

How do HR Professionals Negotiate Organisational Legal Compliance and Strategic Decision Making in Britain?

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between compliance and strategic decision making from the perspective of senior HR professionals' professional identity. This research takes a multi case research approach across three public sector organisations; a primary Care Trust (PCT), a university and a local education authority in the southern England. In depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 31 senior HR professionals. Template analysis was used to analyse the data. This paper argues that strategic decision making in the human resource role is limited due to the constraining influence that employment regulation has on workplace practices. The relationship between operational practices and strategy needs to be fully integrated if the human resource function is to provide an organisation-wide response. HR compliance and strategy are considered within the contemporary backdrop of increased employment regulation and the impact on human resource strategic decision making. The study explores how HR senior professionals position themselves within organisations and the relationship between strategy, employment regulation and professional identity.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Professional Identity, Strategy, Leadership