

Chapter 12

Adoption and Use of Human Information System Digital Technology for Organizational Competitiveness: An Exploratory Study in the Context of Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Staying competitive in the current digitized workplace era requires, among other things, an adequate and efficient use of modern technology. Human resource information system (HRIS) is one of several tools that helps organizations remain sustainable by providing technology that can help to acquire, store, generate, analyze, and disseminate timely and accurate employee information and activities. Of late, HRIS is slowly gaining prominence in Nepal. A generic model for conditions that are necessary for successful adoption and use of HRIS in Nepali organizations is designed as the models proposed by earlier researchers in a developed context may not work well in a developing context. This sets fertile ground to carry out scholarly inquiry into the domain of HRIS in the Nepalese context. The limitations of present study are mentioned and practical/research implications of the same are discussed towards the end. Researchers are of the opinion that the findings of this preliminary study can be taken up to the next level for carrying out quantitative research in HRIS domain in Nepal.

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INTRODUCTION

An adequate and efficient use of technology, *inter alia*, is a *sine qua non* to stay competitive in the current workplace of digitized era. Human Resource Information System (HRIS) is one of the several tools that helps modern organizations remain competitive by providing technology that can help to acquire, store, generate, analyze, and disseminate timely and accurate employee information. HRIS is an intersection of human processes and technology through a HR software solution that allows electronic processing of HR processes and activities (Gupta, 2013). In similar lines, Anitha and Aruna (2013) state that HRIS provides a pool of information systems that integrate different HR processes for business excellence. In organizations that have adopted Information Technology, HRIS has invariably become an essential part of it as it helps organizations in carrying out their HRM functions efficiently. HRIS has now become an integral part of organization information management along with the development of computer and database network techniques (Jie, 2014). Research report published by Sage People (2017) found that though 83% of global HR leaders agree that all people decisions should be based on data and analytics, only 37% are actually using them. For instance, HRIS has *not* been implemented in Pakistani health sector owing to multitude of factors ranging from infrastructure, lack of expertise, low budget, and lack of maintenance (Kumar et. al. 2013).

Earlier research studies suggest that adoption of HRIS and its use has not been fully functional in majority of organizations globally and we can surmise a similar situation in Nepal as well. However, of late, **HRIS** is slowly gaining prominence in Nepal. It was implemented in some nascent form since early 90s by mid to large-sized firms largely due to individual, organizational, environmental, and technological factors. Last decade has witnessed virtually a HRIS wave in a majority of Nepali organizations. However, adoption of an Integrated HRIS in Nepal is an exception rather than a reality. Further, there is wide gap between the intended and actual use of HRIS demanding an inquiry into factors that affect successful adoption of HRIS. There is no precise data on the number of organizations using HRIS or IT enabled HR systems in Nepal despite the fact that the use of HRIS is increasing even more rapidly in the last five years compared to the earlier decades. Use of HRIS is found to be more in banking sector followed by other sectors such as Private, MNCs, Development, and Public. Among total number of businesses, only 250-300 organizations have HRIS in place. This information can be supported by the fact that there are already 12-15 major developers of HR software in Nepal. Each of them has some 15-20 clients as listed in their websites on an average and the cumulative number totals to 250-300.

In the global context also, literature on HRIS has remained limited. Though researchers have focused mostly on the barriers and conditions for successful adoption, the findings cannot be generalized for all sectors and contexts. Additionally, the models proposed by previous researchers in a developed context may not work well in a developing context. This aptly sets a fertile ground to carry out scholarly inquiry into the domain of HRIS in the context of Nepal. For the present research, information was elicited through interviews with 18 key informants working for MNCs, Government, and Private sector representing education and development domains. After the coding process, different HRIS themes emerged and they were further grouped to form sub-themes. The overarching goal of this study is to develop an initial understanding of HRIS in Nepal and its current usage status. After exploring the dynamics and various dimensions of HRIS domain, a Generic Model for conditions that are necessary for successful adoption and use of HRIS in Nepali organizations is designed. It is believed that the models proposed by previous researchers in a developed context may not work well in a developing context.

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