Training need assessment on human resource management information system for public school heads of Punjab

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Abstract

The school education department, Government of Punjab had launched human resource management information system for school heads in 2019. It desired to operate many different managerial tasks of school heads through this system such as online leave mechanism, teacher's retirement and pension, online ACRs and other financial operations. But school heads were facing problems while using the system. The study focused on training need assessment on this system for school heads. The design of the study was phenomenology. Further it was transcendental. The data were collected through focus group discussion from eight high and higher secondary school heads and observed that most of the heads demanded capacity building training on the system and highlighted many training needs.

Keywords

Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS), Capacity Building Training program, School Heads, Punjab

Introduction

According to (Iqbal, 2019) leadership is an art of having impact on the actions of well-organized groups in order to attain goals. It is a personal and intangible quality, a combination of example, persuasion, and compulsion. It is the extension of oneself, his personality and his character. The quality of decision making is an integral part of leadership. It is a key function in educational organization and up to date information plays a very important role in any kind of decision-making process in educational organization. Without proper and organized information, educational managers could not perform targeted decision-making processes. With the development of science and technology, the concept of educational management has revolutionized and integrated with the modern digital technology. Educational stakeholders, leaders and managers are using computerized systems for data analysis and decision making. Management information systems (MIS) and educational management information systems (EMIS) are two related terms used in this regard. While working in an educational environment, computer-based decision making is very effective rather than traditional decision-making methods.

In order to achieve a computer-based decision-making system, EMIS has been developed. It is a formal method of providing management with accurate and timely information for planning, project development and other management functions (Majid, 2022). On the other hand, human resource management (HRM) is an integral part of modern technology (Hussain, 2023). It is a

systemic approach to for organizing, coordinating, and managing employees within an organization to accomplish its mission, vision, and goals. HRMIS is a combination of HRM and MIS with digital technology that is used in any educational organization (Hussain, 2023). An educational manager uses MIS to perform different types of decisions. These decisions are made with the help of administrative information system, learning management system and assessment management system.

In Pakistan each province has developed its EMIS in early 1990 such as national educational management information system, Baluchistan education management information system etc. (Shah, 2008). With the collaboration of Punjab information technology board, and school education department, Punjab govt. constructed and launched a modern web-based HRMIS in 2019. By implementing this system, the education department of Punjab aimed to enhance efficiency, transparency, and decision-making processes related to HRM. It provided interface for school heads with different features according to their need. Heads have different access limits according to their requirements. It is important to note that Punjab monitoring and implementation unit is a department working under the SED which is responsible to update the database and data management of human resource management system.

School heads play a significant role in any school. For efficient and effective work done they need to work through computer-based technology. SED Punjab provided login IDs and passwords to all public-school heads through which they can login the system. After successful login the interface provided by the system to public school heads consists of many different modules, for example module of E-Profile in which they can view his own profile and raise objections on it. Secondly leave management is another module in which school head can initiate his leaves and check leave balance. There is also the option to accept and reject the leaves of staff members. Thirdly there is a module for performance and promotion. In this module they can view the submitted ACRs/PERs of staff members. They can also evaluate the submitted ACRs/PERs and submit them to higher authorities for counter signing purpose. The fourth module is retirement and pension module. They can view the pension cases applied from staff members and can forward this application to higher authorities for recommendation. Staff verification is the fifth module in the Human resource management system in which they can validate the data of staff members. The last module of the system is non-teaching staff in which school heads can create the post of non-teaching staff and add details on it.

Due to pandemic situation all educational institutes had locked down from March 2020 to September 2021 in Pakistan. That's why the SED could not develop and implement training program on this system for school heads. But the school heads were supposed to implement this system and perform all functions on this system. Hussain (2023) briefly discussed that school heads are facing challenges when they interact with the system because they are not being trained. Most of the school heads could not understand the basic terminology used in the system such as E-profile, scanned documents, ACR and PER, verification and validation, initiating request and many more. Secondly school heads are facing challenges while understanding the concepts of web-based technology related with the system. School heads should know the basic concepts of web sites, web pages, web applications and basic requirements of internet and communications. Thirdly there is very important and critical change about operation of system. Most of the school heads could not operate the system well, they do not know how to initiate the requests, check the status of requests, comments on ACRs and upload the required data of teachers and many more functions. Finally, school heads are facing managerial challenges. when the data of teachers are wrongly entered. Mostly they do not know the departmental procedures and policies for corrections of data. So, there is a need to address these challenges and design a training program.

Many doctoral and philosophical theses are published on Human Resource Management Information System Punjab. A doctoral thesis has been published by Shakoor (2021) that discussed development of framework for higher education institutes and universities. He briefly discussed that how HRIS can be developed for higher education and universities so that the students and management will be benefitted. Shah (2008) also published a doctoral thesis on a case study on HRMIS dynamics and use of this system in decision making in Pakistani education. He concluded that the system is very useful for managing and decision-making processes. Majid (2010) published doctoral thesis on the use of EMIS for educational planning and development. He emphasis the role of Educational Management Information system for planning and development in the educational sector. All above research thesis studied HRMIS briefly into different dynamics and paradigms. But the research thesis published by Hussain (2023) gave a baseline to our study in which he studied the head teacher's and teacher's perception regarding HRMIS Punjab. He studied the perceptions of head teachers on HRMIS of Punjab and strongly recommended an enhanced training program on this system to overcome the different challenges faced by the teachers and school leaders. The author suggested that the training program should cover the basic functionalities as well as operational issues of HRMIS. The author recommended the user-friendly interface, customized workshops, addressing technical issues, continuous support system, integration with professional development and user documentation. He suggested that there is a need for a capacity building training program on this system so that the problems of heads could be fixed. With multiple problems that heads were facing, the basic purpose of this system could not be achieved, and this modern system is useless without heads 100% involvement and interaction with the system. So, this study focused on the training need assessment on HRMIS for school heads.

Purpose of Study
The purpose of study was to conduct training needs assessment of public-school heads of district Rawalpindi working in school education department Punjab on web based human resource management information system.

Research questions
What are the problems you are facing while using HRMIS?
Which specific knowledge and skills do you feel you need to know?
What should be solution to overcome these problems?
Do you feel you should build your capacity to minimize these problems through a capacity building training program?
How do you prefer to learn missing knowledge and skills?
What would you like to achieve after the capacity building training program on HRMIS?

Methodology
The design of the study was phenomenology. Further it was transcendental. As per the record of district education officer Rawalpindi, there are 1794 high and higher secondary school's heads are working in the district. All these heads were the population of the study. 8 heads were conveniently selected for focus group discussion. Qualitative data were collected from focus group discussion and thematic analysis was used to extract the dedication of results. There were eight high and higher school heads participated in the discussion. There were 6 open ended questions that were asked from school heads in order to explore training need assessment on HRMIS.

Interpretation of Data Analysis
Deductive thematic analysis was used for interpretation of qualitative data collected from focus group discussion.

Results
Discussion started with the problems of HRMIS for school heads, most heads are viewed that they could not use HRMIS efficiently as they are unfamiliar with the computer technology, and they are totally dependent on computer expert / IT teachers at the school. One of the respondents said that "I am facing a lot of problems with HRMIS as I am not familiar with computer software, and I could not use this software. I do not know the hardware and software technology. An IT teacher of my school uses my Login ID and Password and operates the system. I sit aside with IT teacher and direct her to perform tasks". Another issue which was discussed by the same participant was that "to overcome the managerial problems it is the responsibility of the department to give us access to the database of the system. After entering the data in system, we are not authorized to edit the data. We could not change the data of teachers and there is not proper policy is defined about the data correction. The department is not cooperative in this regard.". Another respondent also supported the first respondent about the access of data base of HRMIS as "It is very hard for us to change or correct the data of teachers in the system, as the department is not supportive neither it guides us how to edit the data. So, it is our demand to give us access to the database so that we can edit or correct our own data. All heads are responsible for it and I hope after taking the training on the system, we will definitely handle our database very well. All the other participants of the discussion strongly agreed with the argument and demanded data correction access of the system. But it is only possible when all the heads can use the system efficiently. While discussing the managerial challenges of the system the same respondent viewed that "we have not given any booklet, guidebook about departmental rules and regulations on leave management, ACRs, retirement and pension. Normally whenever some leave, retirement and pension cases appear, we try to take information from the coordinator or any other senior heads and proceed with our cases. There is a need for a proper booklet on rules and regulations of different modules of HRMIS so that we can smoothly handle our issues". Some heads complained about slowing down the system and some thought it is a failed system, and it needs to be rebuilt. An IT expert teacher in the discussion argued that "First of all, I think the department should fix the errors in the software. The condition of the software is not very good. Normally it goes down when we are working on it. the discussion concluded with the argument that most of the heads has not familiar with the software and they are facing managerial as well as database access issues. The software also needs to be improved, and developers needs to fix the errors of system.
Then the discussion moved to the question that which knowledge and skills all heads should know for handling the problems, the school education department conducted different Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Promotion Link Training (PLT) for school heads to increase the performance level of heads. During these training programs, school heads are also trained in IT skills. During the discussion one participant argued that "I have received IT training during PLT and CPD, but I could not know HRMIS. I am not familiar with it and that's why I could not operate it. all my operations are performed by an IT expert teacher in the school. If the department conducted the training on this system, I could use the system but unfortunately, there was no training program on HRMIS". Since HRMIS is a web-based system that runs in the web browser, some heads discussed that there should be hardware and software knowledge, and IT skills are required for all heads to operate the system as well as a training on HRMIS. On of the participant in the viewed that "I think school heads should try to increase their capacity so that they can solve their issues. We should learn new skills and gain information about the computer hardware and software and try to solve our issues. I personally

think that it is our own responsibility to learn the technology". Another participant added "there is the option of YouTube and other media through which we can take guidance. So, I agree with the discussion that it is our own responsibility to increase our capacity in this regard.". So, the discussion concluded with the statement that there should be a compulsory knowledge of basic hardware and software for all heads so that they can minimize the problems on the system. Most of the heads are totally unfamiliar with the computer technology, as they can operate android cell phones, but they could not operate computer system that's why, they are failed to operate web based human resource management information system.

After that, the next question was discussed that what should be the solution to overcome the problems of heads? On responding the questions, a respondent demanded that a capacity building training program for school heads should be launched so that we can solve our own problems as "there should be a capacity building training program for us in which we should be taught basic hardware, software knowledge as well as skills to operate the HMRIS software. I personally think that without our training, we could not solve our issues". While discussing the role of you tube and other media for guidance one of the participants totally disagreed with the discussion and argued that "You tube videos are not authentic source of getting training on HRMIS. Our department is authentic, and it is the responsibility of our department to launch the capacity building training program on HRMIS so that we can operate the system effectively. Another group member added that "we should be given theoretical as well as practical training along with booklets, handouts and lecture notes on the system. We should provide policy guides about different modules of the system so that we have written material for our guidance". Same participant pointed out that "I am very confused about two systems running at the same time School Information System (SIS) and Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS). I think it should be one system for heads and there is no need to develop two systems for same purpose". While discussing Capacity building training program on Human resource management information system is the need of time and heads demanded it. They are arguing that after getting the training, all heads are expected to operate the system with their login credentials, and they will stop getting help from IT teachers. On the other hand, some heads are on the view that the system is not very efficient as after uploading the data on the system, it is not visible sometimes. An IT expert respondent added that "all heads should be given a comprehensive capacity building training program on this system. Being an IT expert teacher, I am ready to train the heads as and when I was directed by the department". At the conclusion of the discussion, all the heads of viewed that there should be capacity building training launched for all heads on this web-based system.

While discussing capacity building, the discussion moved the question that should all heads needs to build their capacity through a training program so that their problems can be minimized? All the heads in discussion strongly agree with the aroused question that they need to build their capacity. A respondent viewed that "yes, I agree with the discussion that all heads should build their capacity so that they can work with the system, I want to learn different technical, managerial and computer-based skills on the system so that I can operate the system myself". Another respondent disagreed with the discussion topic that for the solution of problems capacity building training is more important. it viewed that "I do not think, for all the above challenges that we are facing, capacity building training is more helpful. First of all, the problem of the system needs to be fixed by the developer. When the system runs smoothly, then we need to increase our skills". Another responded strongly disagree with the previous respondent and argued that "I disagree with the opinion that capacity building training is not as important as fixing the problems of software by the developer. I think we are unable to operate the system, we should not be able to point out the errors appearing in the system. When we train in the system, we will be able to point out the errors and report the errors and system will be improved by the developers on our reporting". All other heads agreed with the opinion

that they should increase their knowledge and skills through a capacity building training program.

At the last session, the heads discussed how they learn the training program and what are the expectations after taking the training, one of the respondents viewed that "I prefer face to face training program. As per the new policy of the school education department, government of Punjab, Saturdays are reserved for CPD training, hence it is better for us to take training on every Saturday". Another respondent added that "there should be separate classes for knowledge based and practical based training. The knowledge-based training should consist of technical, theoretical concepts of the system. It should also include different rules and regulations for the modules of the system. The practical session should consist of practical training on a system in which we should be trained on the software". All the participants agree with the face-to-face mode of training, and they demanded the lecture notes in the form of a booklet in which all knowledge-based material is included. All the participants hope that the capacity building training will be launched for us. After getting training, they are expected to operate the software will full command and also, they will gain the knowledge of rules and regulations of all the modules of the system.

Discussion

The role of HRM for any organization is very important to achieve the organizational goals (Iqbal, 2011) elaborated that the HRM practices include recruitment, selection and hiring the individuals of the workforce. Once the individual is hired, the need to be incorporated into the company framework through training and socialization. Human resource management information system is a very useful web-based system which is developed by Punjab information technology board. (Hussain, 2024) searched that the software is very effective if school heads could operate it efficiently, but unfortunately, due to lack of training on this system, it will become useless. From the research findings, it is deduced that most of the school heads are not using this system and face four major challenges. First, many heads are not able to understand the terms used in the system such as E-profile, E-leaves, scan documents, verification and validation of documents of staff etc. secondly, as many different school heads are unfamiliar with the technology, they are lacking the knowledge about the technology of the system. They don't know the basic requirements; hardware and software required to run the system. Thirdly, a lot of school heads fail to log in to their own credentials and operate the system. They do not know how to operate the system and perform different tasks. As a result of this failure, some IT expert and computer science teachers are using the login IDs and Passwords of heads and operating the system instead of heads which is a very tragic fact. Finally, a lot of school heads are facing managerial issues regarding the system. They do not know how to correct the data of teachers and other staff members. School heads are not authorized to edit the data of the system due to data security. SED, Punjab has authorized one person in a district to give access to the data base of the system, hence mostly school heads are unaware of data correction process. On the other hand, many junior school heads are also not aware with the departmental rules and regulations of retirement, pension, leaves and annual confidential report mechanisms.

(Iqbal, 2012) further discussed the problems faced by headteacher in order to achieve the departmental goals. In his research he also discussed the importance of in-service teachers training and its impact on institute performance. There is a need of capacity building training program for school heads so that they can seek knowledge and skills to operate and use it. The process of taking training and information seeking process is discussed by (Iqbal, 2015) as it is a purposive activity and motive behind this activity is to satisfy some goal. There is a need for school heads to adopt information seeking behavior and interact with information systems.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Following were some conclusions and recommendations of the study:

Most of the school heads are unfamiliar with the computer technology.

IT expert teachers are operating system instead of head by using their login credentials.

There is a lack of training and computer skills of school heads.

There is lack of managerial guidelines on HRMIS modules and data correction by the school education department Punjab. All heads are given access to the data base for correction of data.

Capacity building training on HRMIS is required for all school heads.

Training program must consist of theoretical as well as practical sessions on HRMIS modules. Different lecture notes, booklets or study materials may be developed for school heads in order to overcome the managerial challenges and guidelines.

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