

# EXPLORING THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HRDIS) IN A MEDIUM-SIZE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN PATHUMTHANI

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## Abstract

Nowadays Information Technology is widely used all over the world. We can call this an era of information. Even in the university especially in Human Resources work. There are plethoric problems concerning the effectiveness of Human Resource Development Information Systems. This is due to the four significant changes in increasing amounts of data, difficulty in accessing stored data, poor data management and decision making based on outdated information. To develop the new HRDIS model which is suitable for the university, a qualitative research approach applying grounded theory strategy was conducted with 21 informants. In this study, criterion sampling and the use of snowball sampling techniques were employed to identify the participants from one selected private university in Pathumthani. The semi-structured interview was the main data collection technique employed to discover these issues. The data was transcribed and categorized into themes. The main findings of this study were seven categories (Bottom-up communication, Self-Service operation, Paper-based requirement, Poor working operation, Poor practice of information management, Deficiency Services, Not utilizing any online HRDIS application) and nine sub-categories were reported (Not being able to inform staff about specific training courses matching individual's needs, Slow training approval process, Lack of information about HRD program, Not updating stored data, Losing Document, Incompetent service staff, Inadequate number of staff leading to poor service, Weakness not receiving Information, Not providing information regarding training application process and time).

**Keywords:** Human Resource Development (HRD), Human Resource Development Information System (HRDIS), Information System, Private University

### **Background of the Study**

While it has widely been expected by societies that the roles of higher educational institutes; such as colleges and universities, are developing quality human resources for the nation, it has been found that there have been certain pressures effecting educational quality from both internal and external factors. They need to carefully plan their competitive strategic management, introduce effective operation systems and convenient information technology, deal with accounting and finance, ensure its excellent total quality control, as well as maintain and develop their human resources etc. Wanjiru (2016).

According to Kulkarni and Savita (2012) the work of the HRD department in a university could involve a number of activities including planning staff training and seminars, conducting both short term and long term individual development plans, implementing and maintaining knowledge management systems, and facilitating issues concerning staff overseas development programs. Therefore, the work of HRD in a university is now taking the role of providing quality data that leads to the improvement of their faculty members – both teachers and supporting staff. Without having good recording and retrieving this important information, it is difficult for educators and faculty members to have proper directions for individual development and a career development plan.

Vanduhe (2015) agreed on this giving an example that if the data concerning staff attending their training programs and staff performance evaluation were not recorded properly and continuously into a good system, the management team may evaluate staff overall performance mistakenly based on their shortage of information. Lacking an effective data recording system could therefore result in the failure of managing necessary information concerning employees' individual and career development plans.

### **Statement of problem**

At present, the university has entered into a research study that has no Human Resource Development Information System (HRDIS) which causes delays in operations related to HRD, such as delays in document delivery, due to the use of documentation systems for approval. Non-systematic document storage causes loss of documents. At times, the documents are in many copies, making it impossible to tell which documents are the latest, need to prepare a place for storing documents and filing equipment that has increased over the year and the inconvenience of updating personal information and accessing information

from executives to make decisions. Especially, staffs are experiencing problems in planning their self-development because of delays in the current system, such as approvals, training sessions or updates information that cannot be done by staff, HR staff are required to do it. Operation plan and HRD activities did not respond to the needs of HRD. It is evident from the fact that the university provides training to the same staff and that each faculty has different training needs. The personnel who recently worked with the works before it, needs to be different. The news release will also be submitted by a staff member that was on duty, which is a waste of time and resources, such as paper and ink of the university.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the ways the current HRD system is operated in a selected medium sized private university in Pathumthani.
2. To investigate stakeholders' opinions toward the current HRD system in the university.

### **Research Questions**

1. How has the current HRD system been operated in the selected university?
2. What do the stakeholders think of the current HRD system?

### **Literature Reviews**

According to McLagan (1996) it can be see that the role of the HR Department in an organization includes HR strategic advisor, HR systems designer and developer to assist HR management, Organization change agent, Organization design consultant, Learning program specialist, Instructor/facilitator, Individual development and career counsellor assistant, Performance consultant and Researcher assesses HRD practices. In this study HRD roles in the selected private university were part of the report collected to address the first research question.

Mostly local HR applications tend to be focused on the personnel records of the overall monitoring system at work and only calculating the salary. This is what a typical organization requires in terms of human resource development. There are not many details available, especially on the cheap. Executive point out an apparent lack of sufficient information on which to conclude further analysis to be used as a basis for planning,

management and development of human resources in the organization (Batool, Sajid and Raza, 2012).

According to Rawat (2008) Human Resource Development Information Systems is a system that is used for managing most HR data and information concerning staff and people working in an organization. The system collects, calculates, stores and retrieves data by taking advantage of running a set of complicated computer programs. This is to ensure the valuable information which could help the management team in making accurate decision making. Moreover, Dessler (2013) strongly claimed that there was the time that some old information management system which demanded a big space for storage, full of papers and useless for an important decision making should be replaced by a new effective system.

When an HRDIS is developed, several benefits are obtained. For example, it increases competitiveness, it helps collect useful required data, it allows management teams to develop effective strategic HRD, reengineers the HRD processes, functions and increases employee job satisfaction.

### **Research Methodology**

This study was a qualitative study applying Grounded theory strategy, the systematic procedure of Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) and the constructivist approach of Charmaz (2001; 2006). The researcher used in-depth interviews to collect the data and analyze it through the technique of Grounded theory. The researcher collected data until reaching saturation (Glaser, 1992, p. 102). The total number of informants is 21. By setting up the criteria to ensure meaningful data collection, theoretical sampling is applied as the main sampling technique used in this study. This can be done by adopting the informants identification technique called ‘snowball effect’. In addition, the researcher used grounded theory coding for data analysis. To ensure the trustworthiness, quality of data and information, data triangulation, audit trail, participant feedback, and reflexivity are presented in this study. Since the ethical issues were carefully concerned in all phases of this study, the researcher strictly complied with research ethics.

No.	Job Position	Year of Employment
1	The management position	11
2	Faculty Member	3
3	Faculty Member	4
4	The management position	11
5	The management position	5
6	Faculty Member	4
7	IT	3
8	IT	4
9	IT	2
10	Faculty Member	5
11	The management position	5

No.	Job Position	Year of Employment
12	The management position	6
13	HR	12
14	The management position	6
15	HR	7
16	Faculty Member	5
17	Faculty Member	6
18	Faculty Member	4
19	Faculty Member	4
20	The management position	5
21	The management position	7

### Research findings

The first research question was “How has the current HRD system been operated in the selected university”.

3 major categories and some examples of direct quotations supporting each category are presented as follows:

**1. Bottom-up communication:**

*For the training program, it takes a while to receive the related documents. I normally do the survey about which training I would like to take part in so I've forwarded the document to that office. (Staff 07)*

*I'm searching for the training program which topic I am interested in, then I send the permission form including the registration fee for the training program and pass it to the office. (Staff 09)*

*If we didn't get it from HR department, we need to contact the Faculty office. If we don't have a Faculty office, we need to contact directly to the instructor and ask them for the information about when it will take place. Most instructors know their own information. (Staff 10)*

**2. Self-service operation :**

*Mostly, we need to work on our own because we wouldn't get anything from them. We need to search for information by ourselves where it should be. If we couldn't find it from where it is supposed to be, we need to look it up from the Faculty such as formal form because they said this staff is not here, no file, or lost file. We need to do it on our own anyway. (Staff 10)*

*Walk-in to the staff and complete the form for which document is needed. After that, they will process for us, but if some documents need to be approved – we need to send a formal document and staff will let us find the information ourselves. (Staff 13)*

*Contact the President's office, writing the request form for what document is needed. After that, staff will receive the form and complete it – like requesting the salary certificate. But if the document needs to be sign for approval – staff will pass it to the management level. When it's done, staff will make a phone call telling us to pick up the document. (Staff 15)*

**3. Paper-based requirement :**

*It needs to fill out the requested form which is in hard copy – the details will be simple thing to fill out, but if we consider to be 4.0 it should be something faster, not reduce the global warming or writing paper that is wasted as well. (Staff 01)*

*They work step by step, sending documents into the related department like the process of how government works that needed to be signed by every level. (Staff 13)*

*Most of documents are not in the e-document, can't get it out from the system. It's not fast. It's still in hard copy document which take time to process. Indeed, we need it fast. (Staff 16)*

To sum up, the current HRD system which has been operated in the selected university are of a bottom-up communication type, self-service operation, and paper-based system. All staff are required to complete requested forms and submit them to get their approval. The work related to HRD is centrally operated at the President's office (available HRD and training activities, as well as staff benefits and career development opportunities) and in Faculties (staff attendance and training approval).

**The second question was “What do the stakeholders think of the current HRD system?”**

4 major categories and 9 sub-categories. The researcher shows some examples of direct quotations supporting each category are presented as follows:

**1. Poor working operation:**

1.1 - Not being able to inform staff about specific training courses matching individual's needs

*I don't think they can do it because when I go to training, it is based on program of Council of Engineers which requires a number of trainees – one training program should be about 30 – 50 people. For us it is no good because we need to base on Council of Engineers. My view is why should we be based on Council of Engineers because of the connection to meet with instructors, colleagues and exchange knowledge. (Staff 05)*

*Training program from this department is so general, not matching with what I needed. (Staff 11)*

*I mostly search training programs by myself from outside. The university provides training program such as Quality Assurance, Academic Position, and English training course. Now they also have exercise courses as well. Sometimes not matching with my needs but I do have another option to be trained from outside because the university arrange a budget for training program. (Staff 14)*

1.2 - Slow training approval process

*Sending request of training program, time is a worry. The process of signing*

document takes time. Sometimes it's difficult to set timeline but if they set timeline of signing document is useful. (Staff 01)

Process of document finding or other process that takes too much time. It would be good if it's faster like requested salary certificate or training program. Some people might be in a hurry but document has just arrives in a couple days is already late. (Staff 02)

The approval is very delay like for training program. We couldn't rely on this department at all. It's ok for staff sometimes, I guess. (Staff 12)

## 2. Poor practice of information management :

### 2.1 - Lack of information about HRD program

HR department should inform about training program, requirements. These things are still lack of information. (Staff 01)

The HR management is useless here. They just inform us about leave of absence, lateness and sick leave. There is no information widely in terms of training/HRD program, etc. (Staff 02)

When I apply job in other organization, HR's staff inform me about regulations, workdays, and training courses but doesn't exist here. (Staff 11)

### 2.2 - Not updating stored data

When requested the Act of Organization Division, how organization division worked. This office didn't have any information. They recorded it since 2007 which is useless. They should update it. (Staff 03)

Information is mixing between old and updated. It's in hard copy documents, not online document (e-doc) which can't get it from the system. The hard copy document is a waste of time in the process even when we want it fast. (Staff 06)

One of the problems we had is information updating because its lack of updated information causes us to lose some benefits. So HR department should update information frequently because each staff always improve their profiles such as educational degree, salary, and training program. It would be useful when needed. (Staff 19)

### 2.3 - Losing Document

Document frequently lost along the process. If user not monitor document, it may get lost. If there is a system, it won't be lost. (Staff 11)

We should follow up the document with secretary's Faculty or by yourself. Everyone knows that they should copy document in case it becomes lost. (Staff 13)

*The secretary's faculty will copy all documents in case it's lost. In order to save time making a new one. (Staff 14)*

### **3. Deficiency Services :**

#### **3.1 - Incompetent service staff**

*HR's potential is lack of instructors' need in term of training program that require many different fields – staff wouldn't know deeply any details in human resource. They can't meet the instructors' needs. So in the President's Office, less people know everything. (Staff 06)*

*They tried to give me information, but it was delayed. We communicated what is needed but end result is totally different. (Staff 08)*

*If you ask me, is this department do best in the job, I would say "No" because the staff are lack of HR knowledge such as main training needed. (Staff 16)*

#### **3.2 - Inadequate number of staff leading to poor service**

*They don't have a professional staff to deal with human resources. They need to hire the HR expert. Many private companies hire HR expert to deal with career path such as how salary-based improvement to motivate staff for higher level. This is why career path needs to be clear. (Staff 03)*

*When insurance company want any documents from HR department, they can't provide any details. The reasons for that such as staff resigned, staff day off, or wait for main staff. (Staff 10)*

*We're quite busy now because a few people do the work. We have to do documents all day as well as update information for everyone continuously. (Staff 18)*

#### **3.3 - Weakness not receiving Information**

*I give you an example about training program, everyone should attend even the staff but information never reach me. External information usually sent directly to the Dean but he never read it. So, I missed the opportunity to go. But if the center know that they have a business management, it's going to be a right track. (Staff 04)*

*About the continued studying, we find all of information by ourselves as well as do the approval documents. Perhaps they never pass through HR sometimes from my previous experiences. (Staff 09)*

*Staff do their best to help me, but they have a lack of information such as documents are not found, not updated, or don't know the process. (Staff 13)*

3.4 - Not providing information regarding training application process and time

*The limitation of time should be set such as within 3 days, 7 days or 15 days in each specific process to help user plan to process the document as well as finished period. But they don't tell us anything. (Staff 01)*

*Time is a main concern. We don't know how long does the approval process take but if it's run in the system, it should be better and on-time. Sometimes, I've to wait for a couple weeks or if lost, I should make a new one which causes delay. (Staff 11)*

*They should improve time-ability. Normally, the documents that issue from here won't take long but stuck in the approval process, even more signatures to prove – time is concerned. (Staff 15)*

#### **4. Not utilizing any online HRDIS application:**

*There is no helping-tool such as information system for stored staff profiles and can access to those details. Now, facing problem finding stuff but never be solved by the system causes staff workload. Every process takes time but how to make it less to do. (Staff 02)*

*There is no information system in here. When requesting any document seem to be self-service. They let us find stuff by ourselves in hard copy folders. But if we requested the current document, they might have it in their computers. This why information system should be involved. (Staff 09)*

*How fast for receiving information depends on what kinds of information we requested, If it is current information we will get real soon, but if it is old stuff, it takes time or sometimes not found it because they didn't have a program recorder. (Staff 15)*

To recap, informants reported 4 major concerns and 9 subs major towards the current HRD systems as follows: First, poor working operation - 2 points of concern from using the current systems : Not being able to inform staff about their specific training courses matching with individual's needs and the slow training approval process. Second, poor practice of information management - 3 concerns include lack of information about HRD program, not updating stored data, and losing documents. Third, not providing enough service is comprised of 4 sub-categories: incompetent service staff, inadequate number of staff leading to poor service 3 and 4. Fourth, not utilizing any online HRDIS application.

## Discussions

### Addressing the first research question

“How has the current HRD system been operated in the selected university”.

This study reported that the current HRD system in the selected university relies on 1) the bottom-up communication, 2) self-service operation and paper based system in which all staff are required to complete the requested forms and submit their requests through a long chain of command to get their approval. Similar findings were agreed by Moghadam (2002) who found that the organization that produced documents suffered from bureaucracy. When an engineering unit creates a document, then sent it to other units for assertion and in the end sends it to the employer. Control of papers, specifically when there are thousands of them, is a very challenging task. Abadiano (2012) said that in the University of Cebu (UC) the Human Resource Officer is manually looking up the files in the archives of the Human Resource Office. There is no computerized human resources information system existing in the university. All staff have to submit documents and forms and then send to the HR office. Some important documents are either missing or misplaced which makes report's generation and tracking of absences difficult. Also these findings have been congruently reported in studies involving the flow of HR data in educational organizations. While SHRM (2016) explained that “"Centralization," the degree to which decision-making authority is restricted to higher levels of management, typically leads to a pyramid structure”. Philip (2012) moreover, found that the work of HR in most educational institutes asks their people to help themselves for HR services and some services need to be requested through their supervisors in their departments.

### Addressing the second research question

“What do the stakeholders think of the current HRD system?” Most informants reported their opinions towards the current HRD system of the university in 4 shortfalls – 1) poor working operation, 2) inefficient data and information management, 3) deficiency services, and 4) the need for having a Human Resource Development Information System. These drawbacks were also in line with Papa (2016) pointing out that at The Cavite State University, the HR office is having a hard time in managing their employee records. It becomes highly inefficient to store and process data and uses the derived information to make decisions. Managing needed data is very time consuming leading to deficient service when users request data. This leads towards developing a human resource information system with centralized

database that would help the HR staff and other employees to retrieve and process employees' information in a fast way. Furthermore, when discussing the effectiveness of document management, Mehrad and Mokhtari (2012) also agreed with this presenting the similar result that in technical and vocational institutes that did not often practice a good operation in storing their documents since the time they are produced until their final storage of disposition, the important data may be stored in different places causing problems such as losing, inaccessibility and damaged documents. Then they have to design electronic document management in the institute. Abadiano (2012) pointed out problems of HR systems found in the University of Cebu related to the findings in this study. These included the delay of dissemination of HR data, lack of a proper monitoring system, tracking or recording documents as well as inefficiency and slow processing of shared documents. In addition, this study also found that both teaching and non-teaching staff were lacking the skills for using their new HRD inventory. Tanner (1999) raised the similar finding which was discovered in two types of organizations -- one of them was a production company and the other was a medium-sized university. It was found in these two organizations that the work of HR still demands the use of paper unnecessarily and inefficiently during their data management procedures.

### **Implication for practice**

#### **Implication for practice #1: Most university faculty members.**

Since one of the drawbacks found in the manual HRD system is the loss of important documents, as being reported in this study, this shortfall would be mitigated if the new HRDIS is developed to run on the platform where detailed information, work paper, or requested materials are securely and easily, required, recorded, completed, submitted, stored and delivered between users and HR operators through the internet network. Moreover, not only does the newly-analyzed system allow the employees to review available training courses, but also they could straight away register for courses that they are eligible to join, then evaluate the success of their development experiences received from the courses. Moreover, by utilizing the new system, the faculty members are permitted to write a request for an open access to needed in-house training courses or ask for permission to attend some public training. If they wish to attend the public training, the new recommended HRDIS system has a module to assist how the member may complete an electronic form to describe the details of their training proposal so that necessary information could be provided to assist the

university board committee's decision-making approval process. After being considered, the result of the training approval would be automatically returned to the senders.

**Implication for practice #2: HR staff/HR Department.**

By launching the new HRDIS in which data is thoroughly manipulated and a number of manual HRD transactions could be conveniently made and stored in the database by the users of this new application, the great amount of workload of the HRD department could be reduced. For example, HRDIS should shorten some HR work processes especially the requirements of which are less complicated or do not need approval from the top management. Therefore, instead of submitting documents through a long chain of command, the new HRDIS may consider whether some transactions such as requesting the approval of work leave letters may be directly sent through the system to the person who could have the authority to approve them. However, the HRD team still has their authorization to access the routine functions such as generating, recording, monitoring, tracking or deleting staff profiles or reviewing the training history of all faculty members. Additionally, being able to monitor staff training which are submitted online or requested, the HR department would conveniently review and approve the registration for the training courses, then make and print out a summary report after the end of each training program.

**Implication for practice #3: University board committee.**

University board committee can effortlessly receive and approve the public training courses requested by individual faculty members online. In addition, the new HRD software could provide University board committee with both graphic and detailed reports regarding current situations of HRD activities, staff training as well as workforce competencies. Decision making based on the supported information, eventually, helps the policy makers to work out future HRD strategies, training budgets and plans.

**Implication for practice #4: University.**

Developing the HRDIS, the university could promote the concept of the green university and paperless office in which the organization could reduce the amount of paper required in the previous system. It is accustomed that the university could reduce much paper in the processes of training transactions which have been currently utilized.

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