



Integration of Career Literacy in Human Resource Development (HRD) Practice for Corporate Competitiveness

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This paper employs a narrative literature review to examine the role of career literacy within human resource development (HRD) and talent management practices. Career literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to understand career opportunities, clarify career goals, manage their development, and respond adaptively to changing work demands. The review suggests that career literacy is shaped by individual factors, including motivation, interest, and self-efficacy, as well as organisational factors such as managerial support, access to career information, development opportunities, and digital resources. Rather than assuming a direct relationship between career literacy and employee outcomes, this paper proposes that career literacy may operate through increased career clarity and self-management, which can encourage participation in HRD and talent management activities. Such participation may subsequently support employee engagement, retention, career adaptability, and productivity, thereby contributing to organisational capability and competitiveness. However, much of the available evidence remains indirect and is derived from related constructs such as career development, employability, and talent management. Accordingly, the proposed framework should be regarded as a conceptual model requiring further empirical validation.

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INTRODUCTION

Human resource development (HRD) is one of the key success factors for companies in navigating an increasingly dynamic business environment. In this context,

career literacy emerges as a strategic competency that is essential not only for individuals to manage their career journey but also for organizations to ensure sustainability and competitiveness. Career literacy encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to recognize their potential, understand job opportunities, plan career development, and adapt to changing job demands (Covacevich et al., 2021). For companies, employees with strong career literacy tend to be more proactive, adaptable, and performance-oriented.

Despite its importance, implementing career literacy within the corporate environment still faces real challenges. Some employees are unaware of the career paths available within the organization or fail to recognize existing development opportunities. This lack of career literacy contributes to low work motivation, high turnover potential, and a limited pool of internal candidates ready for strategic positions. For instance, research in the retail sector shows that perceptions of career opportunities can reduce employees' intention to resign, with organizational commitment serving as a key mediator in this relationship (Leonardi & Panggabean, 2021). Selain itu, meta-analisis juga menegaskan bahwa kesempatan pengembangan profesional seperti pelatihan, feedback kompetensi, dan promosi secara signifikan menurunkan niat keluar karyawan (Özdemir, 2024). This indicates that enhancing career literacy through well-designed development programs is not solely the responsibility of the individual, but also a strategic HR initiative that can strengthen employee loyalty and workforce stability..

From a human resource management perspective, career literacy can be seen as an integral part of talent management. Companies that align career literacy programs with employee development strategies tend to build a workforce that is adaptive, engaged, and prepared to face technological challenges as well as the dynamics of the global market. Meta-analyses and empirical studies have shown that effective training and development enhance employee skills, job satisfaction, and loyalty, while simultaneously reducing turnover intention and increasing overall productivity and retention (Urme, 2023). In addition, talent management practices that include career identification, development, and planning have been found to correlate positively with retention, productivity, and overall organizational performance. (Almashyakh, 2024).

However, much of the current literature still focuses on literacy in the context of education or general individual development, while studies examining career literacy from the perspective of HRD in companies remain relatively limited. For example, although extensive research has been conducted on employability skills and career competencies among graduates, few studies explicitly link these to HRD practices within organizations. Tushar and Sooraksa (2023) note that the majority of studies still frame career literacy within an educational context, rather than as an integral strategy in corporate HRD (Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). Therefore, this study is important to fill that gap by examining how career literacy can be optimized as a strategy for human resource development within companies.

This paper aims to examine the role of career literacy within human resource development and talent management and to develop an integrated conceptual framework explaining how career literacy may contribute to employee and organizational outcomes. Specifically, the paper examines the individual and organizational factors associated with career literacy, explores its potential role in strengthening career clarity and self-management, and discusses how these capabilities may encourage participation in HRD and talent management activities. The paper further considers how such developmental processes may support employee engagement, retention, career adaptability, and

productivity and, in turn, contribute to organizational capability and competitiveness. Rather than proposing direct causal effects, this study seeks to clarify the theoretical mechanisms connecting career literacy, employee development, and organizational outcomes and to identify areas requiring further empirical investigation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Career Literacy

Career literacy refers to a set of abilities and skills that enable an individual to acquire, understand, interpret, and evaluate career-related information, and subsequently apply it in career planning and decision-making processes. This concept encompasses three main dimensions: functional, which is the basic ability to understand career information; interactive, which is the capacity to interpret such information; and **critical**, which is the ability to assess information and make well-informed career decisions (Widyowati & Widiana, 2024).

According to Valentine and Koloski (2022), career literacy provides individuals with the ability to make decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of information, rather than solely on personal experience. This capability supports adaptability to change and opens up career opportunities aligned with one's desired lifestyle. Conceptually, career literacy can be viewed as a program or form of intervention that equips individuals with the capacity to make informed career decisions and to design strategic steps toward achieving their career goals. This includes the use of the internet for career development and the provision of guidance through mentoring activities.

Career literacy plays a strategic role in strengthening the capabilities of both individuals and organizations by enhancing awareness, planning, and competency development based on information. For individuals, it contributes to assessing personal potential, designing a systematic career path, and making decisions that are more responsive to changes in the world of work. This capability also fosters increased motivation, promotion opportunities, and retention through a continuous understanding of career direction and skills development. Adaptation to change and data-driven decision-making further stimulate innovation and creativity in professional growth (Kompas, 2023).

For organizations, career literacy serves as a crucial foundation in talent management. By clarifying career paths and development needs, companies can enhance performance, reduce turnover rates, and foster employee loyalty. In addition, career literacy supports succession planning and more targeted talent pool management, thereby facilitating the placement of internal employees into strategic positions in the future.

In education, career literacy focuses on providing knowledge, self-exploration, and structured career planning, helping students identify their interests, talents, and the connection between education and professions through career guidance and relevant curricula. In the workplace, however, career literacy places greater emphasis on practical skills that support productivity and sustainability, including digital literacy, contextual understanding of tasks, and the ability to adapt directly to industry demands.

Widyowati and Widiana (2024) developed the Indonesian Career Literacy Scale as an effort to empirically formulate career literacy indicators, referring to two main dimensions: concepts and skills, each measured through a set of behavioral indicators. Their study identified 24 valid indicators—three for each aspect of the concept dimension and five for each aspect of the skill dimension—which comprehensively represent the construct of career literacy among Indonesian adolescents..

On the other hand, Hirschi et al. (2018) propose a more comprehensive approach through the Career Resources Framework, which categorizes resources supporting career development into four main domains: (1) knowledge and skills, (2) motivation, (3) environment, and (4) career management behaviors (Monteiro et al., 2023).

Human Resource Development (HRD)

From the perspective of management literature, human resource development (HRD) is a series of structured processes aimed at enhancing the competencies, abilities, and readiness of individuals to meet the demands of both current and future job roles. Yusuf and Hendra (2023) emphasize that while training tends to be short-term in nature, development is focused on preparing employees to take on greater responsibilities in the future, with implementation principles that are fair, transparent, and evaluation-based. (Yusuf & Hendra, 2023).

Meanwhile, Tufa (2018), in a publication available on ResearchGate, explains that human resource development encompasses all activities that help employees acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes—not only for current job requirements but also for future needs—including education, training, as well as career and organizational development. (Tufa, 2015).

In human resource management practice, organizations typically implement various integrated strategies—such as training, career development, coaching, and mentoring—to enhance employee competencies and performance. Training focuses on mastering operational and technical skills relevant to daily work tasks, thereby proving effective in significantly improving performance. Career development plays a role in motivating employees and strengthening their loyalty to the organization (Sarjito & Sutianingsih, 2022).

Coaching and mentoring offer more personalized and long-term development approaches. Coaching helps improve individual performance through targeted guidance, while mentoring provides long-term strategic insights to support career growth and leadership development (Agustia, 2024). The implementation of Coaching, Mentoring, and Counseling (CMC) has proven effective in enhancing performance, motivation, and leadership readiness, although its success is highly influenced by role clarity, managerial support, and integration into the performance management system. A case study at Yayasan Pandhega Jaya also demonstrated that the combination of coaching and mentoring can practically improve various aspects of performance—including attendance, quality and quantity of work, communication, teamwork, and adaptability—as reflected in significant improvements in performance evaluations over several intervention cycles (U.R.P. et al., 2024).

Human resource development (HRD) is a key strategic pillar in strengthening organizational competitiveness amid increasingly intense global competition. Literature reviews indicate that comprehensive HRD—which includes competency training, leadership strengthening, and the use of digital technologies such as HRIS—can improve efficiency, productivity, and innovation, enabling organizations to become more adaptive and better prepared to face global challenges. (Purba, 2025).

In addition, well-designed HR strategies have proven effective in driving organizational performance while strengthening competitive advantage, particularly by enhancing workforce capacity to adapt to changes in the business environment. In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the digital society, organizations that adopt innovative approaches—such as the use of digital technology, continuous training, and

the creation of an adaptive work environment—are more likely to excel in building adaptability and organizational resilience (Assyava & Firdaus, 2024).

Career Literacy in the Perspective of Human Resource Management

In the context of talent management, career literacy serves as an essential foundation that connects individual capabilities with the strategic needs of the organization. Talent management itself is an integrated system that includes identifying key positions, developing high-potential employees, and aligning HR policies and practices with organizational strategy. At the talent development stage, career literacy equips employees—particularly those classified as “talent”—with the skills to plan their careers, identify development paths, understand the competencies required, and proactively manage their career expectations. (Monteiro et al., 2023).

Furthermore, career literacy strengthens career development practices within talent management, as demonstrated in studies involving millennial and Gen Z generations. Talent is not only guided in performing current tasks but is also provided with a clear career roadmap, supported by coaching or mentoring programs, and given feedback that encourages long-term growth. This approach helps organizations retain talent while preparing them to fill strategic positions in the future, ultimately enhancing organizational competitiveness and sustainability (ARAR & ÖNEREN, 2018).

Although the direct relationship between career literacy and engagement, loyalty, and productivity has not been extensively studied in the scientific literature, several related studies position it as part of career development that contributes to these variables. Findings from research in the public sector, for example, show that career development—which includes aspects of career literacy—has a significant positive effect on increasing employee loyalty, which in turn positively impacts organizational productivity (Rahmi & Suryatni, 2025). Another study at PT Nusantara Surya Sakti Palembang revealed that career development and job loyalty simultaneously have a significant impact on increasing employee productivity. In addition, at PT Bank Pembangunan Daerah Jambi, efforts to enhance job loyalty—among others through inclusive career development—have been shown to improve the company’s productivity (Putri et al., 2025).

As for employee engagement, although career literacy is not explicitly mentioned, general research indicates that employee engagement is associated with higher performance and productivity (Muhammad Inshany Renhoran et al., 2024). In a broader context, the WorkL platform highlights that when employers truly support career development, employee engagement, productivity, and retention all receive a substantial boost—also emphasizing the importance of a sense of progression and purpose as key elements of workplace happiness.

From these findings, it can be concluded that career literacy—as a component of career development—plays a crucial role in creating employees who are more engaged, loyal, and productive. By supporting individuals’ understanding of their career paths, organizations not only foster loyalty and engagement but also drive higher work output.

In modern human resource management practices, integrating career literacy into the HRM cycle—namely during the recruitment, training, and promotion stages—serves as a vital strategy for aligning individual development with organizational needs. At the recruitment stage, implementing a competency-based recruitment approach enables companies to assess candidates not only based on formal qualifications but also on their career readiness—using indicators such as career planning or career maturity as part of

the selection criteria. This helps ensure alignment between candidates' career orientations and the organization's strategic direction.

In the training phase, career literacy can be incorporated through continuous development programs that enhance not only technical skills but also employees' capacity to manage their own career paths. Research on training and HR development emphasizes that when training programs are designed according to individual career needs and implemented systematically, they foster a culture of adaptive learning and support long-term career readiness (Jum'iyatul et al., 2025). Subsequently, in the process of promotion or career development, career literacy helps create transparency and accountability within career pathways. For organizations, this means mapping employees' competencies and aspirations in a structured manner, so that promotions are carried out based on career readiness and potential, rather than solely on tenure or seniority. Such an approach strengthens the talent management process and maintains motivation, while simultaneously supporting sustainable career development for both employees and the organization.

Factors Influencing Career Literacy

Internal factors such as motivation, interest, and self-efficacy play a crucial role in shaping career literacy. Motivation—particularly intrinsic motivation—encourages individuals to actively explore career information and develop a deep understanding, as explained in the *Self-Determination Theory*, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering the drive to learn and build a career. Strong career interest helps individuals remain focused and persistent in understanding professional pathways, as evidenced by the study of Syaiful Fakhri & Candra Indraswari in *Jurnal Spirits*, which found that career interest combined with self-efficacy contributed significantly to the effectiveness of career guidance for vocational students, with an effective contribution rate of 47.8%. (Fakhri & Indraswari, 2020).

Meanwhile, self-efficacy, or the belief in one's own ability to achieve career goals, has a significant influence on decision-making and persistence in facing challenges, in line with *Social Cognitive Theory*. The study by Kurniawati & Arief in the *Economic Education Analysis Journal* also confirms that self-efficacy and job interest have a direct effect on the work readiness of vocational high school students, both simultaneously and partially (Kurniawati & Arief, 2016).

Thus, motivation, interest, and self-efficacy complement one another in shaping strong career literacy, which ultimately supports an individual's readiness to plan and manage their career path effectively. External factors play an important role in shaping career literacy. Organizational support—such as the perception of HR practices that are concerned with career development and mutually beneficial relationships between employees and supervisors—helps strengthen self-directed and sustainable career management behaviors. Systematic reviews indicate that both organizations and individuals contribute to this process, creating a positive cycle between support and engagement in career self-management (Martins et al., 2024). Furthermore, access to information—covering career information available through educational advisors, libraries, mass media, and government career centers—broadens options and enriches individuals' understanding of available professional opportunities (Achim et al., 2019). Meanwhile, technology facilitates career literacy through advancements in information and communication, such as the availability of online career assessments and similar

platforms that make it easier to explore and make more accurate career decisions (Achim et al., 2019).

In today's digital era, career literacy faces various dynamic trends as well as complex challenges. Advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital platforms have become major driving forces, opening broad access to online career assessments, global occupational information, and interactive learning resources—all of which facilitate individuals in exploring and making career decisions. However, this increased access also brings serious challenges. Among them are the flood of information that is often unverified, the persistent digital divide between urban and remote areas, and the challenge of critical thinking skills needed to filter out misinformation or algorithmic bias that limits exposure to diverse information—factors that can hinder the effective development of career literacy (Putrayasa et al., 2024). Moreover, excessive reliance on AI without fundamental digital skills risks turning individuals into passive consumers of instant solutions rather than critical and independent decision-makers. This underscores the need for education and strategies that integrate critical understanding of technology, ensuring that the use of digital tools is not merely reactive but also wise and competent.

Overall, technological trends open up many opportunities—such as quick access to information, personalized career learning, as well as flexibility and digital engagement. However, for career literacy to develop comprehensively, various challenges such as information bias, unequal access, and the ethical application of digital intelligence must be addressed strategically through educational policies, strengthening digital infrastructure, and equipping individuals with critical thinking skills.

Conceptual Framework of Career Literacy and HRD Integration

Based on the reviewed literature, career literacy should not be conceptualized as an isolated individual competency that automatically produces favorable organizational outcomes. Instead, it can be understood as part of a broader developmental process involving individual characteristics, organizational support, career self-management, HRD participation, employee outcomes, and organizational capability.

At the antecedent level, individual factors such as motivation, career interest, and self-efficacy influence an employee's willingness and ability to seek, interpret, and use career-related information. At the same time, organizational support—including access to career information, managerial guidance, mentoring, development opportunities, and digital career resources—creates an environment in which career literacy can be developed and applied. These internal and external factors therefore provide the foundation for employees to build stronger career literacy.

Career literacy is subsequently expected to facilitate greater career clarity and self-management. Employees who understand available career opportunities, competency requirements, and possible career trajectories are more likely to establish realistic career goals, evaluate their development needs, and actively manage their professional development. Career literacy should therefore be regarded as an enabling capability rather than as a direct determinant of organizational performance.

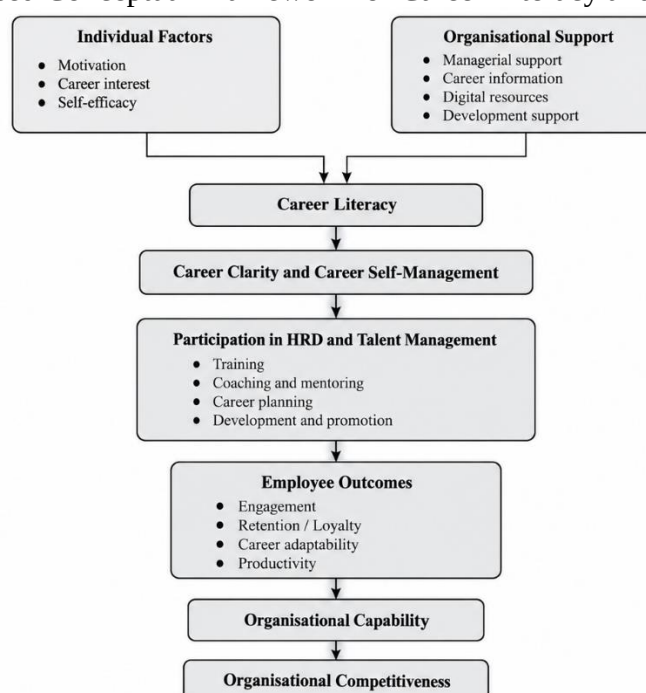
Career clarity and self-management may, in turn, encourage employees to participate more actively in HRD and talent management activities, including training, mentoring, coaching, career planning, competency development, and internal mobility programs. Through these activities, employees may strengthen their capabilities while developing a clearer perception of career progression and organizational support.

The potential employee-level consequences include stronger engagement, retention or loyalty, career adaptability, and productivity. However, the relationships proposed in this framework should be interpreted cautiously. Much of the existing literature provides indirect evidence through related constructs such as career development, employability, perceived career opportunities, and talent management rather than through direct empirical examinations of career literacy itself. Consequently, employee outcomes are treated as theoretically plausible consequences rather than empirically established effects of career literacy.

At the organizational level, favorable employee outcomes may contribute to the development of stronger organizational capability through a more adaptable workforce, improved internal talent pipelines, enhanced knowledge utilization, and greater workforce continuity. Over time, such organizational capabilities may support competitiveness by enabling organizations to respond more effectively to technological, market, and workforce changes.

This framework therefore proposes a sequential mechanism in which career literacy functions as a developmental capability connecting individual and organizational antecedents with HRD participation and subsequent employee and organizational outcomes.

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework for Career Literacy and HRD Integration



METHODS

This paper was prepared using a *literature review approach* that focuses on collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing previous research results that are relevant to the topics of career literacy and human resource development (HR) in companies. The data sources used come from scientific journal articles, reference books, research reports, and other academic publications that are indexed nationally and internationally. The literature selection was carried out purposively by considering the relationship between substance and the focus of the study, namely the role of career literacy as part of a talent

management strategy to increase employee retention, loyalty, and productivity. The literature search process is carried out through online databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and university journal portals, with keywords among others *career literacy*, *human resource development*, *talent management*, *employee engagement*, dan *organizational competitiveness*.

Subsequently, all collected sources were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis to identify relevant concepts, theories, empirical findings, and research gaps. The analysis involved categorizing the literature into key themes, such as the definition of career literacy, its dimensions and indicators, its relationship with HR variables, and its integration models within the HRM cycle. The synthesized literature findings served as the foundation for the arguments presented in this paper, ensuring that each concept discussed is supported by strong theoretical and empirical evidence. Through this method, the paper aims to provide a valuable conceptual contribution to the development of career literacy-based HRD strategies within organizational settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Career Literacy as an Integrated HRD Mechanism

The reviewed literature suggests that career literacy should be understood as part of an interconnected developmental mechanism rather than as an independent factor directly producing employee engagement, loyalty, or productivity. The proposed framework begins with individual factors, including motivation, career interest, and self-efficacy, together with organisational support in the form of accessible career information, managerial guidance, development opportunities, and technological resources. These conditions may facilitate the development and application of career literacy.

Career literacy may subsequently improve career clarity by enabling employees to understand possible career trajectories, competency requirements, developmental gaps, and available opportunities within and beyond their current positions. Greater career clarity can strengthen career self-management because employees become better able to establish development goals, seek relevant information, evaluate opportunities, and make informed career decisions.

The next stage concerns employee participation in HRD and talent management practices. Employees who understand their development needs and career direction may be more willing to participate in training, coaching, mentoring, competency development, career planning, and internal mobility programs. Organizational support remains important at this stage because career knowledge alone does not guarantee access to developmental opportunities.

Through participation in these HRD activities, employees may develop stronger competencies, experience clearer career progression, and perceive greater organizational investment in their development. These conditions may subsequently support employee engagement, retention, career adaptability, and productivity. However, these relationships remain theoretically plausible rather than conclusively established, because much of the reviewed evidence examines career development and related constructs rather than career literacy directly.

At the organizational level, positive employee outcomes may accumulate into broader organizational capabilities, including workforce adaptability, internal talent availability, succession readiness, knowledge continuity, and more effective utilization of human capital. These capabilities may ultimately contribute to organizational competitiveness. Thus, the framework proposes an indirect and sequential mechanism

rather than a simple direct relationship between career literacy and organizational performance.

The Impact of Career Literacy on Employee Engagement

The literature shows that employees with a high level of career literacy have a clear understanding of their professional development paths. The reviewed literature provides a theoretical basis for linking career literacy with employee engagement, although direct empirical evidence remains limited. Career literacy may help employees understand their professional direction, available development pathways, and the competencies required for future roles. Such clarity can make work experiences more meaningful and may strengthen employees' perceptions that their current roles are connected with longer-term career objectives.

However, career literacy alone should not be assumed to generate engagement. Its influence is more plausibly mediated through career clarity, perceived development opportunities, participation in HRD activities, and organizational support. Employees who understand their career direction and simultaneously receive meaningful opportunities for development may be more likely to invest cognitive, emotional, and behavioural energy in their work. Therefore, the literature supports a potential and indirect relationship between career literacy and engagement rather than a definitive direct effect.

Career Literacy, Retention, and Employee Loyalty

Career literacy may also be relevant to employee retention and loyalty because it can enable employees to recognize internal career opportunities and understand the developmental steps necessary to pursue them. Nevertheless, the reviewed literature suggests that this relationship is likely to depend on organizational conditions rather than career literacy alone.

Studies concerning career development and perceived career opportunities indicate that employees are more likely to remain with an organization when they perceive credible opportunities for professional growth and organizational support. Career literacy may strengthen employees' ability to identify and utilise these opportunities, while HRD and talent management practices provide the organizational mechanisms through which such opportunities become accessible.

Accordingly, retention and loyalty are more appropriately conceptualized as possible downstream outcomes of an interaction between career literacy, career clarity, development participation, and organizational support. The current evidence does not justify treating career literacy as an independent or direct determinant of employee loyalty.

Career Literacy and Employee Productivity

The relationship between career literacy and employee productivity is primarily supported through indirect evidence. Career literacy may help employees identify competency gaps, understand performance expectations, and select development activities that are relevant to their current and future roles. When these capabilities lead to meaningful participation in training, coaching, mentoring, and other HRD practices, employees may acquire knowledge and skills that support more effective job performance.

Productivity should therefore be interpreted as a possible downstream outcome rather than a direct consequence of career literacy. The proposed mechanism suggests that career literacy may contribute to clearer career goals and stronger self-management, which can encourage participation in development activities and potentially strengthen engagement, adaptability, competency, and retention. These intermediate processes may subsequently support individual and organizational productivity. Further empirical research is required to determine the strength and direction of these relationships.

From Employee Outcomes to Organisational Capability and Competitiveness

The contribution of career literacy to organizational competitiveness should similarly be understood as indirect. At the individual level, career literacy may facilitate career clarity and self-management. When supported by effective HRD and talent management systems, these capabilities may encourage employees to participate in development activities and may contribute to engagement, retention, adaptability, and improved use of competencies.

At the organizational level, the accumulation of these employee-level outcomes may strengthen organizational capabilities. Higher workforce adaptability can improve organizational responses to technological and market change; stronger retention may preserve organizational knowledge; more effective career development may improve succession readiness; and better alignment between employee capabilities and organizational needs may strengthen the internal talent pipeline.

From a Resource-Based View perspective, these workforce capabilities may become strategically valuable when they are embedded within organizational processes and are difficult for competitors to replicate. Therefore, career literacy is not proposed as a direct source of competitive advantage. Rather, it can be understood as one component of a broader HRD and talent management architecture that may contribute to the development of human capabilities supporting organizational competitiveness.

Strength and Interpretation of the Evidence

An important consideration in interpreting this review is the distinction between direct and indirect evidence. Direct empirical research examining career literacy as a workplace construct remains relatively limited. Several relationships proposed in this paper are therefore informed by studies of adjacent constructs, including career development, career resources, career self-management, perceived career opportunities, employability, and talent management. These studies provide a reasonable conceptual basis for developing the proposed framework but do not establish that career literacy independently causes higher engagement, retention, adaptability, productivity, or organizational competitiveness.

Accordingly, the framework developed in this study should be interpreted as a theory-informed synthesis of existing literature rather than as an empirically validated causal model. Its primary contribution is to organize currently fragmented concepts into a testable sequence of relationships that can guide future empirical research.

CONCLUSIONS

This narrative literature review suggests that career literacy represents a potentially important component of human resource development and talent management, particularly in environments where employees are increasingly expected to navigate changing career opportunities, competency requirements, and technological demands.

Career literacy can help individuals understand career-related information, clarify career goals, identify development needs, and manage their professional development more deliberately.

However, the reviewed evidence does not support a definitive conclusion that career literacy directly increases employee engagement, loyalty, retention, productivity, or organizational competitiveness. Instead, the literature supports a more cautious and sequential explanation. Career literacy may contribute to greater career clarity and self-management, which may encourage employees to participate in HRD and talent management activities such as training, coaching, mentoring, career planning, and competency development. These experiences may subsequently support employee engagement, retention, career adaptability, and productivity. At the organizational level, the accumulation of such outcomes may contribute to workforce capability and, over time, organizational competitiveness.

The principal contribution of this study is therefore the development of an integrated conceptual framework linking individual factors and organizational support with career literacy, career clarity and self-management, HRD participation, employee outcomes, organizational capability, and competitiveness. The framework should be regarded as a conceptual proposition rather than a validated causal model. Further empirical research is required to determine the strength, direction, and boundary conditions of the proposed relationships.

Recommendations

Organizations may consider incorporating career literacy into existing HRD and talent management practices rather than implementing it as an isolated programme. Career information, competency mapping, mentoring, coaching, development planning, and transparent internal career pathways may help employees translate career knowledge into realistic development decisions.

HR managers should also recognize that providing career information alone is unlikely to produce favorable employee outcomes. Career literacy initiatives should be accompanied by credible development opportunities, managerial support, access to training, and transparent talent management processes so that employees are able to act on their career knowledge.

Future research should empirically examine the proposed sequential mechanism of career literacy → career clarity and self-management → HRD participation → employee outcomes → organizational capability. Such research would help determine whether career literacy independently contributes to engagement, retention, adaptability, and productivity or whether its influence depends primarily on organizational support and development opportunities.

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