

Strategic HRM Theories & Models

What is a phenomenon?

A situation being analyzed and may be a process, system, event, person, or thing. Phenomena are the plural of phenomenon.

What are theories?

A particular perspective used to understand phenomena, such as a process, system, event, person, or thing. Theories consist of general principles or accepted beliefs that are independent of the phenomenon. Theories are used to guide the analysis of phenomena. Theories are developed through empirical research relying on facts gathered and confirmed through observation and experiment.

What are models?

A model is system for analysis of phenomena that is followed or a prototype that is imitated. Models consist of recognizable steps to follow that may or may not be well documented, making the application of models both an art and a science. Sometimes, there are typical examples (i.e. archetypes) to refer to when applying the model. Models are developed to describe phenomena that cannot be experienced or confirmed through observation and experiment.

How can we use theories and models as our lens to examine phenomena?

We use theories and models to explain the approach we are taking to understand phenomena. From our shared understanding, we can then focus on problem solving and working towards goals. Most usefully, theories and models guide people in discussions to answer the *how* and *why* questions: how something is happening; why something is happening.

For example, we can use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory to facilitate a discussion on human motivation and behaviour. When we apply the Maslow lens, our discussions move straightforward to reach points of mutual understanding. Together, we quickly understand that humans cannot focus on the need to create beautiful art until their lower needs for housing and food has been satisfied. From this understanding, our discussions can then focus on ways to solve problems to meet the broader goal of creating beautiful art.

References

- Anfara, V.A., Jr. & Mertz, N.T. (2015). *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50: 370-396.



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What are the theories of strategic HRM?

Theories & Models	One-Sentence Definitions
Human Capital Theory	The accumulation of firm-specific knowledge and experience involving a joint investment by both the employee and employer to maintain a long-term relationship
SWOT Analysis Framework	A strategic tool to identify and analyze the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
Neo-Institutional Theory	A model that focuses on understanding organizational behaviour by considering wider social forces
Contingency Theory	Also known as the model that claims there is no best way to organize a business or make decisions, but argues instead that one should decide on a new strategy each time depending on the internal and external situation
Human Resources Roles Model	A model to define the work of HR professionals as to include employee advocate, human capital developer, functional expert, strategic partner, and leader
Competing Values Framework	A model to define a set of guidelines that can help leaders diagnose and manage the interrelationships, congruencies, and contradictions about different aspects of organizations.
Strategic International Human Resource Management	A model concerned with the human resource problems of multinational firms and the relationship to local environments
Organizational Culture Model	Also known as the onion model, the more superficial layers of the workplace culture is more easily changed than those more deeply embedded