

## Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Concepts and Models for Virtual Organization Management: A Literature Review

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### Abstract

*Virtual groups have been defined to be an assemblage of persons that are physically or administratively separated but work together concurrently and cooperatively on job procedures through correspondences as well as information technology for achieving definite objectives. Managing a virtual remote workgroup is difficult and requires additional competences when compared to traditional management. Many managers are not capable of remote working or trained for such work situations leading to challenges associated with fulfilment of responsibilities. There is a need for managers to acquire fresh skill set. Understanding the unique social aspects and computer mediated technicalities encompassing management of virtual workforces will enhance organisational productivity likewise create an efficient human resource management (HRM) structure that can enhance attainments. This article is an integrative review of literatures aimed at expanding human resources management scope. In-depth investigations of human resource management literatures, research and theories and their application as well as study of applicable models and theoretical frameworks which can be used to comprehend the peculiar nature of virtual organizations was extensively explored. Findings recognized crucial tasks likewise opportunities emanating from contemporary situations that warrant virtual, remote working and suggestions were proffered that managerial staff and human resource executives can utilize for imminent circumstances that might require innovative work techniques for enhanced organizational performance. Pragmatic indications credibly prove that implementing strategic human resource management (SHRM) processes and strategies in virtual organizations adds value to organisational performances with reference to improved efficiency, greater viability, and reduced staff turnover level.*

**Keywords:** *Strategic Human Resource Management, Virtual Organizations.*

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### Introduction

Virtual organisations arose from demands by businesses to perform operations within rapidly inventive international markets where physical sites were non-existent although there were obligations to serve prospective consumers via cyberspace.

This multi-mode experience also requires careful human capital management and e-administrators' involvement in decisions that are complex. Managers have to improve their

decision-making speed because virtual enterprises do not require physical borders. Therefore, strategic management of virtual organization teams involves effective managerial communication with employees to achieve specific goals, forging connections, and fostering trust [1, 2].

Initially, many academics regarded virtual organizations as a brand-new type of organizational structure, more recent research has categorized them as extensions of already-

existing institutions rather than revolutionary organizational shifts. Progressive technological developments have offered improvement and chance to effective virtual, remote-working groups.

Virtual organisational constructs are being established through communication and shared technologies.

IoT makes remote connections simpler and more real thereby build trust within virtual groups. Coordination-based technologies enhance management and trust between team participants [3, 4].

Managers struggle to manage remote-working employees, leading to distrust. Managers must acquire virtual management skills to improve remote-working outcomes [5].

## Literature Review

Four types of virtual workers exist depending on locality and quantity of managers. Teleworkers, Remote groups, Matrixed teleworkers, and Matrixed remote groups are all types of remote groups [6]. Figure 1 shows the locations and number of managers with regards to each type of virtual workers.

According to [7], remote working can lead to conflicts, reducing efficiency and job value. Bad information-sharing, improper anticipations, and ambiguous accountability/power causes virtual group failure. Virtual remote work can be hindered by lack of technological knowhow, inability of virtual structures, and unsuitability of staff [8]. All these affect workers in various dimensions.

		<b>Managers</b>	
		<b>One</b>	<b>Multiple</b>
<b>Locations</b>	<b>One</b>	<b>Teleworkers</b>	<b>Matrixed Teleworkers</b>
	<b>Multiple</b>	<b>Remote Team</b>	<b>Matrixed Remote Teams</b>

**Figure 1.** Categories of Virtual Work; Source: Cascio and Shurygailo, 2003

Although various concerns and likely complications are encountered by virtual remote-working groups, huge opportunities are also available for them. Remote-working organisations have the following advantages: financial benefits due to lowered rental and facilities expenses; availability of global specialists which facilitates knowledge dissemination and transfer; and reduced response time to marketplace demands since employees can work all the time. Similarly, the

employees benefit from flexibility of working as well as elimination of commuting times and costs [9, 10].

A virtual organisation scheme, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), aimed at provision of vital information essential to top executives' decision-making process has outlined benefits of virtual establishments (see Table 1) which include organisational efficacy as well as enhanced work fulfilment. The project

demonstrated that workers' job outcomes improvement and their feeling being recognised by top-level management leads to greater job enthusiasm [2].

### Structures and Strategies in Virtual Organisations

Virtual organisations operate through the internet and distant computing. Virtual organisations use structures and strategies to achieve their objectives. Organisational structures, strategies, and performances are essential for effective virtual organisations [11] [12]. Organisational strategy theories applicable to virtual working include shared value, learning and micro-foundation. The shared-value theory proposes that organisations gain competitive advantage through solving public concerns [13]. The organisational learning strategy theory, invented by [14] postulates that organisations gain competitive advantage through education, knowledge sharing, and management. Knowledge sharing involves circulating existing expertise and getting new information. Virtual groups have diffused proficiencies and blended practices to create mutual learning [8]. Thus, technology advances enable access to big data for organisational expertise [15, 2]. On the other hand, the micro-foundation strategy theory

which originated from the social sciences focuses on the influence of facets such as culture, formation, practices, and capacities on communal working groups [16].

The finding of an investigation conducted by Harvard Business Review investigators to measure the impact of COVID-19 showed that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on employees' job, wellness, and efficiency, with 40% of executives and administrators lacking self-confidence in managing remote-working staffs. The overall result suggested deficient self-efficacy and contrary viewpoints in over 50% of surveyed individuals [5, 17].

Virtual groups have supplemental managerial difficulties different from conventional workers which require strategic human resource management and HR executives' specialised skills for setting explicit correspondence, cooperation, shared values likewise required results expectancies [18, 2]. Diverse linguistic proficiency levels, alongside the absence of oral hints, tonation and body languages can also act as barriers to effective communication between managers and subordinates leading to ambiguous expectations, reduced productivity, poor planning, delays, tensions, and aggravations [8].

**Table 1.** Virtual Organisations' Possible Impacts

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Operational</b>
Reduced expenses	Improved marketing personnel productivity
Improved profits	Higher job capacities
Decreased volume of amenities/offices block	Decreased working periods
Greater manageability through substituting fixed expenses with variable expenses	Enhanced value of services
<b>Consumer</b>	<b>Personnel Capacities</b>
Improved client satisfaction	Improved technologic capacity
Greater accessible periods	Higher flexibility amongst staffs
Enhanced worldwide appreciation of brands	Expanded aptitude levels
Increased excellent service provision	Enhanced work fulfilment
	Enhanced living condition
	A sense of managerial recognition
	Increased occupational employability

Source: D'Urso et al, 2015

## Managerial Issues Associated with Virtual Teams

Virtual groups are social systems that facilitate collaboration. Thus, virtual groups rely on access to quality data to deliver assignments. Virtual workgroups focus on individual advancement rather than direct authority. Managers must empower group participants to make decisions, preventing setbacks.

Due to the fact that virtual work settings have distinctive elements such as the requirement for self-governing, problems with creating trust and articulating control as well as vague correspondences, management approaches ought to recognise and accommodate such. It has been asserted that organisational management position changes to decision-making from interpersonal supervision implying the key managers' responsibility of exploiting major societal affiliations inside the system instead of merely offering tactical decision-making. Hence, managers of virtual communication systems might be deficient in established or administrative influence and thus unable to merely order directives for accomplishing strategic goals, accentuating the additional responsibility of accelerating and guaranteeing that virtual workers do not encounter challenges when performing assigned roles [8, 17].

Managing a virtual remote workgroup is difficult and requires additional competences when compared to traditional management. Many managers are not capable of remote working or trained for such work situations leading to challenges associated with fulfilment of responsibilities. There is a need for managers to acquire fresh skill set (Table 2) that will empower them to offer higher independence and trust to their workers in order to produce motivated employees, alongside enhanced welfare, and accomplishments [5, 17].

Accordingly, virtual organisational managers alongside having the aforementioned skill sets, should establish constant and transparent correspondence, possess the motivation to cooperate with each group member, have comprehensible anticipation about category of technologies and their uses, maintain approved definition of successfully completed assignments, team standards, tasks and assumptions treaty, joint answerability, precise timelines plus personal outcomes, organised documents, as well as group correspondence and products archives in order to produce group efficiency and accomplishment of objectives [18].

**Table 2.** Virtual Human Resources Managers Skill Set Requirements

S/N	Competences and Aptitudes
1.	<b>Communication Skills:</b> This is the highest degree of ability required of HR managers and essential for presenting clear, defined likewise correct procedures to the appropriate personnel.
2.	<b>Facilitation Skills:</b> It is an aptitude highly critical to the capability of facilitating virtual gatherings and obtaining individuals' loyalty. It is also vital to aiding the workforce to freely and publicly articulate their ideas
3.	<b>Information Technology Skills:</b> This expertise enables the effective utilisation of diverse technological devices and the ability to understand and adapt to newer technologies faster.
4.	<b>People Skills:</b> Due to the absence of physical spaces, knowing how to interact effectively with virtual staffs using appropriate people competencies is crucial to demonstrating sensitivity to their reactions.

Source: Törmänen, 2017

As technological inventions continue to offer extensive organisational potentials, advancing means of group interactions and connectivity, human resource managers, especially of virtual organisations, need to take into consideration transformational aspects such as communication, governance and technological shifts likewise developing trust, which influence remote working in order to expand the capacities within its current workers [19, 20].

### **Human Resource Management (HRM)**

Management is a process that occur universally within internal, societal, and governmental likewise organisational settings and generally described as human activities that take place when individuals assume accountability for actions and deliberately seek to influence their progress and effects. Simply defined, it is the endeavour of achieving activities through the help of human capital and other resources [21]. Human resource management (HRM) on the other hand, refer to wide-ranging and logical approaches towards recruiting and developing employees, and entails employing organisational designs and developmental policies and systems for providing facilities that improve the welfare of staffs. Human resource management seeks to assist organisations to attain their objectives through creating and executing human resource (HR) policies which can be incorporated into the overall strategy; promote advancement of a high-functioning philosophy; guarantee the existence of gifted, capable and involved individuals required by the establishment; creation of constructive employment relations, ethical administration as well as a mutually trusting atmosphere between executives and staffs [22].

HR specialists occupy an active position in contributing to organisational strategies creation, improving incorporated HR policies

likewise providing advisory support about maintaining fundamental principles alongside ethics, and also support improvement of organisational capacities to enable efficient performances, objectives accomplishments as well as collaborating with direct management in delivery of set objectives. Although human resource units formulate new guidelines likewise procedures, onus rests on administrators for execution. Thus, superior HR services depends on direct managers' improved performance as well as performance proprietorship. HR specialists manage hiring affiliations and their responsibilities differ depending on generalisation (directors, managers, officers), specialisation (directors of learning and development, talent management, compensations), operational position (administration, strategy, managerial), organisational requirements, top executives' perspectives regarding their inputs, operational environments, likewise individual competences. Consequently, they are able to become policymakers, collaborators, visionaries, transformative mediators, domestic advisors, implementers, and mentors [23].

A vital element of human resource worth constitutes the moral position taken to promote impartial and reasonable strategies and procedures for human administration, taking into consideration organisational and workers' concerns. Whereas privately employed HR professionals have the burden of promoting company pursuits alongside increasing shareholders' profit, those in the public segment have the stress of promoting organisational objectives. While HR appear to be linked to commitments of productivity thus presented as an organisation's financial driver, dissociating it from every link to wellbeing can result in risks of depending entirely upon its corporate attributes such that principles and accountability turns out to be non-compulsory [22, 24].



**Figure 2.** The Human Resource Management Framework; Source: Armstrong and Taylor, 2014

### **HRM Theories and Models for Virtual Organisational Management**

Human resource management (HRM) models, often viewed as being bipartite, can be categorised into 2, namely soft and hard models. Whereas the hard type underlines the insight in possessing HRM tactics complementary to an organisational total strategy, emphasise performance administration and dynamic procedure of staffs' management, the soft managerial strategy focuses on individuals as well as their self-governance, loyalty, and dependability. The Harvard model is a soft HRM model that is linked to human interactions efforts, utilises personal aptitudes as well as the McGregor's Theory Y viewpoint about people, and is connected to the notion of 'high-level dedication job structure that is intended to produce loyalty actions which are mainly self-governed instead of being supervised via exterior-based authorisations and tensions. Furthermore, the model emphasises organisational interactions that are reliant upon elevated trust degree and correlates to being adaptable and flexible indicating the vital managerial position of communication [25, 26].

A key HRM system characteristic which is incorporated into it, is its contextuality wherein HRM activities are conducted. HRM context refer to exterior and interior considerations and situations, for instance, social norms, regulations, employment marketplace and

industrial working environments that are applicable to managing human capital. The Harvard model provides a systemic HRM standpoint stating that every component of the model work together in a way where the entirety is superior to totalling up some components, and furthermore postulates that work settings holds great influence on ways of comprehending HRM, the stakeholders intended to be dealt with, which procedures are valid as well as likely consequences of the procedures. This systemic viewpoint proposes fostering harmonisation likewise managing human resources comprehensively [27, 28].

According to the Harvard model, HRM should make inputs into employees' lifelong welfare; thus, a superior operational job structure which produce great fiscal proceeds yet results in tension and poor health is not considered a satisfactory HRM arrangement. Also, as establishments get authenticity from the society, the Harvard model expects HRM resolutions to have enduring societal gains [29]. The earliest HRM concept has solid hypothetical foundation and rely greatly upon dedication and motivative notions obtained from organisational behavior discipline. One of such theories that have particularly contributed to comprehending HRM objective and implication is the 'Resource-based view' theory which allude to competitive advantage being only achievable when organisational assets are precious,

uncommon and pricey to replicate. This theory asserts that HRM occupy the vital role of assuring that organisational human resources fulfil these requirements [30] [31]. Other notable theories applicable to this subject are: the AMO theory which maintains that achievements result from managers' Ability plus Motivation plus Opportunity to Participate in HRM actions, and that HRM systems thus influence personal accomplishments when they promote flexible work, enhance competences likewise offer individuals with likelihoods of achievements; and the Social Exchange Theory which

postulates that contributions between organisations and workers would be reciprocal if staffs recognise that their workplaces are beneficent towards them [32] [33]. The Contextual Model of HRM is a wider model that integrates the HRM structure with the environment where it is established. This model highlights the significance of environmental elements like social, institutional and political likewise exterior and interior stakeholders and how they influence implementation of HRM strategies [22, 34].

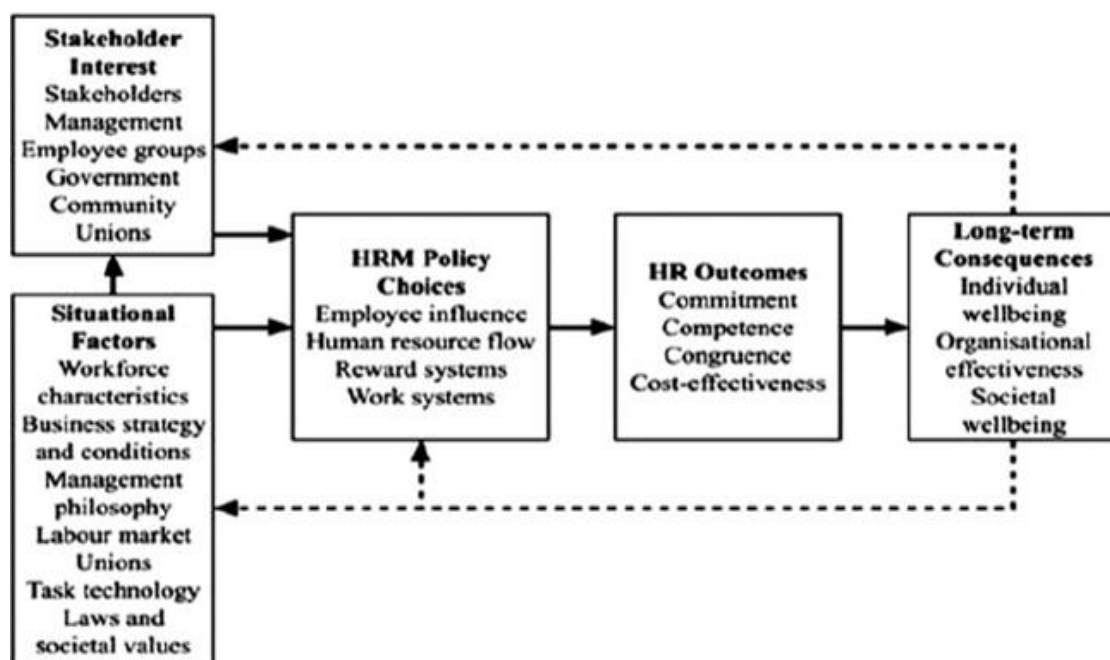


Figure 3. The Harvard Model of HRM; Source: Beer et al, 1985

Currently, human resource (HR) experts' requirements are enormous with reference to abilities and anticipated actions and successful HR functioning are assessed based on efficacious organisational development instead of just having people competences. A top performing organisation does not result from merely possessing an assortment of thoroughly planned human resource guidelines and procedures but from wherein the guidelines and procures are executed. However, human resource units are so far considered to have bureaucratically functional roles, instead of

strategical, that renders HR especially lacking [35, 36].

The [37] 5-P Model of SHRM can be used to analyse the HR Philosophy, Policies, Programmes, Practices and Processes of virtual organisations in order to decide the best managerial approach to implement. HR philosophy refer to declarations about ways that organisations consider their human resources, roles played by the human assets in total organisational accomplishments as well as ways to handle and manage them; HR policies present regulations for acting on personnel-associated corporate matters and for creating HR schemes

and practices that are centered around strategic demands; HR programmes are those designed using HR procedures and entail organised HR efforts aimed at initiating and managing organisational change endeavours triggered via tactical corporate requirements; HR practices are actions conducted while executing HR guidelines and plans, and involve assigning resources, training and development, managing of achievements and incentives, staff interactions, and management; HR processes comprise of official systems and techniques utilised for putting HR tactical schemes and regulations into action [22]. The 5-P strategic human resource management model is further useful for formulating corporate goals which are then streamed into the model's five elements, thus facilitating establishment of their HRM [38].

### **Effective Collaborations in Virtual Organisations: Managerial and Technological Perspectives**

Virtual group collaboration can be viewed from two angles, namely the technological and the managerial viewpoints respectively. Technologically, effective collaboration is reliant upon a match between present undertaking and the information technology involved. Additionally associated determining factors include the following: kind of information involved whether scripted, spoken or body language; materialistic attribute of data interchange if synchronic or asynchronic; and information's formational quality, whether structured or not structured. On the other hand, successful virtual collaborations viewed from the managerial standpoint relies upon how coordinated the responsibilities assigned to virtual group participants are. Further supplementary factors incorporate: Group formation, which is related to whether the duties assigned to virtual group members are comprehensible, well-defined and planned with objectives continually revised; Trust and unity creation, consisting of developing social

relationships based on emotive and cultural understanding and intellectual trust that is reliant upon choosing individuals that are specialists; and Contextual conformism, facilitated through management that is either linked to one individual or alternated between virtual team members depending on every assignment's prerequisites [39-41].

Collaborative techniques are affected via contextual factors. Hence, effective collaborative endeavours, which should highlight group productivity instead of focusing on organisational achievements, must consider two aspects which are: group qualities and knowledge-sharing attribute (see figure 5 below). Additionally, virtual working groups collaborative achievements are assessed based on conditions like efficacy, value and outputs while the personal achievements within groups evaluated using degree of satisfaction, status and education. Measurements also include evaluating if the group is satisfied with working with each other and if they will contemplate collaborating together on upcoming tasks. Similarly, the organisation could measure its collaborative achievements by estimating if the benefits accrued has prospects of increasing financial value [42].

Group qualities involve the virtuality level which indicate that e-communication nature is linked to a continuum rating and the higher the degree of virtuality, the greater necessity for collaborative arrangements. Also, the further complicated a role is, the higher requirement for conducting collaborations via thorough synchronising meetings because of the elevated interdependency among group participants. Furthermore, the longer the duration of virtual collaboration amongst group members, the lesser the need for members to be anonymous whilst group character become additionally stronger. Regarding knowledge-sharing attributes, it has been suggested that virtual group members advance collaborative efforts dependent upon knowledge-sharing activities. Nevertheless, achieving seamless knowledge-



sharing procedures is a herculean task as most responsibilities assigned to virtual groups has no regular path and the transient attribute of virtual groups restricts accumulation of mutual knowledge. Consequently, this stresses the necessity of establishing a knowledge-sharing ethos likewise becoming familiar with usage of technological devices that mediates knowledge distribution [42, 43].

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that formalising collaborative procedures can result in possibilities of reducing the amount of work that virtual managers' do if incorporated into technology-driven alliances. Furthermore, it can allow managers to concentrate on trust creation and enhancing group formations. Conclusively, if diverse management techniques and technological advances are integrated, virtual collaborations can be improved upon.

The framework above demonstrates a need to create an atmosphere with a network of psychological security that enhance group interactions at the start of virtual remote-work and continually expanding interpersonal advancement as well as trust creation which constitute a key group operational aspect. Similarly, virtual groups require trainings about best practices for successful virtual engagement as it must not be assumed that the employees have prior knowledge on how to function in such peculiar work settings. In line with this, managers must also recognise distinctive virtual groups concerns and handle them appropriately. However, it must also be understood that not

every individual is mentally suited for virtual work because of what it demands. Furthermore, foundational guidelines regarding correspondence types and medium should be established to prevent confusions about instructions and job expectations. This should be based on well-known procedures that have produced outstanding results and correct technological equipment and devices made available to facilitate the whole process. Onus rests on a manager of virtual remote-working groups to be a good example of knowledge-sharing who can deliver important concepts correctly and likewise emphasise similar knowledge-sharing technique among group participants. Functional and social standards, duties and obligations expected of virtual group workers must be openly and unambiguously delivered to the group and this ought to be very coordinated as well as unanimously accepted. Finally, managers of virtual remote employees must concentrate on incorporated communal improvement instead of creating immediate dominances, and also enable individuals by shifting power to group participants through delegation. Inability of them to do so can result in decision-making delays which can demoralise virtual staffs who are usually ambitious with elevated independence degree. When managers of virtual remote-working groups are able to identify and encourage budding leaders, organisational management position shifts towards managing interpersonal relationships rather than making judgements only [8].

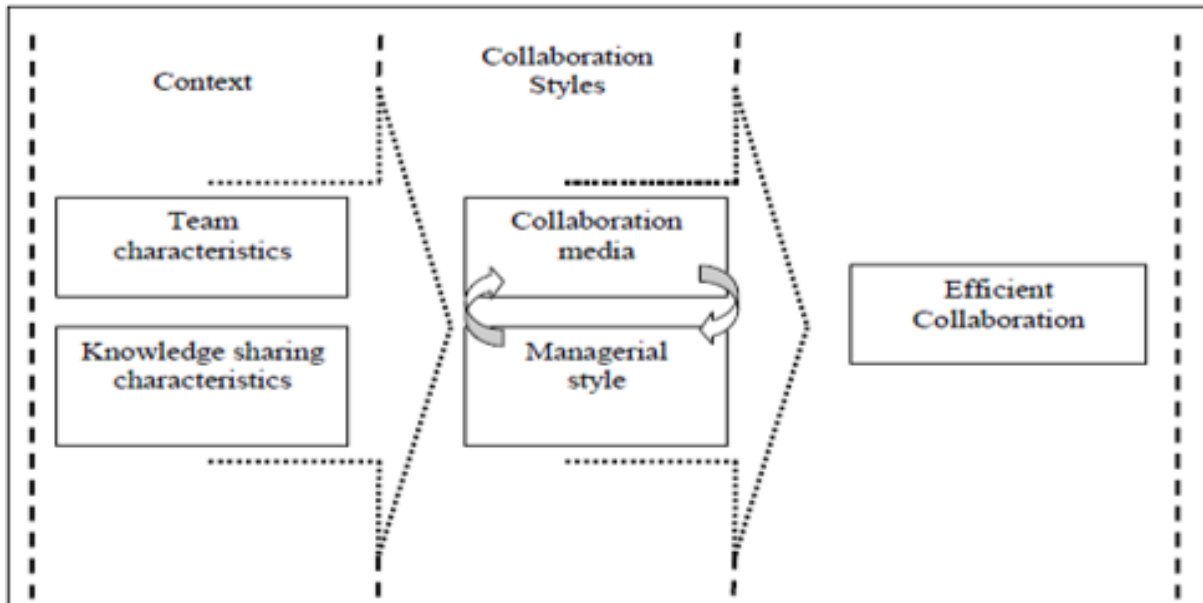


Figure 4. Theoretical Pathway to Efficient Group Collaboration; Source: Karoui, Güerkan and Duderzert, 2010

### Propositions for Management of Virtual Groups

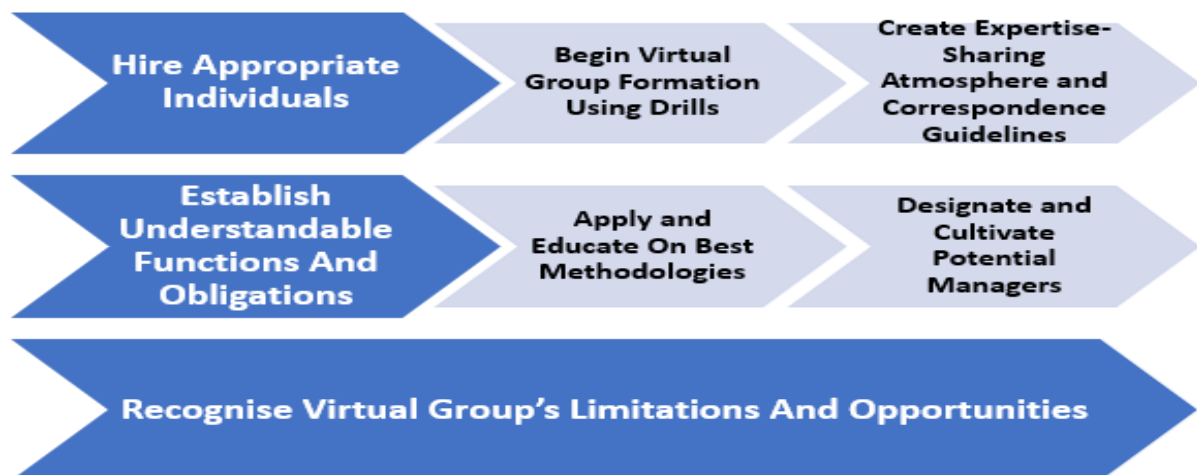


Figure 5. Virtual Employees Management Approach; Source: Törmänen, 2017

### Conclusion

Human resource management (HRM) is characterised by tactical, incorporated, and articulate staffing, growth as well as welfare approaches towards individuals employed within organisations and involves administrative deployment of activities, expertise, capacities and dedicated actions that staffs provide to a firmly controlled human venture. The four objectives of human resource management, which purposes to attain a societally valid labour administration scheme, are: tactical incorporation, high-level dedication, superior

standard likewise adaptability. In the same vein, strategic human resource management (SHRM), best expressed as a procedure, is a system that develops and implements HRM strategies. The goal of SHRM is to be a vehicular channel that stimulates and institutionalise transformation processes for impendency [22]. Numerous theoretical and experiential publications that investigates the link between SHRM and operation emerged in the 90s' resulting in investigative studies about the task of the human resource operational fitting betwixt SHRM, as well as varieties of related elements such as

external and internal environs, procedures likewise organisational managerial legacy [29].

Transforming human resource management (HRM) and technological advances currently widens HRM system geographic frontiers while gaps among and within establishments are being diminished. As a result of varied technology progress, establishment can provide workers with novel functioning methods through removal of geographic likewise duration obstacles while depending upon administrative arrangements like HRM allocated facilities, virtual groups and cybercommuting which results in incorporation of technology-facilitated organisation types and participants during HRM activities. Thus, workers, managers, management executives and directors are instantaneously engaged in collaborative HRM design [27].

Since globalisation, information technologies and emergent issues such as the current COVID-19 pandemic has altered ways by which organisations currently work. Thus, the need has arisen to retrain managers and executive to adequately deal with the obstacles to virtual remote-working and enhance their capability to modify their organisational HRM system for improved organisational performances. It is suggested that research be conducted into adoption of 'high-performance human resource

practices' (HPRPs) means of managing virtual remote-working groups which have been confirmed to foster enhanced organisational achievements and improved human resource efficiency. Furthermore, it is argued that switching employees from remote working to conventional work practices can affect output and viability. Thus, training and development needs of virtual managers and human resource departments executive ought to be assessed in order to gather necessary data and evidence of best practices for ensuring efficient remote-working strategies.

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