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**LEADERSHIP AND CORE BELIEFS IN  
DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES:  
A SURVEY OF PRACTITIONERS**

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## SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

*“When you care enough to want to make a difference,  
you are poised to learn and practice leadership.”*

N. S. Huber, 1998

Human Resource Development (HRD), as a young and evolving discipline, continues to define its purpose and its core beliefs. The dialogue and debate between scholars and practitioners concerning its purpose and beliefs are critical to the advancement of HRD as a profession. These fundamental differences in philosophy and core beliefs will affect how work is done and how research is conducted. This is not to suggest that HRD must confine itself to a singular declaration of its beliefs and goals, rather, the need is to make existing beliefs and goals explicit. As Swanson (2000, p. 35) states, “We can hope that HRD will always have rival belief systems that provoke us to revisit and revise our strategies, tactics, and even our visions and missions.”

Both academic and practicing HRD professionals are guided by core beliefs—sometimes explicit, but more often implicit. Recent research on core beliefs within the HRD academic community (Ruona, 1999) has revealed a broad spectrum of core beliefs. However, research is lacking on making explicit the core beliefs of HRD practitioners. This study meets that need by conducting similar research within the community of practitioners in order to compare findings with the academic community. Additionally, as part of defining HRD in practice and its core beliefs, it is not sufficient to merely examine the current state. Valuable research requires the articulation of the desires and expectations for the future of the HRD profession in order to capture a clear picture of not only what is, but also what can be. Therefore, the study was designed to capture opinions on the “current status” of a variety of descriptors as well as “likely future states” and “desired future states.”

The future advancement of HRD not only necessitates a system of beliefs that guides its work in organizations, it also requires the capacity to become a driving force within organizations. If HRD is to “unleash human expertise” within the organization for the purpose of improving performance (Swanson, 1998), then, it must establish itself as a catalyst for change. HRD must also establish itself as an integral member of the management team to fulfill its mission. This requires leadership. While leadership has been clearly manifested in the advancement of HRD in the academic community, there is not a clear understanding about the status of HRD leadership in practice.

By examining both strands—core beliefs and leadership development—this research project seeks to understand the perspective of HRD practitioners in top business organizations. The purpose of this study is not only to bring to light core beliefs in the HRD practitioner community, but also to assess the practitioner perceptions of HRD leadership necessary to act on those beliefs and enable meaningful change in organizations. This study, then, seeks to explore two research questions within the practice of HRD in Minnesota’s top 100 corporations:

- 1) What is leadership in developing human resources in an organization?
- 2) Are the core beliefs of HRD scholars relevant to HRD practitioners?

The responses to the survey constructed to address the questions above have provided valuable insights into beliefs among practitioners and the capacity for HRD leadership within the companies that participated in the study. Results of the study also highlight the need for continuing research of these critical topics.



## SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Section two presents the relevant literature to the discussion of leadership in HRD research and practice. First, the call for increased understanding and consistency of the boundaries, philosophies, theories, and core beliefs fielding HRD is presented. Second, literature relevant to the discussion of leadership in HRD is described and analyzed. Guiding research questions for this study are also contained within these discussions.

### The Field of HRD

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a relatively young field of study, and those working within it have taken up the charge of driving the maturity and quality of the field. Swanson and Holton (1997) indicate that, in part, “mature fields of study have a scholarly journal [...] a scholarly professional association [...] a research handbook” (p. xiv). With several well-established scholarly journals, a growing professional organization dedicated to scholarship, and a high-quality research handbook in place, is there still a charge to lead? With a mere glance at the dialogue in the scholarly HRD literature and brief ear lent to the conferences, the answer is a resounding, ‘yes.’ The dialogue about the continued development of the field centers around several issues, each of which will be discussed here and related to the purposes of this study. The issues are: (1) determining whether or not defining the field increases its maturity or limits its potential; (2) determining the core beliefs of the field, in part arriving at one or a few dependent variables or outcomes for HRD; (3) developing quality theory within the field; (4) bridging the gap between research and practice; and (5) finding out what it will take to continue to drive the development of the field in research and in practice.

### *A Definition of HRD*

Through its contemporary origins in the Training Within Industry effort in the 1940s, a system of training and development for workers, HRD rests on several underlying disciplines. HRD’s focus on management principles, productivity improvement, and team and group dynamics, allows it to draw from disciplines including industrial psychology, organizational behavior, management, industrial relations, education, curriculum instruction, psychology, engineering, sociology, statistics and others (Wimbiscus, 1995). The multi-disciplinary foundation has broadened and blurred HRD’s focus over time, making a precise definition difficult.

There are almost as many definitions of HRD as there are articles about HRD. Some argue that the lack of definitional clarity in the field stems from its interdisciplinary nature, building off of other mature fields (McGoldrick, Stewart & Watson, 2001; Weinberger, 1998; Wimbiscus, 1995). Others argue that the field of HRD is dynamic; the necessary skills and body of knowledge shift with each client engagement or scholarly issue, making a definition difficult (Lee, 2001). Still others state that HRD’s presence in international contexts makes the idea of settling on one definition for the entire global profession quite unlikely and perhaps an unnecessary goal (McLean & McLean, 2001). In contrast, there are those who have developed definitions of HRD and feel that they

increase the professionalism, consistency, and quality of the field as a whole (Ruona, 2000; Russ-Eft, 2000; Swanson 2001, Wimbiscus, 1995).

Overall, HRD scholars welcome these divergent interpretations. Gioia and Pitre (1990) argue that organizational study, similar to all other forms of inquiry including HRD, is anchored in the researcher's conceptual paradigm. This anchor consists of fundamental beliefs about ontology, the nature of reality and existence of phenomena; about epistemology, how we come to know about reality and human phenomena; and about methodology, how we study human phenomena. It is therefore not surprising that HRD has many different faces.

Admittedly, for the researchers conducting this study on core beliefs and leadership, a Western understanding of the concept of HRD has guided the research. Explicitly, the definition that prevailed in the minds of the researchers has been, "HRD is a process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organization development (OD) and personnel training and development (T&D) for the purpose of improving performance" (Swanson, 2001, p. 304). To conduct this study, precaution was taken to ensure the concept and instrument development incorporated a wide variety of thought. Very little definitional guidance was given for participants to avoid biasing their understanding. More explanation about these and other bias-reducing steps is provided in the methods section.

### ***Philosophy and Core Beliefs of HRD***

"It is time for HRD to begin to identify its own systems of beliefs as a community of professionals" (Ruona, 2000, p. 3). Fundamental differences in *philosophy* (frameworks for thinking) and *core beliefs* about the field of HRD (the beliefs that affect our view of truth), affects how the work is carried out or the research is conducted (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Ruona, 2000; Swanson, 2000). Researchers and practitioners are benefited when philosophy and core beliefs are made explicit: "alternative belief systems should be articulated and made explicit to the HRD community as well as its clients. It should be clear what the belief systems are, how systems vary from each other, and how different belief systems affect the practice of HRD" (Ruona, 2000, p. 3). There is obviously some common philosophical ground that holds the field together, and perhaps common assumptions of codes of ethics, but the argument is that both of these need to be further defined and clarified (Chalofsky, 2000; Ruona, 2000; Ruona & Rusaw, 2001; Swanson, 2000).

One of the largest philosophical differences seems to be the lack of consensus of the core dependent variable of HRD. A dualism between learning and performance has been explored extensively in the HRD literature (Barrie & Pace, 1998; Froman, 1994; Holton, 2000; Kuchinke, 1998; Payce, 2000; Swanson, 1995, 1996; Watkins, 2000; Watkins & Marsick, 1995), and has fostered vehement arguments (Holton, 2000; Kuchinke, 1998). To summarize, viewing performance as a main dependent variable of HRD means being conscious of and especially strategic about obtaining performance improvement outcomes (Swanson, 1996). Viewing learning as a main dependent variable of HRD means seeing the dependent variable as "the development of the whole person or whole employee" (Barrie & Pace, 1998, p. 49). More recent discussions are somewhat more balanced stating "human resource developers use learning and change to improve

individual and organizational performance” (Watkins, 2000, p. 55), and “whatever the flavor of the HRD intervention, whether it be training, employee wellness, culture change, or transfer of expertise, its ultimate value is the degree to which it can contribute to the company’s overarching purpose” (Kuchinke, 1998, p.380). While this is not the dichotomy it once was, the philosophical arguments underneath them still exist.

What sits underneath this argument are basic philosophical assumptions about *ontology*—the nature of reality; *epistemology*—the nature of knowledge and how we come to learn it; and *ethics*—how we ought to act as individuals and as a community in the field of HRD (Ruona & Rusaw, 2001, p. 223). Again, it is not the hope to limit the foundational assumptions of HRD, rather to make them explicit. Swanson clarified: “We can hope that HRD will always have rival belief systems that provoke us to revisit and revise our strategies, tactics, and even our visions and missions” (Swanson, 2000, p. 35).

A major study conducted with this goal in mind was carried out by W.E.A. Ruona (1999). This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the core beliefs of many noted scholars in the field of HRD. Prompted by the question, “If the profession of HRD was excellent in all ways, what 5-7 things would be true?” ten current and past presidents or chairs of the Academy of Human Resource Development and American Society for Training and Development were interviewed. The qualitative study gathered extensive text for thematic analysis; a somewhat paraphrased summary of the resulting themes and their subthemes are reported in Table 2.1. For each theme, there were areas of similarity and difference between the scholarly leaders. Ruona (1999, 2000, 2001) provides detailed analyses regarding these findings.

In Ruona’s study, the dramatic examples of both the level of cohesion on some issues and the disagreement on others led the researchers conducting the study presented here to think about what practitioners would say about their HRD work. Therefore, Ruona’s study was used as the primary source for mapping questionnaire content about core beliefs of HRD. Because this study also incorporates the concept of leading HRD in practice, further work on leadership is reviewed in a later section and a description of the primary sources for that content is presented at that time. Driving this research is the clear message that there are fundamental differences in philosophical foundations and core beliefs between scholars in the field of HRD.

### ***Developing Quality Theory & Research for the Field of HRD***

Quality theory and research is one issue those in the field of HRD can agree on. There is a consistent call for the development and use of quality theory and research in doing HRD work (Lynham, 2000; Ruona, 1998; Swanson, 1997a, 1997b, 2001; Torraco, 1997). The desire of those in the field of HRD to develop more quality theory and research is not unlike the desire that exists in other fields of organizational study (Dubin, 1978; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Van de Ven, 1989; Weick, 1989; Whetten, 1989; to name a few). In addition to its own research and theory development, HRD also draws on the developments of its underlying disciplines. Recently, as these disciplines have called for more multiparadigmatic research for theory building, and more multilevel theories, HRD has taken up that charge as well (Dooley, 2002; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Eagan, 2002; Klein, Tosi & Canella, 1999; Lynham, 2000, 2002; Torraco, 2002; Turnbull, 2002; Yang, 2002).

While there is a call for quality theory and research within the field, there is some disagreement about what the theoretical foundations of the field should be. While some push for a more minimalist approach of a few informing pillars including psychology, economics, and systems (Swanson, 1997; Ruona, 1998); others would argue for a much broader incorporation of influences such as anthropology and other disciplines (McLean, 1998). Regardless, this study builds off of several quality works of theory in HRD and related disciplines. Part of the goal of this study is to generate new discussion around the theoretical issues of 1) leadership and 2) HRD, by also building off of sound research and theory.

Table 2.1. Paraphrased Themes Concerning Core Beliefs of HRD Scholars from Ruona (1999)

	Major Themes	Sub Themes
I.	<i>The Role of HRD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Helping Profession</li> <li>▪ Development of People               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the meaning of development</li> <li>- what HRD develops</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Learning &amp; Development               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- change as a learning process</li> <li>- learning at multiple levels</li> <li>- learning &amp; performance</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Development of Systems</li> </ul>
II.	<i>Who HRD Serves</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Individual</li> <li>▪ The Organization</li> <li>▪ Society</li> <li>▪ Win-win-win</li> </ul>
III.	<i>People</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People as Learners</li> <li>▪ Value of People</li> <li>▪ Commitment to People</li> </ul>
IV.	<i>Work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Meaning of Work</li> <li>▪ HRD and Work</li> </ul>
V.	<i>Organizations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HRD in organizations not just corporations</li> <li>▪ Definition of Organizations</li> <li>▪ Organizations Should Treat People Well</li> </ul>
VI.	<i>HRD Interventions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Characteristics of Effective Interventions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- systems</li> <li>- proactive</li> <li>- long term</li> <li>- global lens</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Defining &amp; Solving Problems</li> <li>▪ Process / Methodology</li> </ul>

### ***Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice in HRD***

The gap between research and practice in HRD takes on a few different faces. First, there is some disagreement about the ultimate purposes of an applied field. Specifically, what should be the balance between solving problems and generating knowledge (Holton, 1999)? This disagreement is often split right down the middle between the practitioner community and research community, respectively, with practitioners judging knowledge outputs in HRD research for their usefulness in practice, and the researcher community judging the rigor of solutions and approaches used by practitioners (Lynham, 2000).

The second noticeable difference between research and practice stems from the influence of the researcher's paradigm on how research is framed. Much of the visible portion of the field of HRD is driven through the research and development of HRD scholars, often in the academic community. This research connects with practice, as subjects or participants are often members of the practitioner community; however, the perspective or conceptual paradigm of scholars can be much different from that of practice. Scholars even call for a temporary distancing of research from practice so as not to get tied up in "solving problems," enabling a more clear focus on important phenomena (Holton, 1999).

These issues have left a much talked about gap between the academic and practitioner communities, and a call from some to dissolve this tension (Holton, 1999; Jacobs, 1997; Lynham, 2000). Some believe that the solution is better partnerships between both communities, to work together on research to better understand the world around us (Jacobs, 1997; Lynham, 2000). Most theory building and research methodologies call for some form of testing or application in the world to ensure that they in fact mirror what is happening (Dubin, 1978; Reynolds, 1971); however, often this testing occurs as a short, transactional gathering of information from practice rather than a true partnership (Jacobs, 1997).

As the academic field of HRD now has insight into its own philosophy and core beliefs about its work (Ruona, 1999), this study sought to obtain information from the practitioner community about similar issues. Thus, while this study took one step towards reducing the gap between the communities on this important issue, it was not a true partnership. Such a partnership in the future to further clarify these fundamental issues about the work of HRD is highly recommended.

### ***Leading HRD in Research and Practice***

Leadership in HRD, both on the academic side and the practitioner side, will be incredibly important in the years to come. A brief examination of the educational programs of HRD and similar fields illustrates that there is a gap between what are seen as critical roles and competencies between the practitioner community and research from the academic community. Kuchinke's (2002) research indicates that while the academic community and practitioners are calling for more strategic roles in HRD, very few programs address strategic and economic issues in their curriculum. In essence, there is a gap between what future leaders of HRD in academia and practice are being taught, and what current leaders in both areas are calling for today. How can HRD students, future

leaders of the field, be expected to lead if their education is not preparing them for what current leaders argue is most needed?

The alignment of education for the future leaders of HRD is not the issue under scrutiny in this study. However, it is one underlying question that drives this research. Further clarifying the perspective that practitioners have about the current state of their work and the direction they would like to see it take could play a role in helping the alignment of educational programs. Kuchinke (2002) calls for this clarity as well from the leaders of the educational institutions: “empirical research can contribute to an accurate description of how HRD is interpreted in practice in those institutions that educate and train HRD practitioners and leaders in the field” (p. 128).

To clarify, to date there has been notable leadership in the academic community and in the practitioner community—without it, the field and demand for human capital development would not be continuing to grow (Kuchinke, 2002). However, there is greater knowledge about the leadership in the academic side than on the practitioner side. Dedicated scholars have driven the development of educational programs at the certificate, masters and doctorate levels (Kuchinke, 2002); several HRD journals, an HRD research handbook, and a professional organization dedicated to scholarship and research (Swanson & Holton, 1997) also exists. Leadership at the HRD practice level is less prominent; some popular literature highlights leaders that do HRD work within successful organizations. However, very little is known about what driving the field of HRD within practice looks like. This research begins to look at that issue by questioning the practitioner community about their core beliefs about HRD and what leadership in those areas should look like.

## **Leadership**

### ***The Importance of Leadership***

Leadership is important because it is what moves us. Leadership is the essential and irreplaceable element in the formula of change. It is the source of our vision for the future. It is what inspires us to commit to personal and organizational goals that turn the vision into reality. In recent times, a new emphasis has been put on the importance of leadership as individuals and organizations look for guidance to navigate today’s environment of continuous turmoil and change, which Peter Vaill (1996) has termed the “permanent white waters” of modern life. Becker (1996) states that leadership in the new century will face greater and more complex demands than those of the preceding century. The new challenges will continue to emerge from the exponential increases in the rate of change, which are driven by tremendous advances in technology and communications. “Leaders will need to pay attention to the social issues of protecting the environment and the planet, of creating a more just society, and of attending to the increasing interest of significant numbers of people to find meaning in their lives” (p. 128). Additionally, leaders have to help organizations understand and know themselves by being reflective in their activities and decisions (Wheatley, 1999).

Burns (1978, p. 1) has said, “One of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership.” And yet, at the time we need good leadership the most, it seems to have failed us in catastrophic proportions. The corporate

world has been racked with scandals that have emanated from the uppermost levels of leadership in some of this country's largest organizations. The world's largest institution, the Catholic Church, has witnessed the failure of its leadership in properly handling of sexual abuse issues and is still groping to find its way as its members protest and many abandon the institution altogether. Kouzes and Posner (1996) cited this trend long before the Enron Corporation scandal or the issues within the Catholic Church surfaced:

The cynics are winning. People are fed up, angry, disgusted and pessimistic about their future. Alienation is higher than it has been in a quarter-century. Loyalty to institutions and institutions' loyalty to people – is sinking like a stone. No longer would we rather fight than switch; we just switch. Nearly half the population is cynical, and cynics don't participate in improving things. In such a climate, how can a leader possibly mobilize a seemingly unwilling constituency toward some unknown and even more uncertain future? Who would want to? (pp. 99-100)

Burns (1978, p. 1), in his seminal work titled *Leadership*, also bemoans the paucity of strong leadership stating “The crisis of leadership today is the mediocrity or irresponsibility of so many of the men and women in power, but leadership rarely rises to the full need for it.” A recent Conference Board study indicated that, of all the companies surveyed, only 54% felt they had the leadership necessary to respond to change, and only 8% rated their leadership as excellent (Ulrich, Zenger, & Smallwood, 1999). Although this all paints a rather gloomy picture, it also highlights the tremendous opportunity for new leadership to emerge and fill the voids at every level and in every function within the organization. Bass (1990, p. 8) has stated, “Despite the skepticism about the reality and importance of leadership, all social and political movements require leaders to begin them” In other words leadership is essential for renewal and change, and the need for new leadership is critical.

What better time for a discipline that champions the “unleashing of human expertise” to take a leadership position in organizations, bring its mission to the forefront, and make it part of the organization's overall mission. What better time for HRD to establish itself as a driving force to enable organizations to achieve new levels of performance as well as their full potential. In the next section, the relevance of leadership in expanding HRD's influence and impact in organizations will be explored and discussed. This in turn highlights the premise on which this study was based – if HRD is to realize its full potential, it must assert itself by assuming a strong leadership role within the organization.

### ***Defining Leadership***

Leadership is not easily defined. Burns (1978, p. 2) has said, “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.” Rost (cited in Ciulla, 1998, p. 10) writes, “neither scholars nor the practitioners have been able to define leadership with precision, accuracy, and conciseness so that people are able to label it correctly when they see it happening or when they engage in it.” A recent study found 130 definitions of the word leadership (See Table 2.2 for definitions offered by prominent authors). Bass (1990, p. 11) states, “There are almost as many different definitions of

leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.” Bass concludes that the definition of leadership should depend on the purposes to be served by the definition. With that in mind, it was essential for this study to do a broad review of leadership literature and develop a definition of leadership that is applicable to the role of leading HRD, as a relatively new and emerging discipline, to an increased level of importance and relevance in today’s organizations. For the purposes of this study the following definition has been synthesized from leadership literature and developed to specifically address HRD leadership in organizations:

*HRD leadership is a process of influencing others in the organization to agree to and actively support HRD efforts for the improvement of performance through the development of human expertise and the implementation of effective organizational change and innovations.*

One way to think about leadership is in terms of essential competencies that effective leaders possess. Competencies can be defined as “an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation” (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 9). Bass (1990) suggests that there are two categories of competencies for leaders:

1. *Task competence* is the ability to effectively deal with the instrumental tasks of the group. It involves the technical knowledge, skills and abilities associated with the particular tasks of the group or organization. Task competence not only enables leaders to relate to the organization in credible ways and facilitate problem solving, it also encourages competent individuals to attempt leadership.
2. *Interpersonal competence* involves empathy, insight, heightened awareness, and the ability to give and receive feedback. This area of competency can also be referred to relationship management or socioemotional competence.

Both categories of competencies are essential to effective leadership, but neither is sufficient in and of itself. For this research project, however, and based on the design of the study, it would *not* be possible to assess interpersonal competencies for the following reasons:

1. The research subjects were the highest level of executives who had direct responsibility for HRD in the participating organizations. As such, any attempt to solicit data concerning interpersonal competencies of HRD leaders would have, by definition, been self-reports and consequently biased and subjective (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1998). To collect valid data on interpersonal competencies of existing leadership, a separate survey would have had to have been administered to members of the organization who had observed, interacted, and were influenced by HRD leaders in their organizations. Financial and time constraints put this possibility outside the scope of the study.



Table 2.2. Definitions of Leadership from Literature

<i>Scholar/Author</i>	<i>Definition</i>
G. Yukl (2002)	<i>"Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives." (p. 7)</i>
P. G. Northouse (2001)	<i>"Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." (p. 3)</i>
D. Katz & R. Kahn (1978)	<i>"the influential increment over and above the mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization." (p. 528)</i>
J. C. Rost (Cited in Ciulla, 1998)	<i>"Leadership is an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes." (p. 11)</i>
E. H. Schein (1972)	<i>"the ability to step outside the culture that created the leader and to start the evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive." (p. 2)</i>
P. Koestenbaum (2002)	<i>"Specifically, a leader is a person who is truly effective in achieving worthy results in any field, no matter what the obstacles and with unfailing regard for human beings." (p. 11)</i>
J. M. Kouzes & B. Z. Posner (1995)	<i>"the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations." (p. 30)</i>
J. M. Burns (1978)	<i>"Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers." (p. 18)</i>
B. M. Bass (1990)	<i>"Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change – persons whose acts affect other people more than other peoples' acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group." (pp. 19-20)</i>
P. Drucker (1996)	<i>"1)The only definition of a leaders is someone who has <u>followers</u>. Some people are thinkers. Some are prophets. Both roles are important and badly needed. But without followers, there can be no leaders. 2) An effective leader is not someone who is loved and admired. He or she is someone whose followers do the right things. Popularity is not leadership. <u>Results</u> are. 3) Leaders are highly visible. They therefore set <u>examples</u>. 4) Leadership is not rank, privileges, or money. It is <u>responsibility</u>." (p. xii)</i>
J. P. Kotter (1999)	<i>"the development of vision and strategies, the alignment of relevant people behind those strategies, and the empowerment of individuals to make the vision happen, despite obstacles." (p.10)</i>
W. Bennis & B. Nanus (1985)	<i>"The new leader... is one who commits people to action, who converts followers into leaders, and who may convert leaders into agents of change." (p. 3)</i>

2. Interpreting data and measuring interpersonal competencies, also referred to as social intelligence, can be a complex and challenging endeavor requiring sophisticated research tools and methodologies as well as expertise in the areas personality and social psychology. These requirements also put the assessment of this category outside the scope of this study.
3. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, this is one of the first research studies focused on the leadership of HRD in organizations. As such, it was essential to conceive of a research process consisting of manageable increments that would build on each other. It was determined that the initial phase, which is addressed with this study, should focus on the task competencies and a subsequent study would address interpersonal competencies.

Within the scope of the study, then, it was possible to construct a survey that could collect data concerning the task competencies that have been determined to be associated with strategic leadership in HRD practice. Consequently the researchers conducted a review of leadership literature to determine those task competencies that not only are most often associated and cited as essential to effective leadership, but also that were relevant to leadership in the field of HRD practice. The review produced the following list of task competencies: 1) strategic thinking, 2) performance improvement, 3) ethical decision making, 4) systems thinking, and 5) innovativeness (See Table 2.3 for definitions from literature).

Assessing to what extent these competencies are manifested in HRD management in the companies studied will provide some conclusions concerning the current status and capacity for HRD leadership in terms of task related knowledge, skills, and abilities. The survey design also enables an assessment as to what extent these competencies are desirable and thereby affords some insights as to whether a leadership perspective or orientation exists.

### ***The Relevance of Leadership in HRD***

As indicated in Ruona's study (1999), one of the sub-themes is that HRD is seen as a helping profession that serves the individual, the organization, and ultimately society. This perspective and belief is grounded in HRD's earliest origins as a training function, per se, for the purpose of passing on skills associated with survival from one generation to the next. Eventually, in the modern era, the focus was on skills associated with improving the quality and performance of organizations (Swanson & Holton, 2001). As such, HRD's historic role has been to respond to the identified skill needs of the organization with training developed to satisfy those needs. As a discipline, it has evolved and developed sophisticated approaches to training and development and with strong leadership in the HRD academic community it is now rigorously pursuing theory development and scholarly dialogue that is international in scope. As the discipline has matured, it has also broadened its conceptualization of its role in the organization to include organizational development and strategic functions that contribute to the shaping strategy as well as enabling organizations to take advantage of emergent business strategies (Swanson & Holton, 2001).

This expanded conceptualization of HRD’s role in organizations in the context of an environment of increasingly rapid and complex change calls for an aggressive leadership posture on HRD’s part to establish itself as an equal contributor to the performance and success of the organization (Torraco & Swanson, 1996). Taking on a leadership role in the organization, as opposed to simply responding to management’s assessment of organizational needs, represents a significant shift in perspective for HRD practitioners and requires a skill set and competencies beyond what the traditional HRD role demanded. The competencies above are essential to effective HRD leadership in organizations. Comparing general leadership literature and the HRD/HR literature uncovers a consensus in the competencies of leadership. As depicted in Figure 1, both bodies of literature support the need for these task competencies in achieving organizational goals (see Figure 2.1). This comparison (presented in Table 2.4) demonstrates that HRD/HR scholars are also recognizing these competencies as essential in advancing HRD and, although not explicit in their call for leadership in HRD, are, in fact, collectively and implicitly expressing a need for leadership.

The point to be made is that strong HRD leadership is essential if HRD is to expand its role within organizations. The leadership role will demand specific knowledge, skills, and personal qualities as described above. As stated earlier, HRD leadership clearly exists in the academic community and has successfully advanced the discipline. HRD leadership in practice is not as clearly understood, yet is just as critical in advancing the HRD profession. It is for this reason that this study has been conducted to explore the status of HRD leadership in practice and establish a basis for continuing study.

Table 2.3. Leadership Competencies Defined

Competency	Definition
<i>Strategic Thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The ability to understand rapidly changing environmental trends, market opportunities, competitive threats, and strengths and weaknesses of their own organizations, to identify the optimum strategic response.” (Spencer &amp; Spencer, 1993, p. 343)</li> <li>• The ability to, “develop distinctive strategies to achieve competitive advantage; translate broad strategies into specific objectives and action plans; align the organization to support specific strategic priorities.” (Gebelein, Lee, &amp; Sloan, 1996, p. 94)</li> </ul>
<i>Performance Improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Performance is a necessary focus and outcome, a necessary requirement, of leadership. A primary purpose of leadership is the attainment of desired outcomes, of what is often referred to as desired results... leadership must positively serve and impact multiple performance domains of the performance system in which it occurs.” (Lynham, 2000, pp. 59-60)</li> <li>• “Effective leadership = attributes x results. This equation suggests that leaders must strive for excellence in both terms; that is, they must both demonstrate attributes and achieve results.” (Ulrich, Zenger, &amp; Smallwood, 1999, p. 3)</li> <li>• “... leadership can account for improved performance as measured by a variety of factors: net income, sales, profits, and net assets; employee commitment, job satisfaction, and role clarity; and employee turnover, achievement of company goals, and teamwork.” (Kouzes &amp; Posner, 1995, p. 321)</li> <li>• “[Leadership’s] essence is performance.” (Drucker, 2001, p. 268)</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Ethics</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The study of ethics generally consists of the examination of right, wrong, good, evil, virtue, duty, obligation, rights, justice, fairness, and so on, in human relationships with each other and other living things.” (Ciulla, 1998, p. 4)</li> <li>• “Ethics is roughly a synonym for morality, but is often restricted to the rules and norms of specific kinds of conduct or the codes of conduct for specialized groups...ethics as a philosophical endeavor is the study of morality.” (Boatright, 2000, p. 23)</li> <li>• In the context of leadership, Lynham (2000, p. 53) states that ethics consists of the following competencies: 1) Serving as a symbol, 2) Resonating the needs and feelings of one’s constituents, 3) Doing things right, 4) Nurturing differences and nurturing the larger environment, 5) Embracing a sense of inner truth and higher purpose, 6) Possessing toughness, courage, balance, and touch, 7) Holding a deep sense of commitment and the belief in people.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Systems Thinking</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots.” (Senge, 1990, p. 68)</li> <li>• “In simplest terms, systems thinking is a way of seeing and talking about reality that helps us better understand and work with systems to influence the quality of our lives. In this sense, systems thinking can be seen as a perspective. It also involves a unique vocabulary for describing systemic behavior, and so can be thought of as a language as well. And because it offers a wide range of techniques and devices for visually capturing and communicating about systems, it is a set of tools.” (Kim, 1999, pp. 1-2)</li> <li>• “Systems thinking – a way of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems.” (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, &amp; Smith, 1994, p. 6)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Innovation</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Innovation is invention that has produced economic value.” (Rogers &amp; Kaplan, 2001, p. 124)</li> <li>• “An innovation is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. It matters little, so far as human behavior is concerned, whether or not the idea is objectively new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery. The perceived newness of the idea for the individual determines his or her reaction to it. If the idea seems new to the individual, it is an innovation.” (Rogers, 1995, p. 11)</li> <li>• “Whereas invention is the creation of a new idea, innovation is more encompassing and includes the process of developing and implementing a new idea.” (Van de Ven, Polley, Garud, &amp; Venkataraman, 1999, p. 9)</li> </ul>

Table 2.4. Comparing Leadership Literature and HRD/HR Literature

Competency	Leadership Literature	HRD Literature
<p><b>Strategic Thinking</b></p>	<p>One of three functions of leadership – <u>Vision Building and Strategizing</u> (Northouse, 2001, p.9)</p> <p>“One of the critical roles of learning leadership, then, is first of all to notice changes in the environment and then to figure out what needs to be done to remain adaptive” (Schein, 1992, p.382).</p> <p>“It is leadership’s responsibility to create a strategy that will cause the organization to succeed, to grow, to prosper, to beat the competition” (Bardwick, 1996, p.135).</p> <p>Leadership attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Articulate tangible <u>vision</u>, values, and <u>strategy</u>”</li> <li>• “Claim the future through reconnaissance, technology, foresight, conceptual flexibility, <u>vision</u>, and <u>strategic alignment</u>, and by enhancing the companies’ image”</li> <li>• “<u>Think strategically</u>” (Ulrich, Zenger, &amp; Smallwood, 1999, p.8)</li> </ul> <p>A leadership competency – “Sharing, inspiring and safe-guarding <u>mission, vision, and direction</u>” (Lynham, 2000, p.53)</p>	<p>“The influence of HRD on strategic planning is moving from being exclusively in a role supportive of business strategy to becoming a major force in the shaping of business strategy” (Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.340).</p> <p>“HRD demonstrates its <u>strategic capability</u> as it adds two important dimensions to the organization’s business-planning process: (1) HRD provides education and learning in the concepts and methods of strategic planning and systems thinking to those responsible for setting the strategic direction for the organization; and (2) the HRD function itself plays an active role in strategic planning through direct participation of HRD professionals in the business-planning process” (Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.348)</p> <p>HR as a strategic partner (Ulrich, 1997, p.25)</p> <p>“What roles will typify future HR work?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Combine company and HR strategy to create organizational effectiveness and thus enhanced performance</u>” (Rothwell, Prescott, &amp; Taylor, 1998, p.266)</li> </ul> <p>HR Management-Oriented Competencies – <u>strategic thinking</u> (Rothwell et al, 1998, p.269)</p> <p>“Strategic competencies are more important than functional competencies” (Becker, Huselid, Pickus, &amp; Spratt, 1997, p.236).</p>
<p><b>Performance Improvement</b></p>	<p>“Knowledge-worker <u>productivity</u> is the biggest of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century management challenges” (Drucker, 1999, p.157).</p> <p>“What we found were leaders of the best-performing organizations in their respective profit-making and social sector</p>	<p>“The development and unleashing of employee expertise provides a potentially inexhaustible source of ideas for further innovation and <u>increased productivity</u> because the most basic output of a highly competent employee – knowledge – is not used up in the process of using it” (Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.342)</p>

<p><b>Performance Improvement (cont.)</b></p>	<p>'industries' who defined their jobs in terms of identifying and constantly communicating commonly held values, shaping such values to enhance performance, ensuring the capability of people around them, living the commonly held values, listening a great deal of the time, and literally speaking a different language than their traditional counterparts. In short, they saw themselves as shapers and keepers of performance-oriented cultures" (Heskett &amp; Schlesinger, 1996, p.112).</p> <p>Leaders convey: "Well-articulated expectations of high performance for each and every member of the organization and the belief that everyone, including the leader, will be evaluated against those expectations on the basis of <u>performance</u>" (Deerane, 1996, p.254).</p> <p>"Leaders do much more than demonstrate attributes. <u>Effective leaders get results</u>" (Ulrich et al, 1999, p.1).</p> <p>"When leaders fail to exhibit concern for <u>results</u>, however many attributes they possess, they will ultimately be ineffective and their tenures unproductive" Ulrich et al, 1999, p.29).</p> <p>"Performance is the key dependent or outcome variable of leadership" (Lynham, 2000, p.59)</p>	<p>"HRD functions that adopt a systems perspective of the organization and its environment and that recognize the centrality of employee expertise to <u>optimal business performance</u> are in the best position to provide the <u>performance-based interventions</u> needed by organizations for continued growth and success" (Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.347).</p> <p>"HRD must contribute directly to important business goals and must be based on <u>key business performance requirements</u>" (Torraco &amp; Swanson, 1995, Cited in Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.354).</p> <p>"What roles will typify future HR work?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine company and HR strategy to create organizational effectiveness and thus enhanced <u>performance</u>" (Rothwell, Prescott, &amp; Taylor, 1998, p.266).</li> </ul> <p>What HR practitioners need to know – "<u>Performance Improvement</u> – Broadened measurement – determine key performance enhancers" (Burke, 1997, p.106).</p> <p>"HR must become a strategic core competency rather than a market follower. A high performance work system that creates real shareholder value is not a commodity that can be benchmarked from other organizations" (Becker et al, 1997, p.236).</p>
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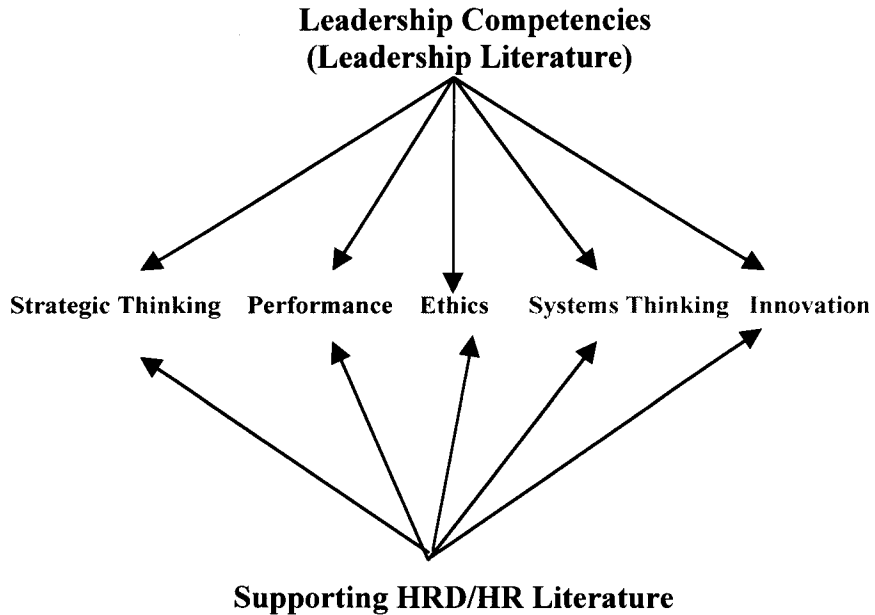
<p><b>Ethics</b></p>	<p>“The influence dimension of leadership requires that the leader has impact on the lives of those being led. To make a change in other people carries with it an enormous <u>ethical burden and responsibility</u>” (Northouse, 2001, p.254).</p> <p>“<u>Moral leadership</u> is not mere preaching, or the uttering of pieties, or the insistence of social conformity. <u>Moral leadership</u> emerges from, and always returns to, the fundamental wants and needs, aspirations, and values of the followers” (Burns, 1978, p.4).</p> <p>“Leadership is not a person or a position. It is a complex <u>moral relationship</u> between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good. <u>Ethics</u>, then, lies at the very heart of leadership” (Ciulla, 1998, p.xv).</p> <p>“In addition to courage, leaders must have some certainty about which direction to take and which path to choose. In turn, this requires leaders to have a clear conviction about <u>values</u> and a steadfastness of purpose in <u>distinguishing between right and wrong, wisdom and foolishness</u>” (Bardwick, 1996, p.137).</p> <p>“Honesty is also related to values and ethics.... Confusion over where a leader stands creates stress; not knowing the leader’s beliefs contributes to conflict, indecision, and political rivalry. We simply don’t trust people who won’t tell us their <u>values, ethics, and standards</u>” (Kouzes &amp; Posner, 1995, p.23)</p> <p>“Responsible leadership is the purposeful and integrated demonstration, application and achievement of effective practices, <u>ethical habits</u> and enduring resources” (White Newman, 1993, cited in Lynham, 2000)</p>	<p>“These Standards on Ethics and integrity for the Academy of Human Resource Development provide guidance for HRD professionals engaged in practice, research, consulting, and instruction/facilitation/teaching..... Adherence to these standards builds ethical, professional, and research accomplishments for HRD professionals and adds to the further definition and clarification of HRD as a profession” (Academy of Human Resource Development Standing Committee on Ethics and Integrity, 1999, p.1).</p> <p>Competencies for HR roles and positions – “<u>exhibits ethical behavior—integrity/honesty</u>” (Rothwell et al, 1998, p.275).</p> <p>“The HRD managing role also has a number of <u>ethical issues</u> to consider....” (Sofa, 1999, p.169).</p>
<p><b>Systems Thinking</b></p>	<p>“As the world becomes more complex and interdependent, the ability to think systemically, to analyze fields of forces and understand their joint causal effects on each other, and to abandon simple linear causal logic in favor of complex mental</p> <p>“HRD functions that <u>adopt a systems perspective</u> of the organization and its environment and that recognize the centrality of employee expertise to optimal business performance are in the best position to provide the performance-based interventions</p>	

<p><b>Systems Thinking (cont.)</b></p>	<p>models will become more critical to learning (Senge, 1990). The learning leader and the learning culture must therefore be built on the assumption that the world is intrinsically complex, nonlinear, and overdetermined" (Schein, 1992, p.371).</p> <p>"The second activity of a leader is 'aligning'. It consists of ensuring that the organizational structure, <u>systems</u>, and operational processes all contribute to achieving your vision and mission of meeting the needs of customers and other stakeholders" (Covey, 1996, p.152).</p> <p>"The first premise is that leadership is itself a system, meaning it consists of interacting, interdependent inputs, processes, outputs, feedback, and boundaries" (Lynham, 2000, p.49).</p> <p>"In order for leadership to effect performance improvement of the system in which it occurs, performance must be viewed and treated as a <u>whole system</u> of performance, and performance improvement must be pursued in all four domains of that <u>system</u>" (Lynham, 2000, p.60).</p>	<p>needed by organizations for continued growth and success" (Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.347).</p> <p>"HRD demonstrates its strategic capability as it adds two important dimensions to the organization's business-planning process: (1) HRD provides education and learning in the concepts and methods of strategic planning and <u>systems thinking</u> to those responsible for setting the strategic direction for the organization; and (2) the HRD function itself plays an active role in strategic planning through direct participation of HRD professionals in the business-planning process" (Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.348).</p> <p>Competencies for HR roles and positions – "knows business <u>systems thinking</u> and information technology" (Rothwell et al, 1998).</p> <p>"The most important missing element in HR functional expertise is a <u>systems perspective</u>" (Becker et al, 1997, p.237).</p>
<p><b>Innovation</b></p>	<p>"The last policy for the change leader to build into the enterprise is a systematic policy of <u>innovation</u>, that is, a policy to create change" (Drucker, 1999, p.84).</p> <p>"The institutional leader role is important at the earliest stages of an <u>innovation</u> as the innovation team forms and later when an innovation moves from development to implementation and market introduction. As resource controllers and agents of legitimacy, institutional leaders' involvement builds the infrastructure needed for a <u>successful innovation</u>" (Van de Ven, Polley, Garud, &amp; Venkataraman, 1999, p.123).</p> <p>"Leaders both set the tone of open-mindedness and acceptance and create a culture that generates continual improvement and <u>innovation</u>" (Ulrich et al, 1999, p.183)</p>	<p>"The development and unleashing of employee expertise provides a potentially <u>inexhaustible source of ideas for further innovation</u> and increased productivity because the most basic output of a highly competent employee – knowledge – is not used up in the process of using it" (Swanson &amp; Holton, 2001, p.342)</p> <p>Competencies for HR roles and positions – "able to be <u>innovative</u> and creative - creative thinking" (Rothwell et al, 1998, p.271)</p> <p><u>Innovation</u> – one of five key results for HR processes (McLagan &amp; Suhadolnik, 1989)</p> <p>Eight best human asset management practices – "<u>Risk and Innovation</u>: <u>Innovation</u> is a recognized necessity. There is a willingness to risk shutting down present systems and structure and restarting in a totally different manner while learning from</p>



	<p>“Leadership is inextricably connected with the process of innovation, of bringing new ideas, methods, or solutions into use” (Kouzes &amp; Posner, 1995, p. 51).</p>	<p>failure.” (Fitz-Enz, 1997, p.221).</p>
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Figure 2.1. Making the argument for leadership in HRD



***Guiding Research Questions***

This study began with the interest of illuminating what it means to lead the development of human resources in an organization. The guiding research questions for this study and their accompanying sub-questions were:

- RQ1: What is leadership in developing human resources in an organization?
  - a. What does it look like presently?
  - b. What will it look like in the future?
  - c. What would it look like optimally?

RQ2: Are the core beliefs of HRD scholars relevant to HRD practitioners?

### SECTION THREE: METHODS

The processes and methods used for the development of this study are described in this section, beginning with a restatement of the problem and purpose of the study as well as the guiding research questions.

#### *Restatement of the Problem and Purpose of this Study*

The concept of leadership is well developed in the literature. While each analysis may contain different elements of leadership, there is some agreement about the overall concept. Similarly, the concept of developing human resources within organizations is one that has been the focus of attention by many scholars and practitioners. Again however, the elements of what should be included in that quest have been the topic of much debate. In essence, how can one lead the charge of developing human talent in the organization without understanding the elements of leadership appropriate for that task or even understanding the task itself? This study is interested in beginning the dialogue around that issue.

#### *Restatement of Guiding Research Questions*

This study began with the interest of illuminating what it looks like to lead the development of the human resources in an organization. The guiding research questions for this study and their accompanying sub-questions were:

- RQ1: What is leadership in developing human resources in an organization?
- d. What does it look like presently?
  - e. What will it look like in the future?
  - f. What would it look like optimally?

RQ2: Are the core beliefs of HRD scholars relevant to HRD practitioners?

#### *Research Design*

Multiple research paradigms were considered for appropriateness given the research question. Gaining a deeper understanding of what it means to lead the development of human resources in organizations was a goal of this study. This goal opens the possibility for a phenomenological approach to the issue. However, the researchers' sub-goals for the study were to help paint a picture of this kind of leadership not only in the current experience of those with that challenge but also to develop the landscape of what it might look like in the future and what it should look like optimally. Therefore, an empirical/analytical methodology was chosen to begin to put the two concepts of leadership and developing human resources in organizations together. The quantitative methods used in this study were exploratory in nature, looking to "discover relationships, interpretations, and characteristics of subjects that suggest new theory and define new

problems” (Holton & Burnett, 1997, p.70). This study, therefore, was an instrument that puts the two aforementioned concepts together.

In empirical studies, questionnaires as well as interviews, are regularly used as a method for collecting information that is difficult to observe directly (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). In this study, questions focused around participants’ perceptions and beliefs about leading the development of their human talent within the organization. Due to the cost effective and time efficient qualities of the questionnaire, it was chosen as the desired method for this study. The reduced ability to probe deeper into participants’ perceptions, as would be possible with interviews, was taken into account.

The following steps used for questionnaire research are based on Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) and served as a basis for the methodology for this study:

1. Defining research objectives
2. Selecting a sample
3. Designing the questionnaire format
4. Pretesting the questionnaire
5. Precontacting the sample
6. Writing a cover letter and distributing the questionnaire
7. Following up with nonrespondents
8. Analyzing the questionnaire data

Addressing step one, the objectives of this research were to begin to conceptualize what leadership in human resource development in organizations currently looks like, what it could look like in the future, and what those charged with that responsibility would hope it would eventually look like in the future. Consequently, the target population for this study was those individuals championing human resource development efforts as their normal course of business.

The remainder of this section will describe the researchers’ processes at each of the stages listed above. Stage one includes the development of the instrument format and items, stages two and three explain the two forms of pretesting used, stage four describes the sample participants and the processes used for carrying out the final test of the instrument. Finally, a description of the intended data analysis procedures is presented.

### ***STAGE ONE: Questionnaire Development***

The development of items for the instrument involved a review of the literature for appropriate content and mapping of created items back to literature for both concepts of leadership and developing human resources, consideration of additional independent variables, and development of a format and structure for the instrument.

*Literature Foundation.* As this study sought to put together the concepts of leadership and HRD, the literature on each concept was reviewed as a foundation for developing the survey instrument items. With respect to core beliefs, there are a growing number of articles and research in the field of HRD around what is considered to be foundational aspects of the field. However, the themes developed through Ruona’s (1999) work synthesized much of surrounding literature on foundations of HRD. Questionnaire items were developed to map to each conceptual cluster of the synthesized leadership literature as well as to each theme Ruona proposed as highlighting core beliefs about HRD. Some questions were exclusively only mapped to the Ruona material,

consisting of statements of a more philosophical nature. Similarly, some questions were exclusively only mapped to the leadership content; these consisted of statements more behavioral in nature. Thus, it was intended that analysis would take place for both sets of mapped content as well as a consideration of the questionnaire as a whole.

*Variables.* This study sought to utilize some organizational and participant attributes as exploratory differentiators for the data. Some attributes examined were the organization's size (e.g., the number of employees), the organization's yearly revenue, and the number of years the organization has been in existence. Individual gender attributes were also collected (e.g., male and female) in order to assess any possible differences based upon gender.

*Format & Structure of Instrument.* The format of the questionnaire contained organization descriptor statements followed by 5-point Likert scale options for responses. Participants were asked to differentiate their responses to the descriptors based on its resemblance to the 'Current State' of their organization, the 'Likely Future State' and the 'Desired Future State'.

### ***STAGE TWO: Subject Matter Expert Review***

*Content Subject Matter Expert Review.* Several subject matter experts were chosen to review the first draft of the instrument for content validity. The group chosen consisted of 3 practitioners, current or former leaders in developing human resources within their organization, and 6 scholars, currently engaged in developing the field of HRD from within their University institutions. Reviewers were asked to provide their feedback on the content validity of the survey. In other words, they were asked to affirm that the questions of the survey sufficiently and clearly addressed the two areas of HRD and leadership (Holton & Burnett, 1997). Additionally, reviewers were asked to comment on the structure and clarity of the instrument itself, keeping in mind the target population of Human Resource executives in organizations. Subject matter experts responded by phone, email, and fax with their feedback. The feedback from the subject matter experts prompted changes in wording as well as questionnaire format, moving the instrument into the final format (see Appendix A). Changes meant remapping to ensure adequate coverage of content.

*Human Subjects Committee Review.* To meet the ethics in research requirements of this University, these researchers developed a consent form to the specifications of the Human Subjects Committee, or Institutional Review Board (IRB) and submitted all appropriate paperwork for Exempt Review (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Very few minor changes were made the language within the consent form and otherwise approved.

### ***STAGE THREE: Pilot Test***

A pilot study usually involves small-scale testing of the procedures that one plans to use in the main study, as well as revising those procedures based on what the testing reveals (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). As this test was meant to simulate the target population, pilot members consisted of individuals who either presently or formerly held positions of leadership in developing human resources within their organizations. Twenty-two individuals were contacted for participation in the pilot test portion of this study; due to

various needs of the participants, some survey packets were delivered via fax or email, as opposed to traditional mail. Pilot members were chosen to review the instrument for ease-of-use, clarity, and comprehensiveness. Individuals were asked to respond as participants to the survey and then fill out responses to four basic questions: (1) How long did it take you to finish the survey? (2) Were there any questions or concepts that you found to be unclear? (3) Was what you were being asked to respond to clear (i.e., rating current, likely future, and desired future)? (4) Is there anything you would like to convey that you thought was missing in this survey addressing topics of leadership in HRD and/or core beliefs about HRD? Twenty-one participants responded to the pilot test.

In general, the pilot feedback indicated that the survey itself took on average 26.5 minutes to complete, that most questions and concepts were clear, that the format was clear, and that no large areas of developing human resources or leadership were missing in the minds of the participants. However, some comments led to a few rewording changes to questions for clarity, a few questions were joined together for simplicity, and one question addressing the development of future leadership talent was added. The changes to the questions and the one additional question still allowed for clear mapping of the questions back to the primary theoretical and research content of Ruona (1999), and the other major leadership literature.

**STAGE FOUR: Sample Implementation**

**Final Instrument**

The final draft of the instrument can be viewed in Appendix A. The final instrument was a booklet that began with a broad explanation of HRD as a way to provide a context for the questionnaire, along with general directions for responding to the items. The general definition provided was:

‘**HRD** – refers to the function of *developing* human resources in organizations. This function is most often referred to as HRD but can also be labeled Organization Development, Organization Effectiveness, Training & Development, Knowledge Management, and such. At a minimum, it is the training and development function. In a broader sense, it can include facilitating organizational change, strategic human resource planning, and intercultural relations and diversity initiatives.’

A sample question was also provided to assist in conveying the format of the instrument (also see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Sample Item from Questionnaire

Sample.

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive	Minimally Descriptive	Moderately Descriptive	Very Descriptive	Perfectly Descriptive
		1	2	3	4	5
#	Retention efforts for key employees are primarily monetary in nature.					X
	Current State					X
	Likely Future State					X
	Desired Future State		X			

The final instrument consisted of 45 questions (questions measuring both the concepts of leading HRD and core beliefs of HRD), followed by 4 demographic questions and one open ended question. The demographic questions used were: (1) Respondent’s gender, (2) How many individuals are currently employed in your total organization? (3) What is your total organization’s yearly revenue? (4) For how many years has your organization been in existence? The open-ended question stated:

‘As with any questionnaire, we might not have captured everything you would have liked to convey about the topic. Please use the space provided below, along with any additional documentation you wish to attach, to give further comments about Human Resource Development in your opinion’

Questionnaires were packaged along with the consent form and two preaddressed and stamped envelopes, one for the questionnaire and one for the consent form. The final mapping of the content of core beliefs of HRD and leadership are shown below in Figures 3.2 and 3.3.

Figure 3.2. Conceptual Mapping of Items from Ruona’s Study on HRD Core Beliefs

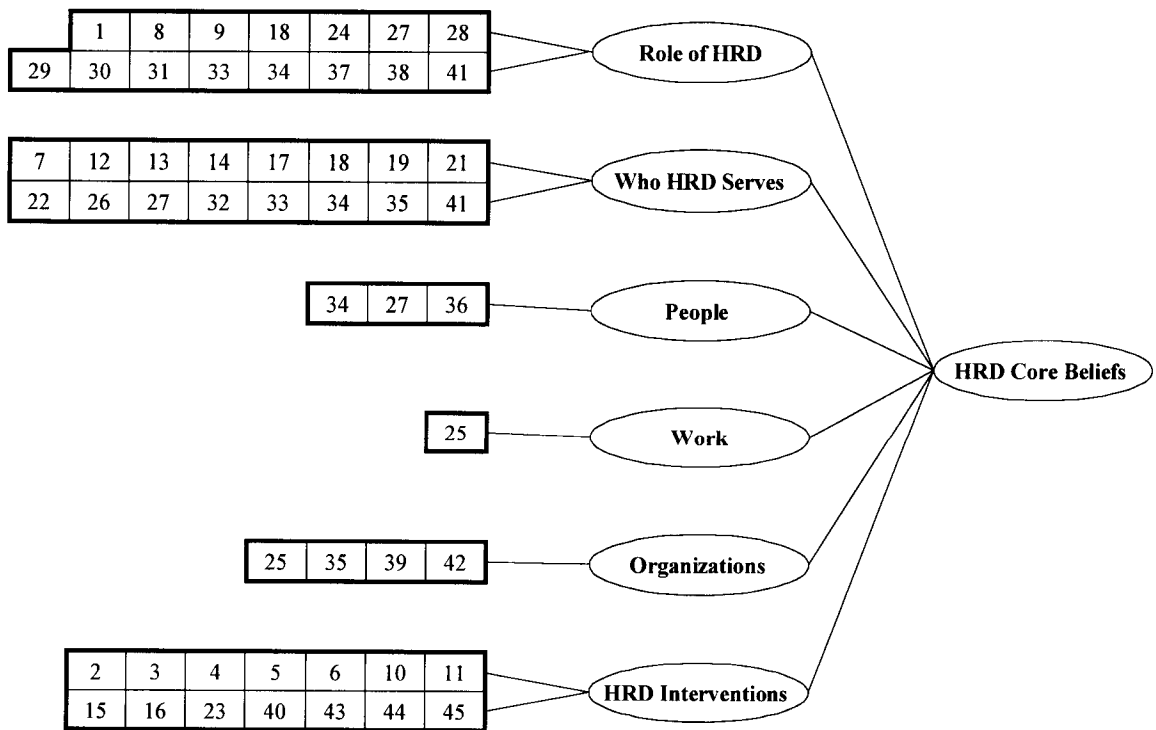
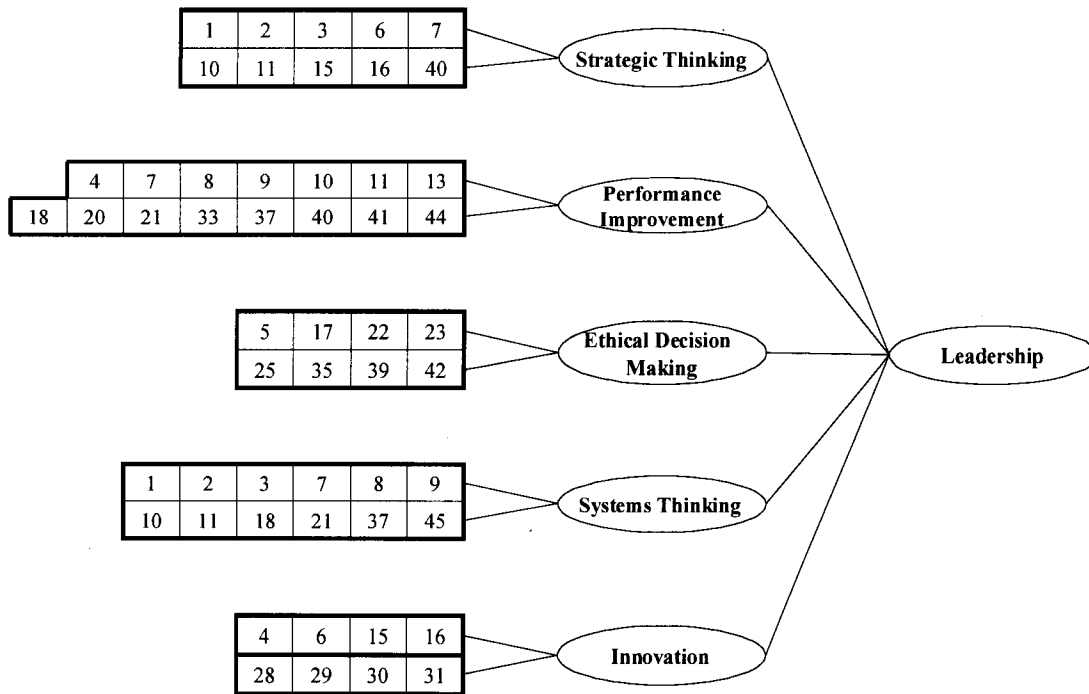


Figure 3.3. Conceptual Mapping of Items from Lynham and Others on Leadership



Questionnaire items were developed to map to each conceptual cluster of the synthesized leadership literature as well as to each of Ruona's themes of the core beliefs about HRD. Some questions were exclusively only mapped to the Ruona material, consisting of statements of a more philosophical nature. Similarly, some questions were exclusively only mapped to the leadership content; these consisted of statements more behavioral in nature. Thus, it was intended that analysis would take place for both sets of mapped content as well as a consideration of the questionnaire as a whole.

### ***Sampling***

The exploratory nature of this study, along with its objectives, determined the type of sampling methods used. In general, the target population, accessible population, and sample of participants were chosen based on the fundamental need to ensure that the questionnaire content was salient to them (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

*Target Population and Accessible Population.* The goal of these researchers was to explore a topic that could potentially have implications for all individuals who lead human resource development activities within their organizations. However, the scope of this study in particular was exploratory and developmental in nature, beginning the dialogue of what that type of leadership would look like. Therefore, while the target population eventually would be HRD leadership in any organization, for this study the target population was corporations headquartered in the United States.

The accessible population was a group of top producing organizations, purposefully chosen with the idea that those organizations with notable revenue would



likely have investments in developing the human talent within their organization. The idea of purposeful sampling being to help ensure the cases selected would be “information rich with respect to the purposes of the study” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The purposeful sample consisted of the 100 top producing companies, as measured by revenues, headquartered in Minnesota. This list of 100 companies was published in a large local newspaper, The Star and Tribune.

*Subject Selection.* Once the 100 organizations had been identified, a local database of organizations and their key leaders provided the necessary contact information for the most senior Human Resource professionals in each organization. Given the large variation in organizational characteristics of the 100 companies, it was considered likely that roles, job structures, amount of power and influence, and beliefs about HRD and leadership would differ between the companies. The demographic questions were provided to allow for that type of analysis. Additionally, the 100 most senior HR executives consisted of 52 males and 48 females.

*Final Sample.* The response rate for the survey was 23%, twenty-three organizations responded to the questionnaire, two of the responses indicated that there was a company policy in place that prohibited responding to external questionnaires. Thus, there were 21 usable questionnaires. The demographics of the final 21 organizations are listed in the table below (refer to Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Demographics of Final Participant Organizations

<i>N</i> = 21	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	11	52 %
<i>Female</i>	10	48 %
Total No. Employees		
<i>Less than 1,000</i>	7	33 %
<i>1,000 - 9,999</i>	10	48 %
<i>10,000 - 19,000</i>	0	0 %
<i>20,000 +</i>	4	19 %
Total Org. Revenue		
<i>Less than \$100M</i>	3	14 %
<i>\$100M - \$499M</i>	6	29 %
<i>\$500M - \$999M</i>	4	19 %
<i>\$1 billion +</i>	8	38 %
Org. Years in Existence		
<i>5 years or less</i>	1	5 %
<i>6 - 19 years</i>	7	33 %
<i>20 years or more</i>	13	62 %

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

The data collection procedures consisted of several points of contact (as recommended by Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Initially, each of the Human Resource professionals at the 100 companies received a pre-survey mailing outlining the interest of the study and what they could expect to receive in the mail within a short period of time. Second, the researchers attempted to reach each participant by phone to answer any questions, explain that they could receive the results of the study prior to publication, and remind them the survey

was in the mail. Next, each participant received the survey package, including (1) the consent form, (2) the survey, (3) two preaddressed and stamped envelopes, one for the survey and one for the consent form, to maintain anonymity. Shortly after the deadline for the survey had passed a reminder mailing was sent thanking those who had participated in encouraging those who had not to send their responses in. Finally, the researchers sent out one final reminder to each participant. Contact information for the researchers was on all pieces of information (see Appendix A for all documentation used in the survey protocol).

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

The response rate of usable questionnaires for the study was 21%, creating immediate limitations to statistical analyses. A factor analysis had been planned to determine whether the items clustered around the five leadership items. However, since a limited response rate was obtained, a few of the planned analyses were abandoned. One such abandoned analysis was the factor analysis, which would have indicated whether or not the items clustered effectively around the 5 leadership areas. The other tests would have been ANOVA tests to determine differences based on the demographic differentiators, gender, number of employees, total organizational revenue, and years in existence. Addressing the first subquestion of RQ1, which sought to understand the current state of HRD leadership in organizations, descriptive statistics were used to draw conclusions. Addressing the second and third subquestions of RQ1, which sought to understand the participant's perspectives about the likely future of their roles and the future they desired for their roles, the data were subjected to paired t-tests. The researchers hoped to gain insight into (H<sub>1</sub>) how practitioners leading HRD in organizations see their roles differing in the future as compared to currently, and (H<sub>2</sub>) how they would like their roles to look ideally.

$$H_1: \mu_{\text{current}} - \mu_{\text{likely}} < 0$$

$$H_2: \mu_{\text{current}} - \mu_{\text{desired}} < 0$$

RQ2, which sought to understand whether scholar's core beliefs about HRD aligned with practitioner core beliefs, was also addressed using H<sub>2</sub>; the researchers equated significant results to indicate value placed on those items by the participants.

## SECTION FOUR: REPORT OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this section is to outline the data collected, the analyses performed, and the main findings from those analyses. This section is divided into three main parts: (1) analyses related to the instrument as a whole; (2) findings related specifically to the leadership aspect of this study split by leadership cluster; and (3) findings related specifically to the core beliefs aspect of this study split by theme of Ruona's (1999) study. Key findings are highlighted after each leadership cluster or core belief theme. Section Five further elaborates on these findings and draws conclusions and implications for HRD.

### *Broad Data Analysis Procedures & Findings*

Descriptive statistics were gathered on each of the 45 questions, and their accompanying subquestions concerning the *Current State*, *Likely Future State*, and *Desired Future State*. However, the most significant of the data analyses targeted the comparisons of the Current State to the Likely Future State, indicating the level of optimism/pessimism for the future of HRD leadership, and the comparison of the Current State to the Desired Future State, indicating the level of agreement/disagreement with core beliefs held by key scholars in the field of HRD. Analysis of purely the current state was subordinated to other analyses, as the response rate left unbalanced demographics of organizations to compare; the resulting sample varied widely on several indices of size, revenue, and tenure. Additionally, the data show substantial variation among the responses for the current state, making it clear, the current state of leadership in the sample organizations varied widely. Because of the smaller sample size, this study utilizes the data as exploratory measures for the topic of leading human resource development in organizations as well as fuel for future research.

### *Paired t-Tests*

Paired *t*-tests were used to determine where there was a significant difference between the means of the comparison pairs (*Current State vs. Likely Future State*; *Current State vs. Desired Future State*); *t*-tests were conducted for each question. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 summarize the *t*-test results for each question. Table 4.6 is grouped by the conceptual leadership clusters of *Strategic Thinking*, *Performance Improvement*, *Ethical Decision Making*, *Systems Thinking*, and *Innovation*. Table 4.7 is grouped by the themes from Ruona's (1999) study, *Role of HRD*, *Who HRD Serves*, *People*, *Work*, *Organizations*, *HRD Interventions*.

With an alpha set at 0.05, paired *t*-tests showed significant differences between both the comparison groups for almost every single question. The trend for the first comparison between the Current State and the Likely Future State, except for the reverse coded items, indicated an expectation that the descriptive statements would likely occur with more frequency in the future, even though they were occurring at a much lower levels currently. The trend for the second comparison between the Current State and the Desired Future State, except for the reverse coded items, indicated a substantial desire for the descriptive statements to occur in greater strength in the future, even though they

were occurring at much lower levels currently. Likely Future State responses were rarely rated as strongly (as close to 5) as the Desired Future State; however, they were still significantly different from the Current State ratings. These results provide support for both Hypothesis 1 and 2.

Two items did not show significant results for either pairing. Those two items were related to HRD having primary influence in determining its own role, direction, and interventions within the organization, rather than taking direction from executive and line management. The responses indicated that HRD is only somewhat descriptive of the current state of determining its own direction and responsibilities, would likely remain that way in the future, and should remain as such.

Five items did not show significant differences for the Current State compared to the Likely Future State or Desired Future State. Two of the items were negative, stating that HRD at times may have to compromise its integrity due to organizational pressures, and that HRD may not fulfill its commitments due to changing management priorities. Responses indicated that that organizational pressures do not often cause a compromise in integrity and that it is not likely to be much different in the future. Similarly, while changing management priorities occur at times causing some unfulfilled commitments, respondents believe that this is likely to be the case in the future as well. The third question stated that HRD works to build cooperation within the organization; the results indicated that this is occurring with some regularity currently, and is likely to remain just as high of a priority in the future. The fourth question concerned whether HRD was assessed by client/customer satisfaction. Both Current State and Likely Future State means indicated that this is currently descriptive of the sample organizations and is likely to remain just as descriptive in the future. The final question concerned whether HRD sought to develop primarily job-focused knowledge and skills or whether it focused on the whole individual; there was no significant difference between the different ratings of Current, Likely or Desired. The rest of the paired t-tests for the items showed significant results for both paired comparisons. In summary, the overall trend indicates a strong desire for these descriptors to appear with more regularity in the sample organizations in the future, and a significant level of optimism that such a future will be seen.

Analyses of the data indicated three main results:

- First, participating organizations varied on several indices of size, revenue, and tenure, as well as the assessment of the current state of HRD leadership. Less focus was placed on mining the data for nuances between how these organizations differed because of the limited sample size.
- Second, the significant results gained from comparing the current state of leadership and that of the likely future illustrates a sample of executive HRD leaders feeling optimistic about the possibility of achieving the organizational descriptors presented. In essence, the participants believed that in the future their organizations would come to resemble, in much greater strength, the descriptions put forth in this study.
- Finally, as almost all of the organizational descriptors were found to be highly important or desirable by the participants, there is significant congruence between what this sample of practitioners believed to be desirable and that of HRD scholars illuminated by Ruona's study (1999).

Results were also examined by leadership cluster as well as core belief themes, enabling more depth of examination with the data.


### ***By Leadership Cluster***

Breaking the items down into leadership conceptual clusters aided in uncovering some of the more subtle nuances among the items. Again, the conceptual clusters identified here have not been validated by a factor analysis; rather, they have been identified as comprehensive task-related competencies of leadership, from which the descriptors in the survey were developed. Future research would seek to bolster the instrument through factor analysis. By conceptual cluster, more conclusions can be made.


Grouping items into the leadership conceptual clusters was a process of literature search, analysis, and synthesis. Questions were developed around the conceptual clusters. While the number of respondents was not enough to run a factor analysis on the conceptual clusters, a few other analyses were performed to show some of the reliability and validity of the measures.

The items contained in each leadership conceptual cluster were aggregated into a total Mean and Standard Deviation for the cluster (Table 4.1). An internal consistency measure of Cronbach's Alpha was taken for each conceptual cluster for each of the three time states. Measured indicate fairly strong internal consistency ratings for most of the areas (Table. 4.2). Additionally, correlations were taken between each of the leadership clusters for each of the three time states. Results indicate strong correlations between the clusters, strongest in the Current State and somewhat weaker moving to the Likely Future State and Desired Future State (Tables, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5). In addition to paired *t*-tests that were run for individual leadership items (Table 4.6), paired *t*-tests for the aggregated mean scores for the clusters were run as well (Table 4.1).

For *Strategic Thinking*, the most notable issue was that participants consistently did not strongly agree with the idea that they should be playing a primary role in determining their function's role or direction within the company. These respondents seemed to believe that other executive and line management should be responsible for this leadership role. The item showing the most strength of change from ratings of the Current State to the Likely and Desired Future States was item 15 stating, 'HRD aggressively challenges the status quo in this organization.' While Current State response means were low, the Likely and Desired Future State means were dramatically above, indicating a strong desire and optimism to move in that direction. This is a strong indication that a leadership posture is highly desirable for HRD in the organizations responding to the survey. Challenging/questioning the status quo is clearly a key leadership role (Burns, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Ulrich, Zenger, & Smallwood, 1999). Additionally, the call for the HRD function to take a more proactive role in determining its own direction within the company and the call for HRD to be stronger change agents within the organization are two critical topics in the current literature surrounding development of human resources. The strong voices in the literature point to the need for HRD to move beyond being purely a "helping" administrative function to something more strategic and proactive, given the functions' expertise in the area of human systems (Swanson & Holton, 2001; Gilley & Maycunich, 1998).


 **Key Finding:** *If HRD is to assume a leadership role within the organization, it must to define its own agenda and be willing to challenge the status quo in the organization. The data indicates that this assertiveness is currently lacking.*

For *Performance Improvement*, the most notable issue was what appeared to be a current bias towards effecting change in the human systems of the organization over the business systems. Two items in this cluster addressed HRD's role in assessing work process effectiveness and alignment with organizational goals. Currently participants are not heavily involved in work process areas of the organization, and while participants rated some interest in pursuing a connection to these areas, the strength of the desire did not equal that of other human systems related areas. There is a debate in the field of HRD as to the scope of the profession (McLagan, 1989; Ruona, 1999). One of the arguments is that HRD needs to be integrally involved in understanding the business systems of the organization in order to be able to make changes at the human systems level, indeed even teaching other management functions to see the human side of the changes they are making to the business systems (Swanson, 1996; Swanson & Holton, 2001). Others argue that HRD inherently means to work with humans, whereby negating a need to get involved in the intricacies of work process design (Ruona, 1999). Other key results from this cluster was the acknowledgement of the need to take more responsibility for calculating the return from HRD interventions; and the need to assess this effectiveness through other methods than purely customer satisfaction (e.g., more of a focus on learning and performance as a result rather than participant perceptions). These realizations are supported in the scholarly literature as defined areas of need for the field as a whole (Swanson & Holton, 1999, 2001; Phillips, 1997). The focus on results is also consistent with leadership literature and, again, suggests a desired leadership posture for HRD. As Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood (1999) have stated, "Leaders do much more than demonstrate attributes. Effective leaders get results"(p. 29).


 **Key Finding:** *If HRD desires to be perceived as contributing to the overall performance of an organization, then HRD must understand how its interventions in both human systems and business systems impact the overall performance within the organization and provide credible measures of that impact. The respondents indicate that this focus in practice is currently not as strong as it should be.*

For *Ethical Decision Making*, there were a few issues that stood out. First, the greatest change from Current State to Likely and Desired Future State was the item that stated, 'HRD helps this organization foster a sense of purpose in its employees.' The Current State mean indicated that this is not a strong current descriptor of the participating organizations, however, participants both believe that it should be and will be a stronger element in the future. The item is a value-laden statement that arose as an issue in the work in Ruona (1999) about what HRD develops in the organization. Threads emerged indicating that some scholars firmly believe in the need to develop the whole individual, focusing on individual potential and purpose, while others believe that a stronger focus on job and role related knowledge, skills, and abilities was a more appropriate role for the function.

The second major issue from this cluster pointed to the reality of changing management priorities, at times leaving HRD unable to fulfill its commitments. This was one item where respondents showed little optimism for the situation to change in the future. This is unfortunate and should be an area of concern because two critical modal values on which true ethical leadership rests are responsibility and promise keeping (Ciulla, 1998). If HRD is to develop a credible leadership posture in organizations, it is essential that it stands by its commitments to the stakeholders in the organization and does not allow itself to be compromised in fulfilling those commitments.

 **Key Finding:** *The study indicates that HRD has the opportunity to model ethical leadership in the organization by fulfilling its commitments to all stakeholders. But this opportunity may be limited by findings that changing management priorities can impede HRD's responsibilities to its stakeholders.*

For *Systems Thinking*, the largest change between current and future states in this cluster dealt with the respondents' desire to assess the organization's change readiness prior to change initiatives with much more regularity. The change literature supports the fact that most change efforts fail because the organizational system is not adequately and comprehensively analyzed as to the implications of a major change initiative (Nadler, 1998; Newman & Nollen, 1998; Rummier & Brache, 1995). Nadler (1998) emphasizes the assessment of key characteristics of people in the organization, such as knowledge, skills, expectations, perceptions, and demographics as an essential part of diagnosing an organization's change readiness. This highlights a leadership opportunity for HRD in organizations that are planning major change initiatives. HRD is uniquely positioned to step forward and make the case for assessing the skills, knowledge, and capacity necessary to execute changes within the organizational system.

 **Key Finding:** *HRD is in a unique position to perform the role of continually analyzing the organization as a system and diagnosing its change readiness. The data indicate a desire on the part of the respondents to perform this role in the organizations they serve.*

For *Innovation*, respondents indicated that creating a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing is highly desirable, but only moderately descriptive of their organizations at this time. This suggests that although there is a strong awareness of the importance of organizational learning as promoted in current literature, it has yet to become a reality. Items related to risk taking, challenging the status quo, fostering innovation, and being a change agent within the organization, were all highly desirable but currently somewhat low in the participant organizations. However, while participants recognize the need for their function to challenge the status quo and be change agents within the organization, participants did not strongly agree with the statement that they should be making proactive decisions regarding HRD interventions; rather, they should be taking their direction from expressed line management needs. While the former is indicative of a desire to assume a more aggressive leadership posture in HRD, the latter suggests a more reactive posture. These seemingly contradictory responses may be the result of a lack of a clear idea of what HRD leadership and innovation should look like.

Further research and discussion is needed to develop the concept HRD leadership and what it should entail.


 **Key Finding:** *The survey results suggest the opportunity exists for HRD to assume a leadership role in challenging the status quo and fostering innovation within an organization.*



Table 4.1. Paired *t* tests for Aggregated Leadership Conceptual Clusters √

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired <i>t</i> test √√
<b>Strategic Thinking</b>			
<i>Current State</i>	3.00	0.50	-
<i>Likely Future State</i>	3.41	0.38	-5.65**
<i>Desired Future State</i>	3.80	0.32	-6.71**
<b>Performance Improvement</b>			
<i>Current State</i>	2.97	0.68	-
<i>Likely Future State</i>	3.51	0.53	-6.70**
<i>Desired Future State</i>	4.09	0.34	-8.38**
<b>Ethical Decision Making</b>			
<i>Current State</i>	3.10	0.68	-
<i>Likely Future State</i>	3.49	0.57	-5.16**
<i>Desired Future State</i>	4.03	0.45	-6.71**
<b>Systems Thinking</b>			
<i>Current State</i>	2.91	0.61	-
<i>Likely Future State</i>	3.40	0.46	-6.27**
<i>Desired Future State</i>	3.92	0.35	-7.84**
<b>Innovation</b>			
<i>Current State</i>	2.80	0.62	-
<i>Likely Future State</i>	3.33	0.54	-6.15**
<i>Desired Future State</i>	3.92	0.35	-9.22**

√ Aggregate scores for each conceptual cluster were created by generating a new variable consisting of the means of all of the items mapped to that cluster.

√√ Paired *t* Tests were run in two ways (1) between the Current and Likely differentiators, and also (2) between the Current and Desired differentiators. The results are displayed as such.

\*  $p \leq 0.05$

\*\*  $p \geq 0.01$

Table 4.2. Internal Consistency Measure – Cronbach’s Alphas of Leadership Conceptual Clusters\*

	Items	Current State	Likely Future State	Desired Future State
Strategic Thinking	N = 10	0.71	0.61	0.45
Performance Improvement	N = 15	0.92	0.88	0.73
Ethical Decision Making	N = 8	0.81	0.79	0.69
Systems Thinking	N = 12	0.84	0.75	0.64
Innovation	N = 8	0.82	0.79	0.43

\* Correlations were run from the aggregate mean scores for each conceptual cluster.

Table 4.3. Current State –  
Correlations Between Leadership Conceptual Clusters

<i>Current State</i>	Strategic Thinking	Performance Improvement	Ethical Decision Making	Systems Thinking	Innovation
Strategic Thinking	1.00				
Performance Improvement	0.86**	1.00			
Ethical Decision Making	0.77**	0.67**	1.00		
Systems Thinking	0.90**	0.97**	0.71**	1.00	
Innovation	0.81**	0.80**	0.63**	0.77**	1.00

\*  $p \leq 0.05$   
\*\*  $p \geq 0.01$

Table 4.4. Likely Future State –  
Correlations Between Leadership Conceptual Clusters

<i>Likely Future State</i>	Strategic Thinking	Performance Improvement	Ethical Decision Making	Systems Thinking	Innovation
Strategic Thinking	1.00				
Performance Improvement	0.86**	1.00			
Ethical Decision Making	0.72**	0.63**	1.00		
Systems Thinking	0.90**	0.95**	0.64**	1.00	
Innovation	0.82**	0.77**	0.51*	0.79**	1.00

\*  $p \leq 0.05$   
\*\*  $p \geq 0.01$

Table 4.5. Desired Future State –  
Correlations Between Leadership Conceptual Clusters

<i>Desired Future State</i>	Strategic Thinking	Performance Improvement	Ethical Decision Making	Systems Thinking	Innovation
Strategic Thinking	1.00				
Performance Improvement	0.53*	1.00			
Ethical Decision Making	0.52*	0.32*	1.00		
Systems Thinking	0.80**	0.84**	0.47*	1.00	
Innovation	0.75**	0.72**	0.33	0.82**	1.00

\*  $p \leq 0.05$   
\*\*  $p \geq 0.01$

Table 4.6. Detailed Report - Means, Standard Deviations and *t* Tests of Items Grouped By Leadership Conceptual Cluster

Item #	Descriptive Statement	Sub	N	M	SD	Paired <i>t</i> Tests
<b>Conceptual Cluster 1: Strategic Thinking</b>						
1.	HRD's role in the organization is primarily based on its own assessment of organizational needs versus having its role determined by management.	Current	21	2.52	1.17	-
		Likely	21	2.71	1.10	-1.00
		Desired	21	2.62	1.16	-0.31
2.	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>external</u> stakeholders.	Current	21	2.67	0.86	-
		Likely	21	3.19	0.75	-3.53**
		Desired	21	3.48	1.03	-3.60**
3.	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>internal</u> stakeholders.	Current	21	3.90	0.94	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.70	-2.09*
		Desired	21	4.57	0.60	-3.35**
6.	HRD is an active change agent in this organization.	Current	21	3.10	1.09	-
		Likely	21	3.62	0.80	-3.53**
		Desired	21	4.14	.57	-5.97**
7.	HRD communicates this organization's goals in all of the work that it does.	Current	21	3.33	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.95	0.67	-3.83**
		Desired	21	4.57	0.51	-5.70**
10.	HRD solicits input from <u>internal</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	3.90	0.70	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.54	-2.65*
		Desired	21	4.52	0.51	-3.83**
11.	HRD solicits input from <u>external</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	2.05	1.02	-
		Likely	21	2.57	0.98	-4.69**
		Desired	21	3.10	0.94	-6.49**
15.	HRD aggressively challenges the status quo in this organization.	Current	21	2.48	0.93	-
		Likely	21	3.29	0.78	-6.17**
		Desired	21	4.00	0.71	-9.32**
16.	HRD's interventions are primarily based on its own assessment of this organization's needs as opposed to basing the interventions primarily on the expressed needs of individual managers.	Current	21	2.67	0.73	-
		Likely	21	2.81	0.68	-1.14
		Desired	21	2.76	1.00	-0.49
40.	HRD demonstrates a long-term perspective in the work that it does in this organization.	Current	21	3.33	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.52	0.93	-2.17*
		Desired	21	4.29	0.56	-4.26**
<b>Conceptual Cluster 2: Performance Improvement</b>						
4.	Risk taking is promoted by HRD in the work that it does.	Current	21	2.71	0.90	-
		Likely	21	3.14	0.91	-3.87**
		Desired	21	3.67	1.02	-4.48**
7.	HRD communicates this organization's goals in all of the work that it does.	Current	21	3.33	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.95	0.67	-3.83**
		Desired	21	4.57	0.51	-5.70**
8.	Assessing this organization's change readiness prior to change initiatives is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.62	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.38	0.80	-4.20**
		Desired	21	4.33	0.73	-6.61**
9.	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to evaluate the efficiency of work processes.	Current	21	2.33	1.11	-
		Likely	21	3.14	0.85	-4.00**
		Desired	21	3.86	0.73	-6.22**
10.	HRD solicits input from <u>internal</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	3.90	0.70	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.54	-2.65*
		Desired	21	4.52	0.51	-3.83**
11.	HRD solicits input from <u>external</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	2.05	1.02	-
		Likely	21	2.57	0.98	-4.69**
		Desired	21	3.10	0.94	-6.49**
13.	The most compelling argument with management for investment in HRD initiatives is to project an improvement in performance (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current	21	3.48	0.93	-
		Likely	21	3.95	0.80	-3.63**
		Desired	21	4.19	0.81	-5.09**

<i>Item #</i>	<i>Descriptive Statement</i>	<i>Sub</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Paired t Tests</i>
18.	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to ensure work processes are designed to support the goals of this organization.	Current	21	2.52	1.03	-
		Likely	21	2.90	0.89	-3.51**
		Desired	21	3.57	0.81	-5.55**
20.	HRD works to build cooperation within this organization.	Current	21	3.86	0.65	-
		Likely	21	4.00	0.55	-1.83
		Desired	21	4.24	0.54	-2.96**
21.	HRD ensures that all of its initiatives support the goals of this organization.	Current	21	3.67	0.91	-
		Likely	21	4.00	0.77	-3.16**
		Desired	21	4.57	0.60	-4.39**
33.	HRD's effectiveness is assessed by organizational performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current	21	2.71	0.96	-
		Likely	21	3.57	0.75	-6.85**
		Desired	21	4.19	0.68	-7.29**
37.	HRD monitors performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality) at the individual, team or the organizational levels.	Current	21	2.29	1.19	-
		Likely	21	3.00	1.26	-4.56**
		Desired	21	3.48	1.12	-5.29**
40.	HRD demonstrates a long-term perspective in the work that it does in this organization.	Current	21	3.33	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.52	0.93	-2.17*
		Desired	21	4.29	0.56	-4.26**
41.	Helping this organization facilitate the development of future leadership talent is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	3.67	1.11	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.83	-3.87**
		Desired	21	4.86	0.36	-4.86**
44.	HRD calculates return on investment metrics following its initiatives in this organization.	Current	21	2.00	0.89	-
		Likely	20	3.05	0.94	-6.19**
		Desired	20	3.95	0.76	-9.23**
<b>Conceptual Cluster 3: Ethical Decision Making</b>						
5.	HRD participates in the shaping of this organization's core values.	Current	21	3.57	1.12	-
		Likely	21	4.00	0.77	-2.91**
		Desired	21	4.33	0.58	-3.34**
17.	Organizational pressures and demands sometimes require HRD to compromise its integrity.	Current	21	1.71	1.01	-
		Likely	21	1.57	0.81	1.83
		Desired	21	1.38	0.74	2.32*
22.	HRD, at times, cannot fulfill its commitments to this organization due to changing management priorities.	Current	21	2.90	1.14	-
		Likely	21	2.67	1.02	2.02
		Desired	21	1.86	0.73	4.93**
23.	HRD helps this organization to create a culture that promotes diversity.	Current	21	3.00	1.00	-
		Likely	20	3.60	0.99	-3.58**
		Desired	20	4.20	0.95	-5.21**
25.	HRD helps this organization foster a sense of purpose in its employees.	Current	21	2.81	0.93	-
		Likely	21	3.29	0.72	-4.26**
		Desired	21	4.05	0.80	-6.01**
35.	HRD encourages this organization to play a critical role in making society a better place.	Current	21	2.29	1.06	-
		Likely	21	2.62	1.12	-3.16**
		Desired	21	3.24	1.04	-4.74**
39.	HRD promotes work/life balance in the work that it does in the organization.	Current	21	2.86	0.91	-
		Likely	21	3.24	0.83	-3.51**
		Desired	21	3.67	0.66	-4.00**
42.	HRD publicly recognizes the achievements of people throughout this organization.	Current	21	2.90	1.04	-
		Likely	21	3.43	0.93	-3.53**
		Desired	21	4.00	0.77	-4.42**
<b>Conceptual Cluster 4: Systems Thinking</b>						
1.	HRD's role in the organization is primarily based on its own assessment of organizational needs versus having its role determined by management.	Current	21	2.52	1.17	-
		Likely	21	2.71	1.10	-1.00
		Desired	21	2.62	1.16	-0.31
2.	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>external</u> stakeholders.	Current	21	2.67	0.86	-
		Likely	21	3.19	0.75	-3.53**
		Desired	21	3.48	1.03	-3.60**
3.	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>internal</u> stakeholders.	Current	21	3.90	0.94	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.70	-2.09*
		Desired	21	4.57	0.60	-3.35**

Item #	Descriptive Statement	Sub	N	M	SD	Paired t Tests
7.	HRD communicates this organization's goals in all of the work that it does.	Current	21	3.33	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.95	0.67	-3.83**
		Desired	21	4.57	0.51	-5.70**
8.	Assessing this organization's change readiness prior to change initiatives is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.62	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.38	0.80	-4.20**
		Desired	21	4.33	0.73	-6.61**
9.	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to evaluate the efficiency of work processes.	Current	21	2.33	1.11	-
		Likely	21	3.14	0.85	-4.00**
		Desired	21	3.86	0.73	-6.22**
10.	HRD solicits input from <u>internal</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	3.90	0.70	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.54	-2.65*
		Desired	21	4.52	0.51	-3.83**
11.	HRD solicits input from <u>external</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	2.05	1.02	-
		Likely	21	2.57	0.98	-4.69**
		Desired	21	3.10	0.94	-6.49**
18.	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to ensure work processes are designed to support the goals of this organization.	Current	21	2.52	1.03	-
		Likely	21	2.90	0.89	-3.51**
		Desired	21	3.57	0.81	-5.55**
21.	HRD ensures that all of its initiatives support the goals of this organization.	Current	21	3.67	0.91	-
		Likely	21	4.00	0.77	-3.16**
		Desired	21	4.57	0.60	-4.39**
37.	HRD monitors performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality) at the individual, team or the organizational levels.	Current	21	2.29	1.19	-
		Likely	21	3.00	1.26	-4.56**
		Desired	21	3.48	1.12	-5.29**
45.	HRD always considers the indirect impact of its initiatives on other organizational work groups and systems that are not the direct targets of those initiatives.	Current	21	3.10	1.09	-
		Likely	20	3.50	1.15	-2.67*
		Desired	20	4.35	0.49	-4.86**
<b>Conceptual Cluster 5: Innovation</b>						
4.	Risk taking is promoted by HRD in the work that it does.	Current	21	2.71	0.90	-
		Likely	21	3.14	0.91	-3.87**
		Desired	21	3.67	1.02	-4.48**
6.	HRD is an active change agent in this organization.	Current	21	3.10	1.09	-
		Likely	21	3.62	0.80	-3.53**
		Desired	21	4.14	.57	-5.97**
15.	HRD aggressively challenges the status quo in this organization.	Current	21	2.48	0.93	-
		Likely	21	3.29	0.78	-6.17**
		Desired	21	4.00	0.71	-9.32**
16.	HRD's interventions are primarily based on its own assessment of this organization's needs as opposed to basing the interventions primarily on the expressed needs of individual managers.	Current	21	2.67	0.73	-
		Likely	21	2.81	0.68	-1.14
		Desired	21	2.76	1.00	-0.49
28.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes knowledge sharing is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.71	1.06	-
		Likely	21	3.33	1.02	-4.81**
		Desired	21	4.14	0.79	-6.69**
29.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes innovation is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.71	0.78	-
		Likely	21	3.33	0.86	-4.81**
		Desired	21	4.05	0.80	-6.69**
30.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes the development of critical thinking skills is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.67	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.38	0.80	-4.56**
		Desired	21	4.14	0.65	-6.57**
31.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes continuous learning is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	3.38	0.97	-
		Likely	21	3.76	0.83	-3.51**
		Desired	21	4.43	0.60	-6.49**

Note: Paired t Tests were run in two ways (1) between the Current and Likely differentiators, and also (2) between the Current and Desired differentiators. The results are displayed as such.


\*  $p \leq 0.05$  \*\*  $p \geq 0.01$

### ***By Core Belief Cluster***

The concepts put forth in this research (core beliefs about HRD work in organizations and leading that work), are inextricably linked. Thus, much of the previous discussion concerning leadership of HRD overlaps with this discussion of core beliefs. However, since it was not the intent of this study to validate the Ruona themes, aggregate cluster scores, internal consistency measures, or correlations were not run on these clusters. In sum, conclusions are drawn purely on the fact that questions were designed around the themes set forth by Ruona. The results of paired *t*-tests on the core belief items can be seen in Table 4.7.


For *The Role of HRD* in Ruona's (1999) study, the theme of HRD as a "helping profession" emerged as the strongest theme from the scholars. In essence, HRD is seen to assist others in improving organizational situations. While there was some variation on what should be developed and how, some sub-themes of being a helping profession emerged, including: learning and development, developing people, and developing systems.

Data from this study suggested that the practitioners viewed themselves as "helpers" as well, taking their role direction primarily from management needs. Additionally, there was agreement that developing people and systems were critical. These included developing future leadership talent, functional expertise, and developing a culture that promotes knowledge sharing, innovation, critical thinking and continuous learning.

 **Key Finding:** *HRD has traditionally seen itself as a helping profession and participants in this study agreed with that assessment. The challenge for HRD, based on findings from this research study, is developing a disposition of self-determination to decide and recommend to management what areas should be addressed in the organization.*


*Who HRD Serves* was one of the most provocative themes that emerged from Ruona's (1999) interviews. In essence, there was immense variability among the scholars as to who HRD's primary client should be. Some thought that HRD served the individual: "The HRD profession would be excellent if it saw its role as being responsible to and for individual workers rather than management" (p. 65) Others thought that HRD serves the organization: "We would be excellent if we were seen as furthering the mission of the organizations or entities that sponsor our efforts" (p. 71); multiple stakeholders, "The profession of HRD would be excellent if it recognized the importance of multiple stakeholders...they serve a wider community" (p. 79); or society as a whole: "HRD would be excellent if it was connected more to the broader sense of workforce development" (p. 81).

Within this study, such variability was not seen. While attempts were made to differentiate concepts in questionnaire items, participants found each to be very desirable. Thus, either the participants believe HRD should serve multiple stakeholders, or the questions were unable to make a clear differentiation between alternative possible stakeholders.


 **Key Finding:** Responses to the survey indicate that HRD sees its mission as serving multiple stakeholders at all levels of the organization.

For the theme of *People*, Ruona's (1999) study uncovered two perspectives among scholars concerning the value of people. One theme focused on human knowledge is a vital resource to organizations today. The second theme focused on, employees not being used as resources, rather, they are worthy in and of themselves.


In this study, while there was not significant results finding that HRD should focus on developing the whole individual over exclusively focusing on job skills, participants did agree that it would be desirable to optimize each individual's human potential. However, participants also stated that employees possessed economic value for the organization and it was extremely desirable to continue to focus on that attribute for their organizations.

 **Key Finding:** The survey data suggests that a key role for HRD is to optimize human potential within the organization. This investment in the development of human resources represents a value for individuals as well as an economic value for organizations.

For the theme of *Work*, Ruona's (1999) study showed that some believed it was the role of HRD to foster a sense of purpose in employees, "we have not helped people truly understand that they could have meaning in their work" (p. 94). From the participant responses in this study, this group agrees with such a statement. Participants see fostering a sense of purpose in their employees as one of their tasks.

 **Key Finding:** The survey data indicate that HRD believes that it is important to foster a sense of purpose in employees and that the employees should perceive their work in the organization as meaningful.

For the theme of *Organizations*, one sub theme that arose in Ruona's (1999) study was that organizations should treat people well. In this study, participants desired to aid their organizations in making society a better place, promoting work/life balance, and publicly recognizing the achievements of their people.

 **Key Finding:** Respondents indicate an active concern for the well-being of employees and society in general is a strong value within the HRD practice.

For *HRD Interventions*, Ruona's (1999) findings suggested taking a systems view, being proactive, thinking long-term, and having a global lens. Considerable agreement existed between these beliefs and those of the participants of this study, with one exception. The question, "HRD's interventions are primarily based on its own assessment of this organization's needs as opposed to basing the interventions primarily on the expressed needs of individual managers" Yielded results that suggest participants are more reactive than proactive to management requests. Participants rated this question lower on all dimensions, meaning it was not a current, likely or desirable organizational

attribute. As discussed in the leadership section, either this points to a lack of strategic action on the part of HRD functions or a different reading of the question.


 **Key Finding:** *Interventions which are strategic in nature were highly valued by participants; however, the results indicate that the HRD function is not likely to be the one deciding and recommending to management what areas should be addressed in the organization.*



Table 4.7. Detailed Report - Means, Standard Deviations and *t* Tests of Items Grouped By HRD Core Belief Themes

Item #	Descriptive Statement	Sub	N	M	SD	Paired <i>t</i> Tests
<i>The Role of HRD</i>						
1.	HRD's role in the organization is primarily based on its own assessment of organizational needs versus having its role determined by management.	Current	21	2.52	1.17	-
		Likely	21	2.71	1.10	-1.00
		Desired	21	2.62	1.16	-0.31
8.	Assessing this organization's change readiness prior to change initiatives is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.62	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.38	0.80	-4.20**
		Desired	21	4.33	0.73	-6.61**
9.	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to evaluate the efficiency of work processes.	Current	21	2.33	1.11	-
		Likely	21	3.14	0.85	-4.00**
		Desired	21	3.86	0.73	-6.22**
18.	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to ensure work processes are designed to support the goals of this organization.	Current	21	2.52	1.03	-
		Likely	21	2.90	0.89	-3.51**
		Desired	21	3.57	0.81	-5.55**
24.	Developing deep functional expertise in this organization is the responsibility of HRD.	Current	21	2.43	0.93	-
		Likely	21	2.81	0.81	-3.51**
		Desired	21	3.33	1.06	-4.66**
27.	HRD focuses primarily on the development of job-focused knowledge/skills for individuals versus focusing on development of the whole individual.	Current	20	3.15	1.31	-
		Likely	20	3.05	1.28	0.81
		Desired	20	2.85	1.31	1.55
28.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes knowledge sharing is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.71	1.06	-
		Likely	21	3.33	1.02	-4.81**
		Desired	21	4.14	0.79	-6.69**
29.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes innovation is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.71	0.78	-
		Likely	21	3.33	0.86	-4.81**
		Desired	21	4.05	0.80	-6.69**
30.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes the development of critical thinking skills is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	2.67	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.38	0.80	-4.56**
		Desired	21	4.14	0.65	-6.57**
31.	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes continuous learning is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	3.38	0.97	-
		Likely	21	3.76	0.83	-3.51**
		Desired	21	4.43	0.60	-6.49**
33.	HRD's effectiveness is assessed by organizational performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current	21	2.71	0.96	-
		Likely	21	3.57	0.75	-6.85**
		Desired	21	4.19	0.68	-7.29**
34.	In this organization, HRD has the responsibility to help each individual to optimize his or her own human potential.	Current	21	2.62	0.97	-
		Likely	21	3.24	0.62	-3.83**
		Desired	21	3.81	0.75	-5.06**
37.	HRD monitors performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality) at the individual, team or the organizational levels.	Current	21	2.29	1.19	-
		Likely	21	3.00	1.26	-4.56**
		Desired	21	3.48	1.12	-5.29**
38.	HRD measures the outcome of learning at the individual, team or the organizational level, following its initiatives.	Current	20	2.55	1.00	-
		Likely	20	3.30	1.08	-5.25**
		Desired	20	4.00	0.79	-7.31**
41.	Helping this organization facilitate the development of future leadership talent is a key role for HRD.	Current	21	3.67	1.11	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.83	-3.87**
		Desired	21	4.86	0.36	-4.86**
<i>Who HRD Serves</i>						
7.	HRD communicates this organization's goals in all of the work that it does.	Current	21	3.33	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.95	0.67	-3.83**
		Desired	21	4.57	0.51	-5.70**
12.	HRD shares in the responsibility for achieving organizational performance goals (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current	21	2.90	0.94	-
		Likely	21	3.62	0.92	-4.56**
		Desired	21	4.05	0.67	-6.61**
13.	The most compelling argument with management for investment in HRD initiatives is to project an improvement in performance (e.g., financial,	Current	21	3.48	0.93	-
		Likely	21	3.95	0.80	-3.63**
		Desired	21	4.19	0.81	-5.09**

<i>Item #</i>	<i>Descriptive Statement</i>	<i>Sub</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Paired t Tests</i>
	productivity, and quality).					
14.	The most compelling argument with management for investment in HRD initiatives is to demonstrate how they support employee development.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	3.10 3.52 3.95	0.89 0.68 0.67	- -3.29** -4.32**
17.	Organizational pressures and demands sometimes require HRD to compromise its integrity.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	1.71 1.57 1.38	1.01 0.81 0.74	- 1.83 2.32*
18.	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to ensure work processes are designed to support the goals of this organization.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	2.52 2.90 3.57	1.03 0.89 0.81	- -3.51** -5.55**
19.	The primary method used in this organization to persuade top management to invest in HRD initiatives is to communicate the impact on employees.	Current Likely Desired	20 20 20	2.70 2.85 3.15	0.66 0.67 0.99	- -1.83 -2.65*
21.	HRD ensures that all of its initiatives support the goals of this organization.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	3.67 4.00 4.57	0.91 0.77 0.60	- -3.16** -4.39**
22.	HRD, at times, cannot fulfill its commitments to this organization due to changing management priorities.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	2.90 2.67 1.86	1.14 1.02 0.73	- 2.02 4.93**
26.	The primary competitive advantage of this organization is gained through our people.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	3.81 4.14 4.57	0.98 0.73 0.60	- -2.65* -4.54**
27.	HRD focuses primarily on the development of job-focused knowledge/skills for individuals versus focusing on development of the whole individual.	Current Likely Desired	20 20 20	3.15 3.05 2.85	1.31 1.28 1.31	- 0.81 1.55
32.	HRD's effectiveness is assessed by client/customer satisfaction.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	3.19 3.33 3.76	0.81 0.86 0.77	- -1.14 -2.68*
33.	HRD's effectiveness is assessed by organizational performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	2.71 3.57 4.19	0.96 0.75 0.68	- -6.85** -7.29**
34.	In this organization, HRD has the responsibility to help each individual to optimize his or her own human potential.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	2.62 3.24 3.81	0.97 0.62 0.75	- -3.83** -5.06**
35.	HRD encourages this organization to play a critical role in making society a better place.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	2.29 2.62 3.24	1.06 1.12 1.04	- -3.16** -4.74**
41.	Helping this organization facilitate the development of future leadership talent is a key role for HRD.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	3.67 4.24 4.86	1.11 0.83 0.36	- -3.87** -4.86**
<i>People</i>						
27.	HRD focuses primarily on the development of job-focused knowledge/skills for individuals versus focusing on development of the whole individual.	Current Likely Desired	20 20 20	3.15 3.05 2.85	1.31 1.28 1.31	- 0.81 1.55
34.	In this organization, HRD has the responsibility to help each individual to optimize his or her own human potential.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	2.62 3.24 3.81	0.97 0.62 0.75	- -3.83** -5.06**
36.	In this organization it is believed that the people possess skills, experience, and knowledge, and therefore, have economic value to organizations.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	3.81 4.00 4.38	0.93 0.89 0.59	- -2.17* -3.23**
<i>Work</i>						
25.	HRD helps this organization foster a sense of purpose in its employees.	Current Likely Desired	21 21 21	2.81 3.29 4.05	0.93 0.72 0.80	- -4.26** -6.01**
<i>Organizations</i>						
25.	HRD helps this organization foster a sense of purpose in its employees.	Current Likely	21 21	2.81 3.29	0.93 0.72	- -4.26**

Item #	Descriptive Statement	Sub	N	M	SD	Paired t Tests
		Desired	21	4.05	0.80	-6.01**
35.	HRD encourages this organization to play a critical role in making society a better place.	Current	21	2.29	1.06	-
		Likely	21	2.62	1.12	-3.16**
		Desired	21	3.24	1.04	-4.74**
39.	HRD promotes work/life balance in the work that it does in the organization.	Current	21	2.86	0.91	-
		Likely	21	3.24	0.83	-3.51**
		Desired	21	3.67	0.66	-4.00**
42.	HRD publicly recognizes the achievements of people throughout this organization.	Current	21	2.90	1.04	-
		Likely	21	3.43	0.93	-3.53**
		Desired	21	4.00	0.77	-4.42**
<i>HRD Interventions</i>						
2.	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>external</u> stakeholders.	Current	21	2.67	0.86	-
		Likely	21	3.19	0.75	-3.53**
		Desired	21	3.48	1.03	-3.60**
3.	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>internal</u> stakeholders.	Current	21	3.90	0.94	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.70	-2.09*
		Desired	21	4.57	0.60	-3.35**
4.	Risk taking is promoted by HRD in the work that it does.	Current	21	2.71	0.90	-
		Likely	21	3.14	0.91	-3.87**
		Desired	21	3.67	1.02	-4.48**
5.	HRD participates in the shaping of this organization's core values.	Current	21	3.57	1.12	-
		Likely	21	4.00	0.77	-2.91**
		Desired	21	4.33	0.58	-3.34**
6.	HRD is an active change agent in this organization.	Current	21	3.10	1.09	-
		Likely	21	3.62	0.80	-3.53**
		Desired	21	4.14	.57	-5.97**
10.	HRD solicits input from <u>internal</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	3.90	0.70	-
		Likely	21	4.24	0.54	-2.65*
		Desired	21	4.52	0.51	-3.83**
11.	HRD solicits input from <u>external</u> clients/customers in designing its HRD programs.	Current	21	2.05	1.02	-
		Likely	21	2.57	0.98	-4.69**
		Desired	21	3.10	0.94	-6.49**
15.	HRD aggressively challenges the status quo in this organization.	Current	21	2.48	0.93	-
		Likely	21	3.29	0.78	-6.17**
		Desired	21	4.00	0.71	-9.32**
16.	HRD's interventions are primarily based on its own assessment of this organization's needs as opposed to basing the interventions primarily on the expressed needs of individual managers.	Current	21	2.67	0.73	-
		Likely	21	2.81	0.68	-1.14
		Desired	21	2.76	1.00	-0.49
23.	HRD helps this organization to create a culture that promotes diversity.	Current	21	3.00	1.00	-
		Likely	20	3.60	0.99	-3.58**
		Desired	20	4.20	0.95	-5.21**
40.	HRD demonstrates a long-term perspective in the work that it does in this organization.	Current	21	3.33	1.02	-
		Likely	21	3.52	0.93	-2.17*
		Desired	21	4.29	0.56	-4.26**
43.	HRD conducts post-implementation reviews of its organizational initiatives.	Current	21	2.52	0.81	-
		Likely	21	3.33	0.80	-6.17**
		Desired	21	4.14	0.65	-8.06**
44.	HRD calculates return on investment metrics following its initiatives in this organization.	Current	21	2.00	0.89	-
		Likely	20	3.05	0.94	-6.19**
		Desired	20	3.95	0.76	-9.23**
45.	HRD always considers the indirect impact of its initiatives on other organizational work groups and systems that are not the direct targets of those initiatives.	Current	21	3.10	1.09	-
		Likely	20	3.50	1.15	-2.67*
		Desired	20	4.35	0.49	-4.86**

Note: Paired t Tests were run in two ways (1) between the Current and Likely differentiators, and also (2) between the Current and Desired differentiators. The results are displayed as such.

\*  $p \leq 0.05$  \*\*  $p \geq 0.01$

## SECTION FIVE: DISCUSSION

One major goal of this study was to make the case for why understanding the practitioner perspective on leading HRD in their organizations is so important. Additionally, we wanted to begin to put together the concepts of core beliefs of HRD and concepts of leadership into one research instrument. One of the major contributions of this study can be seen to be the conceptual development of core beliefs and HRD leadership. Significant and deep conceptual information was collected from subject matter experts and pilot participants regarding the viability of the concepts presented in the instrument. Therefore, while additional research is needed to validate the instrument created in the process, the major contribution here is the conceptual development of the topics of leadership of HRD within organizations.

This section takes the findings reported in Section Four and discusses broader conclusions and implications related to the findings. This section is divided into five main parts: (1) broad conclusions and implications for leadership in the development of human resources; (2) results of this study concerning core beliefs are contrasted with those found by Ruona (1999); (3) limitations of this research; (4) directions for future research; and (5) overall conclusions and implications for HRD.

### *Leadership in the Development of Human Resources*

As previously stated, the authors believe that strong leadership in HRD practice is essential if HRD is to continue to grow and expand its role in organizations. The expanded role envisioned includes organizational development and strategic functions. Future contributions of these roles include shaping strategy as well as enabling organizations to take advantage of emergent business strategies. In this respect, the results summarized in Table 5.1 show an encouraging and somewhat uniform pattern among the five competencies. First, the means of the five competencies within the “Current State” category all reflect a recognition that these competencies exist within the organizations, although only moderately on average. What is perhaps most encouraging is the similarly positive trends shown in the means of all five competencies in the “Likely Future State” and the “Desired Future State” categories. The former suggests that there is some optimism about these competencies being further developed and improved in the future. The latter suggests that these competencies are highly desirable among the respondents.

It is important to state that the strong desirability of these competencies in HRD practice in and of themselves do not suggest an explicit desire for HRD to assume a leadership role in organizations. Rather, these findings indicate that a foundation and a potential exists for HRD leadership to continue to develop in the future. As discussed earlier, organizations have a greater need for leadership at all levels. The fact that this great need for leadership coincides with the ever increasing need for the “development and/or unleashing of human expertise” within organizations provides HRD practitioners with the opportunity to emerge as leaders in shaping strategy and improving organizational performance. The question that remains unanswered by this study is to what extent interpersonal competencies (e.g., empathy, insight, and awareness) are

required for this leadership to exist within HRD practice. What is clearly demonstrated by the data is the optimism and desire exists for an expanded role for HRD in the future.

Table 5.1. Perceptions of HRD Leadership: Now and for the Future\*

	Current State (1-5)	Likely Future State (1-5)	Desired Future State (1-5)
Strategic Thinking	3.00	3.41	3.80
Performance Improvement	2.97	3.51	4.09
Ethical Decision Making	3.10	3.49	4.03
Systems Thinking	2.91	3.40	3.92
Innovation	2.80	3.33	3.92

\* Paired *t* tests indicate the differences between means within each conceptual cluster are significant at a 0.01 level.

### ***Core Beliefs about Developing Human Resources***

This study revealed marked similarity between the core beliefs communicated by some of the scholars in Ruona's (1999) study and the sample of practitioners in this study. In Ruona's study there were major themes that emerged, but scholars often had differing viewpoints within those themes. The practitioner sample in this study was clearly aligned with some of the scholars in Ruona's study but not others. Therefore, three relationships of agreement or disagreement were possible. One, the scholar and practitioner groups could have been aligned in their fundamental beliefs about HRD. Two, due to the variability in the beliefs of scholars found in Ruona's study, there could have been topics in which the practitioners were aligned with only some of the scholars. Three, there could have been topics on which the practitioners and scholars did not agree at all; this, however, did not occur.

An example of an issue the scholars and practitioners were in agreement on was seeing HRD in a fundamental helping role in the organization, working to improve continuous learning, expertise, and leadership (Table 5.2.). A topic on which practitioners were aligned with only some of the scholars was whether or not HRD should include improvement of systems and work processes in its scope. Some scholars indicated that HRD should not deal at that level in the organization, one scholar (Ruona, 1999) noted:

For many people their care at least has been human and that basically we develop humans. And so when you take the full performance improvement perspective and start talking about processes and such, then for many you have violated that boundary of the core—you know, human development. (p. 63)

However, practitioners in this sample were very clear that dealing with the improvement of work processes was definitely a core role for HRD (Table 5.2.).

Table 5.2. Scholar & Practitioner Core Beliefs of Developing Human Resources in Organizations: Comparative Perspectives from Two Studies

<b>HRD Scholars &amp; Practitioners</b>			
		Ruona (1999)	Henderson & Tuttle (2003)
		<i>Points of Agreement</i>	<i>Points of Disagreement</i>
<i>The Role of HRD</i>	HRD as playing a helping role within the organization, including ensuring continuous learning, improving expertise, and leadership; HRD should also be assessed for its success in this role by measuring performance and learning.		Some scholars hesitated to include improvement of systems, or work processes in the scope of HRD. Practitioners in this study indicated strongly that it was an important role.
<i>Who HRD Serves</i>	HRD can serve multiple stakeholders within the organization (the employees, the organization, and the community or society at large)		Some scholars thought that the primary responsibility should be to the organization. These items did not show practitioners making that distinction.
<i>People</i>	A key role for HRD is to optimize human potential within the organization. Individuals are inherently valuable, but also provide economic value to the organization and therefore both should be optimized.		Some scholars indicated the primary focus should be on development of job-related skills and knowledge. These practitioners disagreed with that assumption.
<i>Work</i>	A role for HRD is to work to foster a sense of purpose in employees.		Not all scholars believed fostering purpose was part of HRD's role, while these practitioners thought it was.
<i>Organizations</i>	HRD should actively show concern for the well being of employees, by recognizing achievements and promoting balance, and society by encouraging organizational participation.		No points of disagreement here.
<i>HRD Interventions</i>	HRD interventions should take a long-term view, utilize an understanding of systems, including the need to hear stakeholders, and have a global lens.		Most scholars studied indicated that HRD interventions should also be proactive and challenge the status quo where necessary, assessing and acting on the needs of the organization. Most of the participants of this study preferred to take direction from management.

The most notable area of agreement/disagreement in core beliefs between scholars and practitioners is whether or not HRD should be more self-directed within the organization. This finding has dramatic implications for HRD leadership within organizations because it challenges whether HRD should be working to define its own role and decide what necessary interventions within the organization are needed. One scholar in Ruona's study noted that HRD requires a deep belief in human beings and that belief requires courage in the HRD professional, "At that point it takes an enormous

amount of courage...if that's our job...to talk back to the system, the organization, about it's behavior, it's system, it's logic, it's inadequacies. So that's what gives us courage" (p. 108). Many of the scholars validated this deep belief and need for advocacy for the humans within the organization, pointing to the need for courage as well as the ability to aid in problem defining, not just solving the problems handed down by the organization.

However, the practitioners within this study rejected the idea that HRD should be proactive and courageous in defining itself, its role, and its interventions within the organization. It is possible that the practitioners have the view of one of the scholars Ruona interviewed:

A helper is one who looks at your problems and assists you in solving the problems the way you're defining them. The way you can see them, helps you define the problem. In a non-helping relationship, you become directive. You decide what the person's qualities are. You specify how they're to be corrected in advance and then you impose that on the other person. (p. 108)

Without further data collection, one cannot be sure of what is compelling the practitioners from assuming a stronger leadership posture. However, both the leadership and HRD literature examined for this study validate the scholar perspective calling for courage. This literature calls for HRD practitioners to have the courage and leadership posture necessary to proactively drive the development of human resources within the organization, at times moving out ahead of management to assess and determine performance and learning needs.

### ***Limitations of Current Research***

Delimitations of the study included: 1) the decision to contact only corporations in the sample, rather than non-profit, privately held, government or other such organizations where leadership in developing the human resources of the organization are important; and 2) the study chose a comprehensive coverage of issues in the survey, resulting in a lengthy survey. The researchers chose the breadth of a quantitative instrument and process over the depth of a more qualitative method for this research.

There are three general limitations of this research. First, the current research is restricted by the subject sample. All participant organizations were taken from a published list of Minnesota-headquartered companies. The generalizability to other organizations headquartered in other states or countries is uncertain. An additional limitation is that all of the data were collected from self-reports. The accuracy of those perceptions regarding the current state of leadership and its likely state in the future may be based more on perception than on fact for the responding organizations. Finally, a significant limitation in the study that diminished the analytic possibilities for the data was the low response rate. The length of the survey, the lack of spare time from executive level participants, or the clarity of the survey may all have played a factor in reducing the response rate.

### ***Directions for Future Research***

Several avenues for future research were identified. First, this study focused specifically on the *task* components of leadership identified from the literature. Future research should attempt to tackle not only the *task* components but also the *relationship* components of leadership, which was beyond the scope of this study. Such a study would paint a much more complete picture of the state of HRD leadership in organizations.

Second, this study gathered only one data point in assessing the current and future state of HRD leadership in organizations. Future studies could seek to better triangulate responses by seeking out data from other members of the HRD team in the same organizations. As this study asks leaders to report on their own effectiveness at leading the development of human resources within their organization and their optimism for the future, other studies should attempt to determine the level of alignment between these perceptions and those of other development team members. Another approach would be to assess actual skills in addition to gathering perception data.

Third, the results of this study indicated that participants believed most items were of importance to their roles. Future studies should attempt to differentiate between activities or behaviors that are positive if they exist, versus those that would be critical to leading human resource development. Finally, it is likely that altering the methodology to a more interpretive or qualitative approach for future studies regarding the issues of leadership and core beliefs about developing human resources may produce more depth of results and clarity into the perceptions and experiences of HRD leaders.

### ***Conclusions & Implications for HRD***

The intent of this study was two-fold. The first intent was to assess the relevance of the core beliefs of HRD identified in the Ruona (1999) study to HRD practitioners in the field. The second intent, was to assess the status of HRD leadership in organizations. It was felt that these objectives for the study were not only relevant, but also essential to informing the discussion concerning the potential for an expanded strategic role for HRD in organizations. If practitioners and academics are to mutually advance HRD as a discipline, it is essential that there is an understanding of what similarities and differences exist in how HRD is defined. Additionally, leadership in both groups must be clearly established and committed to the continuing development and growth of the HRD discipline.

The data in this study concerning core beliefs indicate that there may be more commonality than differences between HRD practitioners and HRD scholars. In one respect this can be seen as evidence of fertile ground for continuing to grow a shared system of beliefs and values both in practice and in academia. On the other hand, some of the shared beliefs may, in fact, be counter-productive to the development of a leadership perspective in HRD. For example, the belief that HRD is primarily a helping profession that takes its direction from management and its clients may foster a more reactive posture rather than a proactive one essential to assuming a leadership role. This highlights the importance of ongoing dialogue concerning core beliefs and HRD's role in organizations. There may always be differences in philosophies and core beliefs, but as Ruona (2000) has stated, it is important that these differences and how they affect the



practice of HRD be made explicit to the HRD profession and the clients it serves. Practitioners and scholars alike need to pursue these discussions not only to define what HRD is, but to define what it can be in the future as well.

It is encouraging that the respondents saw the leadership competencies addressed in this study as highly desirable. Yet this is only one aspect of what is necessary for HRD to assume a leadership role in organizations. It is both essential and critical for HRD practitioners to embrace the idea of being leaders within the organization. This calls for both an expanded vision of what HRD can do within the organization, and individuals in HRD who will pursue that expanded vision with energy and conviction. Data from this study indicate that this leadership perspective may still be lacking in the field. The respondents still see their role as responding to management's direction and stated needs as opposed to HRD defining its own direction and making its own assessment of organizational needs. HRD will not be able to assume a leadership role in organizations unless it first can perceive itself in that role. Only then can HRD begin to actively participate in shaping the strategic intent and direction of the organization and optimize the powerful tools and knowledge it brings to the organization. This also suggests that where HRD is often the entity in the organization that is responsible for leadership development it must now consider the active development of leadership skills within its own ranks.

In summary, although the study's limited response rate (21%) curtailed much of the planned statistical analysis, the results advance the discussion of the core beliefs in HRD as well as a springboard for ongoing examination of HRD leadership in organizations. The results of the study suggest that there exists some consistency in core beliefs between practitioners and academics. Additionally, although the leadership task competencies appear to be currently limited, these competencies are seen as highly desirable for HRD practitioners in the future. These are encouraging findings because they illustrate a common interest in strong leadership for the future advancement of the discipline, as well as for the desire for an expanded strategic role for HRD in organizations.

Future studies are needed to further explore these topics. The debate remains concerning the core beliefs of HRD. Future studies not only need to inform the discipline of HRD on how beliefs continue to evolve and change, but also to what extent the perceived gap between the field of practice and academia changes over time. Further investigation of the status of HRD leadership in practice should address the interpersonal competencies plus task competencies with an expanded sampling process to develop more accurate assessments of how HRD leadership in organizations is perceived. Continued research and dialogue on these topics is essential to HRD's improved effectiveness and contribution to the organizations it serves as well as its growth and maturation as a discipline.

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**APPENDIX A**

***Subject Matter Expert Review: Mailer & Questions***

***Pilot Participant Questions***

***Initial Mailing***

***Phone Script***

***Consent Form***

***Questionnaire***

***Follow-up Mailing***

*Subject Matter Expert Review: Mailer & Questions*



University of Minnesota

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University of Minnesota Research Study -  
**Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners**

Date: 13 September, 2001

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We are conducting research study for the University of Minnesota concerning the development of human resources in organizations, targeting specifically the viewpoint of practitioners. As a recognized expert in this field, we would like to ask you for your input in the development of the survey instrument.

Our primary purpose in soliciting your input is to establish the "face validity" of the survey instrument in the areas of (1) HRD core beliefs and (2) leadership in organizations. In other words, do the questions in the survey, based on your expert opinion, sufficiently and clearly address the two areas just mentioned. Secondly, we would appreciate any comments you could offer in relation to the structure and clarity of the instrument itself. This study may serve as a baseline for a longitudinal research, rigor in expert review is critical in this initial phase.

Attached you will find an abstract describing the study as well as the survey instrument itself. Please feel free to make your comments directly on these documents and return them to us in the envelope provided. We have also provided the documents on the enclosed disk, so if you would prefer, you can submit your comments to us electronically via email.

We appreciate how busy you are, so we will be extremely grateful if you can invest a portion of your valuable time and provide us with the feedback we are requesting no later than **Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001**. Please feel free to contact either of us with questions about the study and, again, our sincere thanks for your assistance on this project.

Greg M. Henderson  
(763) 577-0927  
[Ghender555@aol.com](mailto:Ghender555@aol.com)

Monica M. Tuttle  
(612) 333-6356  
[tutt0027@umn.edu](mailto:tutt0027@umn.edu)

PS: We would be most happy to provide you with the results of the study. Additionally, we would like to offer you the use of the finalized version of this instrument to conduct this study in your area. If you are interested in receiving the results and/or utilizing the survey instrument, just indicate so when you return your comments.





University of Minnesota Research Study -  
**Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners**

**Expert Review**

Reviewer Directions:

After reviewing the enclosed instrument, please do the following :

- A. Write any comments directly on the instrument/ or send via email to the researchers
- B. Read the statement below, circle your level of agreement
- C. Sign in the space provided
- D. Write any additional comments or concerns below
- E. Please send this signed form along with any written comments in the return envelope enclosed

Reviewer Statement:

Given the changes that I have suggested and sent to the researchers, in my opinion, I find the attached survey instrument for the University of Minnesota research study entitled Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners, to sufficiently and clearly address the concepts of HRD leadership and HRD core beliefs (please circle one of the statements below, sign in the signature space provided).

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If you answered below "agree", what are your primary concerns? Please describe.

*Pilot Participant Questions*



University of Minnesota

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## **Pilot Feedback Form**

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In order for us to improve this survey instrument prior to its implementation, we would appreciate your candid feedback about the questions listed below.

1. Approximately how many minutes did it take you to finish the survey? (Including the time it took to read the directions and get oriented to the purpose of the study )
2. Were there any questions or concepts that you found to be unclear? (If, yes, please indicate your concerns below and include the item #)
3. Was what you were being asked to respond to clear? (i.e., rating current, likely future, and desired future) If 'no', please describe your concerns below.
4. Is there anything that you would like to convey that you thought was missing in this survey addressing the topics of leadership in HRD and/or core beliefs about HRD?

*Initial Mailing*



*What are the largest 100 companies headquartered in Minnesota thinking and doing about developing their human resources?*

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**University of Minnesota Research Study -  
Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners**

What are the largest 100 companies headquartered in Minnesota thinking and doing about developing their human resources? The focus of this research study is to examine exactly that.

The purpose of this research study is threefold: first, to explore core beliefs about developing human resources in organizations, held by Human Resource Executives in Minnesota's top 100 companies. Second, to explore how these core beliefs might differ when considering the present versus the future. Third, to explore and assess the status of leadership in developing human resources within these same Minnesota companies. Two recent studies (Ruona, 2000; Wienberger, 1998) have examined such core beliefs proposed by the academic community; similar studies need to be conducted with the practitioner community.

**Request for Participation**

You have been chosen as a potential participant in this study because of your status as a human resource executive in one of the top 100 companies headquartered in Minnesota, as published in the Star and Tribune in 2001. We would welcome your insights: the survey takes approximately 30 minutes of your time.

**Expanding the Knowledge Base**

By participating, you will be expanding the knowledge base of the field of Human Resource Development, furthering the field's understanding of the practitioner perspective. In addition to receiving a questionnaire you will also receive a consent form. If you check the box on the consent form that says you would like to receive the results of the study, you will have the opportunity to view the aggregated perspectives of the top 100 companies in Minnesota concerning the topic of developing human resources within their organizations.

**What's Next?**

The week of January 7th either Greg or Monica will contact you about this study. During the phone conversation we will be able to answer any questions you may have about participating in this study. If you prefer not to be contacted by the researchers please notify the researchers at this information: Greg Henderson (763) 577-0927, [GHender555@aol.com](mailto:GHender555@aol.com). Following the phone conversation you will receive the questionnaire to fill out and a consent form to sign in the mail.

**We look forward to speaking with you,  
and hope this mailing has piqued your interest about information the study could provide**

Greg M. Henderson

Monica M. Tuttle

*Phone Script*

University of Minnesota Research Study  
Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources:  
A Survey of Practitioners

Script for the Initial Telephone Contact

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Greg/Monica and I am with the University of Minnesota. We recently sent you information concerning a study we are conducting on Human Resource Development core beliefs and leadership in Minnesota's top companies. Did you receive the information?

If the answer is no:

I'm sorry you did not receive it. We would very much like you to participate in this study. Would it be OK to send you the information concerning the study again? (Assuming the answer is yes) Could I confirm your mailing address? (Read the address on file and correct if necessary). Thank you. I will send the information out immediately and contact you by phone again in a few days to answer any questions you may have about the study and your participation in it. Thank you very much for your time. Good-bye.

If the answer is yes:

Great. As you may recall, there were two pieces of information: the description of the study and a copy of the consent form. Let's start with the description of the study. Did you have any questions about the description of the study? (Answer any questions the participant may have concerning the study)

We also included a copy of the consent form, which provides additional information about the study and addresses confidentiality. Do you have any questions concerning the information in the consent form? (Answer any questions the participant may have concerning the consent form).

Can I answer any other questions you may have about the study? (Answer any additional questions).

Thank you for taking the time to discuss our study. The survey package is in the mail to you. When you receive the package, please sign the consent form and return it to us in the envelope provided. You can then proceed with completing the survey and return it to us in the envelope attached to it.

Thanks so much for agreeing to participate and please contact either Monica/Greg or myself if we can answer any further questions you may have about the study. Good-bye.

*Consent Form****Research Consent Form****“Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners”*

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You are invited to take part in a research study of practitioners' beliefs about the current and future state of Human Resource Development (HRD) activities in their organizations. You were selected as a possible participant because of your company's elite status as one of Minnesota's 100 largest publicly held organizations, as published by the Minneapolis Star and Tribune of 2001. This study is being conducted by the University of Minnesota, under the direction of Greg Henderson and Monica Tuttle, in the department of Human Resource Development. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

By signing this consent form you are indicating that: you understand that you do not have to take part in this study and can stop taking part in this study at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. You can also ask to have information related to you, returned to you, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

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**RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research study is threefold: first, to explore core beliefs about developing human resources in organizations, held by Human Resource Executives in Minnesota's top 100 companies. Second, to explore how these core beliefs might differ when considering the present versus the future. Third, to explore and assess the status of leadership in developing human resources within these same Minnesota companies. Two recent studies (Ruona, 2000; Wienberger, 1998) have examined such core beliefs proposed by the academic community; similar studies need to be conducted with the practitioner community.

**RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

If you agree to be in this study, we ask that you sign this consent form and complete the attached survey. Completing the survey should take approximately 30 minutes of your time. It asks you some brief demographic questions about you and your organization. It also asks you, as a senior member of the Human Resources team, your beliefs about the nature and scope of your responsibilities for developing human resources within your organization. In your package you will see two return envelopes; in one envelope you will send the signed consent form, in the other you will send the completed survey. We ask that you send the completed materials by February 1, 2002.

**RISKS**

There are no perceived risks in this study, names of particular participants or organizations will not be connected with the data nor published in a report. The only other foreseeable risk is the sensitivity of the questions asked; however, they are only related to workplace events, only request your opinion, and the data will remain anonymous and confidential. Procedures for confidentiality appear below in the "Confidentiality" paragraph.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Surveys are returned in separate envelopes from the consent forms, leaving no remaining participant identifiers on the questionnaires; researchers are not able to identify the source of any questionnaire. Additionally, records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject or any particular organization. Only criteria for the selection of participants will be published and it will not be made clear who participated and who did not. Research records will be kept in a locked file and computer work will be done on researchers' home computers; only the researchers will have access to the records.

**COSTS & COMPENSATION & BENEFITS**

There are no costs or compensations involved if you participate in this research project. While not technically considered a benefit, we will be sending out the results of this study prior to any form of journal publication to those organizations that would like the results. Please check the box at the end of this consent form, indicating that you would like to receive the results of the study upon its completion.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY**

Taking part in this research project is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the researchers, or any party associated with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

**HOW TO GET ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS:**

You are encouraged to ask questions both before you agree to be in the study and also at any time you need information in the future. You may contact Greg Henderson at (763) 577-0927 or Monica Tuttle at (612) 333-6356. You may also contact the researchers' advisor, Dr. Richard Swanson, Professor of Human Resource Development at (612) 624-3004.

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**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

I understand that by completing and returning the survey, I imply my consent to take part in this research. Specifically, that:

- I have read and understand the explanation provided to me;
- I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this study;
- I have been given a copy of this consent form.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, contact Research Subjects' Advocate line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; telephone (612) 625-1650.

Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**YES, I would like to receive the results of this study!** (check the box if 'yes')

We have fully explained this research study to the participants, and in our judgment there was sufficient information regarding risks and benefits, to make an informed decision. We will inform the participant in a timely manner of any changes in the procedure or risks and benefits if any should occur.

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Follow-up Mailing*



University of Minnesota

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*What are the largest 100 companies headquartered in Minnesota  
thinking and doing about developing their human resources?*

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University of Minnesota Research Study -  
Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners

Dear survey participants,

To all of you who have completed and returned the survey & consent form, we wish to express our sincere thanks for your involvement in this important study. We look forward to sharing the results with you in the very near future.

For those of you who have not yet completed the survey, we would greatly appreciate it if you could do so no later than **February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002**, so that we can begin the compilation and analysis of the data for the study. As members of Minnesota's top 100 companies, your comments and insights concerning the practice of human resource development are critical to this research. If you have any questions about completing the survey, please contact either one of us and we would be happy to assist you. We again thank you for your willingness to participate in this University of Minnesota study.

Again, there is an addressed stamped envelope for the consent form and one for the survey to ensure your anonymity.

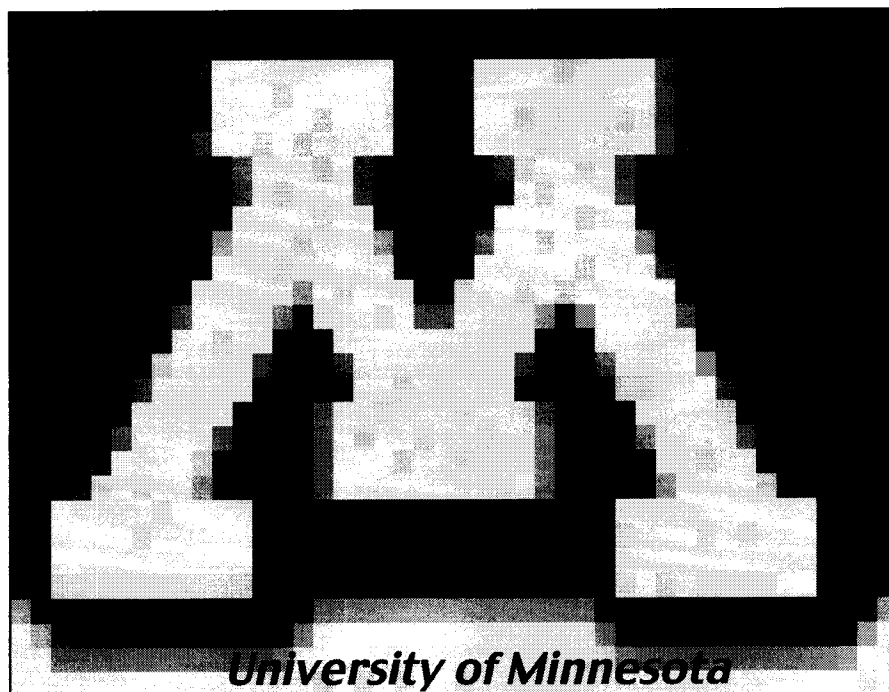
Greg M. Henderson  
(763) 577-0927  
GHender555@aol.com

Monica M. Tuttle  
(612) 333-6356  
Tutt0027@umn.edu

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# **Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners**

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Human Resource Development Research Center  
University of Minnesota  
Department of Work, Community & Family Education  
1954 Buford Avenue, Room 425  
St. Paul, MN 55108





# Leadership & Core Beliefs in Developing Human Resources: A Survey of Practitioners

**Concept of HRD.** Throughout this questionnaire, we will refer to the concept of Human Resource Development, or HRD.

**HRD** – refers to the function of *developing* human resources in organizations. This function is most often referred to as HRD but can also be labeled Organization Development, Organization Effectiveness, Training & Development, Knowledge Management, and such. At a minimum, it is the training and development function. In a broader sense, it can include facilitating organizational change, strategic human resource planning, and intercultural relations and diversity initiatives.

As a relatively new and developing field, there are many definitions and conceptualizations of what the field of HRD should and should not be. As it is the goal of this study to continue to define the frame and scope of HRD, it is difficult to provide you now with one definition as a guide for this questionnaire. The characteristics of HRD provided below are merely provided as a foundation for the questionnaire, and are drawn primarily by the work of Lynham (2000) and Ruona (1999). You should consider that by answering the questions for this study, you are helping to shape and define HRD core beliefs and the practitioner view of HRD leadership within organizations.

**Directions.** The following survey contains 45 questions, and should take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. For each question you will read a statement about HRD, you will then be asked to rate how *descriptive* that statement is about your organization (please also see the sample question below). Your choices range from 1-5. Marking a one (1) on the scale indicates the statement is *not descriptive of your organization*, marking a five (5) indicates that the statement is *perfectly descriptive of your organization*. When making responses, please think about HRD, or HRD-like initiatives in the organization you currently work for; your organization in the broadest sense. **Please send your survey response by Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002.**

Additionally, for each question you will make three ratings. First you are asked to indicate how descriptive the statement is for the *current* functioning of your organization. Next you are asked to indicate how descriptive the statement would be for the *likely future* (i.e., 5 years), given some stability in your organization and its culture. Finally, you are asked to indicate how descriptive the statement would be about your *desired future* for the organization, imagining what a utopian situation would be like for developing your organization’s human resources.

**Sample.**

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive	Minimally Descriptive	Moderately Descriptive	Very Descriptive	Perfectly Descriptive
		1	2	3	4	5
#	Retention efforts for key employees are primarily monetary in nature.					X
	Current State					X
	Likely Future State					X
	Desired Future State		X			



- Mark a rating from 1-5 about how descriptive the statement is about your organization
- Make this rating regarding how it currently describes your organization, how you think it will likely be in the future, and how you would desire it to be in the future.

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive	Minimally Descriptive	Moderately Descriptive	Very Descriptive	Perfectly Descriptive
		1	2	3	4	5
1	HRD's role in the organization is primarily based on its own assessment of organizational needs versus having its role determined by management.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
2	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>external</u> stakeholders.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
3	In this organization, HRD considers the needs of <u>internal</u> stakeholders.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
4	Risk taking is promoted by HRD in the work that it does.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
5	HRD participates in the shaping of this organization's core values.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
6	HRD is an active change agent in this organization.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
7	HRD communicates this organization's goals in all of the work that it does.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				



- Mark a rating from 1-5 about how descriptive the statement is about your organization
- Make this rating regarding how it currently describes your organization, how you think it will likely be in the future, and how you would desire it to be in the future.

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive	Minimally Descriptive	Moderately Descriptive	Very Descriptive	Perfectly Descriptive
		1	2	3	4	5
8	Assessing this organization's change readiness prior to change initiatives is a key role for HRD.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
9	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to evaluate the efficiency of work processes.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
10	HRD solicits input from <u>internal</u> customers/clients in designing HRD programs.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
11	HRD solicits input from <u>external</u> clients/customers in designing HRD programs.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
12	HRD shares in the responsibility for achieving organizational performance goals (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
13	The most compelling argument with management for investment in HRD initiatives is to project an improvement in performance (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
14	The most compelling argument with management for investment in HRD initiatives is to demonstrate how they support employee development.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				



- Mark a rating from 1-5 about how descriptive the statement is about your organization
- Make this rating regarding how it currently describes your organization, how you think it will likely be in the future, and how you would desire it to be in the future.

Descriptive Statement			NOT	Minimally	Moderately	Very	Perfectly
			Descriptive	Descriptive	Descriptive	Descriptive	Descriptive
			1	2	3	4	5
15	HRD aggressively challenges the status quo in this organization.	Current State					
		Likely Future State					
		Desired Future State					
16	HRD's interventions are primarily based on its own assessment of this organization's needs as opposed to basing the interventions primarily on the expressed needs of individual managers.	Current State					
		Likely Future State					
		Desired Future State					
17	Organizational pressures and demands sometimes require HRD to compromise its integrity.	Current State					
		Likely Future State					
		Desired Future State					
18	HRD has a shared responsibility with operations management to ensure work processes are designed to support the goals of this organization.	Current State					
		Likely Future State					
		Desired Future State					
19	The primary method used in this organization to persuade top management to invest in HRD initiatives is to communicate the impact on employees.	Current State					
		Likely Future State					
		Desired Future State					
20	HRD works to build cooperation within this organization.	Current State					
		Likely Future State					
		Desired Future State					
21	HRD ensures that all of its initiatives support the goals of this organization.	Current State					
		Likely Future State					
		Desired Future State					



- Mark a rating from 1-5 about how descriptive the statement is about your organization
- Make this rating regarding how it currently describes your organization, how you think it will likely be in the future, and how you would desire it to be in the future.

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive 1	Minimally Descriptive 2	Moderately Descriptive 3	Very Descriptive 4	Perfectly Descriptive 5
22	HRD, at times, cannot fulfill its commitments to this organization due to changing management priorities.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
23	HRD helps this organization to create a culture that promotes diversity.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
24	Developing deep functional expertise in this organization is the responsibility of HRD.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
25	HRD helps this organization foster a sense of purpose in its employees.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
26	The primary competitive advantage of this organization is gained through our people.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
27	HRD focuses primarily on the development of job-focused knowledge/skills for individuals versus focusing on development of the whole individual.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
28	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes knowledge sharing is a key role for HRD.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				



- Mark a rating from 1-5 about how descriptive the statement is about your organization
- Make this rating regarding how it currently describes your organization, how you think it will likely be in the future, and how you would desire it to be in the future.

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive	Minimally Descriptive	Moderately Descriptive	Very Descriptive	Perfectly Descriptive
		1	2	3	4	5
29	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes innovation is a key role for HRD.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
30	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes the development of critical thinking skills is a key role for HRD.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
31	Helping this organization create a culture that promotes continuous learning is a key role for HRD.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
32	HRD's effectiveness is assessed by client/customer satisfaction.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
33	HRD's effectiveness is assessed by organizational performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality).	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
34	In this organization, HRD has the responsibility to help each individual to optimize his or her own human potential.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
35	HRD encourages this organization to play a critical role in making society a better place.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				



- Mark a rating from 1-5 about how descriptive the statement is about your organization
- Make this rating regarding how it currently describes your organization, how you think it will likely be in the future, and how you would desire it to be in the future.

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive	Minimally Descriptive	Moderately Descriptive	Very Descriptive	Perfectly Descriptive
		1	2	3	4	5
36	In this organization it is believed that people possess skills, experience, and knowledge, and therefore, have economic value to organizations.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
37	HRD monitors performance outcomes (e.g., financial, productivity, and quality) at the individual, process, and organizational levels.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
38	HRD measures the outcome of learning at the individual, team, or the organizational level, following its initiatives.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
39	HRD promotes work/life balance in the work that it does in this organization.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
40	HRD demonstrates a long-term perspective in the work that it does in this organization.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
41	Helping this organization facilitate the development of future leadership talent is a key role for HRD.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
42	HRD publicly recognizes the achievements of people throughout this organization.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				



- Mark a rating from 1-5 about how descriptive the statement is about your organization
- Make this rating regarding how it currently describes your organization, how you think it will likely be in the future, and how you would desire it to be in the future.

Descriptive Statement		NOT Descriptive 1	Minimally Descriptive 2	Moderately Descriptive 3	Very Descriptive 4	Perfectly Descriptive 5
43	HRD conducts post-implementation reviews of its organizational initiatives.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
44	HRD calculates return on investment metrics following its initiatives in this organization.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				
45	HRD always considers the indirect impact of its initiatives on other organizational work groups and systems that are not the direct targets of those initiatives.	Current State				
		Likely Future State				
		Desired Future State				

**Demographic Questions.** The purpose of the following demographic questions is for the researchers to be able to sort and analyze the resulting data in various ways, your responses to these questions as well as to all other questions on this survey are anonymous and confidential. Please circle the appropriate answer.

I. Respondent's Gender:            Male    Female

II. How many individuals are currently employed in your total organization?

- a. 20,000 or more
- b. 10,000 – 19,999
- c. 1000 – 9999
- d. Less than 1000
- e. Don't know

III. What is your total organization's yearly revenue?

- a. \$1 billion or more
- b. \$500 million – \$999 million
- c. \$100 million - \$499 million
- d. Less than \$100 million
- e. Don't know

IV. For how many years has your organization been in existence?

- a. 20 years or more
- b. 6-19 years
- c. 5 years or less
- d. Don't know





**Comments.** As with any questionnaire, we might not have captured everything you would have liked to convey about the topic. Please use the space provided below, along with any additional documentation you wish to attach, to give further comments about Human Resource Development in your opinion.

**Thank you for your participation in this study!**

**Questions.** As stated in the consent form you signed, if you have any questions prior to, during, or following the completion of this questionnaire, please feel free to contact any of these sources:

- Researchers: Greg Henderson (763) 577-0927, [GHender555@aol.com](mailto:GHender555@aol.com)  
Monica Tuttle (612) 333-6356, [tutt0027@umn.edu](mailto:tutt0027@umn.edu)
- Research Advisor: Richard Swanson (612) 624-3004, [raswanson@qwest.net](mailto:raswanson@qwest.net)
- Institutional Review Board: Moira Keane (612) 626-5654, [keane002@umn.edu](mailto:keane002@umn.edu)

This instrument draws primarily on the works of:

Lynham, S. A. (2000). The development of "a theory of responsible leadership for performance". Unpublished Dissertation, University of Minnesota, St. Paul MN.

Ruona, W.E.A. (1999). An investigation into core beliefs underlying the profession of human resource development. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota, HRD Research Center.