

## Strategic Human Resource Management and Organizational Transformation in Emerging Economies: Insights from a PRISMA-Based Systematic Review

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### ABSTRACT

This study presents a PRISMA-guided systematic review examining the role of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in enabling business transformation in emerging economies. Only peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection were included. The search covered English-language publications from 2015 to 2026 using topic-based SHRM and business-related keywords across relevant subject categories. Following rigorous screening and eligibility assessment, the selected studies were systematically analyzed. The findings indicate that SHRM is a critical driver of business transformation, enhancing talent management, leadership development, workforce capabilities, and strategic alignment. Organizations adopting SHRM practices demonstrate greater adaptability to change, improved organizational effectiveness, and sustained competitive advantage. The study offers practical and theoretical insights for managers, policymakers, and researchers...

**Keywords:** Strategic Human Resource Management; Business Transformation; Emerging Economies; Systematic Review; PRISMA; Organizational Performance; Talent Management; Leadership Development; Human Capital Strategy; Competitive Advantage

### INTRODUCTION:

The modern international business is faced with an unprecedented amount of change, which has been triggered by globalization, digital transformation, competition as well as the changing workforce expectations, in organizations that have been operating in emerging economies. Strategic human resource management [SHRM] has in this regard become an important tool with which organizations have to align their human capital to long term strategic goals in order to bring about sustainable business transformation. SHRM as compared to traditional human resource practices, which is mainly administrative and operation driven, gives more emphasis to the proactive alignment of HR policies with the organizational strategy in order to place the employees as a competitive advantage source. The emerging market economy is a distinctive and difficult background to consider the role of SHRM in business

change. These are economies typified by institutional instability, scarcity of resources, high-speed industrialization, population diversities and changing regulatory systems. Companies operating in such environments should continually restructure, reorganize their processes and cultures so as to stay competitive in the domestic and international environment. Transformation in business in emerging economies is usually not only limited to technological change, but also to change in leadership styles, organizational culture, employee capacity and governance systems. In turn, strategic human resource management is put at the heart of providing and maintaining such changes. Within the last twenty years, an empirical and conceptual literature has been developed examining the correlation between SHRM practices, including talent management, leadership development, performance management, employee engagement, and learning and development with numerous aspects of business transformation,

including organizational performance, innovation, agility, and resilience. Nevertheless, the current research is scattered across fields, situations and methodological orientations that leads to the disjointed knowledge and insufficient theory-building. Furthermore, developed economies form the major part of the SHRM literature, although the evidence of the emerging economies are underrepresented, although their role in the global economic sphere is growing. The current study aims to fill in the gap by conducting a PRISMA-based systematic review to elucidate the current research on the influence of SHRM in relocating business transformation in emerging economies. The PRISMA [Preferred Reporting Items to Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses] framework is a clear and rigorous methodology of selecting, filtering, and evaluating pertinent academic materials. Through this systematic review plan, the research will be methodologically sound, reduce selection bias, and will improve the credibility of the results. The proposed systematic review will [i] map the intellectual space of the qualitative research on SHRM and business transformation in emerging economies, [ii] observe predominant themes, theoretical approaches, and methodological patterns, and [iii] explore the channels of SHRM as a driver of transformational performance at an individual, organizational, and institutional levels. The study provides exhaustive knowledge to scholars, practitioners and policymakers interested in learning the ways in which strategically aligned HR practices can help organizations in emerging economies to deal with change, become innovative and gain sustainable competitive advantage.

### 1.1 Objectives and significance of the study

The objective of this study is to systematically review and synthesize existing research on the role of Strategic Human Resource Management [SHRM] in driving business transformation in emerging economies using a PRISMA-guided approach. The study seeks to identify key SHRM practices, dominant theoretical frameworks, methodological trends, and transformational outcomes, as well as to highlight existing research gaps. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to consolidating fragmented literature, offering evidence-based insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers, and enhancing understanding of how strategically aligned HR practices support organizational change, competitiveness, and sustainable growth in the unique and dynamic context of emerging economies.

## 2. Literature Review

Strategic Human Resource Management [SHRM] has transformed out of a conventional personnel role to a strategic collaborator that links human resources with the company goals to create sustainable competitive advantage [1]. Researchers underline that SHRM is a combination of HR policies, practices with business strategy that allows organizations to be responsive to the changing competitive environment [2]. Business transformation, which consists of basic change in organization structures, organizational processes, organizational culture and strategic orientation, is generally considered a key to survival and growth of the

organization over a period of time [3]. In the emerging economies, SHRM plays even more crucial role in the transformation of business because of the high rates of economic transitions, globalization, technological advancement, and institutional uncertainty [5]. Research has shown that skills, regulatory instability, and limited resources are among the threats to organizations in emerging markets, making it more important to have HR practices that are strategically aligned [6]. Leadership development and talent management are also often mentioned as the primary SHRM practices that facilitate transformation and help to raise the level of employee competence and capability [7]. Development of leadership has specifically been reported to create change preparedness and strategic orientation throughout transformational efforts [8]. The performance management system that aligns with the organizational objective also contributes to the transformation because it enhances accountability and strategic orientation [9]. The other mechanism that has been identified as intermediary in the relationship between SHRM and business transformation is the involvement and perpetual learning aspect of employees [10]. It has been observed that employees who are engaged tend to be more flexible, innovative and open to organizational change and thus the probability of achieving positive results of the transformation is high [11]. Learning and development programs help organizations to develop dynamic capabilities and remain transformative in a dynamic environment [12]. Theoretical lenses, including the resource-based view, reveal how human resources are utilized as precious and non-replicable resources, whereas the dynamic capability theory outlines how SHRM helps organizations to rearrange skills and competencies in response to periods of change [13]. The institutional theory also explicates that regulatory pressures, cultural norms, and socio-economic conditions affect SHRM practices in emerging economies [14]. Recent literature also adds the concepts of digital transformation, organizational agility, resilience, and sustainability [15]. It is known that digital HR systems with the assistance of SHRM enhance decision-making and workforce planning and change management processes [16]. SHRM practices that promote sustainability provide answers to business transformation in alignment with ethical, social, and environmental goals, hence improving the performance of an organization over a long time [17]. Although the literature has been growing, it is still disjointed and has a lot of variation in their methodological actions and contextuality [18]. Other articles point out that there is no systematic review on PRISMA guidelines in this field [19]. Researchers have thus highlighted that systematic synthesis, context-relevant models, and longitudinal studies are necessary to facilitate improved knowledge on SHRM as strategic driver of business change in emerging economies [20]. Open communication on issues, participative decision making, and inclusive HR practices have been identified to minimize resistance and increase trust [21]. Cross-sectoral studies show that SHRM-led transformation is applicable in manufacturing, service and knowledge based industries in the emergent economies [22]. SMEs are becoming more and more inclined to use SHRM to facilitate growth, innovation, and

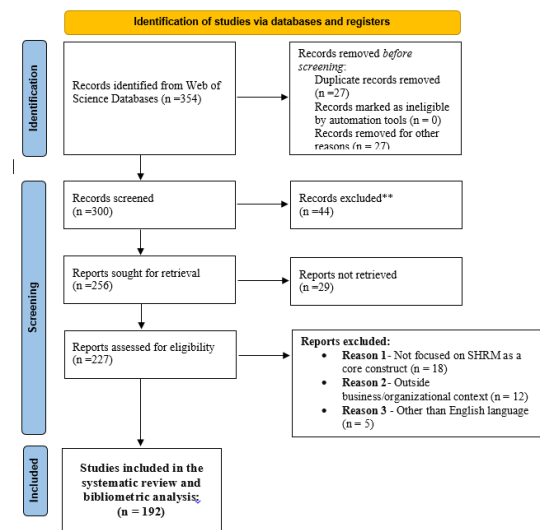
internationalization [23]. Nonetheless, empirical studies indicate that the performance of SHRM depends on the size of the organization, the type of industry, and the institutional context [24]. Methodologically, the literature is characterized by a wide variety of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method designs of research of SHRM and business transformation [25]. Although cross-sectional studies are more prevalent, researchers assert that longitudinal research is required to reflect dynamism of transformation processes [26]. Studies are concentrated geographically in few emerging economies thus reducing the generalizability of the findings [27]. The fact that there are no integrated frameworks, which bring the strategic, human, and institutional approaches together, is also observed by researchers [28]. This has been further limited by the lack of holistic PRISMA-based systematic review and theoretical synthesis that could lead to evidence-based conclusions [29]. Therefore, recent research recommends increased synthesis, context-specific models, and theory-informed empirical investigation to enhance the knowledge on SHRM as a strategic engine of business change in developing economies [30]. Although the cross-sectional research is the rule, the longitudinal research would be essential to reflect the dynamic and process-oriented nature of transformation initiatives [31]. The restricted ability to generalize to other emerging economies is caused by the geographic concentration of studies in the chosen ones [32]. The scholars also observe the absence of integrated conceptual frameworks to simultaneously deal with strategic alignment, human capital development, and institutional influences [33]. Lack of thorough PRISMA-based systematic reviews has also limited the theoretical merging and evidence based inferences [34]. Thus, the current research proposes the systematic synthesis, context-sensitive models, and theory-based empirical studies to enhance the knowledge on SHRM as a strategic business change driver in emerging economies [35].

### 3. Methodology

This research is a systematic review and bibliometric analysis of the literature on Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Transformation in Emerging Economies, which is solely based on peer-reviewed journal articles in the Web of Sciences Core Collection [Figure 1]. A systematic multi-phase approach of identifying, screening, evaluation of eligibility and inclusion was used. The retrieval of records was done using topic based search of titles, abstracts, author keywords and Keywords Plus with a special emphasis on SHRM and business transformation related keywords. Only English-language articles published in 2015-2026 in the Web of Science Topic data sets Management, Business, Psychology Applied, Industrial Relations and Labor, Social Sciences Interdisciplinary, and Economics were included in the review. Studies that included SHRM as a construct in a business or organization setting were only incorporated. Following the screening, a final list of 354 documents with 150 sources was left. The data indicate that the average number of citations per document is 19.34, average age of documents is 5.77 and co-authorship is 37.01 percent

international, which is a very good collaboration on the global level. The Biblioshiny in R Studio was used to perform a bibliometric performance analysis and scientific mapping that identified SHRM as one of the important factors that lead to business transformation and organizational success in emerging economies. Shown in Figures 1 & 2

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases and registers only



\*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/registers).  
 \*\*If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.  
 Source: Page MJ, et al. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71.

Figure 1. PRISMA technique for inclusion of research articles.

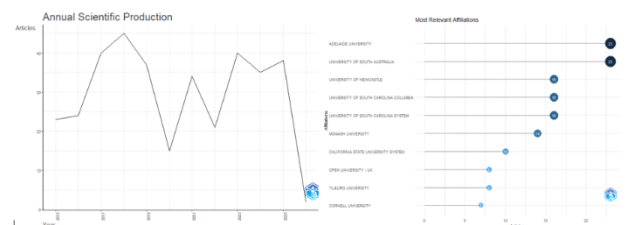


Figure 2. Annual scientific production and most relevant affiliations

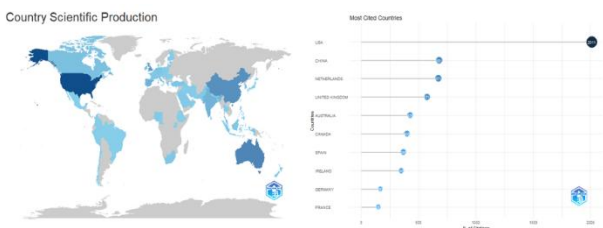
The differences in the production of scientific works annually are the reflections of the changing interest of scholars to the given research sphere. The publication trends of Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Transformation in the years are presented in Figure 2. The trend suggests that there are some significant changes instead of a continuous growth trend, and there are periods of very high publication activity and time when the trend of increase has changed. The causes of such variations could be explained by changing priorities of research, fluctuation of managerial paradigms, changes in organizational practice, changes in research funding and policy focus. Also, the appearance of the related topics including digital transformation, sustainability, and human capital analytics might have

contributed to the redistribution of scholarly interest in the existing area of management research.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

The discussion of institutional affiliations provides the information about the current world research on Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Transformation in Emerging Economies. As Figure 3 demonstrates, the works of Adelaide University and the University of South Australia are leading in the field and include 23 publications each, followed by the University of Newcastle, University of South Carolina (Columbia), and the University of South Carolina System that have 16 publications each. Other critical players consist of Monash University (14) and the California State University System (10), and it shows that there is a great deal of research in both Australia and the United States. Institutions in the emerging economies also play a minor role, with the contribution of European institutions like the Open university (UK) and Tilburg university being significant. All in all, the results indicate the prevalence of the universities in developed countries and open possibilities of the further research cooperation and growth.

**Figure 3** presents the geographical distribution of scientific production and citation impact related to **Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Transformation**. The results indicate that the **United States** is the most influential contributor, leading both in publication output and citations, reflecting its strong academic emphasis on strategic management and organizational transformation. Other major contributors include **China**, the **Netherlands**, and the **United Kingdom**, followed by **Australia** and **Canada**, demonstrating significant scholarly engagement in this domain. European countries such as **Spain**, **Ireland**, **Germany**, and **France** also show moderate research activity. Overall, the distribution highlights the dominance of developed economies in SHRM research, while contributions from emerging economies remain comparatively limited, suggesting opportunities for future research expansion and cross-country collaboration.



**Figure 3. Country scientific production and most cited countries.**

Figure 4 shows the national impact of citation of the studies on Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Transformation. The United States has the greatest number of citation and it shows that the United States dominates in this field of research and has a high scholarly effect. Other nations like China, the Netherlands, and United Kingdom also exhibit the significant citation performance, and this fact indicates their increased interest in SHRM-related research. In Australia and Canada the citation levels are in the middle

range with European countries such as Spain, Ireland, Germany and France making relatively lower contributions to the citation landscape. In general, the citation analysis shows the focus of high-impact SHRM research in the developed economies, and emerging economies are still under-represented in regards to citation presence.



**Figure 4. Word cloud.**

Figure 5 provides the word cloud that demonstrates the most common keywords in the literature on Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Transformation. The predominant terms of the existing literature on performance outcomes and organizational effectiveness include such words as firm performance, performance, impact, organizational performance, and HRM that outline the main topic of the research. The multifaceted aspect of SHRM in the development of the processes of business transformation involves other key keywords, such as HR practices, productivity, competitive advantage, commitment, job satisfaction, innovation, and work systems. The use of terms like mediating role, antecedents, systems, and management suggests that it has a great empirical orientation to look at the causal relationships and mechanisms in which SHRM has a positive influence on firm-level outcomes. In general, the distribution of keywords implies that the modern SHRM studies focus on the topics of strategic alignment, performance improvement, and competitiveness, which supports the argument that SHRM can be a key contributor to the sustainable business transformation in both emerging and developed economies.

#### 5. Conclusion

The word cloud in Figure 5 demonstrates the keywords that prevailed in literature on Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Transformation. The leading words used like firm performance, performance, impact, organizational performance and HRM bring out the main theme of current research on the performance results and organizational performance. The other keywords such as HR practices, productivity, competitive advantage, commitment, job satisfaction, innovation, work systems, among others, depict the multidimensional aspect of SHRM in the business transformation processes. The usage of the concepts of mediating role, antecedents, systems, and management shows a great degree of empirical orientation to the study of the causal relationships and ways in which SHRM can cause the firm-level outcomes. On the whole, the key word distribution indicates that the recent research in the field

of SHRM focuses on strategic alignment, performance improvement, and competitiveness, which makes the SHRM an important factor contributing to sustainable

business change in both emerging and developed economies...

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