

Human Resources Management At The National Public Sector In Cambodia: Focus On HR Professionals In Decision Making

Someas Mon^{1*}, Sarom Mok², Chan Ouk³, Mengheang Hor⁴

¹Ph.D. Candidate, Preah Sihamoniraja Buddhist University, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

² Ph.D., Main Advisor, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

³Ph.D., Co-Advisor, Preah Sihamoniraja Buddhist University, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

⁴Ph.D., Committee, Preah Sihamoniraja Buddhist University, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

* Corresponding Author:

E-mail: monsomas21@gmail.com

Abstract.

The issue this study addresses is how the lack of formal decision-making standards created especially for human resource (HR) management can lead HR professionals to make choices that are not only expensive for administration but also raise their own risk and liability. The goal of this qualitative study using a case study was to examine how the lack of formal decision-making standards created especially for human resource management can lead HR professionals to make choices that can increase their personal risk and liability as well as the financial and perceptual costs to the organizations they work for. Furthermore, the goal of this research project was to provide fresh insights into the decision-making process in the field of human resources management. This qualitative case study investigated the perspectives and experiences of HR specialists employed by the Ministry of Cult and Religion in Cambodia. Participating human resources leaders and experts represented a range of decision-making responsibilities. The study's findings shed light on the primarily detrimental effects, consequences, and outcomes that HR professionals perceive and encounter as a result of the lack of formal decision-making standards created especially for HR management. Based on perceptions or experiences, an analysis of the data gathered from participants regarding the actual decisions made as a result of the lack of formal decision-making criteria for the management of human resources revealed evidence linking the lack of formal criteria to primarily negative impacts, effects, and outcomes. In order to create a formal decision-making process that includes criteria specifically created for the management of human resources in order to achieve results that reduce cost, mitigate liability, and avoid risk, such evidence through participant claims featured personal and organizational results that could be further studied against the backdrop of existing literature, albeit limited.

Keywords: Human resource management; National public sector; Decision making HR professionals and Cambodia.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of human resources experts is essentially a basic, required and continual obligation of decision making (Chermack, 2008a). In addition, the main liabilities and hazards experienced daily by human resources professionals are decision making (Sloan & Gavin, 2010). The challenges of the modern workplace require human resources professionals to have good skills in employee and human relations, a solid knowledge of employment law, and a common-sense approach to resolving personal and professional dilemmas (Scimia, 2007). Workplace decision making places many time-constraining and emotionally-stressful demands on human resources professionals each work day to make effective and efficient business decisions for all affiliated stakeholders in the organisations for which they are employed or associated (Rahman & DeFeis, 2009). The concern for prospective costs, liabilities and risks connected with the decision-making activities for which human resources professionals are responsible is an occupational part of managing the human resources function in any business (Calvasina et al., 2008a).

The process of making decisions on human resource management is frequently complicated by the necessity for decision makers to recognise and adhere to a multitude of subjects, trends, concepts, issues, practices, and regulations (Ulrich et al., 2008). The notion of equity is frequently scrutinised when stakeholders are informed of decisions made by human resources that do not correspond with their anticipated outcomes (Bodah, McHugh, & Yim, 2008). An illustration of the imperative to possess subject matter knowledge and adhere to regulations pertains to existing labour legislation (Calvasina et al., 2011). Human resources specialists need to evaluate the applicable laws at the local (city and county), state, and federal levels, if any are present (Calvasina et al., 2011; Woska, 2007). Human resources professionals must exemplify ethical norms of duty and conduct during decision-making processes (Bartels et al., 2011; Society for Human Resource Management, 2009). Situational practices in human resources and the fluctuating dynamics of a global economy are particular tendencies that should be taken into account when making

decisions in human resources management (Brunner & Colarelli, 2010; Calvasina et al., 2008a; Society for Human Resource Management, 2014a). Challenges frequently emerge from the context (i.e., individuals, occurrences, and realities) associated with decisions in human resource management (Rahman & DeFeis, 2009).

A prevalent challenge encountered by human resources practitioners when rendering decisions is the appeal by an employee to reverse a determination made by their direct supervisor (Fox, 2012). Likewise, the apprehension among human resources practitioners resulting from managerial resistance to ethical and legal decision-making is a prevalent challenge faced by numerous organisations (Fox, 2012). While these topics, trends, concepts, and challenges might complicate decision-making, the stakes are frequently elevated due to the potential interrelated complications associated with each human resources decision-making request (Calvasina et al., 2008a). The administration of human resources is additionally constrained by a philosophical principle that emphasises the necessity to intentionally foster and perpetually sustain constructive working relationships between an organization's decision makers and its decision seekers (Society for Human Resource Management, 2014b; Walters, 2003). Central to the administration of human resources in a business is the capacity of HR professionals to enable effective decision-making (Chermack, 2008a).

The issue examined in this qualitative research study was the lack of formal decision-making criteria tailored for human resource management, which can lead HR professionals to make costly decisions for organisations and heighten their personal liability and risk (Ayyub et al., 2010). This issue highlights that the lack of established decision-making standards tailored for human resources management exposes organizations—and the professionals responsible for human resources decisions—to potential liabilities and risks stemming from adverse decision-making results (Flouris & Yilmaz, 2010). These adverse decision-making effects are frequently linked to outcomes deemed unjust, unlawful, immoral, or indefensible (Roehling & Wright, 2006).

The ramifications of failing to address this identified issue include persistent, repetitive, cumulative, and detrimental impacts of liability and risk stemming from the choices made by human resources professionals due to a lack of decision-making standards tailored for human resources management (Ayyub et al., 2010). Furthermore, the repercussions of these outcomes impose significant expenses on organisations (Calvasina et al., 2008a). Nonetheless, the accountability and hazards faced by a public sector and its leaders are not solely confined to monetary losses, but frequently encompass detrimental effects on reputation and status (Bodah et al., 2008; Greenwood & Freeman, 2011). Additional significant repercussions include the emergence and escalation of personal accountability and the peril faced by organisational decision-makers, such as human resources leaders and experts (Ayyub et al., 2010).

The aim of this qualitative study through various case analyses was to explore how the lack of formal decision-making standards tailored for human resource management can lead HR professionals to make decisions that are detrimental to organisations and elevate their personal liability and risk (Ayyub et al., 2010). Moreover, a primary aim of this research investigation was to enhance the understanding of decision-making processes pertinent to the domain of human resources management. A primary focus of this research study was to elaborate on Attribution theory while simultaneously developing new hypotheses concerning the impact of decision-making criteria on outcomes associated with decision-making and human resource management. For instance, the outcomes (such as superfluous expenses, accountability, and peril) stemming from a lack of structured decision-making standards tailored for human resource management. The focal point of this research study was to ascertain the process by which human resources management decisions are formulated within organisations (Calvasina et al., 2008b; Tye & Chen, 2005).

From the standpoint of this study, such research can help maintain the validity of earlier studies in decision-making processes while assisting this study in raising awareness of the application of decision-making models specifically created for human resource management. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this research will demonstrate how these models of decision-making can eliminate some of the ambiguity that decision makers have when anticipating desirable results (Rotarescu, 2011). Customised models, as opposed to “one-size-fits-all” ones, could be based on fundamental frameworks of corporate governance, social

responsibility, and business practices, which could enhance the general calibre of job choices for stakeholders.

Understandings the Theoretial Framework

The research's theoretical ramifications included an extension of the Attribution theory and potential support for a decision-making model specifically designed for human resource management, which would also broaden the theory and application of decision-making in the field of human resource management. This study looked at human resources professionals' decision-making rules, procedures, and practices, all of which are thought to be crucial—not to mention contentious—in the administration of human resources (Walsh et al., 2010). An interview methodology (i.e., survey instrument) that involved one-on-one interactions with human resources experts was chosen for this multiple case research. The survey's anticipated results offered insight into the decision-making processes of HR specialists that impact HR management. In this sense, the survey's sample was typical of the entire population (i.e., human resources professionals) as examined in support of the research inquiry's stated goal.

The application of well-established attribution theory provides a useful, logical illustration of how this study might advance theory. According to Walker et al. (2007), the idea of attribution is relevant to business in general and organization development in particular. Attribution theory and human resources management decision making are thought to be framed by the issue this study addresses, which is documented in research literature as human resources professionals make decisions that are expensive for organisations and increase their own personal liability and risk (Ayyub et al., 2010). According to Zikmund et al. (2010), the relationship between the Attribution theory and business can be further extended to the management of human resources, including related decision making, from an organisational perspective and ultimately to those individuals making decisions. As part of the empirical inquiry process to ascertain the organisational impact of decision-making processes (i.e., model) in mitigating liability and reducing risk in the management of human resources, the Attribution theory can also be used to synthesise the consideration of an explanation to support the aspects of the research study.

The comprehensive research results examined the necessity for a uniform, adaptable, and reliable decision-making framework (i.e., model) for employers and their representatives (i.e., human resources professionals and managers) in managing human resources to alleviate or eliminate related organisational or individual expenses, liabilities, and risks. The results of this research are expected to enhance the current thinking on attribution. Simultaneously, an enhancement of the constructs within the theoretical framework of this research study is expected concerning the ramifications of decision-making in the domain of human resources management, where minimal or no comprehensive research is presently available (Walsh et al., 2010).

Understandings the Attribution Theory

Fritz Heider developed the well-known Attribution theory in the 1940s (Walker et al., 2007). According to Weiner (2008), the theory of attribution describes how people try to comprehend the cause-and-effect relationship between themselves and others, as well as how they decide who is responsible and who is at fault. Kurt Lewin's earlier work on group dynamics and motivation from the 1930s served as a major foundation for Heider's attribution study, which was further developed by Harold Kelley and Bernard Weiner in the 1970s and far into the 21st century (Walker et al., 2007). According to Heider's attribution theory, people are aspiring psychologists who foolishly try to make sense of the social reality they live in. According to Walker et al. (2007), Heider also believed that people tended to see cause-and-effect links regardless of their actuality. Heider's research was extended by Weiner (2010) in an effort to show how much people's decisions and behaviours are influenced by their past, present, and future.

An experiment to ascertain how students' performance in a marketing course might affect their professors' assessments was the subject of another extension of Heider's earlier research employing the Attribution theory (Gotlieb, 2009). Although there was no clear link between students' poor grades and their instructors' poor assessments, the experiment did produce data that supported a novel claim about the Attribution theory. According to this new paradigm, students' evaluation of their professors constituted a cognitive process that was too complicated for simple assumptions based on Heider's basic cause-and-effect

theory (Gotlieb, 2009). The results of this study corroborated additional studies by Weiner (2010) and others about the multifaceted nature of relationship cause-and-effect, influenced by interpersonal dynamics, motivation, engagement, and achievement (Graham, 1991; Martin & Dowson, 2009).

This evidence shows that attribution is not a static theory in singularity as originally thought, but rather an evolving set of theories that continue to form in the field of causal attribution in social psychology, as evidenced by the many ongoing attempts to apply and improve it (Mizerski et al., 1979). A key component of decision-making is the application and improvement of causal attribution in this regard, which is exemplified by judgement (i.e., the cause) through an explanation of logic (i.e., the consequence) (Graham, 1991). However, the linkage of decision-making in the management of human resources is missing from the application and refinement of causal attribution as noted in the Attribution theory. Based on the stated problem and purpose of this research as outlined herein, the findings of this study are intended to fill this gap.

Understanding the Sociocultural and Historical Constructions

Using a constructivist worldview, the Attribution theory was chosen as the study's framework in an effort to advance knowledge of HRM in general and HRM decision-making in particular. By evaluating various participant interpretations and connecting them to social and historical constructs of the Attribution theory, the constructivism worldview allowed for a deeper comprehension of observed philosophical principles (Stake, 2010). The perceived need among human resources professionals and their designees (i.e., managers) for a decision-making process with sound, logical, and risk-avoiding tenets, specifically designed for the management of human resources, is the basis for this contribution with regard to this research (Flouris & Yilmaz, 2010). According to research literature, human resources professionals make judgements that are expensive for organisations and increase their own personal liability and risk. This perceived necessity is at the heart of the issue this study attempts to solve (Ayyub et al., 2010).

Moreover, this perceived necessity is likely contingent upon the responsibilities and obligations associated with occupational positions, such as those of a human resources specialist or organisational executive, in the direct or indirect oversight of human resources (Calvasina et al., 2008a). Furthermore, this recognised necessity is further reinforced by continuous observations and dialogues with organisational personnel (i.e., other human resources experts and executives) tasked with overseeing their organisations' most precious resources—its human capital. From the viewpoint of social and historical construction, Attribution theory can underpin the theoretical framework of this research by consolidating the main premise outlined in the problem statement (Adams & Bustow, 2014). The primary focus of this research is the impact of lacking formal decision-making standards tailored for human resource management, which may lead HR professionals to make decisions that incur significant costs for organisations and elevate their personal liability and risk, thereby elucidating the causal relationship between HR decision-making and its consequences. Moreover, the social and historical insights derived from this research can elucidate the causal relationships inherent in Attribution theory as it pertains to the assertion that human resources professionals make decisions that incur significant costs for organisations, thereby augmenting their personal liability and risk.

II. METHODS

Employing techniques and approaches that accurately reflect the subject matter and context of the phenomena under investigation is essential for research efficacy (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). For this study, the qualitative research design methodology was chosen. Employing case study is the most effective strategy within the qualitative research methodology for this scholarly investigation, considering the phenomena under examination (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The principal method of inquiry instrumentation used a well designed interview process, with data gathered through individual interviews for administrative objectives.

In order to guarantee the achievement of an adequate sample in order to sufficiently execute this research project, the recruiting approach was designed to collect the required minimum threshold of the participant sample plus an additional 10 to 15 percent more participants than needed. The call for voluntary

involvement in this research study served as the foundation for all outreach actions described in the recruiting plan.

When relevant and applicable, depth interviews (using the laddering technique) were chosen as the supplementary method for collecting further data. Economy of design (i.e., cost considerations), appropriateness for research strategy (i.e., business application), personalised data collection (i.e., supports importance of inquiry), immediate access to data collection (i.e., rapid turnaround time), and participant convenience factors (i.e., takes into account time and place of scheduling availability) were some of the reasons given for using the chosen method and approach for this qualitative research (Cozby, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008; Yin, 2011a; Zikmund et al., 2010). In the end, the rationale behind the chosen strategy and methodology matched the overarching objectives of this investigation.

The study employed thematic analysis to interpret the data gathered. In order to guarantee the validity, reliability, and generalisability of anticipated results during the interpretation process, efforts were made during data analysis. In order to publish interpreted study results that make sense to pertinent audiences, consideration of such factors about the simplicity, balance, completeness, and robustness of the data analysis procedure took place. For reporting reasons, ongoing evaluation and observation of the calibre and rigour of the data analysis and interpretation procedures was required to support these information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Tables and charts are used to display the study's findings as well as interpretations of the research questions' findings and their overall significance.

Given that research involving human subjects (i.e., participants) might occasionally contain a moral dynamic, it is important to address and reduce any potential hazards that could be posed to participants for both short-term and long-term aspects (Kearns, 2014). Despite the advantages for research study participants, researchers must make an effort to guarantee that all ethical guarantees are in place to support the integrity of research while exhibiting concern and care for involved participants (Horner & Minifie, 2011; Kearns, 2014). The three core ethical precepts of beneficence, fairness, and respect for people define care and concern in the context of research (Greaney et al., 2012). All of the activities described in this research study adhered to the requirements set forth by these three essential ethical principles in order to create and uphold ethical assurances.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of Lacking Clear Decision-making Criteria for Managing Human Resources

Excerpts from each participant's response were examined and classified as "positive," "negative," or "neutral" before category codes were applied. As themes developed, codes were added in accordance with particular sub-themes that participants identified for the perceived effects of the lack of format decision-making criteria created especially for human resource management. Three themes surfaced: (1) impact views differ; (2) human resources professionals perceive impacts as balanced; and (3) affects for others can be perceived as primarily negative.

(1) Impact Views Differ

Every participant had the opportunity to express how they felt about the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management. Participants were able to express how they felt about the lack of human resources decision-making standards created especially for human resource management, but their opinions differed. "Management would back us up if a decision was made," stated participant 2. On the other hand, Participant 7 stated that "the best possible decision will probably not be taken." "A look at facts and implications in order to acquire all the evidence needed to make a reasonable decision would be in order," added Participant 11.

Participants' perceptions of the advantages or disadvantages of the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management have been categorised based on interview replies. (A) application of experience; (B) advancement potential; (C) management support; and (D) research excitement are the subcategories of the perceived positive outcomes. The perceived negative effects have been divided into four subcategories: (1) results inaccuracy; (2) knowledge gaps; (3) unethical or unlawful features; and (4) outcome ambiguity. The obligation of human resources professionals to support all facets of decision-

making in the management of human resources, regardless of perceived impact, resulted in a single neutral impact. As a result, this neutral impact has been classified as a work obligation.

(2) Human Resources Professionals Perceive Impacts as Balanced

Every participant was able to list both the advantages and disadvantages of the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management. Participants were asked to identify what they considered to be a perceived good and negative influence using two different questions, and their answers were balanced. When asked what they thought had a positive or negative influence, each participant gave an answer that was both positive and negative. This is known as balanced responses. For instance, when asked about the perceived benefits of the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management, Participant 10 said, “You can focus on the decision to be made in regard to the organization and not be confined to established convention.” In contrast, Participant 10 indicated a negative impact about the lack of decision-making criteria specifically created for the management of human resources by saying, “You could miss the mark with the decision.”

Participants’ perceptions of the advantages or disadvantages of the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management have been categorised based on interview replies. Participants’ perceived benefits have been divided into the following subcategories: (a) more options were obtained; (b) prior experiences were used; (c) decision skills were developed; (d) more autonomy was exercised; (e) better decisions were made; (f) creative thinking was broadened; and (g) decision buy-in was improved. The perceived negative effects have been divided into the following subcategories: (a) incorrect decisions were made; (b) confusion arose; (c) inconsistencies occurred; (d) mistakes increased; and (e) morale declined.

(3) Affects for Others Perceiving as Primarily Negative

The lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management allowed each participant to express what they thought would be both beneficial and detrimental to others. Even though participants were asked to respond to two different questions—one about what they thought had a positive impact on others and the other about what they thought had a negative impact—the majority of their answers were negative. In this case, the term “mainly negative responses” refers to the fact that none of the participants gave a favourable or negative response when asked what they thought would have a positive or negative impact on others. When asked about the perceived positive impact of the lack of decision-making criteria specifically created for the management of human resources, for instance, Participant 6 said, “The ability to make criteria relative to the decision circumstances,” whereas Participant 8 said, “None to think of at this time.” All participants indicated a felt negative influence for others when asked, but none of them indicated a perceived positive impact. When asked about the perceived negative impact of the lack of decision-making criteria specifically created for the management of human resources, for instance, Participant 6 said, “The process used to make a decision may be biased,” and Participant 8 said, “A possible negative outcome could occur.”

Participants’ perceptions of the advantages or disadvantages of the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management have been subcategorised based on interview responses. (A) criteria flexibility; (B) nothing positive; (C) better decisions; (D) more possibilities; and (E) consult others are the subcategories of the perceived beneficial impacts for others. The perceived detrimental effects on other people have been divided into five categories: (a) incorrect choice results; (b) inconsistent results; (c) an unstructured process; (d) outcome uncertainty; and (e) bias potential.

Participants ranked knowledge deficit as having the second-highest negative perceived impact (15%). Additionally, participants said that they were at a clear disadvantage since they did not have all the information necessary to make the decision and were not aware of the standards for making decisions (Wright, 2014). Furthermore, actions that are or may be deemed unethical or illegal could result from the lack of defined decision-making criteria (Shacklock et al., 2011). In this case, 8% of participants responded to the description of the detrimental perceived impact of unlawful or unethical characteristics. Similarly, 8% of participants responded to questions on uncertainty of outcomes. Uncertainty of outcomes (i.e., future results or consequences) may arise when making decisions (Rotarescu, 2011). Participants identified not

knowing the consequences of a decision until after it is made as the main cause of outcome uncertainty (Rahman & DeFeis, 2009). Human resources professionals strive to make decisions that are as accurate as possible, which entails being fully informed about the decision to be made and taking the legal and ethical aspects into consideration to ensure certainty of outcomes, according to the insight on these described negative perceived impacts as disadvantages (Society for Human Resource Management, 2014g).

Many people believe that using experience is a crucial component of any decision-making process (Rotarescu, 2011). Additionally, the management of human resources includes decision-making. The application of experience obtained the highest rating (15%) of described positive perceived impacts, reflecting the participants' viewpoint. According to this ranking, it is conceivable that prior experiences influence application while making decisions. Human resources professionals typically consider the past when making decisions because experience is developed over time. Research has shown that inexperience can result in less accurate and thorough decision making (Rotarescu, 2011).

The Lack of Explicit Decision-Making Criteria for Managing Human Resources

All participants' excerpts were classified as "positive" or "negative" before category labels were applied. As themes surfaced, codes were added in accordance with particular sub-themes that participants identified for the experiences they recounted with reference to the lack of formal decision-making criteria created especially for human resource management. Three themes surfaced: (1) descriptions of experiences differ; (2) human resources experts reported experiences that are balanced; and (3) experiences for others can be characterised as primarily negative.

(1) Descriptions of Experiences Differ

Every participant was able to share their experiences with the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management. Participants were able to share their experiences with the lack of human resources decision-making standards created especially for human resource management, but these experiences differed. "I had the benefit to consult others from peers in HR to legal counsel in order to identify criteria used for decision making based on the severity of issue at hand," stated participant number two. On the other hand, Participant 3 stated, "My experience has been a mixed bag or results." "Frightening as I am always unclear of accomplishing targets and whether I am heading in the ner route to make decisions on behalf of the organization," added Participant 13.

Participants' descriptions of their positive and bad experiences with the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management have been subcategorised based on interview responses. The beneficial experiences that have been described have been divided into three subcategories: (a) study conducted; (b) experience applied; and (c) people consulted. The bad experiences that have been described have been divided into two subcategories: (a) uncertainty occurred; and (b) inaccuracy resulted.

(2) Human Resources Experts reported experiences Balancing

Regarding the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management, each participant was able to recount both positive and negative experiences. Participants were asked to report both happy and bad experiences using two different questions, and their answers were balanced. When asked to describe a pleasant or negative experience, each participant gave a balanced response. When asked to give a positive experience with the lack of decision-making criteria especially created for the management of human resources, Participant 2, for instance, said, "Everyone works together to make the best possible decision." On the other hand, when asked to describe a negative experience regarding the lack of decision-making criteria specifically designed for the management of human resources, Participant 2 said, "Possible stigma may result from the lack of buy-in from people who feel excluded or disconnected from the decision-making process."

Participants' positive and negative experiences with the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management have been subcategorised based on interview responses. The positive experiences that have been described have been divided into the following subcategories: (a) improved collaboration; (b) utilisation of prior experiences; (c) expansion of creative thinking; (d) increased exercise of autonomy; and (e) recognition of opportunities. The negative experiences that have been

described can be further classified as follows: (a) acceptance declines; (b) emotions increase; (c) liabilities increase; (d) discrepancies arise; (e) collaboration declines; and (f) unforeseen consequences occur.

(3) Experiences for Others Characterizing as Primarily Negative

Regarding the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management, each participant was able to share both positive and negative experiences for others. Even though participants were asked to respond to two different questions—one about what they thought was a pleasant experience for others and the other about what they thought was a terrible experience for others—the majority of their answers were negative. In this case, the term “mainly negative responses” refers to the fact that, when asked what they considered to be a positive or negative experience for others, none of the participants gave a positive or negative response. For instance, Participant 8 said, “Decisions are being made, but there is not consistency with the process of decision making,” while Participant 5 responded, “Their input is sought,” when asked about a positive experience regarding the lack of decision-making criteria specifically designed for the management of human resources. When asked, all participants indicated a negative impact on others, but none of them described a favourable experience for others. For instance, Participant 8 said, “There is a possibility of inaccurate and unknown outcomes,” while Participant 5 said, “Their opinions are not sought,” in response to the question about the described negative experience regarding the lack of decision-making criteria specifically designed for the management of human resources.

Participants’ descriptions of others’ positive or bad experiences with the lack of decision-making criteria created especially for human resource management have been subcategorised based on interview responses. The positive experiences that others have reported have been divided into the following subcategories: (a) inconsistent result; (b) involvement in the process; (c) criterion flexibility; d) more possibilities; (e) careful procedure; and (f) acceptance rises. (A) impaired HR credibility; (B) outcome uncertainty; (C) exclusive process; and (D) unstructured process are the subcategories of the negative experiences that others have reported.

Speaking with colleagues was thought to be a necessary step in the research process to generate criteria for decision making that do not currently exist, as evidenced by the 39% response rate of participants for others consulted regarding the favourable experiences of others. In this sense, interacting with coworkers is viewed as a chance to involve others in specifically searching out thoughts and suggestions in a cooperative manner to establish how to develop criteria for their own decision-making reasons. Working together with coworkers can frequently result in a more organised and efficient method of making decisions for human resource management (Flouris & Yilmaz, 2010).

Equal ratings (15%) were given to the sub-themes of study undertaken and experience applied, resulting in a tie for the second-highest described good experience. This relationship leads to the suggestion of a dualism of theory and practice. Additionally, participants’ intellectual support for this duality leads to the idea that, although research is a crucial element of the decision-making process, its actual implementation is just as significant. According to Gavino et al. (2012), the context (i.e., application) of a decision’s process is just as important or correct as the substance (i.e., criteria) on which it is based. According to Flouris and Yilmaz (2010), the process of making decisions in human resources management involves gathering information and specifics before acting.

The Impact of Decision-Making without Explicit Standards for Managing Human Resources

All participants’ excerpts were classified as “positive” or “negative” before category labels were applied. As themes surfaced, codes were added in accordance with particular sub-themes that participants specified for the kinds of outcomes that were described with relation to the lack of formal decision-making criteria created especially for human resource management. Three themes emerged: (1) different outcomes are mentioned; (2) human resources experts describe balanced outcomes; and (3) outcomes for others can be characterised as primarily negative.

(1) Different Outcomes are Mentioned

Every participant was able to explain the kinds of consequences that resulted from the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management. Participants were able to explain a variety of outcomes related to the lack of human resources decision-making criteria created especially for the

management of human resources. “New policies and [decision-making] criteria resulted,” stated participant 3. On the other hand, Participant 10 stated, “The conclusion may not match the needs of my organization and that does not work and it could result in an epic disaster.” Participant 8 added, “Some decisions have been disputed because the outcome was not based upon clear decision points to support and validate the motives and rationales leading to the actual decision that was taken.”

Participants’ descriptions of favourable or unfavourable outcomes related to the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management have been subdivided based on interview replies. Better decisions and new criteria are two subcategories of the good outcomes presented. (A) poor decisions; (B) lack of buy-in; (C) unforeseen repercussions; and (D) liabilities are the subcategories of the negative types of outcomes outlined.

(2) Human Resources Experts Describe Balanced Outcomes

Every participant was able to describe both positive and bad outcomes related to the lack of decision-making criteria created especially for human resource management. Participants were asked to describe what they considered to be a favourable and bad sort of outcome experience using two different questions, and their answers were balanced. When asked what they described as a positive and negative experienced type of outcome, respectively, all participants gave a balanced response. For instance, when asked to describe a favourable consequence about the lack of decision-making criteria created especially for the administration of human resources, Participant 12 said, “Good results with employees being happy with the decisions being made.” On the other hand, when asked to explain a negative sort of result experience about the lack of decision-making criteria specifically created for the management of human resources, Participant 12 said, “Potential for risk rose.”

Participants’ descriptions of favourable or unfavourable outcomes related to the lack of decision-making standards created especially for human resource management have been subdivided based on interview replies. a) employee happiness, b) boosting morale, c) making wise decisions, d) growth opportunities, e) stakeholder engagement, and f) risk mitigation are the subcategories of the positive outcomes outlined. The unfavourable effects that have been described can be divided into two categories: a) increased risk, b) staff disengagement; c) uncertainty; d) a decline in morale; e) a decline in acceptance; and f) poor choices.

(3) Outcomes for Others Characterised as Primarily Negative

Regarding the lack of decision-making criteria created especially for the management of human resources, each participant was able to describe what they considered to be a positive and a poor sort of result experience for others. The majority of the responses were negative, despite the fact that participants were asked to indicate through two distinct questions—the first about what they described as a positive type of outcome experienced for others and the second about what they described as a negative type of outcome experienced for others. In this case, a description of primarily negative responses would be that, when asked what they considered to be a positive and bad type of result experience for others, respectively, none of the participants indicated a positive or negative response. For instance, Participant 10 said, “Everyone seems to work in silos in trying to reach a decision on their own without consulting human resources first,” whereas Participant 6 said, “The decisions made align with standards and laws,” when asked about a positive type of outcome experience regarding the lack of decision-making criteria specifically designed for the management of human resources. When asked, all individuals described a negative outcome for others, but none of them described a favourable outcome for others. For instance, Participant 10 said, “The unstructured process of having no criteria means a lack of guidance and direction that can lead to an incomplete or incorrect decision being made,” and Participant 6 said, “The outcomes result in legal risk for the organization and the decision maker,” when asked about the negative types of outcomes experienced regarding the lack of decision-making criteria specifically designed for the management of human resources.

Participants’ descriptions of favourable or unfavourable consequences for others with reference to the lack of decision-making criteria created especially for human resource management have been subcategorised based on interview replies. A) nothing positive happened, b) employee satisfaction resulted, c) risk mitigated, d) innovative thinking expanded, e) morale increased, f) sound process resulted, and g) defective process resulted are the subcategories of the positive types of outcomes experienced by others. A)

unstructured processes, B) risk potential, C) perceived bias, and incorrect decisions are the subcategories of the bad types of outcomes that others have experienced.

Participants' 31% response rate to bad judgements for specified negative categories of outcomes experiences may suggest that outcomes are generally negative and result in the worst options being made. In this sense, negative forms of outcomes occur more frequently when there is little or no criteria on which to construct a decision (Shacklock et al., 2011). Additionally, human resources professionals are likely to experience negative decision results due to the absence of decision-making criteria especially created for managing human resources (Kearney & Penque, 2012). The second most ranked (22%) sort of poor outcome experience was the no buy-in sub-theme. Participants remarked that the contextual nature of the decisions for which criteria may or may not exist or be applicable often hindered buy-in (Eberly, 2011). In addition, participants observed that the absence of explicit decision-making criteria may lead to divergent outcomes, which not only adds to a lack of buy-in, but can also lead to unintended consequences (Flouris & Yilmaz, 2010; Rotarescu, 2011). In this case, 15% of the participants responded to the negative type of result experience with unintended effects indicated. Liabilities as a sub-theme were reported by 8% of participants. All decisions come with liability attached to them, but liability is least likely to be controlled (i.e. minimised) when there is an application of different standards among decision makers (Olawaju, 2012). From the insight on these described negative types of outcomes experiences as disadvantages, it can be concluded that human resources professionals must take the time to consider each and every decision with care and caution in an attempt to achieve buy-in and avoid adverse outcomes that result in personal or organisational liabilities (Society for Human Resource Management, 2014g).

The decision-making process may benefit from the incorporation of real-world experiences (Ireland, 2009). As a result, this influence is rather noteworthy since it may lead to better choices. 15% of participants rated better decisions, which are reflected in the recollection of past decision-making experiences. This grade represents the participant's belief that, in the absence of formal relevant criteria deriving from both past accomplishments and lessons learned, it is possible to make trustworthy and responsible decisions in the management of human resources. However, research indicates that the best choices come from a mix of knowledge (i.e., requested decision) and actual application (i.e., experience) of criteria (i.e., decision points) (Calvasina et al., 2011; Rotarescu, 2011).

IV. CONCLUSION

This qualitative study used a number of case studies to examine how the lack of formal decision-making standards created especially for human resource management can lead to HR professionals making decisions that are expensive for businesses and raise their own personal risk and liability. The research study's findings gave human resources professionals information about the impacts, effects, and outcomes that they perceive and experience as a result of the lack of formal decision-making criteria created especially for human resource management. Participants' claims provided evidence of personal and organisational outcomes that could be further examined in light of the limited body of existing literature in order to create a formal decision-making model that includes criteria created especially for the management of human resources in order to achieve outcomes that reduce costs, minimise liability, and prevent risk. Practice recommendations were made in light of the study's findings. Furthermore, suggestions for additional research were made. The findings of this study could be expanded by using the researcher's conclusions from primary and secondary research as a basis for future research that looks at a larger, more diverse population, including the perspectives and experiences of others (i.e., employees). More human resources professionals' perspectives and experiences, as well as those of others (i.e., employees), may produce more inclusive findings that are transferable to a range of various demographic contexts

REFERENCES

- [1]. Adams, P. J., & Buetow, S. (2014). The place of theory in assembling the central argument for a thesis or dissertation. *Theory & Psychology*, 24(1), 93–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354313517523>

- [2]. Ayyub, B., Prassinis, P., & Etherton, J. (2010). Risk-informed decision making: Knowing where you are most likely to fail can help set the stage for reducing the chances of failure. *Mechanical Engineering*, 28–33.
- [3]. Bodah, M., McHugh, P., & Yim, S. (2008). Employee involvement programs and collective bargaining: The role of labor relations climate. *Journal of Collective Negotiations*, 32(3), 246–260. <https://doi.org/10.2190/CN.32.3.f>
- [4]. Brunner, L., & Colarelli, S. (2010). Immigration in the twenty-first century: A personnel selection approach. *The Independent Review*, 14(3), 389–413.
- [5]. Calvasina, G., Calvasina, R., & Calvasina, C. (2008a). Personal liability and human resource decision making. *Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, 1(12), 23–29.
- [6]. Calvasina, G., Calvasina, R., & Calvasina, E. (2008b). The U.S. Supreme Court and HR decision making. *Proceedings of the Academy of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 12(2), 2–6.
- [7]. Calvasina, G., Calvasina, R., & Calvasina, E. (2011). Determining employment relationships under federal and state law: Why should employers worry? *Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, 18(1), 394–406.
- [8]. Chermack, T. J., & Swanson, R. A. (2008). Scenario planning: Human resource development's strategic learning tool. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 10(2), 129–146.
- [9]. Cozby, P. (2009). *Methods in behavioral research* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- [10]. Eberly, M., Holley, E., Johnson, M., & Mitchell, T. (2011). Beyond internal and external: A dyadic theory of relational attribution. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(4), 731–753. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.0371>
- [11]. Flouris, T., & Yilmaz, A. (2010). The risk management framework to strategic human resource management. *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics*, (36), 25–45.
- [12]. Fox, M. (2012). Beware management push-back on HR decisions. *Texas Employment Law*, 7(1), 1–2.
- [13]. Gavino, C., Wayne, S., & Erdogan, B. (2012). Discretionary and transactional human resource practices and employee outcomes: The role of perceived organizational support. *Human Resource Management*, 51(5), 665–686. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21493>
- [14]. Gotlieb, J. (2009). Justice in the classroom and students' evaluation of marketing professors' teaching effectiveness: An extension of prior research using attribution theory. *Marketing Education Review*, 19, 1–14.
- [15]. Graham, S. (1991). A review of attribution theory in achievement contexts. *Educational Psychology Review*, 3(1), 5–39. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01323661>
- [16]. Greaney, A., Sheehy, A., Heffernan, C., Murphy, J., Mhalrunagh, S., Heffernan, E., & Brown, G. (2012). Research ethics: A guide for the novice researcher. *British Journal of Nursing*, 21(1), 38–43.
- [17]. Greenwood, M., & Freeman, R. (2011). Ethics and HRM: The contribution of stakeholder theory. *Business & Professional Ethics Journal*, 30(3–4), 269–292.
- [18]. Horner, J., & Minifie, F. (2011). Research ethics I: Responsible conduct of research (RCR)—Historical and contemporary issues pertaining to human and animal experimentation. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 54(1), 303–329. [https://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388\(2010/09-0265\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388(2010/09-0265))
- [19]. Ireland, C. (2009, April 23). Scholars take a look at decision making. *Harvard Gazette*.
- [20]. Kearney, G., & Penque, S. (2012). Ethics of everyday decision making. *Nursing Management*, 19(1), 32–36.
- [21]. Kearns, A. (2014). What is ethics research? *Journal of Religion, Education and the Arts*, 9.
- [22]. Martin, A., & Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues, and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 327–365. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325583>
- [23]. Merriam, S., & Tisdell, E. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- [24]. Mizerski, R., Golden, L., & Kernan, J. (1979). The attribution process in consumer decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 6(2), 123–140.
- [25]. Olarewaju, A. (2012). Strategic decision making: A review of literature. *International Business Management*, 6(4), 552–557.
- [26]. Rahman, N., & DeFeis, G. (2009). Strategic decision-making: Models and methods in the face of complexity and time pressure. *Journal of General Management*, 35(2), 43–60.
- [27]. Roehling, M., & Wright, P. (2006). Organizationally sensible versus legal-centric approaches to employment decisions. *Human Resource Management*, 45(4), 605–627. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20144>
- [28]. Rotarescu, E. (2011). Mathematical modeling in decision making process under conditions of uncertainty in human resource training and development. *Journal of Mathematical Notes*, 7(1), 46–56.
- [29]. Scimia, D. (2007). A common sense approach to reducing liability in today's workplace. *Employee Relations Law Journal*, 33(2), 23–29.
- [30]. Shacklock, A., Manning, M., & Hort, L. (2011). Dimensions and types of ethical climate within public sector human resource management. *Journal of New Business Ideas & Trends*, 9(1), 51–56.
- [31]. Sloan, K., & Gavin, J. H. (2010). Human resource management: Meeting the ethical obligations of the function. *Business and Society Review*, 115(1), 57–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8594.2009.00357.x>
- [32]. Society for Human Resource Management. (2009). Business ethics: The role of culture and values for an ethical workplace. http://www.shrm.org/research/articles/documents/09-0711_rq_4_2009_final.pdf
- [33]. Society for Human Resource Management. (2014a). Bylaws & code of ethics: SHRM code of ethics. http://www.shrm.org/about/bylaws_ethics/pages/codeofethics.aspx

- [34]. Society for Human Resource Management. (2014b). Global HR. <http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/global/Pages/default.aspx>
- [35]. Stake, R. (2010). Qualitative research: Studying how things work. Guilford Press.
- [36]. Trochim, W., & Donnelly, J. (2008). The research designs knowledge base (3rd ed.). Cengage Learning.
- [37]. Tye, M., & Chen, P. (2005). Selection of expatriates: Decision-making models used by HR professionals. *Human Resource Planning*, 28(4), 15–20.
- [38]. Ulrich, D., Younger, J., & Brockbank, W. (2008). The twenty-first-century HR organization. *Human Resource Management*, 47(4), 829–850. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20247>
- [39]. Walker, J., Payne, S., Smith, P., & Jarrett, N. (2007). Psychology for nurses and the caring professions (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill International.
- [40]. Walters, C. (2003, December 19). Personal liability: The HR professional's occupational hazard. *Rochester Business Journal*.
- [41]. Walsh, K., Sturman, M., & Longstreet, J. (2010). Key issues in strategic human resources. Cornell University, School of Hotel Administration. <http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1244&context=articles>
- [42]. Weiner, B. (2008). Reflections on the history of attribution theory and research: People, personalities, publications, problems. *Social Psychology*, 39(3), 151–156. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335.39.3.151>
- [43]. Weiner, B. (2010). The development of an attribution-based theory of motivation: A history of ideas. *Educational Psychologist*, 45(1), 28–36.
- [44]. Woska, W. (2007). Legal issues for HR professionals: Reference checking/background investigations. *Public Personnel Management*, 36(1), 79–89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009102600703600106>
- [45]. Yin, R. (2011). Applications of case study research. SAGE Publications.
- [46]. Zikmund, W., Babin, B., Carr, J., & Griffin, M. (2010). Business research methods (8th ed.). South-Western.