

Chapter 4.6

Exploring the Relation between the Use of HRIS and their Implementation in Spanish Firms

José Antonio Fernández-Sánchez
University of Alicante, Spain

Susana de Juana-Espinosa
University of Alicante, Spain

Jorge Valdés-Conca
University of Alicante, Spain

INTRODUCTION

An information system (IS) is “a set of people, procedures, and resources that collects, transforms, and disseminates information in an organization. A system that accepts data resources as input and processes them into information products as output” (O’Brien & Marakas, 2005). Likewise, the

definition of human resource information Systems (henceforth HRIS) can be expressed as an IS that deals only with information related directly to the human resource management (HRM) area (Tannenbaum, 1990).

Initially, computerized HRIS were only useful for administrative purposes. However, in the course of the last decade, that tendency has changed markedly and a strategic re-orientation of these applications is nowadays considered desir-

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able and necessary for companies competing in today's uncertain, complex and ever-developing environment. This phenomenon has turned HRIS into a major strategic means, capable of providing information about the actual capacity of the firm, its potential, and the potential of its competitors.

This research paper aims to provide an in-depth analysis of HRIS usage as a tool for assisting in recruitment decisions. This was carried out in accordance with the empirical findings of a quantitative research on selection and recruitment processes in Spanish firms. This paper reports and evaluates the major results of this current study and discusses its theoretical and practical implications with a view to increasing the effectiveness of HRIS usage for its recruitment processes.

BACKGROUND

The HRM function involves the whole range of activities occurring from the job opening in a company until the employee leaves his or her post; in other words, the post has to be filled at the time when an employee leaves it (Fernández Sánchez, 2005). Therefore, HRM addresses a wide variety of activities, with the main concern being the identification of the staffing needs required by the firm and whether to use independent contractors or do the hiring in order to recruit and train the best employees. The whole array of these activities is called "recruitment process." HRM activities should also:

- Deal with performance issues
- Manage the organization's approach to employee benefits and compensation; employee records and personnel policies
- Promote the right employees
- Implement managerial practices compliant with HRM regulations.

When concentrating upon the recruitment process, the first step would be whether it should

be run as internal or external recruitment. Internal recruitment occurs when a firm fills a vacant position with a member of its own staff, whether by transferring an employee (horizontal movement within the hierarchical structure of the organization) or by promoting him/her (vertical movement). It could also combine both movements, or even be based on personnel development programmes (Armstrong, 1992; Attwood & Dimmock, 1996; D'Aboville & Bernié, 1991). The external recruitment refers to the decision of filling a vacant position with a candidate alien to the firm, using several recruitment techniques (Deguy, 1989; Gómez-Mejía, Balkin, & Cardy, 2007; Peña Baztán, 1990).

The optimal use of internal recruitment processes requires possessing an updated and accurate knowledge of the personnel (Leal Millán, Alfaro, Rodríguez, & Román, 1999), where an HRIS can prove particularly useful. A human resource inventory, also known as an Internal IS, is probably the simplest and cheapest IS that can be developed. It consists of a database (a structured collection of records) that keeps the largest possible amount of detailed information about the employees. Basic data to be included in this database are personal details, recruitment dates, prior positions held, promotions, and several other observations about the employees' performance and potential (Peña Baztán, 1990).

Table 1 summarizes and compares the arguments in favor and against each type of recruitment, based on the works of Armstrong (1992), Attwood et al. (1996), Besseyre des Horts (1988), Camerer and Vepsäläinen (1988), Claver, Gascó, and Llopis (1996), D'Aboville et al. (1991), Datta and Dodgson (1993), Díez de Castro et al. (2002), Gómez-Mejía et al. (2007), Guthrie (1994), Huber (1991), Leal Millán et al. (1999), Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), Sánchez García (1993), Stata (1989) and Ulrich, Jick, and Von Glinow (1993).

According to Table 1, the internal recruitment is apparently more advantageous than the external method. This is why several academics (e.g.,

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