Abstract

The professionalization of occupations has led to the increased demand for specialised knowledge in many fields, in response to which Higher Education (HE) institutions have provided professional education programmes. The purpose of this paper is to address a need for research into the history and current position of professional education in Human Resource Development (HRD) in the UK and to consider the problem of the extent to which HRD can be regarded as a profession. The paper reports findings from a mixed methods study comprising an audit of the postgraduate HRD programme provision in UK universities and a symposium at which the perspectives of key informants were captured. There is evidence of declining use of the term `HRD' in programme titles, and of contestation and conflict between the professional education of HRD and Human Resource Management (HRM). The paper argues for regarding HRD as symbiotic in relation to HRM, rather than as a distinct profession. It identifies the implications of this conceptualisation for professional education in the field and discusses the relevance of experience in the UK for HRD internationally.

Key words: HRD; HRM; professional education; symbiosis

Introduction

HRD is an arena of scholarship and practice that has evolved over the last 30 years (Gold, Rogers, and Smith 2003; Sambrook and Willmott 2014). Knowledge about HRD programme provision is acknowledged as an area that is under-explored (Zachmeier and Cho 2014; Maclean and Akaraborworn 2015) globally, yet such knowledge is both needed and timely in view of concerns about a perceived decline in the number of HRD professional education programmes in the UK in the 21st century (Stewart and Sambrook 2012; Stewart and Cureton 2014). Stewart and Sambrook (2012) also observe that specialist qualification pathways (e.g. MSc in HRD) are becoming rarer and question the increasing practice of 'embedding' of the HRD curriculum into broader programmes of study such as MBA or MA (HRM). Such shifts in professional education are potentially significant since they may be indicative of changes in the professional landscape in which HRD participates. However, to our knowledge, no comprehensive database of HRD programme provision in the UK (or elsewhere) exists (Stewart, Mills, and Sambrook 2015; Stewart and Sambrook 2012). Nor has any systematic and deep review relating to UK HRD programmes and qualifications been published more recently than the `Qualifications and Mapping Project' (Walton, Moon, McGoldrick, and Sambrook 1995), which was concerned principally with the equivalence between qualifications and progression routes in the area of Training and Development. The mapping project did not compile or present any listing of, or numerical summary of, available programmes.

The aims of this paper are:

1. To establish the state of HRD professional education provision in the UK

2. To review the significance of changes in postgraduate HRD programme provision over the past 30 years
3. To reflect on the status of HRD in relation to HRM from the perspective of professional education
4. To identify implications for the field of HRD both in the UK and internationally.

The paper makes four contributions. First, it provides new knowledge about HRD programme provision in the UK. Second, it contributes theoretically through a new conceptualisation of the relationship between HRM and HRD professional education. Third, the paper poses questions for debate about the significance and implications for the field of HRD and, in particular, its porous boundaries. While our empirical context is UK Higher Education, our theorisation of the HRD/M relationship as symbiotic provides insights for HRD theory and practice more globally. Finally, we suggest avenues for future research. We will begin with a brief overview of the professional literature and how it relates to HRD education, followed by an introduction to the context of the research. We will then describe methodological approach, followed by our 'mixed methods' findings and discussion.

Literature

Hodgson, Paton, and Muzio (2015, 746) state that the cachet of the title of "professional" remains an attraction for a number of specialist managerial disciplines. Status is the primary reason that occupations desire to become professions as this enables them to generate marketable services for themselves and limit career access to the same field for those in other occupational groups (Larson 1977; Chung et al. 2019).

Research (for example, Hodgson et al. 2015; Reed 2018) has observed the emergence of new professional groupings in management contexts, among which is Human Resource Development (HRD), as well as the closely related field of Human Resource Management (HRM). Such groupings are said to be engaged in 'professionalization projects' (Muzio, Hodgson, Faulconbridge, Beaverstock, and Hall 2011, 443), attempting to transition from a career location within operational management (Higgins, Roper, and Gamwell 2016) to achieve greater influence in organizational power relationships.

For the purposes of this article, we define a profession as a field of skilled service or advice based upon specialized intellectual study and training (Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011). The boundary between an occupation and a profession is porous and contested (Hodson and Sullivan 2012) but we use the term 'occupation' to connote a means of livelihood that does not require such extensive training and specialized, advanced level study and qualification.

According to Eraut (1994), knowledge is central to the perceived status of professions; it is `their distinctive competence' (Hughes and Hughes 2013, 30). Thus, professional education provision that enables aspiring members to acquire the relevant, specialized knowledge is an important feature of the legitimization of claims for professional status by occupational groups (Trede 2012). In that respect, professional education has a central bearing on the extent to which HRD can be regarded as a distinct profession.

Freidson (2001) highlights the importance of the control of this knowledge acquisition through formal processes. In the UK, and in the context of managerial disciplines, institutions of Higher Education (HE) play a significant role in this process through the provision of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes; curricula that has likely to have been

developed in conjunction with the relevant professional body. Although considerable research attention has been paid to the emergence of professional bodies through developing a 'professional infrastructure' (Colley and Guéry 2015; Curnow and McGonigle 2006), the role of professional education in legitimizing claims for professional status by occupational groups, while important, is under-researched (Trede 2012).

Background: HRD in the UK

This paper is concerned with professional education for HRD in the UK, following the example of previous research into HRD education that has taken single country focus (Stewart, Mills, and Sambrook 2015; Zachmeier, Cho, and Kim 2014; Watkins and Marsick. 2016), or a two-country focus in the case of Maclean and Akaraborworn's (2015) identification of HRD programmes in Thailand and Malaysia. Studying HRD professional education within a UK context is justified because the UK can be regarded as a distinct professionalization project when compared with the USA and elsewhere. First, the organization of HRD in the USA is separate and distinct from that of HRM, whereas in the UK there is a single professional body, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Another difference worth noting is that academic membership of the body for HRD scholarship in the UK, the UFHRD, is comprised of Higher Education institutions (HEIs) rather than individuals, unlike the Academy for HRD (AHRD) in the USA.

Second, a distinct approach to professional education towards HRD exists in the UK compared with the USA. Both HRD and HRM programmes in the UK are usually provided through Business Schools, in contrast to the USA where HRD is housed typically in Education Faculties. International comparisons (Cho and Zachmeier 2015) indicate that HRD

is taught as part of an academic programme in many different host departments such as Education, Management, Psychology, Social Work and Public Policy. Furthermore, the provision in the USA was formerly documented as focussing on instructional design and training and development techniques (Kuchinke 2003), whereas the UK focus has historically been more on processes of learning and development and their application within organizational settings (Watkins and Marsick 2016).

During most of the 20th century, HRD and the closely related field of HRM can be said to have been undertaking separate professionalization projects. The origins of HRD in the UK lie in the British Association for Commercial Education (formed in 1919), which developed into the British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education and then the Institute of Training Officers (Williams 2010). From these bodies, the Institute of Training and Development (ITD) was formed in 1983. No qualification was needed for entry, hence the perceived status of ITD was low (Reid, Barrington, and Brown 2004).

To address this perceived lack of status, HRD professional higher education was introduced, starting with the first Masters level HRD programme at South Bank University, London in 1990, soon followed by others (Sambrook and Stewart 1998; Zachmeieir and Cho 2014). In parallel, a body for HRD scholarship in the UK (and Europe) was formed in the early 1990s, subsequently becoming the University Forum for HRD (UFHRD) (Stewart and McGoldrick 1996; Sambrook and Stewart 2010). The literature identifies this period as one where the first UK Professors of HRD were appointed, scholarly and professional conferences in HRD were organized (Iles 1994; Stewart and Sambrook 2012) and new patterns of delivery of educational programmes emerged (Walton et al. 1995; Stewart, Mills and Sambrook 2014).

The HRM field traces its roots to the Welfare Workers' Association (WWA), formed in 1913 (somewhat later than the equivalent body in the USA). Renamed the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) in 1946; from 1955 full membership of the IPM was restricted to those who had succeeded in passing its examinations.

A pivotal change in this occupational landscape occurred in 1994 through the merger of the IPM and the ITD to form the Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD 2019). Following the achievement of a Royal Charter in 2000, this became the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), full membership of which was, and continues to be, contingent on acquiring a CIPD-accredited postgraduate qualification. The CIPD controls the knowledge of its members through the development of curriculum content structured through a professional map, the latest version of which was issued in 2020 (CIPD 2020) with the curriculum guidance to follow

Whilst the merger of the IPM and ITD in the UK might indicate a commonality in the interests of HRM and HRD, the relationship between, and the relative status of, HRM and HRD continue to be the subject of much debate. The role and purpose of business and management schools, which are the site of most HRM and HRD professional education, is contested, reflecting wider disagreements about the appropriate mix of educational, economic, and cultural purposes (Johnson and Orr 2019). With specific reference to HRM professional education, Griggs, Holden, Rae, and Lawless (2015) suggest the CIPD's influence on HRM professional curricula has encouraged a primarily functionalist managerial approach. Dundon and Rafferty (2018) go further and contend that HRM professional education is immiserated, uncritical and impoverished by positivist, performative and neo-liberal assumptions about professional practice.

The persistence of specialist research journals that include HRD in their titles ('Advances in Developing Human Resources', 'Human Resource Development International', 'Human Resource Development Quarterly', and 'Human Resource Development Review'), and other journals concerned centrally with this field (e.g. `European Journal of Training and Development'; `International Journal of Training and Development') supports the argument that HRD and HRM are distinctive fields of professional activity and scholarship (Werner 2014). Therefore, in the context of debates about the nature, purpose and boundaries of HRM and HRD, our paper contributes a focus on the provision of professional education. We examine evidence pertinent to the historic perception of contestation between these fields and specifically consider concerns about a perceived inferior status of professional education and scholarship in the HRD field (Kuchinke 2003; Auluck 2006).

Methodological Approach

This study adopted a mixed methods approach. To address our first research question, an audit of professional education in HRD in the UK was undertaken by the authors in 2014-15 on behalf of the UFHRD, of which the authors' institutions were members. To review the significance of changes in postgraduate HRD programme provision over the past 30 years and to discuss issues of the status of HRD in relation to HRM (our second and third questions) we draw on data from a symposium titled 'HRD professional education past and present' at a UFHRD conference. In determining our mixed methods research design we did not set out to achieve data triangulation. Rather we sought to utilize complementary forms of data that would enable us to qualify divergences and commonalities in the findings through the analytical process (Bergman 2011).

The first source of data, the audit of UK HRM and HRD professional education provision at postgraduate level (the level at which 'professional' status can legitimately be claimed), was compiled from publicly available information. All programme provision in the HRM and HRD fields delivered by private providers, vocational colleges and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was included. Although terms are used differently in various HEIs in this paper the term 'programme' connotes educational study leading to the award of a named postgraduate level award. The term 'course' is used to refer to component units or modules that collectively comprise the studies that professional education students will undertake as part of their study programme.

Data were gathered from the CIPD website between June and September 2014; from websites of provider organizations; and through an on-line search directed at 'Google', 'FindAmasters.com' and 'Prospects.ac.uk'. Informed by approaches utilised by Zachmeier and Cho (2014), and Zachmeier, Cho and Kim (2014), data from this audit process were gathered from published directory-type sources analysed in terms of programme names, delivery methods, institutional and geographical locations. This enabled us to determine the profile of UK programme provision and the number of and types of organizations and institutions offering HRM and HRD postgraduate study programmes.

Issues addressed by the study design were as follows. First, there is no agreed or typical basis on which programmes have been identified as being in the field of HRM or HRD for research purposes; Zachmeier, Cho, and Kim's (2014) study of HRD, for example, used the criterion of self-identification. We included terms that have featured consistently in UFHRD and AHRD conferences as follows: HRM, HRD, 'Training and development', 'Coaching',

‘Mentoring’, ‘Organization Development’, ‘Instructional design’, ‘E-learning’, ‘Workforce development’, ‘Leadership development’, ‘Management development’, and ‘Organizational learning’. It is acknowledged that using these terms meant that we included practices that exist at the intersection of what may be regarded as multiple `new’ professions, such as Organization Development and Coaching (Hamlin and Stewart 2011).

A second issue that arose was that most HRD provision is under the guise of HRM programmes. Hence it was not possible to isolate HRD from HRM. This applies not only to CIPD accredited programmes but also to non-accredited programmes, half of which are combined courses (e.g. MSc HRM/D, International HRM, and so on). Where we make reference to HRM it denotes that programmes labelled as HRM include HRD components. HRM programmes without HRD were not relevant because all CIPD accredited programmes must include HRD components - though the terminology now used by the CIPD is `Learning and Development’ (CIPD 2020) rather than `HRD’, a change in usage that we discuss later in the paper.

Qualitative data, in the form of verbal accounts of the development of professional education in the UK, were elicited from three leading figures in the HRD field at a symposium titled ‘HRD professional education past and present’. Sambrook (2004) argues that emergent professions can be ‘talked into being’ through processes that connect thinking, talking, knowledge generation and practice within the emerging ‘professional field’. To examine the narrative understandings of the emergent HRD field we selected participants on the basis of their influential first-hand experience of HRM and HRD education, and their ‘guru’ status in the field. Two of those three figures (referred to as N1 and N2) were academic professors

whose identity and experience extended from before the emergence of the first UK HRD Masters in the early 1990s. The third figure (N3) was a senior employee of the CIPD.

The symposium participants were invited to share their experience and opinions about the past, present and future of HRD professional education and the self-selected symposium audience, which consisted of approximately 25 people, comprised UFHRD conference delegates. As we are focusing on narrative analysis, we do not include an analysis of audience discussion, which occurred after all the narrations, but which extended for around 30 minutes.

The symposium was recorded and transcribed, with permission, and participants were aware of its role in this research project. Narrative analysis (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008) was employed to interpret the data in order to preserve the chronological relationships between events, and the rationale for those relationships, as perceived by each informant. This also emphasised that the accounts were themselves interpretations of historical events (Gill, Gill, and Roulet 2018). The initial analysis involved the authors reviewing the transcribed data independently before comparing their analyses. We retained themes on which there was broad agreement or substantial overlap and divergent and exceptional themes were discussed in order to ensure that important insights were not excluded.

A noteworthy feature of this data source is that all three accounts were gathered at the same event, where each expert heard the others speak. This resulted in each subsequent narration being in part a response to, and at times finessing, the content and/or sequential structuring of previous narrations. It is important to acknowledge that accounts gathered independently of each other might have differed. The fact that the informants introduced nuances to highlight

differences in their own view from that of others can be regarded as advantageous for the purposes of the case study since such variations might have been more difficult to detect in independently gathered accounts. In the findings the quantitative analysis of the audit will be presented first as this mirrors the natural flow of the process, followed by narrative analysis of the informants.

Findings: Quantitative Analysis of Programme Audit

All findings relate to the 2014-15 UK academic year.

The audit identified 259 award titles (e.g. MSc, MA, Postgraduate Diploma) within 187 distinct postgraduate level programmes delivered by 111 providers. In all cases at least one component course was focused on HRD and/or HRM. Of the 259 titles, 193 were CIPD-accredited and 66 were non-accredited. In many cases organizations offered multiple modes of study to achieve the same award e.g. part-time, full-time, 'on-line'; 'burst mode' or blended learning. This was taken into account in the listing process so that 'double counting' of programme providers was avoided.

HEIs represented 65% (n=72) of the 111 providers, the other 35% being offered through vocational colleges (Colleges of Further Education) (n=24) or private providers (n=15). These HEIs offered 139 of the total 259 award titles. With respect to HEIs, the figure of 72 differs from the 105 estimated by Stewart et al. (2014) to be involved in postgraduate level programme provision in HRM and/or HRD, based on 2012-13 data from UK Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA). This may be explained by the nature of institutions that are required to provide data to HESA, which includes publicly funded universities and

other HEIs in the UK, alternative HE providers (that do not receive annual public funding) and some Further Education Colleges which provide some HE level courses. Stewart et al. (2014) also suggested that vocational colleges and private providers outnumber HEIs in HRD education provision. Clearly, our data offer an alternative perspective that may reflect change over time in the number of private providers and vocational colleges choosing to advertise course provision on publicly available search engines and directories.

Table 1 focuses on data relating specifically to HEIs. This illustrates the dominance of CIPD accredited professional education programmes offered by HEIs in the fields of both HRM and HRD. Of 80 HEI programmes in the 'core' field (rows 1 and 2), 74 (83%) were CIPD accredited. Of a further 28 programme titles designated as `International HRM', half were CIPD accredited. The remaining 31 award titles identified were focused on specialist 'areas related to HRM or HRD, the curricula for which are not accredited against CIPD approved 'professional standards' (CIPD 2020).

INSERT TABLE 1 NEAR HERE

55 HEIs have details of non-accredited programmes on their websites that incorporate some feature of HRD within the curriculum (this represents what providers claim to be offering; whether these programmes are actually running could only be verified through inquiries to each individual provider, which was outside the scope of our project).

Only 11 institutions in the UK include the term 'Human Resource Development' as the specific focus of their Masters level award. Table 2 shows that, within the 55 HEIs that offer non-accredited programmes, 23 programmes that we would classify as HRD do not use the

term `HRD' in the programme title (nb it is possible that some of these HEIs offer more than one programme).

INSERT TABLE 2 NEAR HERE

As noted above, the data provide evidence of the distribution across programme providers of six modes of delivery: full-time, part-time; 'burst' mode (block-delivery); distance learning; on-line course delivery; and blended or 'mixed modes' of delivery. Table 3 shows the different modes of delivery broken down into CIPD accredited and non-accredited programmes. This shows that around half of programmes are offered in part-time mode of attendance, for which teaching sessions typically occur on a weekly basis during academic terms with attendance expected for about 6-8 hours per week over the duration of the programme. This mode of programme provision is designed for students who are already in employment, providing an opportunity for post-experience and work-related study in the HRM/D field although data from HEI websites suggests that only 27% of these programmes explicitly require applicants to have current or previous work experience. Currently full-time modes of study account for around one-third of provision. However, only ten of the 77 full time programmes (eight of which are CIPD accredited) explicitly offer some form of work experience as a part of their course offering.

INSERT TABLE 3 NEAR HERE

The data suggest that course providers in UK have been slow to develop other modes of study. Only two HEIs and one vocational college indicate a mixed or blended learning mode

for these programmes; the remaining eleven are all private providers. Half of the distance learning providers also come from the non-HEI sector.

Web-site data from the programme providers also give some indication of the different learning processes included within some provision (Table 4).

INSERT TABLE 4 NEAR HERE

Traditional, classroom-based, face-to-face delivery continues to dominate learning and teaching within UK HRD programme providers. On-line resources often provided on an institutional virtual learning environment, are provided as supplements to this form of delivery. Field visits and guest speakers form a published feature of a few courses.

In summary, it was found from the audit that while HEIs dominate UK programme provision, over a third of providers are privately run organizations or vocational (Further Education) colleges. The audit also suggests that HRM programmes may be offered by fewer independent private providers (PP) and FE colleges than was once the case (Stewart et al. 2014). When non-accredited programme provision is included in the analysis it is likely that HEIs are at least as represented within the population of HRD programme providers as vocational colleges and private providers. In the UK, Business Schools and management departments continue to dominate programme provision. However, providers appear to be moving into areas that UFHRD might seek to claim, but which are not called HRD; for example, OD and coaching. Finally, our analysis reveals that traditional media and modes of learning continue to dominate UK programme provision, confirming the observations of Stewart, Mills and Sambrook (2015).

Narrative analysis of key informants' accounts: subjugation, survival and shared interests

In this section we present the narrative analysis of key informants' accounts about the trajectory of HRD professional education. From among several varieties of narrative analysis (Caine, Estefan and Clandinin 2013), for the purposes of this study a conventional approach was taken (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008). Our approach takes the narrations at this symposium as data relating to our phenomenon of interest (the change in HRD professional education provision over time) and considers the representational form of the narrations.

In examining the representational form, our analysis was informed by Clark and Salaman's (1998) emphasis on the way in which `guru narratives' construct the reality they describe. The narratives in our data set present an involvement in 'epic' events of initiation, change and danger in the occupational field but they each offer different interpretations of past events. One of our respondent's narration (N1), whose experience "goes back rather more than 30 years", depicted deterioration and decline in the [HRD] profession, observing that: "a very key issue (is) the role of the professional body…the merger (between IPD and ITD) took place and it was much more difficult to get … professional recognition, it never fully achieved that" and its educational provision. Another respondent (N2) provided a more resilient narrative suggesting adaptation by the field who stated that although pure "Masters in HRD has declined… increased provision of HRD [now occurs as it is] in [every] CIPD programme". The third respondent (N3), whose perspective was from the more dominant HRM field, provided a narrative imbued with a unitarist, harmonious, even 'romantic' (Clark

and Salaman 1998) stance. This narration emphasised that HRD is a "priority for CIPD" and that: "if there is an irreducible transformational core of HR it's the HRD space".

As the analysis progressed, all four authors reviewed and re-reviewed the transcribed data independently to identify and agree themes within the 'epic narratives' on which there was broad agreement or substantial overlap. Divergent and exceptional themes were discussed in order to ensure that important insights were not excluded. The resultant analysis highlights four interrelated themes concerning the relationship between HRD and HRM woven through those accounts. First, tensions inherent in professional education provision, second, that of HRD ceding control to, and becoming subjugated to, HRM; third, that of HRD's survival; and fourth, that of HRM and HRD having shared interests.

The social tensions of professional education

An area of similarity across all three narratives in relation to HRD professional education is a recognition of a tension between professional education as a basis for maintaining an 'elite' professional status in the HRD field, and the achievement of social aims of widening participation in professional education and practice. N3 and N1, for example, reflected on the opportunities presented by 'low-status' modes of study and provision of accessible qualification pathways through National Vocational Qualifications 'from a social inclusivity point of view… places where people can start off from a fairly unpromising origin and get to fairly senior levels and that should always be there'.

Subjugation

Both N1 and N2 emphasised the importance of professional education providers to improve the status of the field of HRD through developing Masters Programmes and described their

involvement in this activity in the late 1980s. They also related their participation in the founding of the UFHRD through the 'Euston Road Group' (a reference to the location in London at which the group met), formed in 1991 as a collaboration between HRD scholars, the ITD and the newly established UK National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ), the initial purpose of which was to regularise vocational training and education in UK (Stewart and Sambrook 2012; Reid et al. 2004). At the same time, N1 and N2 recalled initiatives to 'develop journals with HRD in the title' (N1) and 'developing [links] to HRD scholarly associations in the USA' (N2).

Within the narrative sense of 'epic' events in the field of initiation, change and struggle (Clark and Salaman 1998) the narrations of N1 and N2 communicate the speakers' predispositions towards the goal of professional independence. N1 highlighted the potential for autonomy and distinctiveness between HRD and HRM through the establishment of distinct HRD artefacts including books and scholarly journals and international collaboration between scholars enabled especially by the affiliation between the UK UFHRD and the AHRD, which is also represented in Asia. The narrative of N1 interpreted the `very key issue' of the merger of ITD and IPM (resulting in the CIPD) in the 1990s as a 'thwarting' of this pioneering work. N1's account describes deterioration and decline in the HRD profession following this pivotal event. This narration communicated N1's interpretation that the establishment of a UK professional body led to failure of the HRD professionalization project which made it 'much more difficult to get … HRD professional recognition, it never fully achieved that'. For N1, the merger represented a ceding of control of the professional education curriculum, with increasingly positivist and performative HRM-based assumptions for socialization into professional practice undermining the pluralist, developmental, interpretivist/constructionist paradigms that informed HRD professional education.

Survival

Whilst the narrative of 'subjugation' is evident from the analysis of the N1 transcript, N2, described the period since the ITD / IPM merger as 'HRD survival' rather than depicting it as decline.

The narrative of N2, whilst consistent with that of N1 in viewing the merger of ITD and IPM as pivotal for HRD professional education, also offered a different interpretation of the outcome, arguing that 'increased provision of HRD [now occurs as it is] in [every] CIPD programme'… such that 'the effect of that [merger] is that it has increased provision of an HRD education …nobody can get a CIPD approved [qualification] without human resource development'. Thus, the HRD field continues to inform specialist and generalist professional education curricula; N2 asserted that "the curriculum content has changed …will be very different to what people study in …a specialist HRD qualification now…".

Shared interests

A third narrative concerning the relationship between HRD and HRM was one of shared interests between the two fields with them having more in common than not, such that HRD has an essential role to play in their combined fate. For example, the data from N3 highlighted HRD field assumptions about learning, change, individual and organizational development as influential on the HRM professional paradigm since the formation of the CIPD. N3, a senior official of the CIPD (whose contributions were made having heard N1 and N2), emphasised positive outcomes of the IPM/ITD merger in the 1990s on professional practice. This challenged the view of N1 that the HRM field was 'trapped' in a 'business

performance model' underpinned by a managerial functionalist paradigm. It also presented a more optimistic view than that of N2's emphasis on (mere) survival. N3 suggested that; 'if there is an irreducible transformational core of HR it's the HRD space'. N3's narrative was characterised by reference to contemporary examples of important issues in the HRM field: 'if you look at engagement, if you look at employee relations, reward, if you even look at service delivery there's an HRD transformational way in which you can do things, it's very much about creating change, agility, adaptability, building trust, integrity…'.

Discussion

In this section we reflect on the meaning and implications of the data from both sources and in relation to the literature.

The data appear to support concerns about a reduction in the provision of professional education labelled explicitly as HRD in the UK. While directly comparative data were not available, Walton et al. (1995) indicated that 56 HEIs were offering Master's level programmes specifically focused on either HRD, Training and Development or HRD related areas. Our audit identified that this number had fallen to 11 institutions. Programmes in the whole field of HRM/HRD were offered by 72 HEIs. The CIPD HR Professional Map has an emphasis on values-based decision making (CIPD 2020), championing better work and working lives and, thus, appears to have a greater emphasis on HRD with concepts such as the development of professional values and behaviour including ways of thinking and acting, as compared to previous versions. This, to some degree, stems from research into HR professionalism (Baczor and Zheltoukhova 2017, 5) that identified a gap 'between the

ambition to uphold ethical values and actual practice' and a greater allegiance with the organisation than the profession, which differs from other research concerning professionalism where the opposite has been found (Gouldner 1957). Nevertheless, without the curricular implications it is not possible to know what influence this will have.

Later, we suggest that our audit be repeated in the 2024/25 academic year, when the latest version of the CIPD `profession map' should have begun to filter through to programme provision. As an indicative exercise for the purposes of this paper, in 2020 we revisited Master's provision by UK HEIs featuring the phrase `Human Resource Development' in programme titles. There is one new instance - that is, an institution that did not offer a programme with HRD in the title in 2014-15 and now does (Birkbeck, University of London). Of the 11 institutions offering such programmes in 2014/15, only 6 continue to offer programmes with HRD in the title. Of those 11 institutions, 4 continue to offer programmes with HRM in the title. In other words, those institutions are still providing professional education in the area of human resources but appear to have ceased to use the title `HRD'.

Furthermore, in contrast with professional education for traditional professions, very few 'top-ranked' and research-intensive institutions offer professional education in either the HRM or HRD fields. 13 HEIs listed in the 2019 Russell Group list (of 24) are included in the list of CIPD providers (18% of the 72). A further 11 of the HEIs offering CIPD programmes are not post-1992 institutions. This leaves 47 HEIs (65%) that are labelled as post-1992 Universities. This suggests that both HRM and HRD fields face status legitimacy challenges associated with their professional education programmes.

However, whether the reduction in HRD-titled programmes means that there has been a decline in HRD professional education provision overall is less easy to discern. The fact that the number of programmes using such specialist terms as titles outnumbers those using HRD suggests a fragmentation of the field into component activities - such as organizational design and development, coaching, leadership and change management. The lack of explicit linkage between educational provision and HRD as a profession also means that programmes can be undertaken by senior managers and others who are not necessarily HRD specialists. In other words, as noted by Auluck (2006), this may be associated with a dispersal of traditional HRD activities to line managers and outsourcing organizations.

This could be regarded as evidence of a decline in HRD per se. However, it may indicate a significant characteristic, affecting both HRD and HRM, which is that - certainly relative to more traditional, established professions - the field has a degree of porosity. The extent to which HEIs offer non-accredited programmes may indicate relatively weak boundaries in the field, in the sense that the CIPD clearly has only partial control over HRD professional education provision. For example, non-accredited courses will possibly not include the knowledge identified by the profession as deemed important to practice. Furthermore, there is no requirement for HRD functions in work organization to be undertaken by HRD professionals. Although membership of the CIPD is predicated on successful completion of an accredited form of professional education, there is no associated 'licence to practice' requirement in either the HRM and HRD fields (Pritchard 2010; Lengnick-Hall and Aguinis 2012).

Since the data for this study were gathered, researchers have focused on pedagogy in HRD education, particularly in relation to reflective learning are (Griggs, Holden, Rae, and

Lawless 2015) and the contribution of continuing professional development to the HR role (Mackay 2017) but no empirical studies have been published that analyse HRD professional education course provision. Therefore, the continuing effect of the porosity between the HRD and HRM boundaries that we identify here in relation to professional education, is an issue requiring further research attention.

Porosity means, among other things, that the boundaries of the field are inevitably weak. It is difficult for the CIPD, for example, to establish a clear distinction between work activities that lie inside and outside its remit and concomitantly, to approve and regulate the `professionals' by whom such activity can be carried out legitimately. There are few barriers to the movement of actors across those boundaries, hence managers (for example) can engage in learning and development activity without being HRD professionals or ever having undergone HRD professional education. Similarly, a freelance person can become qualified in coaching and practise as an executive coach without necessarily identifying with, or having any affiliation to, HRD as a profession.

This appears to represent what could be framed as a dilemma for HRD as a field. On the one hand, does HRD retain the aspiration to become an established, boundaried profession, with the knowledge that it may be in a weak position to do so - given, for example, the porosity of the field and its less dominant, albeit important, relationship to HRM within the CIPD? Or, on the other hand, does it embrace the benefits for the field of engaging a wider population in learning and development activity - such that a greater number of people working in organizations are `HRD literate' even if not HRD professionals?

The evidence from our study may suggest a tendency towards the latter scenario in practice. Yet this could mean that while HRD professional education for the purposes of establishing a definable, aspiring profession is in decline, HRD professional education may have become dispersed in a way that has the advantage of reaching a wider audience of organizational actors.

The symbiosis of HRD and HRM

To a large extent, existing theories of professionalization appear to rely on a binary distinction between 'success' and 'failure' in professionalization projects (Hodgson, Paton and Muzio 2015; Trede 2012). In our view, this struggles to account for the nuances of interdependence that appears to characterise the fields of HRD and HRM; for example, the presence of advantages as well as disadvantages, ambivalence about the desirability of professionalization for HRD and the mutuality and interdependence of the relationship between HRM and HRD.

Thus, a further theme for discussion is that of the relationship between HRD and HRM. The narrative analysis revealed three ways in which this relationship was framed by our key informants, those of subjugation, survival and shared interests. We offer an interpretation that may be capable of integrating those themes, which is that of the relationship between HRD and HRM as symbiotic.

The concept of symbiosis, of which there are three forms, comes from biology. The interdependence between HRD and HRM corresponds to the notion of `mutualism', which is

characterised by reciprocal and mutual benefit arising for both parties (the other two forms of symbiosis are parasitism, in which the host is harmed by the dependent organism; and commensalism, in which the host is unaffected). Thus HRD, in this instance the less dominant partner, is able to sustain its activities. At the same time, it assists HRM, the host profession, in its capacity to adapt to changes in external and, in an organizational environment, corporate conditions. Mutuality implies that both parties are better off together than becoming separate, yet they may still experience tensions and conflict.

This rejects a simplistic alignment with any of the stances in the narrative analysis, and at the same time allows all to co-exist. Thus it allows that the fields may at times be in opposition, with HRD subjugated to an HRM field 'trapped' in a 'business performance model' (N1) underpinned by a managerial functionalist paradigm (Brown, Caldwell, and White 2004); it allows that the merger resulting in the CIPD has enabled HRD to survive; and it allows that the relationship between HRM and HRD may sometimes be experienced as unitarist and harmonious, as in N3's possibly 'romantic' stance (Clark and Salaman 1998). The concept of symbiosis also has the distinct advantage over existing concepts (such as `emergent profession') that it enables the notion of `professionalization project' to become more nuanced and less mono-dimensional and normative. From this perspective, the prevalent notion of `emergent professions' (McEwen and Trede 2014; Young and Muller 2014) may be unhelpful as it implies that a profession will, or should eventually, succeed in `emerging' or 'failing' in this aspiration.

Describing HRD as a symbiotic profession in relation to HRM also entails a shift from the metaphor common to traditional theories of professionalization of a 'territorial campaign' characterised by struggle and contestation to occupy and control an autonomous professional

'space', to a focus on the ecology of `professionalising'. Significantly for HRD, we suggest, although a symbiotic profession might be considered to have failed in its professionalization project, paradoxically, a symbiotic profession can best succeed by failing to become a fully autonomous profession.

In particular we highlight three benefits to HRD of this `paradoxical failure'; first, HRM professional education includes a compulsory, foundational HRD curriculum; second, in matters of scholarship and knowledge generation HRD maintains considerable autonomy; third, HRD informs responses by the HRM field to changes in the corporate environment.

Those involved in professional education might, therefore, question the normative desirability of the achievement of absolute professional 'territorial' boundaries. Whilst scholars and professional organizations such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the Association for Talent Development (ATD) and the UK CIPD have continued to debate differences between the fields of HRD and HRM, these debates have had little resonance for many practitioners, many of whom self-identify with a professional practice generally concerned with people in work organizations, taking into account their management as well as their learning and development (Werner 2014).

Concerns will no doubt be raised that acknowledgement of its symbiotic status threatens to diminish the visibility of the label `HRD'. The stark reality seems to be that not only has the CIPD adopted the phrase `learning and development' in preference to `HRD' but also the number of UK HEIs offering HRD-titled Masters programmes has reduced by more than a third (from 11 down to 7) since our original audit. Such a decline in both practitioner and HE

professional education spheres may appear at odds with continued advocacy for `HRD' as the title of a distinct profession.

Limitations and Further Research

Whilst our analysis assesses audit data of programme provision it does not include information about numbers of students enrolled on professional education programmes. The qualitative data in this study are based on a small, purposive sample of field experts. Future research could expand on this, for example by gathering interview accounts from a larger sample.

Clearly our audit form 2014-15 would benefit from being repeated. We suggest that the most suitable opportunity may be after a decade, in the 2024/25 academic year, when the latest (2020) version of the CIPD `profession map' should have begun to filter through to programme provision.

As discussed, this paper has been concerned with a single country location. We have justified that focus, and have set the paper within its international (HRD) context, particularly with regard to the UK compared with the USA. An opportunity for further research is to investigate HRD educational provision internationally. Further research is also needed into the theory of professions and professionalization processes. We hope that future analyses and accounts of the field of HRD will question and critically examine assumptions that HRD should aspire to be an independent profession.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed a need (Zachmeier and Cho 2014) for research into professional education in Human Resource Development in the UK, which is timely in view of concerns about a perceived decline in the number of HRD professional education programmes in the UK in the 21st century (Stewart and Sambrook 2012; Stewart and Cureton 2014). Its aims were:

1. To establish the state of HRD professional education provision in the UK
2. To review the significance of changes in postgraduate HRD programme provision over the past 30 years
3. To reflect on the status of HRD in relation to HRM from the perspective of professional education
4. To identify implications of for the emerging field of HRD both in the UK and internationally.

The paper has reported findings from a mixed methods study comprising an audit of the postgraduate HRD programme provision in UK universities and a symposium at which the perspectives of key informants were captured.

The audit has provided a comprehensive database of HRD programme provision that may be used as a benchmark for future comparisons. The limited provision of Masters level HRD programmes in 2014-15 supports the 'reading' of an erosion of HRD professional status. Evidence of a declining use of the term `HRD' in programme titles since 2014-15 supports Stewart and Sambrook's (2012) observation that specialist qualification pathways (e.g. MSc in HRD) are becoming rarer, and that HRD education may be becoming more dispersed into

broader programmes of study that are not exclusively for HRD professionals. We raise the question of whether this may be a consequence of the field having porous boundaries over which associations such as the CIPD have limited control, and suggest that it represents a dilemma for HRD in terms of the future direction not only of educational provision but also the claim to be a distinct profession.

Narrative analysis of key informants' accounts of HRD professional education suggests that the relationship between HRD and HRM may be perceived in a variety of ways. We propose a reconciliation of those perspectives through the notion that the relationship between HRD and HRM is best described as symbiotic. A mutually beneficial interdependence, albeit one that also involves contestation and conflict, appears to exist between the HRM and HRD fields. However, this raises the possibility that, paradoxically, HRD can best succeed by failing to become a fully autonomous profession.

In summary, the paper makes four contributions. First, it provides knowledge about HRD programme provision in the UK. Second, it provides insight into the relationship between HRM and HRD professional education. Third, the paper poses questions for debate about the significance and implications for the field of HRD and proposes the concept of a symbiotic profession, to denote a profession that is sustained by its relationship with contiguous fields of professional practice. Finally, we suggest avenues for future research.

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Award focus	Example awards	Number CIPD accredited	Number non-CIPD accredited
HRM	MSc (HRM and Business); MA (Managing Human Resources)	59	2
HRD	MSc (HRD and Consultancy); MSc (Human Resource Development)	15	4
International HRM	MA (International HRM); MSc (International HRM); MSc (International HRM and Comparative Industrial Relations)	14	14
HRD related	MSc (Executive Coaching); MSc (Coaching and Development); MSc Organization Development and Consultancy; MEd (Training and Development); MSc (Leadership Development)	N/A	19
HRM related	MBA in HRM; MSc (HRM and Consulting); MSc (Organizational Change Management)	N/A	12
Total		88	51

Table 1: HRM and HRD Masters level awards

Programme title	HEIs (n)
Coaching and/or Mentoring	11
Organization development/organization change/consultancy	6
Skills and workforce development	1
Personal/professional/leadership development	4
Technology enhanced learning	1
Total	23

Table 2: Specialist terms appearing in programme titles

Mode	CIPD accredited (n)	CIPD accredited (%)	Non-accredited (n)	Non-accredited (%)
Part-time	109	57	29	44
Full-time	53	27	24	36
Burst (block)	8	4	5	8
Distance	11	6	5	8
On-line	-	-	2	3
Blended	12	6	1	1
Total	193	100	66	100

Table 3: Modes of delivery

Media	HEI (CIPD accredited)	HEI (Non-accredited)	Vocational College	Private Provider	n
Classroom / face to face	58	42	13	12	**100**
Online resources	16	11	3	7	**37**
Web-based discussions	3	6	1	3	**13**
Guest speakers	9	4			**13**
Field visits	5	6			**11**
Telephone	2	3		6	**11**
Email	1	3		6	**10**
Self-study resources	1	4		1	**5**
Conferences	1	0			**1**

Table 4: Learning Processes (as indicated by programme providers' web pages)