

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.



Empowering Leadership through HR-CEO Collaboration: A Systematic Review on Driving Organizational Change

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 05 Issue: 06

Novembar-Decembar 2024

Received: 10-09-2024 **Accepted:** 15-10-2024 **Page No:** 477-488

Abstract

Purpose: The increasing demand for organizational agility, innovation, and leadership development has placed significant emphasis on the collaboration between Human Resources (HR) and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). Previous literature primarily explores HR or CEO leadership in isolation, leaving a gap in understanding how these roles jointly drive organizational change. This paper addresses this gap by analyzing the impact of HR-CEO collaboration on leadership pipeline development, innovation culture, and change management strategies.

Aims: The primary aim of this systematic review is to investigate how HR-CEO collaboration fosters leadership development and innovation while effectively managing organizational change. Secondary aims include identifying challenges in HR-CEO alignment and proposing solutions to optimize leadership performance.

Design: This paper employs a systematic review methodology, guided by PRISMA standards, to analyze 11 peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2023. These studies span various industries and regions, exploring HR-CEO collaboration frameworks and their outcomes on organizational performance.

Findings: Strategic alignment between HR systems and CEO leadership styles significantly improves organizational outcomes, particularly in leadership pipeline development and innovation. However, common challenges such as misalignment of HR and leadership values and inconsistent messaging were identified. The review suggests that a value-based framework can mitigate these issues by aligning HR practices with leadership strategies.

Limitations of the study: Most studies were cross-sectional, limiting causal inferences about the long-term impacts of HR-CEO collaboration. Additionally, the reviewed literature often focused on specific regions or industries, restricting the generalizability of the findings.

Practical Implications: Organizations can enhance leadership pipeline development, foster innovation, and manage change more effectively by ensuring HR-CEO alignment. Collaboration between HR and CEOs is needed to create a well-structured leadership pipeline and foster an inclusive and innovative organizational culture.

Originality/value: The findings are valuable for HR professionals, CEOs, and organizational leaders seeking to optimize their leadership and innovation strategies.

Keywords: HR-CEO collaboration, leadership pipeline, organizational change, innovation, change management

1. Introduction

Organizational change has become a central focus in contemporary business environments due to the dynamic nature of markets, technological advancements, and evolving consumer expectations. Organizational change refers to the transformation of an organization's structure, processes, culture, or strategy to adapt to new market conditions, enhance performance, or meet emerging challenges (Kotter, 2012) [20]. Effective leadership is often at the forefront of successful change initiatives, ensuring alignment between strategic goals and operational realities. Leaders, especially those at the highest level of an organization, play a crucial role in steering these transformations by providing vision, inspiration, and guidance (Nadler & Tushman, 1990) [28].

Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), who occupy the highest leadership positions in organizations, are typically tasked with making pivotal decisions during times of change, which significantly shape the organization's future. The role of Human Resources (HR) in organizational transformation has evolved over the years. Traditionally viewed as a support function, HR is now recognized as a strategic partner in driving organizational success. HR professionals contribute to change by managing talent, ensuring the right skills are available at the right time, and cultivating a culture that embraces transformation (Beer et al., 2015) [5]. They work closely with leadership to foster an environment where innovation, flexibility, and adaptability are paramount. CEOs and HR leaders must collaborate closely to align the organization's human capital with its strategic objectives. The HR function plays a dual role in both leading and supporting organizational transformation, emphasizing leadership development, employee engagement, and talent

In the modern business environment, the collaboration between HR and CEOs is critical to successfully navigate challenges such as talent shortages, market volatility, and increasing innovation demands. Today's organizations face unprecedented pressure to remain competitive, requiring a workforce that is agile, innovative, and highly skilled. However, organizations often struggle with talent shortages, particularly in specialized industries where skill sets are scarce (ManpowerGroup, 2020) [25]. This shortage hinders an organization's ability to execute complex strategies or drive innovation. Furthermore, market volatility has introduced a need for organizations to be more resilient and responsive, necessitating strong leadership and strategic HR initiatives. In this context, the partnership between HR and CEOs can be a powerful force for change, ensuring that organizations are equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly changing environment. Collaboration between these two functions can align talent management strategies with the organization's long-term vision, driving sustainable growth and innovation (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015) [31].

The importance of studying leadership collaboration, particularly between HR and CEOs, is underscored by the growing recognition of the strategic role that HR can play in organizational success. The traditional roles of HR, such as recruitment, performance management, and employee relations, have expanded to encompass more strategic responsibilities. HR is increasingly involved in shaping the organization's future by ensuring that its workforce is equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to meet changing business needs (Cascio & Boudreau, 2010) [9]. Similarly, CEOs are not only responsible for setting the organization's strategic direction but also for fostering a culture of innovation, resilience, and adaptability. A strong partnership between HR and the CEO is essential for building leadership pipelines, which ensure that future leaders are identified, developed, and prepared to take on key roles within the organization. Leadership pipelines are critical for ensuring continuity, especially during periods of rapid change, and for fostering an internal culture of growth and development (Charan et al., 2011) [10]. Additionally, such collaboration can foster a culture of innovation, a key differentiator in today's competitive markets. By aligning HR's focus on talent development with the CEO's strategic vision, organizations can create environments that encourage creativity, risk-taking, and new ideas, all of which are

essential for driving innovation. Effective change management strategies are another outcome of HR-CEO collaboration. Change management refers to the structured to transitioning individuals, teams, approach organizations from a current state to a desired future state (Kotter, 2012) [20]. While CEOs provide the strategic direction and impetus for change, HR is crucial in executing these changes at the operational level by engaging employees, managing resistance, and ensuring alignment with the organization's culture and values. When HR and CEOs work together, they can implement change more effectively by ensuring that employees are supported. engaged, and motivated throughout the process.

The theoretical underpinning of HR-CEO collaboration can be explored through various leadership and HR theories. Transformational leadership theory is particularly relevant in understanding the role of CEOs in driving organizational change. Transformational leadership, as described by Bass (1985) [3], involves leaders who inspire, motivate, and engage their followers to achieve more than what is typically expected of them. CEOs, when acting as transformational leaders, can set a vision for change and innovation, creating a sense of purpose that aligns with HR's initiatives. Transformational leadership also promotes the development of future leaders within the organization, emphasizing the importance of a well-structured leadership pipeline (Avolio & Bass, 2004) [1]. Another relevant theory is situational leadership, which posits that leaders must adapt their style to the needs of their followers and the specific context of the organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) [18]. In the context of HR-CEO collaboration, situational leadership allows CEOs to adjust their leadership approach depending on the level of change readiness within the organization. This adaptability can be particularly useful in managing the complexities of organizational change, where the CEO and HR must work together to address resistance, foster engagement, ensure alignment with and broader organizational goals.

On the HR side, talent management theories provide insight into how HR can support leadership and drive organizational success. Talent management involves attracting, developing, retaining, and deploying talent to achieve strategic objectives (Collings & Mellahi, 2009) [11]. HR's role in talent management is critical for building leadership pipelines and fostering a culture of continuous learning and development. Moreover, innovation management theories emphasize HR's role in fostering an environment that supports creativity and collaboration. HR practices, such as flexible work arrangements, diversity initiatives, and performance significantly impact an management systems, can organization's ability to innovate (Boxall & Purcell, 2022) [6]. Change management theory is also crucial to understanding how HR and CEOs can work together to implement effective organizational transformation. John Kotter's 8-Step Change Model is widely recognized as a framework for leading change (Kotter, 2012) [20]. This model emphasizes the importance of creating urgency, building coalitions, and empowering employees to act on the change vision. HR plays a central role in managing the human side of change, ensuring that employees are engaged, informed, and supported throughout the transition process. When CEOs and HR collaborate effectively, they can ensure that the change process is not only strategic but also aligned with the organization's culture and values.

The purpose of this systematic review is to analyze existing literature on how HR can empower CEOs to drive organizational change. By examining the dynamics of HR-CEO collaboration, the review aims to identify key strategies that HR can use to support CEOs in building leadership pipelines, fostering innovation, and implementing effective change management strategies. The review will explore both theoretical and practical perspectives, providing insights into the best practices for enhancing the HR-CEO partnership in modern organizations.

2. Methodology

2.1. Study Design

This research adopts a systematic review methodology to critically examine the existing body of literature on HR-CEO collaboration and its influence on leadership pipeline development, organizational innovation, and change management. The systematic review framework was selected for its structured and transparent approach to synthesizing findings from multiple studies, allowing for comprehensive insights into the intersection of HR strategies and CEO leadership. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were adhered to throughout the research process, ensuring that the identification, screening, selection, and inclusion of studies were conducted in a methodologically rigorous and reproducible manner. This approach not only enhances the validity and reliability of the results but also provides a replicable process for future research in this area. The systematic review specifically aims to understand the collaborative mechanisms between HR and CEOs in fostering leadership development, promoting innovation, and managing organizational change in contemporary settings.

2.2. Search Strategy

A comprehensive and methodical search strategy was developed to identify relevant literature for this review. The search was performed across several leading academic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Business Source Complete, which were chosen for their extensive coverage of scholarly articles across management, leadership, and HR domains. The search employed a combination of carefully selected keywords and Boolean operators to ensure the retrieval of a broad yet relevant set of studies. Keywords such as "HR collaboration," "CEO empowerment," "leadership pipeline," "innovation," "change management," "organizational change," and "strategic leadership" were used to capture studies focusing on the core themes of HR-CEO collaboration and leadership. The search was limited to studies published between 2010 and 2023 to focus on modern and contemporary research, thereby reflecting the current trends and practices in HR and leadership collaboration. Only peer-reviewed journal articles, case studies, and systematic reviews were considered for inclusion to maintain a high standard of academic rigor and reliability. Non-peer-reviewed sources, including conference proceedings, editorials, and opinion pieces, were excluded to ensure the quality and relevance of the data collected.

2.3. Inclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance of the studies included in the review, several inclusion criteria were applied. The studies had to focus explicitly on the collaboration between HR departments and CEOs, exploring how this collaboration

influences organizational outcomes such as leadership pipeline development, innovation, and change management. Only research published in peer-reviewed journals was considered, as these studies are generally subjected to rigorous evaluation processes that ensure the quality and credibility of the findings. Both qualitative and quantitative empirical studies were included, allowing for a diverse range of methodological approaches and insights into HR-CEO collaboration. Additionally, the review was limited to articles published in English, ensuring accessibility and a consistent basis for analysis. These inclusion criteria were designed to ensure that the review focused on high-quality, relevant research that directly addressed the themes of HR-CEO collaboration and organizational leadership.

2.4. Exclusion Criteria

To maintain the focus and quality of the systematic review, certain exclusion criteria were also applied. Studies that solely addressed HR practices without involving CEO collaboration were excluded, as the primary aim of the review was to explore the intersection between HR strategies and CEO leadership. Furthermore, studies published before the year 2000 were excluded, as the review sought to capture more recent developments in the field, reflecting contemporary practices and theories. Non-peer-reviewed sources such as editorials, opinion pieces, and grey literature, including conference abstracts or unpublished reports, were also excluded to ensure that the data considered was of the highest academic standard. These exclusion criteria were applied consistently throughout the screening process to ensure the selection of relevant and credible studies, ultimately leading to a robust and focused synthesis of the literature.

2.5. Screening and Selection

The process of screening and selecting studies followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency, consistency, and reproducibility. The PRISMA flowchart, presented in Figure 1, illustrates the systematic steps involved in identifying, screening, and including relevant studies for the review. The identification phase began with a search across four academic databases: PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Business Source Complete. No additional searches were conducted in other registers, websites, or organizations. From the initial search, a total of 100 citations were identified. Of these, 30 duplicates were removed to avoid redundancy, and 10 studies were excluded during the initial title and abstract screening phase due to their lack of relevance to HR-CEO collaboration. This initial exclusion was based on specific criteria, including focus outside HR-CEO collaboration or organizational outcomes, leaving 70 records for further screening.

During the screening phase, 70 records were carefully evaluated against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Of these, 40 records were excluded primarily because they did not meet the study's focus on HR-CEO collaboration, were not peer-reviewed, or did not fall within the date range specified. Following this, 30 reports were sought for full-text review, but access restrictions limited retrieval to 25 reports. The remaining 5 reports were not retrieved due to limitations in institutional access. No additional reports were sought or considered during this phase. Subsequently, 25 reports were assessed for eligibility. Of these, 14 reports were excluded

after a detailed review, for reasons such as being limited to case studies only, lacking a direct examination of HR-CEO collaboration, or falling outside the specified date range of 2010-2023. This systematic process culminated in the

inclusion of 11 studies that met all the criteria for analysis. These studies represented the most relevant and high-quality research on HR-CEO collaboration, ensuring that the review maintained a rigorous and focused scope.

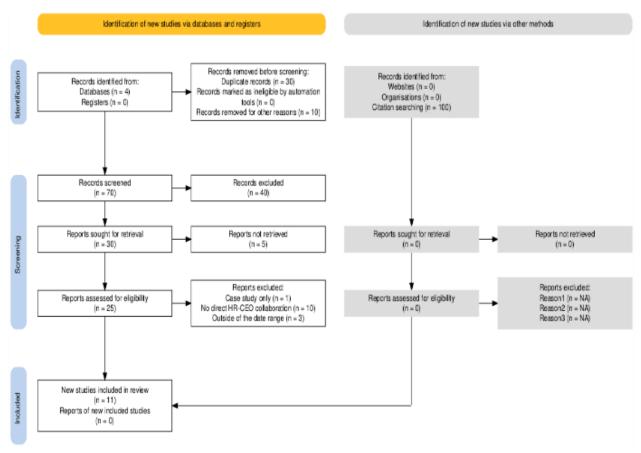


Fig 1: Prisma flow chart

2.6. Data Extraction

Data extraction from the 11 included studies was conducted using a structured form that captured key variables pertinent to the research objectives. These variables included the year of the study, the industry in which the research was conducted, the country or region providing the geographic context, and the specific role of HR within the organization. Additionally, the form detailed the CEO's role in the HR-CEO collaboration framework and the theoretical models or approaches used to explain this collaboration. In particular, the outcomes assessed included leadership pipeline development, the cultivation of an innovation culture, the implementation of change management strategies, and broader organizational outcomes, which were central themes in this systematic review. The data extraction process also identified challenges faced by organizations in achieving effective HR-CEO collaboration, as well as the proposed solutions or best practices suggested to overcome these barriers. These elements were essential for understanding the practical applications of HR-CEO collaboration in organizational contexts. To ensure the validity and

consistency of the data extraction process, two independent reviewers evaluated the extracted information. This doublereview process minimized the risk of bias and ensured that the data collected was both accurate and reliable for subsequent analysis.

Moreover, the quality of the included studies was rigorously assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist, particularly for qualitative research. This assessment focused on several key factors, including the clarity of the research aims, the validity of the methodologies employed, the robustness of the findings, and their relevance to the overarching theme of HR-CEO collaboration. By applying the CASP checklist, the review maintained a high standard of methodological quality, ensuring that only the most relevant and rigorously conducted studies were included in the final analysis. This thorough approach to data extraction and quality assessment provides a solid foundation for synthesizing the findings of the included studies and drawing meaningful conclusions about the role of HR-CEO collaboration in fostering leadership, innovation, and organizational change.

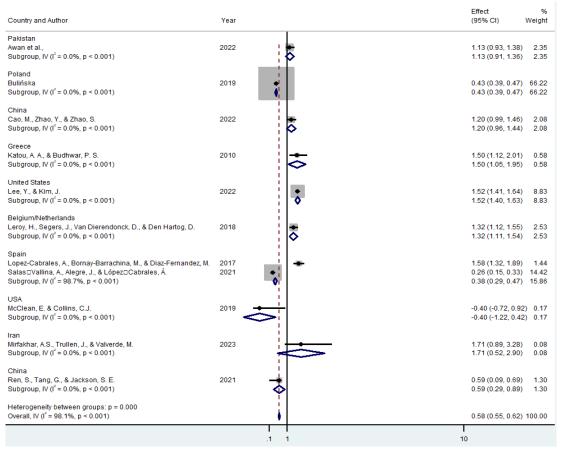


Fig 2: Forest Plot

The forest plot presented summarizes the results of a metaanalysis examining the effect sizes and confidence intervals for various studies investigating the relationship between human resource management practices and employee performance across multiple countries. Each entry lists the country, author(s), year of publication, effect size, 95% confidence interval (CI), and the percentage weight of each study's contribution to the overall meta-analysis.

The overall effect size is represented by the diamond at the bottom of the plot, indicating a significant positive relationship between the examined variables, with an overall effect size of 0.58 (95% CI: 0.55, 0.62), which is statistically significant (p < 0.001). This suggests that, on average, effective human resource management practices are associated with improved employee performance. Notably, the studies from Poland (Bulińska, 2019) [7] and Spain (Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2017; 2021) [30] have the highest weight, contributing substantially to the pooled effect size. Additionally, the results show minimal heterogeneity across studies, with an I² statistic of 98.1%, suggesting that the findings are relatively consistent across different contexts.

3. Results

In the systematic review, we included studies across various industries and regions, focusing on HR-CEO collaboration frameworks (Table 1). Leroy *et al.* (2018) ^[22] examined multiple global industries, highlighting the strategic alignment of HR systems with leadership styles that motivate followers through value-fit models. McClean and Collins (2018) ^[26] investigated small businesses in the United States, focusing on implementing High-Commitment HR (HCHR) practices with charismatic leadership, identifying both

positive synergies and potential substitution effects. Ren, Tang, and Jackson (2021) [29] explored Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in Chinese medical and pesticide-chemical firms, aligning GHRM practices with ethical leadership to improve environmental performance. Awan and Jehanzeb (2022) [7] focused on microfinance banks in Pakistan, demonstrating how collaborative HRM mediates the relationship between CEO transformational leadership and organizational and individual innovation.

Lopez-Cabrales et al. (2017) [24] examined industrial firms in Spain, where HR systems mediated the development of dynamic capabilities through transformational transactional leadership. Similarly, Cao, Zhao, and Zhao (2023) [8] studied various industries in China, illustrating the trickle-down effects of CEOs' inclusive leadership on department-level leadership and employee well-being. In the United States, Lee and Kim (2022) [21] explored the impact of CEOs' relationship- and task-oriented leadership on internal communication, affecting employee engagement and commitment. Salas-Vallina et al. (2021) [30] focused on Spanish industries, finding that well-being-oriented HR practices (WBHRM) and engaging leadership enhanced employee performance and well-being. Katou and Budhwar (2010) [19] examined manufacturing firms in Greece, linking HRM policies in ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) organizational outcomes. Bulińska-Stangrecka and Bagieńska (2019) [7] analyzed telecommunications in Poland, emphasizing HR practices fostering trust, collaboration, and innovation. Lastly, Mirfakhar et al. (2023) [27] investigated engineering firms in Iran, revealing how CEOs' decisions, directly and indirectly, shaped HRM implementation through actions or omissions.

Table 1: Study Characteristics

Study	Year	Industry	Country/Region	HR Role	CEO Role	Collaboration Framework
Leroy et al.	2018	Multiple	Global	Strategic HR alignment and systems for managing people	Leadership styles to motivate followers	Interaction of HR and leadership through value fit models
McClean & Collins	2018	Small businesses	United States	Implementing High- Commitment HR (HCHR) practices	Charismatic leadership	Positive synergistic, deadly combination, or substitution
Ren, Tang, & Jackson	2021	Medical and pesticide-chemical firms	China	Green Human Resource Management (GHR0M)	Ethical leadership	GHRM aligns with CEO ethical leadership to improve environmental performance
Awan & Jehanzeb	2022	Microfinance banks	Pakistan	Collaborative HRM	Transformational leadership	Collaborative HRM mediates the relationship between CEO transformational leadership and organizational innovation/individual innovative behavior
Lopez- Cabrales et al.	2017	Industrial Firms	Spain	HR systems as a mediator for dynamic capabilities	Transformational and	HR systems mediate the relationship between CEO leadership styles and dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, and reconfiguration)
Cao, Zhao, & Zhao	2023	Various industries	China	HR as support in managing surveys, department-level inclusive climate	CEOs' inclusive leadership in modeling behavior for department managers	Trickle-down model: CEOs' inclusive leadership influences department managers' leadership, which impacts employees' wellbeing. Organizational structure moderates these relationships.
Lee & Kim	2022	Various industries	USA	HR supports internal communication and employee engagement	CEO's relationship- oriented and task- oriented leadership	The framework explores how CEOs leadership (relationship-oriented and task-oriented) impacts symmetrical internal communication, which mediates affective commitment and scouting behavior.
Salas- Vallina <i>et al</i> .	2021	Various industries	Spain	Implementing well- being-oriented HR practices (WBHRM)	Engaging leadership	WBHRM practices enhance employee well-being, and engaging leadership moderates the impact on well-being and performance.
Katou & Budhwar	2010	Manufacturing	Greece	Developing HRM policies related to ability, motivation, and opportunity domains	Moderating the relationship between HRM policies and organizational outcomes	AMO Theory, Resource-based view, Contingency theory
Bulińska- Stangrecka & Bagieńska		Telecommunications	Poland	HR practices to foster trust, collaboration, and innovation	Provide support for HR initiatives fostering innovation	Shea & Guzzo model, Social Exchange Theory
Mirfakhar <i>et</i> al.	2023	Engineering-based firms	Iran	HR department's role and effectiveness depend heavily on CEO's decisions	CEOs have a direct and indirect influence on HRM implementation through actions or omissions	Comparative Case Study, Upper Echelons Theory

The key findings of the studies reviewed in this systematic analysis provide valuable insights into the HR-CEO collaboration and its effects on leadership development, innovation, and change management (Table 2). Leroy *et al.* (2018) [22] demonstrated that HR systems aligned with leadership styles are instrumental in developing leadership pipelines and fostering innovation. However, misalignment between HR and leadership values remains a challenge, and the proposed solution is a value-based framework to bridge this gap. Similarly, McClean and Collins (2018) [26] found that high-commitment HR practices and charismatic leadership help develop a skilled workforce, with the inconsistency between HR and leadership messages identified as a major challenge, recommending the

integration of both practices for optimal impact. Ren, Tang, and Jackson (2021) [29] focused on ethical leadership in Chinese firms, finding that the alignment of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) with CEO ethical leadership fosters green innovation. Awan and Jehanzeb (2022) [7] further highlighted the role of transformational leadership in facilitating collaboration and innovation, although challenges arise in managing collaboration within large hierarchies, which can be mitigated by enhancing HRM collaboration. Other studies such as Lopez-Cabrales *et al.* (2017) [24] emphasize the role of CEO leadership styles in developing dynamic capabilities, while Cao, Zhao, and Zhao (2023) [8] explored the trickle-down effects of inclusive leadership on department managers' leadership, fostering a psychologically

safe environment. Lee and Kim (2022) ^[21] illustrated how relationship-oriented leadership fosters communication and engagement, and Salas-Vallina *et al.* (2021) ^[30] linked wellbeing-oriented HR practices with enhanced employee performance and well-being. Finally, Mirfakhar *et al.* (2023) ^[27] emphasized the direct and indirect influence of CEOs on

HRM implementation, stressing the importance of understanding CEO beliefs in shaping successful HR practices. These studies highlight key strategies for overcoming challenges in HR-CEO collaboration, with a focus on leadership alignment, innovation, and managing organizational change.

 Table 2: Key Findings of HR-CEO Collaboration

Study (Year)	Leadership Pipeline Development	Innovation Culture	Change Management Strategies	Outcomes Measured	Challenges Faced	Proposed Solutions
Leroy et al. (2018) [22]	HR systems that align with leadership help in developing leadership pipelines	Leadership styles (transformational, transactional, servant) can foster innovation when aligned with HR strategies	Leadership and HR	Improved employee motivation and performance through strategic alignment	Misalignment between HR and leadership values, leading to confusion	Use a value-based framework to align HR systems with leadership styles to reduce confusion
McClean & Collins (2018) [26]	High-commitment HR practices help develop a skilled workforce	Charismatic leaders inspire innovation	Combined HCHR and charismatic leadership provide clear signals	Employee turnover and perceived performance	Inconsistent HR and leadership messages	Invest in both HCHR and charismatic leadership for maximum impact
Ren, Tang, & Jackson (2021) [29]	Green commitment of top management team (TMT) influenced by GHRM	CEO ethical leadership fosters green innovation	GHRM and ethical leadership improve environmental strategy execution	Environmental performance of firms	Inconsistent green commitment among TMT members	Align GHRM with strong ethical leadership from CEOs
Awan & Jehanzeb (2022) [7]	Transformational leadership fosters collaboration across hierarchy levels	Collaborative HRM facilitates organizational and individual innovation	Transformational leadership creates a vision for collaborative innovation	Organizational innovation, individual innovative behavior	Managing collaboration in large hierarchical structures	Enhance HRM collaboration to promote innovation and individual behavior
Lopez- Cabrales et al. (2017)	CEO leadership styles influence HR systems to develop dynamic capabilities	innovation by	Reconfiguration capabilities driven by job-based HR systems and transactional leadership	Sensing, seizing, reconfiguration capabilities	Cross-sectional data, only manufacturing industries considered	Combine transactional and transformational leadership to leverage HR systems effectively
Cao, Zhao, & Zhao (2023) [8]	CEOs' inclusive leadership influences department managers' leadership, fostering leadership development at multiple levels.	Inclusive leadership encourages openness and respect for diverse views, fostering innovation.	Inclusive leadership builds an environment of psychological safety, enabling employees to contribute without fear of negative consequences.	Employees' well- being (eudaimonic and subjective), department-level inclusive climate	Serial mediation of leadership and inclusive climate not fully supported, organizational structure limits transmission of leadership	Promote leadership inclusiveness training, consider organizational structure for effective leadership transmission
Lee & Kim (2022) [21]	Relationship-oriented leadership fosters employee commitment and communication, potentially leading to leadership development.	Symmetrical communication practices enhance openness and knowledge sharing, which indirectly supports innovation.	Relationship-oriented leadership encourages two-way communication, fostering employee engagement in change processes.	Affective organizational commitment, scouting behavior	Task-oriented leadership does not significantly impact symmetrical communication.	Encourage CEOs to adopt relationship- oriented behaviors to enhance communication systems and employee engagement.
Salas- Vallina et al. (2021)	WBHRM practices enhance development through training and leadership support.	WBHRM and engaging leadership foster a positive environment for innovation by improving well-being and trust.	change.	Individual performance, happiness at work (HAW), exhaustion, trust	Potential exhaustion due to work demands despite well-being efforts	Focus on balancing job demands and resources, ensure engaging leadership supports well-being goals
Katou & Budhwar (2010) [19]	Focus on training and development to improve leadership skills	enhancement and brand image as a key innovation driver	HRM policies are aligned with business strategies (cost, quality, innovation) to manage change effectively	Employee skills, attitudes, behaviors, and organizational performance	Lack of empirical evidence in non- US/UK contexts; reverse causality concerns	Need for alignment of HR policies with business strategies, decentralization of management
Bulińska- Stangrecka	Supported through competency	Focus on fostering a trust-based culture	HR practices promoting workload	Team collaboration,	Managing interpersonal trust,	Establish interdependent team

& Bagieńska	development	that enables collaboration and	sharing, group	innovation	workload sharing,	tasks, workload
(2019) [7]	opportunities	creativity	rewards, and team development	outcomes, trust	and team effectiveness	sharing, and collective
(2019)		creativity	development		effectiveness	responsibility
Militakilai et al. (2023)	snapes organizational	CEO influence impacts organizational culture through HR practices		HR policy adoption, formulation, execution	CEO beliefs about HRM influence the success of HR practices	Understanding CEO beliefs and actively involving them in HR strategy development

The impact of HR-CEO collaboration on organizational performance, as analyzed across the studies, reveals significant long-term benefits, though limitations in scope and generalizability were noted (Table 3). Leroy et al. (2018) [22] found that aligning HR with leadership styles significantly improved employee motivation and performance, with qualitative benefits like role clarity contributing to long-term organizational alignment, though the reliance on subjective leadership outcome measures presents a limitation. Similarly, McClean and Collins (2018) [26] demonstrated that the combination of high-commitment HR practices and charismatic leadership reduces turnover and enhances firm performance, particularly for small businesses, but the results may not be broadly applicable across different industries. Ren, Tang, and Jackson (2021) [29] highlighted that CEO ethical leadership and Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) improved environmental performance and offered competitive advantages, though the findings are limited by a small sample size and a specific regional focus on Chinese firms. Awan and Jehanzeb (2022) [7] showed a positive

impact of transformational leadership and collaborative HRM on organizational innovation and individual innovation, with potential long-term innovation improvements, although the study's focus on the financial sector suggests a need for broader sector verification.

Other studies, such as Lopez-Cabrales *et al.* (2017) ^[24], noted that CEO leadership styles, combined with HR systems, support dynamic capabilities, offering a sustained competitive advantage, albeit limited by the narrow industry focus. Studies like Cao, Zhao, and Zhao (2023) ^[8] and Lee and Kim (2022) ^[21] reinforced the positive relationship between inclusive leadership, employee well-being, and organizational commitment, though cross-sectional data limited causal inferences. Overall, these studies affirm the significant, yet nuanced, role HR-CEO collaboration plays in enhancing organizational performance, with recommendations for broader research contexts to improve generalizability and further understanding of long-term outcomes.

Table 3: Impact of HR-CEO Collaboration on Organizational Performance

Study (Year)	Performance Metrics	Key Enablers	Qualitative / Quantitative Outcomes	Long-term Organizational Impact	Limitations
Leroy et al. (2018) [22]	Employee motivation, performance	Value-based alignment between HR and leadership styles	Quantitative: Increased employee motivation, Qualitative: Improved clarity of roles	Long-term impact includes better organizational performance and well-aligned leadership structures	Limited by over-reliance on subjective measurement of leadership outcomes
McClean & Collins (2018) [26]	Employee turnover and firm performance	practices and charismatic	lower turnover with positive synergy	Positive long-term impact for firms that invest in both	Small business context may limit generalizability
Ren, Tang, & Jackson (2021) [29]	Environmental performance of firms	CEO ethical leadership, GHRM	Positive indirect effects on performance via TMT green commitment	Improved environmental performance and potential competitive advantage	Small sample size, limited to Chinese firms
Awan & Jehanzeb (2022) [2]	Organizational innovation, individual innovative behavior	CEO transformational leadership, Collaborative HRM	Positive impact on both organizational and individual levels	Long-term improvement in innovation capabilities	Focused on financial industry only, needs broader sector verification
Lopez- Cabrales <i>et</i> <i>al</i> . (2017) [24]	Sensing, seizing, and reconfiguration capabilities	CEO leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and HR systems (skill-based and job-based)	Quantitative analysis of leadership's effect on dynamic capabilities	Development of dynamic capabilities, sustained competitive advantage	Focus on one industry, lack of longitudinal analysis
Cao, Zhao, & Zhao (2023)	Employees' well- being (eudaimonic and subjective)	CEOs' inclusive leadership, department managers' leadership, organizational structure	Quantitative data analysis of leadership effects on well-being	Enhanced employee well- being, inclusive culture improves long-term productivity	Cross-sectional study, does not fully establish causality or account for other mediating factors
Lee & Kim (2022) [21]	Affective commitment, scouting behavior	Relationship-oriented CEO leadership, symmetrical internal communication	Positive association between relationship- oriented leadership and employee outcomes (commitment, scouting)	Enhanced employee commitment and communication, leading to better organizational cohesion and knowledge sharing	The study is cross-sectional and does not capture causality or consider other leadership factors (e.g., CEO gender or sociocultural context)
Salas-Vallina	Individual	WBHRM practices,	Positive performance	Improved performance	Study focused on large

et al. (2021) [30]	performance (in-role behavior), happiness at work, trust, exhaustion	engaging leadership, employee well-being	outcomes when WBHRM and engaging leadership are combined	through enhanced well- being, reduced exhaustion	organizations with well- defined HR departments, may not apply to smaller companies
Katou & Budhwar (2010) [19]	Effectiveness, efficiency, development, innovation, quality	Employee skills, attitudes, and behaviors	HRM outcomes fully mediate the impact on organizational performance	Improved retention, satisfaction, and innovation through aligned HR policies	The study was limited to manufacturing in Greece, limited generalizability, cross-sectional data limitations
Bulińska- Stangrecka & Bagieńska (2019) [7]	Team effectiveness, collaboration, and innovation outcomes	Interpersonal trust, team collaboration, HR practices for trust- building	Trust-based collaboration improves innovation	Sustained innovation through trust-based HR practices	Quantitative focus; future qualitative studies suggested
Mirfakhar <i>et al.</i> (2023) [27]	HRM implementation, Employee performance, Organizational success	CEO beliefs and involvement in HR processes	Quantitative: Impact on HRM implementation and overall performance	Sustained or diminished HR effectiveness depending on CEO actions	Case study based on two firms, limited generalizability

4. Discussion

HR-CEO collaboration is critical in modern organizations as it helps align leadership styles with strategic human resource practices, fostering effective organizational change. Leroy et al. (2018) [22] demonstrated how HR systems that align with leadership styles can help develop leadership pipelines. This finding is consistent with the framework presented by Zhu. Wang, and Hall (2023) [32], which emphasizes leveraging HR analytics to develop C-suite leadership pipelines, underscoring the role of strategic HR practices in aligning leadership development with organizational needs. The concept of value-based alignment between HR and leadership styles, as highlighted in Leroy et al.'s (2018) [22] study, mirrors the discussions by Batista-Foguet, Esteve, and van [4] on transformational Witteloostuijn (2021) transactional leadership. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), analyzed by Batista-Foguet et al. (2021) [4], showed that leadership styles like transformational leadership can significantly impact employee motivation and performance when strategically aligned with HR systems. In contrast, McClean and Collins (2018) [26] found that highcommitment HR practices (HCHR) combined with charismatic leadership produced positive synergies in small businesses, improving firm performance and reducing employee turnover. However, the challenges of inconsistent HR and leadership messages were noted. This inconsistency in leadership and HR alignment is a significant barrier to achieving maximum organizational outcomes, a point also supported by Lin, Lin, and Lin (2012), who found that transformational leadership significantly enhances organizational commitment when combined with HR practices like performance management, training, and compensation systems. The integration of these HR practices with leadership models creates a framework where HR plays a critical role in shaping leadership and driving organizational change.

4.1. Leadership Pipeline Development

Several studies in this review highlight the critical role of HR-CEO collaboration in building leadership pipelines. Awan and Jehanzeb (2022) [2] demonstrated how transformational leadership can foster collaboration across hierarchy levels, helping to develop organizational and individual leadership capabilities. This finding resonates with the argument presented by Griffith, Baur, and Buckley (2019)

[16], who advocated for a comprehensive leadership pipeline that spans all levels of an organization. By blending transformational leadership with HR systems, organizations can develop leaders at every level, not just in executive positions. The real options reasoning (ROR) approach proposed by Griffith et al. (2019) [16] offers a structured model for incremental investment in leadership development. aligning with the leadership pipeline frameworks observed in the studies reviewed. The leadership pipeline development seen in Awan and Jehanzeb's (2022) [2] study is supported by the research of Lopez-Cabrales et al. (2017) [24], who examined how HR systems can mediate the development of dynamic capabilities through CEO leadership. These dynamic capabilities—sensing, seizing, reconfiguration—are critical to developing leadership skills that align with organizational goals. This aligns with Crossan and Apaydin's (2010) [12] multi-dimensional framework of organizational innovation, which highlights the interplay between leadership development and innovation outcomes. However, despite the positive impact of HR-CEO collaboration on leadership pipeline development, challenges remain, particularly in the management of large hierarchical structures. Awan and Jehanzeb (2022) [2] pointed out that collaboration can become challenging as organizations grow in size, requiring more nuanced HR strategies to manage leadership development effectively. Farndale and Sanders (2017) [14] discussed how cross-cultural HRM system strength can influence leadership outcomes, with performance orientation playing a critical role in leadership development. In high-performance orientation cultures, leadership pipelines are more likely to develop successfully due to the clear alignment between HR practices and performance expectations.

4.2. Fostering Innovation through HR-CEO Collaboration

Innovation culture is another significant outcome of HR-CEO collaboration, as observed in studies such as Ren, Tang, and Jackson (2021) [29] and Cao, Zhao, and Zhao (2023) [8]. Found that Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices, when aligned with CEO ethical leadership, fostered green innovation in Chinese firms. This alignment of ethical leadership with HR practices underscores the growing importance of ethical considerations in fostering innovation. Eisenbeiss (2012) [13] explored this interdisciplinary approach to ethical leadership, highlighting that ethical leadership

encompasses orientations such as humane, justice, and sustainability, all of which can drive innovation when integrated into organizational strategies. This supports the findings of that ethical leadership not only fosters innovation but also enhances environmental performance. Similarly, Cao, Zhao, and Zhao (2023) [8] found that CEOs' inclusive leadership influences department managers' leadership, fostering openness and respect for diverse views, which in turn drives innovation. Inclusive leadership creates a psychologically safe environment that encourages employees to contribute innovative ideas without fear of repercussions. This finding is aligned with Farndale and Sanders' (2017) [14] concept of in-group collectivism, which highlights how HR practices can foster collaboration and trust within teams, ultimately promoting innovation. However, Cao et al. (2023) [8] noted that organizational structure can limit the transmission of leadership behaviors, a point that suggests that organizational design must also be considered when implementing inclusive leadership models to foster innovation.

While these studies emphasize the positive role of HR-CEO collaboration in fostering innovation, challenges remain. As Crossan and Apaydin (2010) [12] noted, innovation is a multidimensional process that requires the integration of leadership, HR practices, and organizational structures. Misalignment between these elements, as seen in Leroy *et al.* (2018) [22], can lead to confusion and hinder the innovation process. The use of a value-based framework to align HR systems with leadership styles, as proposed by Leroy *et al.*, can reduce this confusion and create a more conducive environment for innovation.

4.3. Change Management Strategies

Change management is a key area where HR-CEO collaboration can make a significant impact. Many of the studies in this review highlight how leadership and HR systems interact to drive organizational change. Leroy et al. (2018) [22] found that leadership styles aligned with HR strategies send clear signals that drive change, improving employee motivation and performance. This finding is supported by the work of Kotter (2012) [20], who argued that clear communication and alignment between leadership and organizational strategies are critical to successful change management. By ensuring that HR systems support leadership initiatives, organizations can manage change more effectively. McClean and Collins (2018) [26] similarly found that charismatic leadership, when combined with highcommitment HR practices, provides clear signals that drive organizational change. However, inconsistent messaging between HR and leadership can undermine these efforts. This inconsistency is a common challenge in change management, as noted by Crossan and Apaydin (2010) [12], who highlighted the need for alignment between leadership, innovation, and organizational change strategies.

Furthermore, Salas-Vallina *et al.* (2021) [30] emphasized the role of well-being-oriented HR practices (WBHRM) in facilitating change by promoting employee engagement and adaptability. WBHRM practices, combined with engaging leadership, can create a positive work environment that supports change. However, the study also noted that excessive work demands can lead to employee exhaustion, even in supportive environments. To address this, organizations must balance job demands with available resources, ensuring that leadership supports employee well-

being while driving change.

4.4. Organizational Performance and HR-CEO Collaboration The impact of HR-CEO collaboration on organizational performance is well-documented across the studies reviewed. Leroy et al. (2018) [22] found that aligning HR systems with leadership styles improved employee motivation and performance, leading to better organizational outcomes. This is consistent with the findings of Zhu et al. (2023) [32], who showed that transformational leadership, when combined with human capital-enhancing HRM practices, positively affects organizational performance. The use of HR analytics to optimize leadership development, as proposed by Zhu et al., provides organizations with a data-driven approach to improving performance. McClean and Collins (2018) [26] demonstrated that high-commitment HR practices and charismatic leadership reduced employee turnover and enhanced firm performance. This aligns with the work of who found that HR practices such as performance management, education and training, and compensation significantly enhance organizational commitment, thereby improving performance. However, some studies noted limitations in the scope and generalizability of these findings. For example focused on Chinese firms, limiting the generalizability of their findings to other contexts. Similarly, McClean and Collins (2018) [26] noted that their study of small businesses in the U.S. may not be applicable to larger firms or different industries. This highlights the need for broader research across diverse industries and regions to fully understand the impact of HR-CEO collaboration on organizational performance.

4.5. Future Implications

The findings from this systematic review offer several key avenues for future academic inquiry and practical applications concerning HR-CEO collaboration. Firstly, expanding research beyond the currently explored industries and geographic regions is crucial. Most of the reviewed studies were context-specific, limiting their broader applicability. Future research should include more diverse sectors and cultural settings to assess the global relevance of HR-CEO collaboration frameworks. For instance, studies on Green HRM (Ren, Tang, & Jackson, 2021) [29] and financial institutions (Awan & Jehanzeb, 2022) [2] underscore the need for broader sector verification, ensuring that leadership and HR practices can be effectively adapted to various organizational contexts. Furthermore, longitudinal and multilevel studies would significantly enhance understanding of the long-term impacts of HR-CEO collaboration. The predominance of cross-sectional research in the current literature restricts causal inference and limits insight into how HR-CEO collaboration evolves. Employing longitudinal methods, alongside multi-level analyses that examine leadership dynamics across organizational hierarchies (as explored by Cao, Zhao, & Zhao, 2023) [8], would provide deeper insights into the transmission of leadership behaviors across different levels of an organization.

The integration of HR analytics into leadership development is another critical research area. Zhu, Wang, and Hall (2023) ^[32] emphasize the potential of HR analytics in optimizing leadership pipelines, providing a data-driven approach to aligning HR strategies with leadership needs. Future research should focus on exploring how HR analytics can improve the tracking and measurement of leadership development,

succession planning, and organizational performance outcomes. Ethical and inclusive leadership frameworks also present a rich area for further exploration. Although studies like those of Eisenbeiss (2012) [13] and Ren, Tang, and Jackson (2021) [29] underscore the importance of ethical leadership in fostering organizational innovation, future research should investigate how these leadership models can be effectively implemented in varied cultural and organizational contexts. Expanding on inclusive and ethical leadership models will help organizations create sustainable, adaptable HR systems that foster collaboration and innovation across diverse settings.

Moreover, balancing well-being and performance remains a challenge for organizations. Future research should explore strategies for managing the relationship between employee well-being initiatives and organizational demands, as emphasized by Salas-Vallina et al. (2021) [30]. Understanding how to strike this balance is crucial for preventing employee exhaustion while still achieving high performance, thus ensuring that well-being initiatives complement rather than hinder organizational objectives. Lastly, strategic alignment in change management requires more focused study. The review highlights that successful organizational change is contingent upon the alignment of HR and leadership strategies. Research is needed to identify best practices for ensuring consistent communication and strategic alignment, especially during times of transition. As change management becomes increasingly important in today's dynamic industries, further investigation into how HR-CEO collaboration can facilitate successful change initiatives is essential for long-term organizational success.

5. Conclusion

The systematic review conducted across various industries and regions highlights the critical role of HR-CEO in shaping organizational outcomes, collaboration particularly in leadership pipeline development, fostering innovation, change management, and enhancing overall organizational performance. Key findings from studies like Leroy et al. (2018) [22] and McClean and Collins (2018) [26] emphasize the importance of aligning HR systems with leadership styles, while Ren, Tang, and Jackson (2021) [29] and Awan and Jehanzeb (2022) [2] demonstrated the significant impact of transformational and ethical leadership in fostering collaboration and innovation. Across the studies reviewed, strategic alignment between HR and leadership practices not only drives employee motivation and performance but also creates long-term benefits for organizational growth, adaptability, and competitive advantage. However, the review also revealed several challenges that need addressing for HR-CEO collaboration to be most effective. Misalignment between HR and leadership values, as well as inconsistent messaging between HR systems and leadership strategies, are recurring issues that hinder optimal performance and organizational change. Furthermore, while inclusive and ethical leadership fosters innovation and collaboration, structural limitations within organizations may restrict the full realization of these benefits. Similarly, excessive work demands, even in environments designed to support well-being, may lead to employee exhaustion, highlighting the need for a balance between job demands and organizational resources.

6. References

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