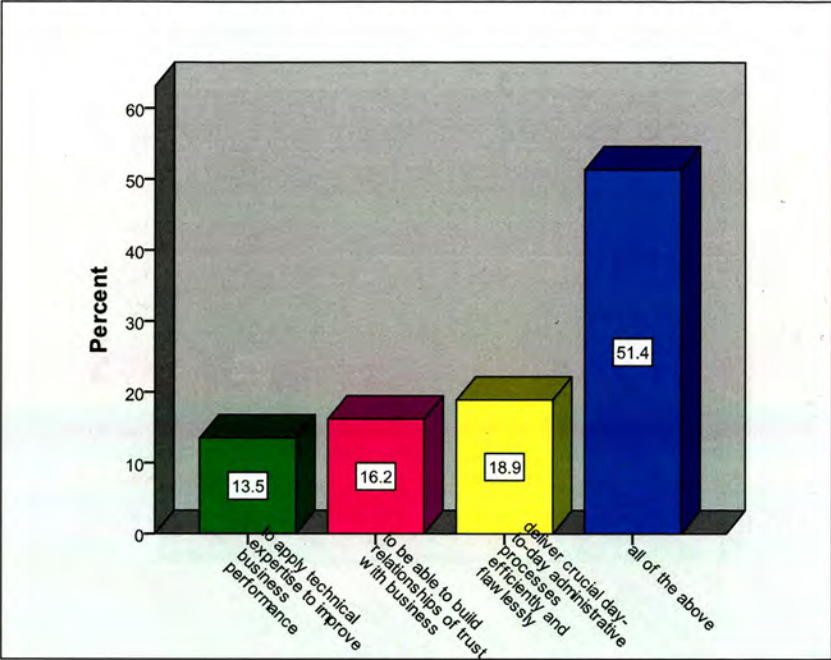


Table 4.27

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To apply technical expertise to improve business performance	5	13.5	13.5	13.5
	To be able to build relationships of trust with business	6	16.2	16.2	29.7
	Deliver crucial day-to-day administrative processes efficiently and flawlessly	7	18.9	18.9	48.6
	All of the above	19	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

HR Professionals as strategic business partners need to

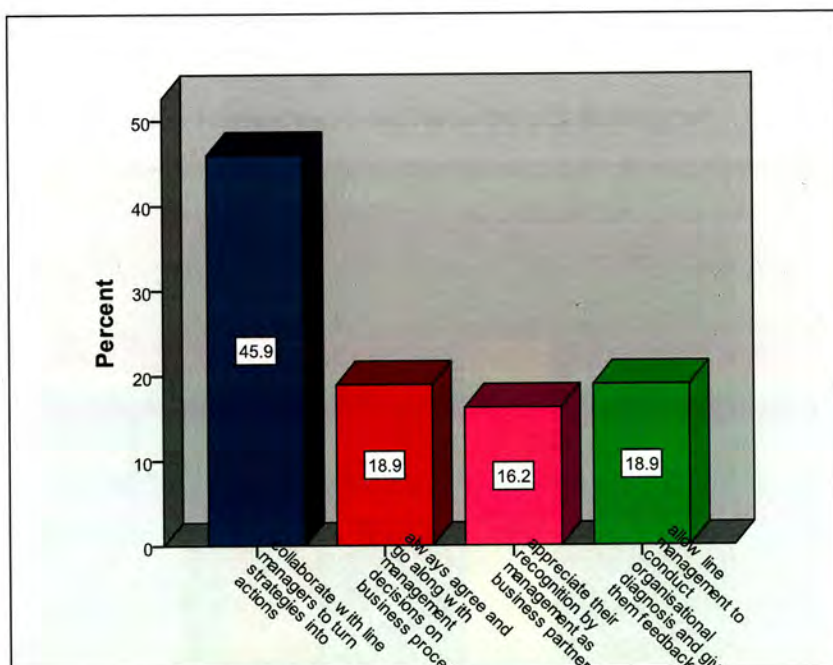


Table 4.28

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Collaborate with line managers to turn strategies into actions	17	45.9	45.9	45.9
	Always agree and go along with management decisions on business processes	7	18.9	18.9	64.9
	Appreciate their recognition by management as business partners	6	16.2	16.2	81.1
	Allow line management to conduct organisational diagnosis and give them feedback	7	18.9	18.9	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.28 shows that 45.9% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource Professionals as strategic business partners need to collaborate with line managers to turn strategies into actions.

Contribution of HR professionals

The Human Resources helps the organisation to

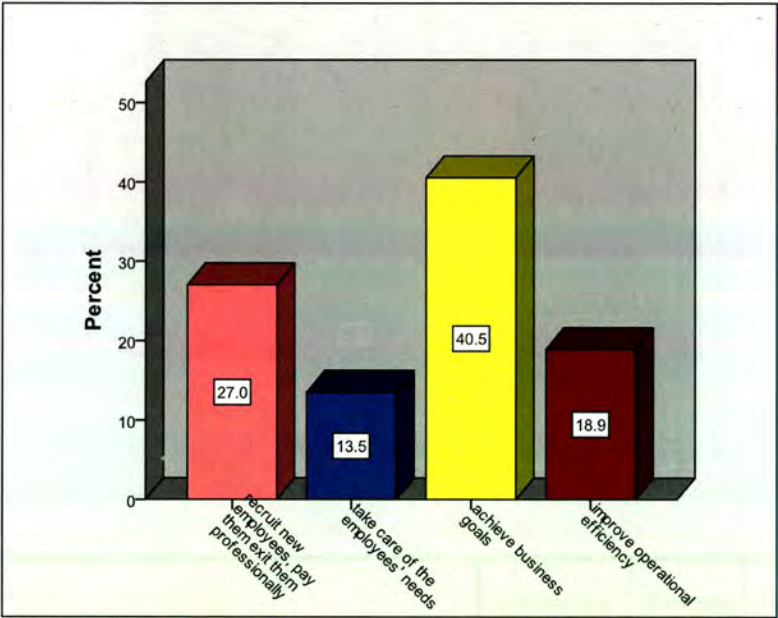


Table 4.29

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Recruit new employees, pay them exit them professionally	10	27.0	27.0	27.0
	Take care of the employees' needs	5	13.5	13.5	40.5
	Achieve business goals	15	40.5	40.5	81.1
	Improve operational efficiency	7	18.9	18.9	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.29 shows that 40.5% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resources helps the organisation to achieve business goral, whilst 27%responded that it recruits new employees, hem and exit them professionally.

The Human Resources should participate in the organisation's strategic processes of

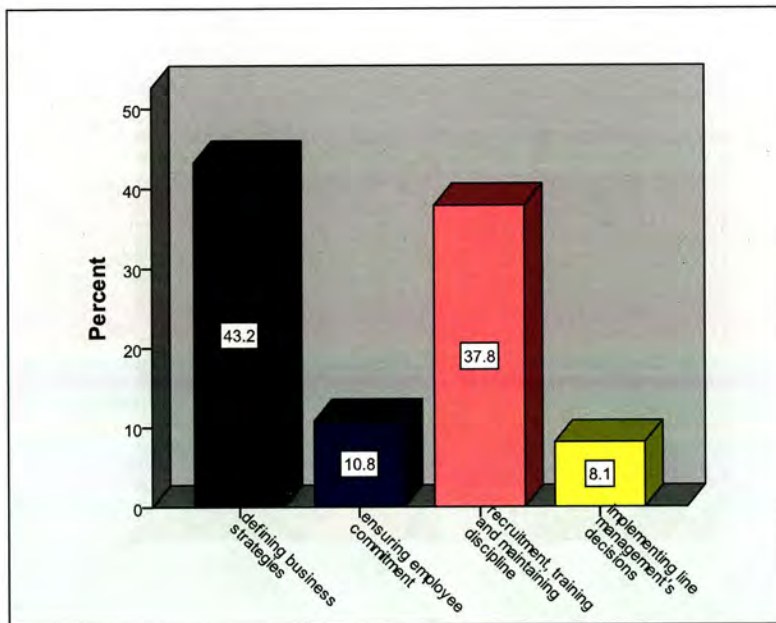


Table 4.30

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Defining business strategies	16	43.2	43.2	43.2
Ensuring employee commitment	4	10.8	10.8	54.1
Recruitment, training and maintaining discipline	14	37.8	37.8	91.9
Implementing line management's decisions	3	8.1	8.1	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.30 shows that 43.2% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resources should participate in organisational processes of defining business strategies. However, 37.8% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resources should participate in the recruitment, training and maintenance of discipline in organisations.

The Human Resources need to develop programmes and processes to

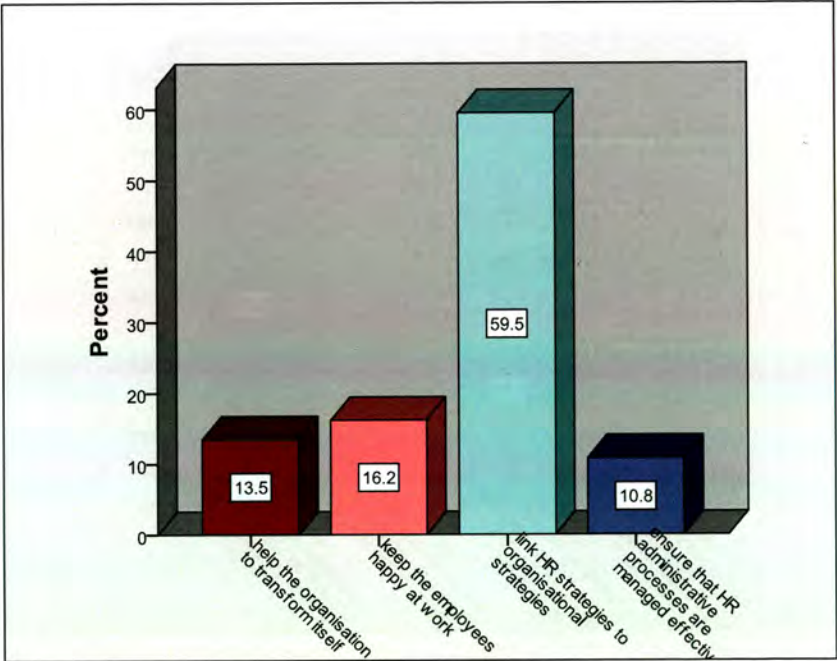


Table 4.31

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Help the organisation to transform itself	5	13.5	13.5	13.5
Keep the employees happy at work	6	16.2	16.2	29.7
Link HR strategies to organisational strategies	22	59.5	59.5	89.2
Ensure that HR administrative processes are managed effectively	4	10.8	10.8	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.31 shows that 59.5% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource develop programmes and processes to link the Human Resource Strategies to organisational strategies and 10.8%indicated that this is done to ensure that the HR administrative processes are managed effectively.

To ensure that employees become the source of competitiveness

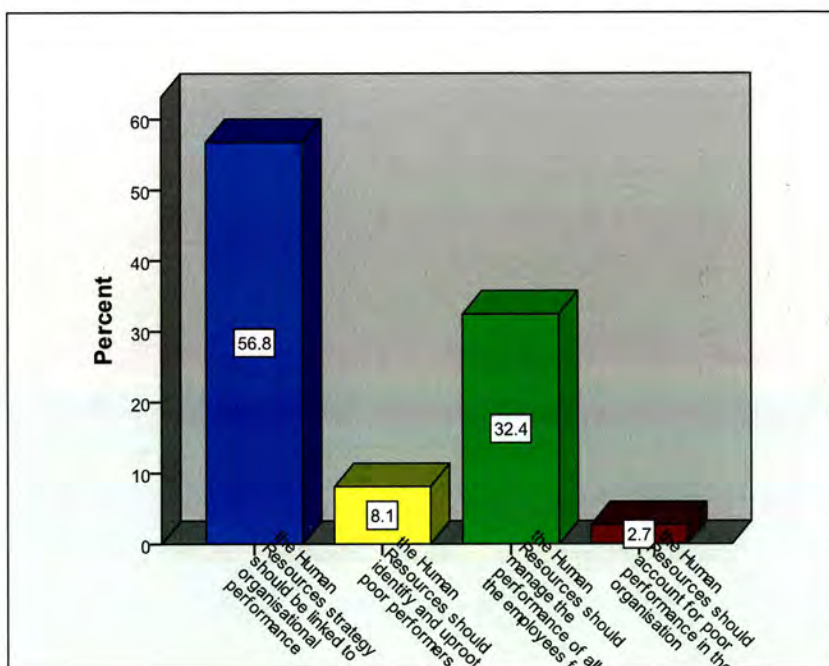


Table 4.32

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid The Human Resources strategy should be linked to organisational performance	21	56.8	56.8	56.8
The Human Resources should identify and uproot poor performers	3	8.1	8.1	64.9
The Human Resources should manage the performance of all the employees fairly	12	32.4	32.4	97.3
The Human Resources should account for poor performance in the organisation	1	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.32 reflects that 56.8% of the respondents indicated that to ensure that the employees become a source of competitiveness, the Human Resources Strategy should be linked to organisational performance, 32.4% indicated that the Human Resources should manage the performance of all the employees fairly and 27% indicated that the Human Resources should account for poor performance.

The strategic Human Resources partnership requires that HR becomes an active partner in

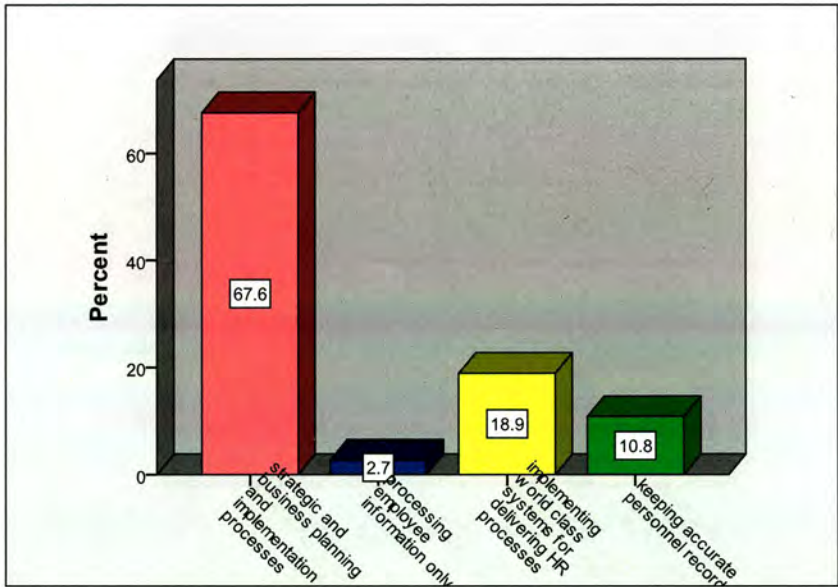


Table 4.33

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strategic and business planning and implementation processes	25	67.6	67.6	67.6
	Processing employee information only	1	2.7	2.7	70.3
	Implementing world class systems for delivering HR processes	7	18.9	18.9	89.2
	Keeping accurate personnel records	4	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table4.33 shows that 67.6% of the respondents indicated that the strategic human resource management requires that the Human Resources become an active partner in strategic business planning and implementation processes.

HR management function adds value to the business, its customers and employees by

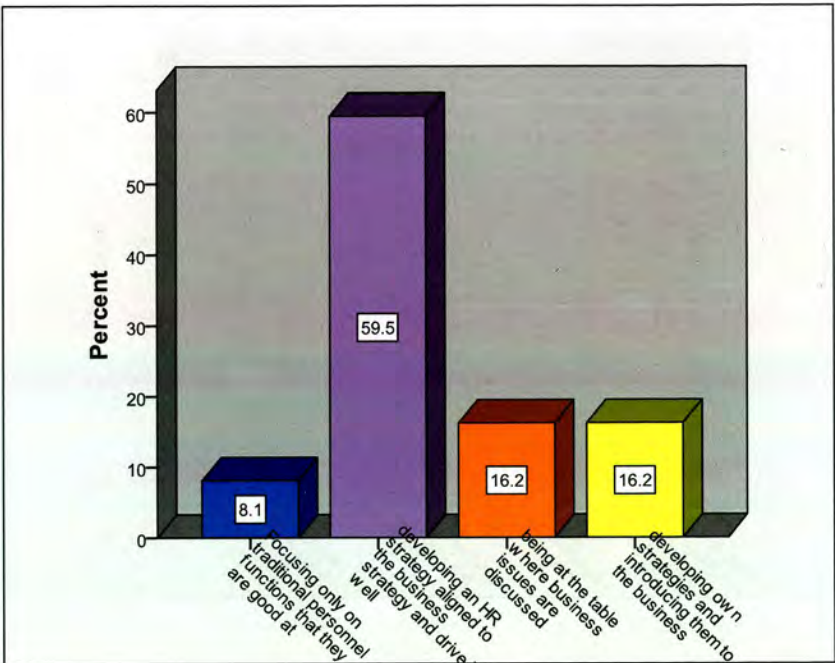


Table 4.34

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Focusing only on traditional personnel functions that they are good at	3	8.1	8.1	8.1
	Developing an HR strategy aligned to the business strategy and drive it well	22	59.5	59.5	67.6
	Being at the table where business issues are discussed	6	16.2	16.2	83.8
	Developing own strategies and introducing them to the business	6	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.34 below shows that 59.5% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource Management adds value to the business, its customers and the employees by developing an HR Strategy aligned to the business strategy and drive is implementation well.

Human Resource management's efforts are celebrated when

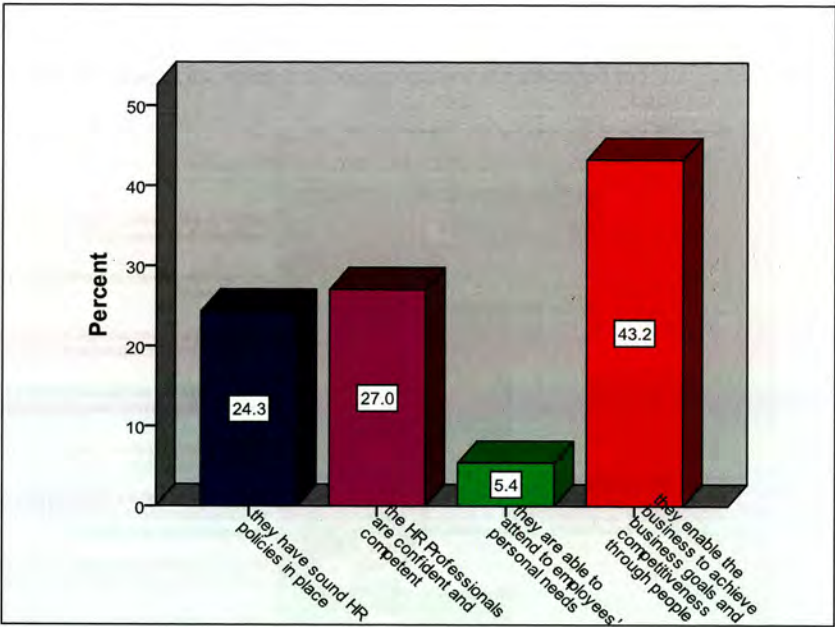


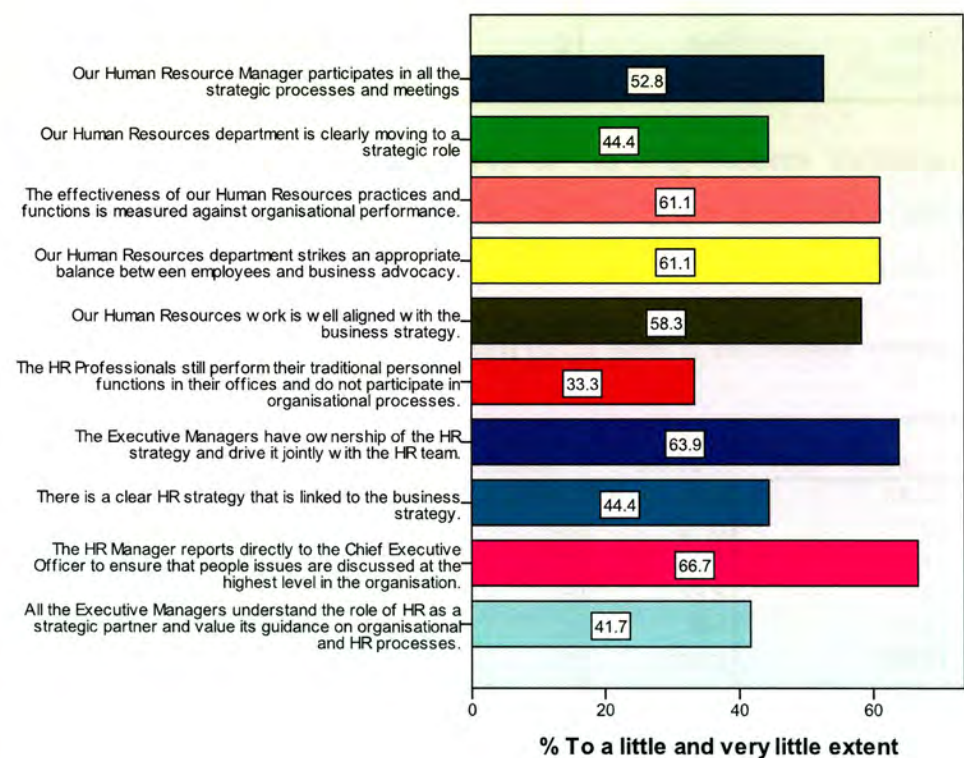
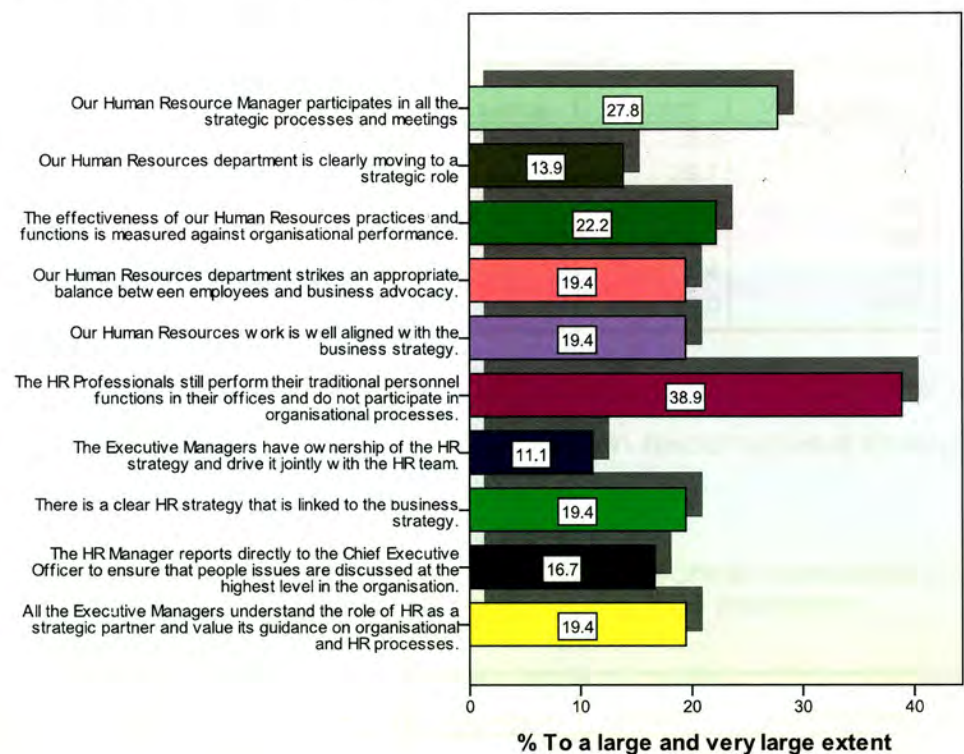
Table 4.35

		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	They have sound HR policies in place	9	24.3	24.3	24.3
	The HR Professionals are confident and competent	10	27.0	27.0	51.4
	They are able to attend to employees' personal needs	2	5.4	5.4	56.8
	They enable the business to achieve business goals and competitiveness through people	16	43.2	43.2	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.35 shows that 43.2% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource Management efforts are celebrated when they enable the business to achieve business goals and maintain competitiveness though people.

SECTION C

The extent to which the HR practices, roles and competencies are attended to



Frequency Tables for section c

All the Executive Managers understand the role of HR as a strategic partner and value its guidance on organisational and HR processes.

Table 4.36

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to a very little extent	4	10.8	10.8	10.8
	to a little extent	11	29.7	29.7	40.5
	to some extent	14	37.8	37.8	78.4
	to a large extent	6	16.2	16.2	94.6
	to a very large extent	2	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.36 shows that only 5.2% of the respondents indicated that all the Executive Managers understand the role of the Human resources as a strategic partner to the business.

The HR Manager reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that people issues are discussed at the highest level in the organisation.

Table 4.37

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to a very little extent	15	40.5	40.5	40.5
	to a little extent	10	27.0	27.0	67.6
	to some extent	6	16.2	16.2	83.8
	to a large extent	4	10.8	10.8	94.6
	to a very large extent	2	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.37 shows that only 5.4% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource Manager reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that people issues are discussed at the highest level in the organisation.

There is a clear HR strategy that is linked to the business strategy.

Table 4.38

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to a very little extent	7	18.9	18.9	18.9
	to a little extent	10	27.0	27.0	45.9
	to some extent	13	35.1	35.1	81.1
	to a large extent	5	13.5	13.5	94.6
	to a very large extent	2	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.38 shows that only 5.4% indicated that there is a clear Human Resource Strategy that is linked to the business strategy.

The Executive Managers have ownership of the HR strategy and drive it jointly with the HR team.

Table 4.39

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to a very little extent	13	35.1	35.1	35.1
	to a little extent	11	29.7	29.7	64.9
	to some extent	9	24.3	24.3	89.2
	to a large extent	2	5.4	5.4	94.6
	to a very large extent	2	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.39 shows that only 5.4% of the respondents indicated that Executive Managers have ownership of the Human Resource strategy and drive it jointly with the Human Resource team.

The HR Professionals still perform their traditional personnel functions in their offices and do not participate in organisational processes.

Table 4.40

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to a very little extent	3	8.1	8.1	8.1
	to a little extent	9	24.3	24.3	32.4
	to some extent	10	27.0	27.0	59.5
	to a large extent	9	24.3	24.3	83.8
	to a very large extent	6	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.40 shows that 16.2% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource Professionals still perform their traditional personnel functions in their offices and do not participate in the organisational processes.

Our Human Resources work is well aligned with the business strategy.

Table 4.41

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to a very little extent	6	16.2	16.2	16.2
	to a little extent	16	43.2	43.2	59.5
	to some extent	8	21.6	21.6	81.1
	to a large extent	3	8.1	8.1	89.2
	to a very large extent	4	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.41 shows that 10.8% of the respondents indicated that SASSETA's Human Resource work is well aligned with the business strategy.

Our Human Resources department strikes an appropriate balance between employees and business advocacy.

Table 4.42

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid to a very little extent	6	16.2	16.2	16.2
to a little extent	16	43.2	43.2	59.5
to some extent	8	21.6	21.6	81.1
to a large extent	7	18.9	18.9	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.42 shows that 18.9% of the respondents indicated that the Human Resource Department strikes an appropriate balance between employees and business advocacy.

The effectiveness of our Human Resources practices and functions is measured against organisational performance.

Table 4.43

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid to a very little extent	9	24.3	24.3	24.3
to a little extent	14	37.8	37.8	62.2
to some extent	6	16.2	16.2	78.4
to a large extent	8	21.6	21.6	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.43 shows that 21.6% of the respondents indicated that the effectiveness of our Human Resource practices and functions is measured against organisational performance.

Our Human Resources department is clearly moving to a strategic role

Table 4.44

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid to a very little extent	4	10.8	10.8	10.8
to a little extent	13	35.1	35.1	45.9
to some extent	15	40.5	40.5	86.5
to a large extent	5	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.44 shows that 13.5% of the respondents indicated that SASSETA's Human Resource Department is clearly moving to a strategic role.

Our Human Resource Manager participates in all the strategic processes and meetings

Table 4.45

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to a very little extent	10	27.0	27.0	27.0
	to a little extent	10	27.0	27.0	54.1
	to some extent	7	18.9	18.9	73.0
	to a large extent	9	24.3	24.3	97.3
	to a very large extent	1	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total		37	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.45 shows that only 2.7% of the respondents indicated that SASSETA'S Human Resource Management participates in all the strategic processes and meetings.

4.4 Conclusion

Data analysis and interpretation is a critical step in the research process as it provides information on the responses to the research questions. The information derived from the analysis and interpretation of the responses is used in coming up with the findings and making recommendations to address the research questions. A detailed analysis has been provided in this chapter, using information contained in tables and graphs generated from the SPSS research instrument. The chapter is therefore, serving as a precursor to the next chapter, which will focus on the analysis, and interpretation of the data contained in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the entire study, providing the findings of the study and making recommendations to address the challenges experienced in the implementation of the strategic human resource management practices in SASSETA. Conclusions are drawn, based on the findings and the recommendations of the study, on whether the study met the research objective or not.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter one of the study introduced the study, providing the background to the study, the problem statement, the aims and objectives of the study, research design and methodology, the scope, the research population and the organisation of the study concludes the chapter.

Chapter two provided a comprehensive literature review on the strategic human resource management practices, starting with the evolution of the field of human resources, defining the traditional human resource administrative and operational personnel levels and then providing a definition of strategic human resource management. The challenges of creating successful strategic partnerships between the Human Resources and business are highlighted and lessons drawn from literature reviewed. The chapter closes with conclusion on what has been gathered from the literature review process.

Chapter three provides the information on the blueprint followed in selecting the research objective, the sample population and the data collection instruments. A detailed process of constructing the questionnaire, its pre-tests

and administration is provided. The data analysis process and the system used to capture data for analysis are also explained in the chapter.

Chapter four provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of data collected on the study. The biographical data of the respondents is analysed. The responses are analysed in detail to ensure the accuracy, validity and reliability of the interpretation.

Chapter five provides the summary of the study, the findings of the study, which are derived from the data analysis and interpretation in chapter four. The chapter also provides the recommendations, informed by the literature review process on the research topic and objectives.

5.3 Research findings

The research findings revealed the following findings:

5.3.1 Biographical data

The findings of the study on the biographical data are covered in detail in section 3 of Chapter 3, which deals with the data analysis. However, there is an observation, from the information presented that:

- 5.3.1.1 the race and gender representivity in the job levels used in the sample population of the study does not comply with the requirements of the Employment Equity Act, especially in management levels. Although the findings reveal a good representation of the African race in the sample, there is a need to ensure a fair representation of the other racial groups in the employment profile, in compliance with the national demographics of the economically active population in the country.
- 5.3.1.2 A low percentage of women participated in the study. Although this does not necessarily influence the success of the study, it would have been good to see the association between the male and female responses to some of the questions.

5.3.1.2 In terms of the qualifications profiles of the respondents, the findings revealed that the majority of them have post matric qualifications. This has been helpful during the data collection process as the employees were able to respond to the questionnaire accurately and fast.

5.3.2 Findings from responses to questions in Sections B and C

The responses to the questions relating to these areas are discussed below, considering the responses to questions under the main focus areas of the study (Refer to 3.5.3.6). These focus areas were developed during the construction of the questionnaire to make sure that the study investigates what it intends to, in line with the research objectives. The findings are therefore, listed under each of the focus areas:-

5.3.2.1 The impact of the structural positioning of the Human Resources on the implementation of the strategic human resource practices

- a. The majority of respondents indicated an understanding of the impact of the structure and reporting lines on the ability of the Human Resources to operate as a business partner to the core business of SASSETA. (Refer to Table 4.12).
- b. The majority of the respondents indicated that for the Human Resources to perform effectively as a strategic partner, it should report directly to the CEO and participate in the strategic planning processes, which is not the case in SASSETA currently. (Refer to Tables 4.37 and 4.44)
- c. The majority of the responses revealed that the structural positioning of the Human Resources has an impact on its ability to partner with business at a strategic level.(Refer to table 4.15). When one links this with responses to whether the HR an report anywhere because every manager is a human resource manager, one picks up a trend that the respondents are consistent in the contention that the Human Resource

Department should report directly to the Chief Executive Officer. (Refer to Table 4.12).

- d. responses also revealed that the Human Resources finds it difficult to contribute to strategic processes. The impact of the continuation of this reporting lines hamper the transition from the traditional personnel functions which is indicated by the responses to.
- d. The majority of the respondents also indicated that the direct reporting lines will ensure that the Human Resource Strategy is aligned with the organizational strategies. (refer to Table 4.13).
- e. The majority of the respondents indicated that the Human Resources Manager of SASSETA does not participate in the strategic management processes and meetings. The Senior Manager responsible for Corporate Services represents the Human Resources in such meetings.(Refer to Table 4.44).
- f. responses also revealed that the Human Resources finds it difficult to contribute to strategic processes under its current reporting lines. The impact of the continuation of this reporting lines hamper the transition from the traditional personnel functions to strategic human resources functions. (Refer to Table 4.12). Literature review revealed that with this structural positioning and reporting lines, it becomes difficult for the Human Resources to have access to executive discussions and decision making processes (Refer to 2.3.8 and 2.4.7).
- f. An interesting observation that has been picked up from SASSETA's Annual Report is that the Senior Manager responsible for Corporate Service does not form part of the Executive directors of SASSETA Board. Only the Chief executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer participate in that structure. (Refer to Annexure B).This means that the people management issues are pushed further down the structures.

5.3.2.2 The contribution of the Human Resources to the achievement of SASSETA's strategic objectives.

- a. the majority of the respondents revealed that the respondents understand the contribution required of the Human Resources, to strategic management processes. (Refer to Tables 4.29, 4.30 and 4.31).
- b. The respondents further indicated the need for the alignment between the Human Resource Strategy and individual as well as organisational performance. Ironically, the responses to whether SASSETA has the Human Resource Strategy revealed that the respondents do not know that their organisation has this strategy. (Refer to Table 4.39)
- c. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents indicated a low response on the knowledge of to whether their executives support the strategy. Only 5.4% of the respondents, who are Senior Managers, confirmed their knowledge of the existence of an aligned HR strategy and indicated that Management supports the strategy. (Refer to Table 4.40). The above information indicates that the majority of the employees of SASSETA do neither know nor have seen the organisation's Human resource Strategy. Efforts need to be taken to familiarise the employees with this important document.
- d. Tables 8, 10, 16 and 17 also reveal that the respondents understand the positive contribution that the Human Resources is making in organisations. However, Table 4.42 reveals that the respondents do not see the contribution that the Human Resources is making in balancing the individual and organisational advocacy.

5.3.2.3. The Human Resource roles to be played in strategic business partnerships

The results indicated that the reporting of the respondents are familiar with the new roles that the Human Resources professionals are expected to

play. The responses to the strategic business partner role, the employee champion role, administrative aspects and change agents can be summarized as follows:-

- a. There is a high percentage of the responses to those questions across all levels. This shows that the respondents know about these roles and expect the HR Professionals to play them to add value to organizational processes.
- b. The high responses to the employee champion role of HR professionals showed objectivity in the respondents' views. The responses indicated a shocking understanding that this role is not only focusing on the employees personal needs but extends o their empowerment through open and honest comments, defining and ensuring that they are provided with the resources they need to perform competently. (Refer to Table 4.23). However, responses as reflected in Table 4.42 show that the Human Resource Professionals at SASSETA are not playing this role well, which necessitates the implementation of measures to address this challenge.
- c. Linked with the talent development role, this is one of the important roles that the Human Resources need to play, to ensure that SASSETA has the right people with the right talents to deliver on its legislative mandate.

5.3.2.4 The readiness of the Human Resource Professionals to become strategic partners to business.

- a. the high response on the role of the Human Resources in guiding managers to handle the human resource matters uniformly, fairly and procedurally show an appreciation of this role by the employees. The question is whether the Human Resource Professionals are ready to take up this challenge, or do they want to shy away from this responsibility and focus on the traditional personnel functions.

- b. The majority of the respondents showed that the Human Resource Practitioners still perform their traditional personnel functions in their offices and do not participate in the strategic management processes. SASSETA needs to attend to this urgently to ensure that their HR gets out of its comfort zone and compete with their peers in the performance of strategic human resources management functions. (Refer to Tables 4.40 and 4.43).
- c. Responses reflected in Table 3.36 reveal that the management of SASSETA does not understand the role of the Human Resources as a strategic business partner. Only 5.4%, which represents the Management category of the sample reported that managers know this role. This explains why the Human Resources is not accorded the same status as Finance in the Executive Management Committees and in the Board of Directors as indicated earlier and also, why it still does not report directly to the chief Executive Officer.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to address the findings of this study

- 5.4.1 SASSETA needs to develop an Employment Equity Plan, with clear numerical targets and affirmative action measures, to ensure that its employment profile complies with the requirements of the Employment Act. The Plan should be integrated in the Human Resource Strategy and spell out clearly how affirmative action, strategic human resource planning, succession planning and talent management measures will be implemented, by when, to ensure that it has the employees with the required competencies to implement the business strategies. The achievement of this goal requires that the Human Resource Professionals play their strategic business partner role, employ a strategic approach to this, informed by the corporate and business strategies agreed for implementation.

Deliberate efforts need to be taken to identify critical management positions that SASSETA cannot afford to have vacant and employees be identified for development, to have a pool of well grounded employees to be appointed into these positions. (Refer to discussions under Tables 4.2 - 4.11).

- 5.4.2 SASSETA needs to elevate the Human Resource Department to a position of power and supremacy. It needs to review its structure, in line with its strategic objectives, to ensure that it serves as a vehicle to drive its strategy. SASSETA, as one of the SETAs in South Africa, was born out of the Department of Labour, before they were transferred to the Department of Higher Education and Training. As a result of this, it follows the Public Service Administration model of Corporate Services, under which the Human Resources reports, which is not necessarily relevant in its case. As indicated in 2.3.6 and the responses from the study, the model presents challenges for the Human Resources to effectively become a strategic partner to the core business of SASSETA.

Given the size of SASSETA, with a total staff compliment of 88 employees, the separation of the Human resources from the Corporate Service to report directly to the Chief Executive will not increase his direct management responsibility significantly, but will add value to the performance of the SETA. It is therefore, recommended that the Human Resource Department reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer. Since this will result in the creation of a create a new position, policies and procedures need to be followed in the filling of this position. As Jack Welch puts it, Finance and Human Resources belong alongside the Chief Executive Officer. (Refer to 2.3.8). The Human Resources as a structure responsible for the most important assets of need to be accorded the same status as Finance and be given its space to add value to organisational processes.

- 5.4.3 The Human Resource Department should be staffed with the right employees. A thorough business analysis need to be conducted to determine what specific functions need to be performed by the Human Resource Department, what competencies are required and bold steps should be taken to ensure

that through strategic human resource planning, the department is capacitated with the Professionals who will be able to elevate the Human Resource Department to its position of power and supremacy. (Refer to 2.3.5 and 2.4.9).

5.4.4 SASSETA needs to review its Human Resource Strategy and ensure its alignment to the organisation's strategic objectives. This must be an intensive and rigorous process that involves all the important stakeholders in the organisation, starting from the chief Executive Officer, the Executive Managers, the Human Resource Manager, employee representatives and all the Senior Managers to ensure its inclusivity. The final product must be communicated to all the employees of SASSETA through all the communication channels, including communication sessions and the intranet. Implementation of the strategy should be a joint responsibility of the Human Resource Department and all the Departments in SASSETA.

5.4.4 The Human Resource Professionals need to be placed on a special developmental programme that will ensure their capacitation with the competencies required for performance as strategic partners to business. Internally, there must be clear coaching programmes identified for them. Externally, mentors need to be identified and clear deliverables be determined for them to be trained in specific areas of the business.

5.4.5 SASSETA needs to embark on a recruitment drive to augment the efforts indicated in 5.4.5. because the grooming of a cadre that will take the Human Resources to its position of power and supremacy may take long (Refer to 2.4 and 2.5).

5.4.6 SASSETA management need to be placed on special programmes to enable them to understand the important role of the Human Resources to the success of their individual department's and the organisation's business performance.

5.5 Conclusion

The findings of the study reveal that there are challenges hampering the implementation of the strategic human resource practices in SASSETA. These are discussed in detail in point 5.3 above. The recommendations are made to the management of SASSETA on what needs to be done to resolve these challenges and ensure the achievement of business goals through the utilisation of the human resources as a source of competitiveness. The participation of the Human Resource Professionals is critical in the strategy formulation and implementation processes, translating the business strategies into human resource programmes, processes and practices that ensure SASSETA's achievement of its legislative mandate and strategic objectives.

A conclusion can be drawn that:

- 5.5.1 the organisational design, positioning and reporting lines of the Human Resource Department of SASSETA create challenges for the implementation of the strategic human resource management practices in SASSETA;
- 5.5.2 the Human Resource Professional are not playing their roles in the creation of strategic partnerships between SASSETA and its Human Resource Department;
- 5.5.3 The Human Resource Practitioners are not ready to function at a strategic level, where they can contribute towards the achievement of the strategic objectives of SASSETA.

It is therefore, the wish of the researcher that SASSETA views these findings as findings and not criticisms; that they interrogate them and implement appropriate measures to address them.

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ANNEXURE 1



NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME

**TOPIC: THE CHALLENGES OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE
SAFETY AND SECURITY SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant

I am a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at the North West University. This questionnaire is used to collect data towards the completion of a mini-dissertation on the above topic. You are requested to complete it and submit it to the researcher through your assigned nodal point.

The questions should be answered with all honesty because the responses will be used to analyse the overall data, highlight the findings and make recommendations for implementation in the workplace.

The data collected will be kept confidentially, used ONLY for the purpose of the study and never against the participant(s) in any way. You are therefore, requested to respond freely and to remain anonymous throughout your participation in the study.

The questionnaire comprises of three sections as follows:

Section A: Biographical Data

Section B: Choice questions

Section C: Ranking order questions

Thank you for your participation!

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Please tick the appropriate block

1. What is your gender?

M	F
---	---

2. What is your race?

African	White	Coloured	Indian	Other
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3. How old are you?

Less than 30yrs	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71 and over
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4. What is your highest qualification

Matric	Post matric certificate	National Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Post degree qualification
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5. Please indicate the number of years in HR

None	1-5	6-10	11-15	16 and over
------	-----	------	-------	-------------

6. Please indicate the number of years in management

None	1-5	6-10	11-15	16 and over
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SECTION B: CHOICE QUESTIONS (Please circle the correct answer)**Example**

One of the key responsibilities of the human resources is

- a. to reduce poverty in the communities
- b. to please employees in organizations
- c. to attract and retain the best talent for the organization
- d. to hire and dismiss employees

1. The Human Resources helps the organisation to:
 - a. recruit new employees, pay them exit them professionally
 - b. take care of the employees' needs
 - c. achieve business goals
 - d. improve operational efficiency
2. The Human Resources should participate in the organisation's strategic processes of
 - a. defining business strategies
 - b. ensuring employee commitment
 - c. recruitment, training and maintaining discipline
 - d. implementing line management's decisions
3. The Human Resources need to develop programmes and processes to
 - a. help the organisation to transform itself
 - b. keep the employees happy at work
 - c. link HR strategies to organisational strategies
 - d. ensure that HR administrative processes are managed effectively

- c. helping employees meet their personal needs
 - d. avoiding involvement in business processes
14. As champions of competitiveness, HR Professionals need to
 - a. focus more on the deliverables of their work than doing their work better
 - b. learn to measure results in terms of business competitiveness
 - c. articulate their role in terms of their value-add
 - d. all of the above
 15. Partnership between business and HR requires that HR Practitioners to be able to
 - a. to apply technical expertise to improve business performance
 - b. to be able to build relationships of trust with business
 - c. deliver crucial day-to-day administrative processes efficiently and flawlessly
 - d. all of the above
 16. HR management function adds value to the business, its customers and employees by
 - a. Focusing only on traditional personnel functions that they are good at
 - b. developing an HR strategy aligned to the business strategy and drive it well
 - c. being at the table where business issues are discussed
 - d. developing own strategies and introducing them to the business
 17. Human Resource management's efforts are celebrated when
 - a. they have sound HR policies in place
 - b. the HR Professionals are confident and competent
 - c. they are able to attend to employees' personal needs
 - d. they enable the business to achieve business goals and competitiveness through people
 18. Human Resources Professionals act as talent developers when they
 - a. reduce the vacancy rate significantly
 - b. cut waste and employee related costs, thus saving money for the business
 - c. implement skills development programmes in the organisation
 - d. implement strategies to attract, train, develop and retain the best talent for the organisation
 19. Human Resource Professionals act as employee champions by
 - a. being the employee's voice in management discussions
 - b. communicating organisational processes honestly and addressing employee concerns
 - c. defining and providing the resources that enable the employees to perform optimally
 - d. all of the above
 20. HR Professionals as strategic business partners need to
 - a. collaborate with line managers to turn strategies into actions
 - b. always agree and go along with management decisions on business processes
 - c. appreciate their recognition by management as business partners
 - d. allow line management to conduct organisational diagnosis and give them feedback
 21. The structure and positioning of the HR department has
 - a. no impact on its ability to partner with business at a strategic level
 - b. an impact on its ability to partner with business and drive the HR strategy jointly with line
 - c. an impact on the development of the HR strategy
 - d. no impact on the HR Professionals' delivery in line with their modern roles

SECTION C

For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent to which the HR practices, roles and competencies are attended to.

Response scale:

- 1 = to a very little extent
- 3 = to some extent
- 5 = to a very large extent
- 2 = to a little extent
- 4 = to a large extent

Example

In my organization:

the Human Resources is key in strategic decision making processes	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

In my organisation:

1. all the Executive Managers understand the role of HR as a strategic partner and value its guidance on organisational and HR processes.	1	2	3	4	5
2. the HR Manager reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that people issues are discussed at the highest level in the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
3. there is a clear HR strategy that is linked to the business strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
4. the Executive Managers have ownership of the HR strategy and drive it jointly with the HR team.	1	2	3	4	5
5. the HR Professionals still perform their traditional personnel functions in their offices and do not participate in organisational processes.	1	2	3	4	5
6. our Human Resources work is well aligned with the business strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
7. our Human Resources department strikes an appropriate balance between employees and business advocacy.	1	2	3	4	5
8. the effectiveness of our Human Resources practices and functions is measured against organisational performance.	1	2	3	4	5
9. our Human Resources department is clearly moving to a strategic role	1	2	3	4	5
10. our Human Resource Manager participates in all the strategic processes and meetings	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU !

ANNEXURE 2

04 November 2011

The Research Coordinator
Graduate School Of Business and Government Administration
North West University
Mafikeng
2745

Dear Sir/ Madam

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT A STUDY

This serves to confirm that SASSETA has granted **Ms Stephina Pulane MOLEFI** [Student No. 16180763] an approval to conduct her mini dissertation on 'the role of the Human Resources as a strategic partner in the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority'.

We therefore, commit to providing her with the necessary support towards data collection, analysis and conclusion of this study. We believe that the findings and recommendations of this study will be useful in ensuring the creation of a strong partnership between the Human Resources and the core business of SASSETA, resulting in the achievement of our strategic objectives and national imperatives.

For more clarification please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards



Mr Z Baloyi
Chief Executive Officer
SASSETA

ANNEXURE 3

CORPORATE SERVICES

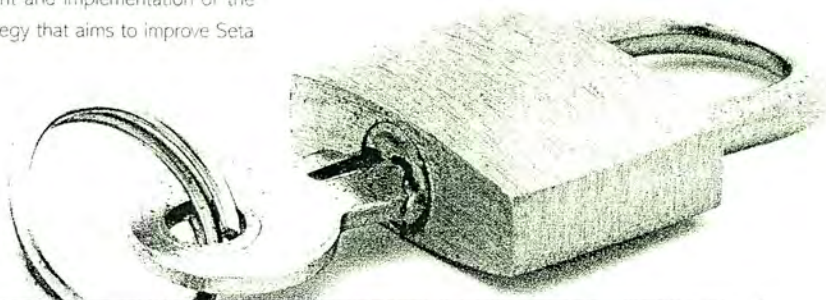
The Corporate Services Division is responsible for building the institutional support of the Seta through provision of Human Resources, Marketing and Communication as well as Information Technology Services. These services support the Seta in achieving its organisational objectives through strategic partnerships with line departments and constant interaction with the Seta stakeholders. The three departments under Corporate Services have their own strategic goals that support organisational growth.

Human Resources Management

The Human Resources Management (HRM) department is responsible for the development and implementation of the SETA's Human Resources Strategy that aims to improve Seta

performance, monitors and manages employee retention and equity trends and sets out the methodology to measure and improve the health and wellness of employees at all levels.

The HRM department developed and approved the Human Resources Strategy during this period and ensured review and approval of 16 Human Resource Policies which currently serve as a Strategic Framework for the implementation of the Human Resource Strategy. The policies have been adequately consulted upon and communicated to all Seta employees. During the past financial year the employment equity plan was implemented consistently with the results set out below:



LEVEL	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	TOTAL	FEMALE				MALE			
			A	C	I	W	A	C	I	W
1	General office worker, junior clerk, machine operator, intern	3	2				1			
2	Clerk, Senior Clerk, Junior Administrator, Receptionist, Typist, Messenger, Call Centre agent, Switchboard Operator	38	30	1	1		4	1	1	
3	Administrator, Senior Administrators (Supervisors), Secretariat, PA to the CEO, Secretary	14	10	1		1	2			
4	Specialist, Bookkeeper, Practitioner, Officer, Professional	18	8			1	8	1		
5	Senior Specialist, Senior Practitioner, Senior Professional, Heads of Departments	11			1	1	6	1	1	1
6	Consultant, Adviser									
7	CEO and Senior Managers	4	1				3			
	Total	88	51	2	2	3	24	3	2	1

A – African

I – Indian

C – Coloured

W – White