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By Zahidul Karim & Md. H Asibur Rahman

Abstract- Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) has emerged as one of the drivers of competitive advantage and strategic decision making tool in many private enterprises. Many global organizations are using HRIS to build their competitive advantage. The practices of HRIS in private sector enterprises in Bangladesh are gradually increasing. This study has been conducted on 104 respondents of 25 private organizations in Bangladesh. 52.88 percent respondents have reported moderate level of HRIS practices in their organizations relative to higher level of HRIS practices reported by 47.16 percent respondents. Thus, the study reveals that the practices of HRIS in private enterprises in Bangladesh are moderate. Although 85 percent respondents have mentioned that their organizations make important strategic decisions by using HRIS, they still require improvements in HRIS practices to gain competitive advantage. 93.26% respondents believed that HRIS is important for both public and private firms to gain competitiveness. This study will also contribute to the existing literature of HRIS and promote the concern about strategic importance of practicing HRIS in both private and public enterprises in Bangladesh.

Keywords: *practices, HRIS, importance, private business enterprises, bangladesh.*

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Practices of Human Resource Information Systems: A Study on Some Private Business Enterprises in Bangladesh

Zahidul Karim [α] & Md. H Asibur Rahman [σ]

Abstract- Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) has emerged as one of the drivers of competitive advantage and strategic decision making tool in many private enterprises. Many global organizations are using HRIS to build their competitive advantage. The practices of HRIS in private sector enterprises in Bangladesh are gradually increasing. This study has been conducted on 104 respondents of 25 private organizations in Bangladesh. 52.88 percent respondents have reported moderate level of HRIS practices in their organizations relative to higher level of HRIS practices reported by 47.16 percent respondents. Thus, the study reveals that the practices of HRIS in private enterprises in Bangladesh are moderate. Although 85 percent respondents have mentioned that their organizations make important strategic decisions by using HRIS, they still require improvements in HRIS practices to gain competitive advantage. 93.26% respondents believed that HRIS is important for both public and private firms to gain competitiveness. This study will also contribute to the existing literature of HRIS and promote the concern about strategic importance of practicing HRIS in both private and public enterprises in Bangladesh.

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I. Introduction

In developed countries HRIS has become a comprehensive HR practice for having strategic contributions. Bangladesh as a developing nation seemed to face difficulties in implementing HRIS in industrial sectors (Rahman et al., 2016). Here most of the government organizations are not so advanced in terms of HRIS implementation due to high cost of technologies (Parvin, 2015). In Bangladesh only a limited number of big corporate houses have initiated to implement HRIS within last five years (Jahan, 2014). Besides, the motive for implanting HRIS is more or less same for both manufacturing and service oriented firms in Bangladesh (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014). Yet, HRIS applications have a positive influence on the company's financial performances in Bangladesh (F. Bhuiyan et al., 2015).

Author α: Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Business Studies, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342, Bangladesh. e-mail: zkarim.mgt@juniv.edu
Author σ: MBA Graduate, Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Business Studies, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342, Bangladesh. e-mail: asib.hrm.ju@gmail.com

Strategic benefits that are derived from implanting HRIS in Bangladesh includes, and faster process of information with greater accuracy, reduced cost to HRM activities, superior employee communication as well as quality planning and enhanced program improvement (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014; Ferdous et al., 2015). Currently, to achieve strategic goals, Bangladeshi firms use various HRIS software, these include: Abra Suite, Atlas Business Solutions, CORT: HRMS, HRSOFT, Human Resource Microsystems, ORACLEHRMS, PEOPLESOFT, SAP HR, SPECTRUM HR etc. (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014).

HRIS have been widely acknowledged as the best way of advancement in any organization, despite the promising benefits of it, its adoption faced with numerous challenges in developing nations especially in Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2016). In his study, Islam (2016) disclosed that the level of HRIS implementation in both private and public business organizations are undoubtedly deviated from desired level and the gap is wider in the public sector relative to the private sector. However, managers of these organizations predict that the tendency of HRIS implementation is expected to change in future (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014).

Support from top management and behavioral intention of the management are the influential determinant of HRIS adoption among financial organizations in Bangladesh (Muhammad, 2018; Rahman et al., 2016). Besides, (Jahan, 2014) noted that public organizations along with small corporate houses have failed to recognize the advantages of HRIS, therefore, have taken hardly any attempts to adopt HRIS. Moreover, pressure to achieve competitive advantages (Muhammad, 2018) and social influence of market leader (Rahman et al., 2016) have a significant effect on the propensity to implement HRIS. Furthermore, M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman (2014) noted some organizational contingencies that impede the success of HRIS both in manufacturing and service firms of Bangladesh, these includes, contentment with the status quo, organizational politics and hidden agendas, lack of or poorly done needs analysis as well as failure to include key people. In addition to these, Ferdous, Chowdhury, & Bhuiyan (2015) specified that

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Ferdous, Chowdhury, & Bhuiyan (2015) specified that reluctant nature of management; privacy issues, internal resistance of organizations, and transformation cost are the probable factors which hinder the successful implementation of HRIS.

In Bangladesh, HRIS is mostly used for recruitment, selection and performance evaluation (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014). However, strategic benefits that are derived from implanting HRIS that includes and faster process of information with greater accuracy, reduced cost to HRM activities, superior employee communication as well as quality planning and enhanced program improvement (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014; Ferdous et al., 2015). Hence, in upcoming days organizations would use information generated from HRIS applications for more strategic purposes (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014).

II. Literature Review

In the ever-changing business world new to newer technologies are continually being developed to cope up with the trends to manage the human resources in organizations. Besides, at the present time, the organizational success is mostly associated with the performance of Human Resource Management (HRM) (Masum, Azad, & Beh, 2016; Muhammad, 2018; Omran & Anan, 2018). Therefore, dealing with human resources efficiently has become a vital reason to achieve success of the business worldwide (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014). To achieve effective utilization of human resources organizations are now increasingly adopting HRIS (F. Bhuiyan, Mahbubur Rahman, & Osman Gani, 2015; M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014; David, Shukla, & Gupta, 2015; Muhammad, 2018). In general, HRIS comprises of some applications of HR planning, forecasting of demand and supply of HR, employment information, qualifications required for applicants, training and development information, promotion-related information salary forecast and pay increase, employee relations, and many more (Bamel, Kumar Bamel, Sahay, & Thite, 2014;

Muhammad, 2018). Kavanagh, Thite, & Johnson (2013) defined HRIS "as a computerized system that is used to acquire, store, manipulate, analyze, retrieve and distribute information regarding an organization's human resources to support HRM and managerial decisions" (p.17). Human Resource Information System (HRIS) has been interchangeably termed as virtual HRM, e-HRM and Intranet/web-based HRM (Muhammad, 2018). However, HRIS covers most of the organizational activities ranging from HR planning to Information Technology development for the HRD (Bamel et al., 2014; M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014; Muhammad, 2018). Further, HRIS was also considered as a convenient way to fulfill regulatory requirements (Bamel et al., 2014).

Recently, private firms are putting emphasis on optimization of cost, efficiency of process and system, to be punctual in performing partnering functions, focus on less usages of paper as well as working manually etc. as these firms has an intentions to secure strategic benefits (Islam, 2016). HRIS assists top management in forming strategic decisions which will undoubtedly provide organization with an advantage to supersede competitors (Muturi, Kiflemariam, & Acosta, 2018). Besides, HRIS has been considered as an important strategic tool in managing HR and it provides organizations with numerous benefits (Muturi et al., 2018; Rasmussen, Andersen, & Haworth, 2010). Moreover, scholars considered HRIS as a strategic partner of the firms since it helps to formulate improved strategies and decision relating to HR activities (Bamel et al., 2014; Muhammad, 2018; Thite, Kavanagh, & Johnson, 2012; Wiblen, Grant, & Dery, 2010). However, the use of HRIS in a strategic manner differs from organizations to organizations, besides majority of organizations started to use HRIS only to replace manual processing and to minimize costs rather decision making (Bhargava, 2014; Jahan, 2014).

Existing literature on HRIS recognizes that it leads to different outcomes (Ceric, 2017; Ruël, Bondarouk, & Looise, 2004), and organizations have to fulfill certain conditions in order to reap the benefits from HRIS (Ceric, 2017; Parry & Tyson, 2011). HRIS achieves operational goals of an organizations being cost efficient in HR functions, for example, it speed up processes (e.g. payroll), reduces administrative pressure on HR Professionals, and it requires reduced number of HR staffs (Ceric, 2017; Ruël et al., 2004).

Besides, output from HRIS like precise information, reports and metrics related to HR activities assist HR managers in strategic decision making (Lawler, Levenson, & Boudreau, 2004). Moreover, HRIS serve as a central database for numerous HR activities like HR planning, training & development, compensation and performance appraisal, etc. (Arora, 2013). Furthermore, HRIS establishes faster communication among HR managers, line managers and other individuals, saves cost of paper usage besides, HR services moved from a bureaucratic system to a self-service system with less manual works (Jahan, 2014).

In addition, HRIS applications have the power to modify the nature of work to be done and empower managers to make faster and more complex decisions (Bamel et al., 2014). Consequently, most of the organizations implement an HRIS comprehensively to assist fundamental HR functions, to heighten administrative proficiency, to share information and to make decisions (Lengnick-Hall & Moritz, 2003; Zafar, 2013). Therefore, a well-designed HRIS functions as the core management instrument in aligning the goals of HR department with strategic objectives, planning as well as decisions (Mohanty & Tripathy, 2007).

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a) Importance of Implementing HRIS

Implementing HRIS has several purposes, for example, achieving efficiency, accelerating superior communication, ensuring the reorientation of the Human Resource functions thus ensuring strategic contribution of other departments (Rahman, Qi, & Jinnah, 2016). The core motivation of implementing HRIS was highly associated to standardization of activities and execution of a strategic way of working in organizations (Heikkilä, Rentto, & Feng, 2017; Omran & Anan, 2018).

Besides, in organizational setting human resource professionals are supposed to add value to organizations and HRIS is to free up their time to ensure higher association in strategic decisions making in organization (Hussain, Wallace, & Cornelius, 2007; Jahan, 2014; Zafar, 2013). Moreover, accurate, relevant and timely information are compulsory to management for making better decisions therefore information is regarded as an essential ingredient (Mohanty & Tripathy, 2007). Furthermore, an integrated HRIS have diverse uses ranging from common worksheets to complicated calculations (F. Bhuiyan et al., 2015).

Additionally, HRIS can help in strategic planning by providing with information related to HR planning, demand and supply forecasting, selecting the right employees, formulating necessary training programs, and forecasting employee compensation (M. R. U. Bhuiyan & Rahman, 2014; Shibly, 2011), as well as increase administrative efficiency (Lengnick-Hall & Moritz, 2003).Finally, HRIS lessens the HR expenses, helps the managers and employee to explore, observe, control their personal information, performs the suitable analysis, communicate with relevant parties as well as contributes in making decisions and mostly without consulting with HR experts (Ngai & Wat, 2006; Rahman et al., 2016).

b) HRIS Adoption Process

Top management support (Altarawneh & Al-Shqairat, 2010; Muhammad, 2018; Omran & Anan, 2018; Troshani, Jerram, & Rao Hill, 2011), HR professionals attribute (Muhammad, 2018; Richter, Stocker, Müller, & Avram, 2013; Troshani et al., 2011), IT infrastructure (Ferdous, Chowdhury, & Bhuiyan, 2015; Muhammad, 2018; Oliveira & Martins, 2010; Omran & Anan, 2018), users knowledge skills and acceptance (Quaosar, 2018), complexity and competitive pressure are some of the crucial factors for HRIS adoption (Muhammad, 2018). However, top most barriers that hinders the implementation of HRIS are high cost, difficulty in determining return of HRIS investment, lack of management commitment and their limited understanding of benefits and cost (Jahan, 2014).

III. Research Methodology

a) Population and Sampling

The targeted population of the study was all the private organizations operating in Bangladesh. However, to meet the objective of the research, the current study collects necessary data from 25 private companies who had implemented HRIS to conduct their human resource management operations and improved strategic and business level decision making. Since the study is related to human resource management function of an organization, therefore, relevant data were collected from 104 HR executives of those organizations. However, convenient sampling method was used to collect data.

b) Research Instruments

To measure the existence of HRIS practices this study adapted the twenty six items from various prominent articles and books related to research objectives. *HR Planning and Job analysis* was measured by *five items*, sample item includes and "Your organization has computerized system to record all information about employee profile (e.g., name, age, salary, experience, and education) Strategic and *Corporate Decision Making* was evaluated on *ten items*, sample items includes, "*Company makes important strategic decision by using HR information form HR database*", "*All the departments use relevant HR information to take their decision*." *Recruitment and Selection* practice was measured on *four items*, sample item includes, "*Organization keep recruitment and selection information in database*". *Training and Development* on *three items*, "*Organization keeps training & development information in database*". *Compensation Management* was assessed on *three items,* sample item includes, "*Organization records payroll/ benefits information in the database*". *Performance Appraisal* practice was measured on *three items,* sample item includes, "*Organization records performance evaluation/ACR related information in HR database*". However, the study uses a common item "Organization has fully adopted HRIS to deal with HR activities" for all the constructs except importance of HRIS. Finally, the *importance of HRIS* in private organizations was measured on *three items*, the sample items include, "*HRIS is important for both public and private firms to gain competitiveness*". These items were measured on five point Likert scale that ranges from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

c) Data Preparation and Data Analysis Techniques

The data were subjected to data preparation using SPSS 23.0 and MS Excel. To evaluate and interpret the level of HRIS practices the mean score ($\bar{x}$) of individual constructs are computed along with the value of standard deviation (σ). Finally, the average

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ratings off all the items are accumulated to find the overall HRIS practice.

d) Managerial Implication/ Implication of the Study

The present research has a number of significant implications for HR professionals and top executives of both public and private business enterprises. First of all, the current research would give hands off preview of current status of HRIS implementation, especially for private enterprises. Secondly, top executive and HR professionals would be encouraged to pay proactive attention on implementing HRIS in their organizations. Finally, the current study would encourage top managers to implement HRIS in their organizations to cope up with the current development and achieving competitive advantage over competitors through more strategic decisions. HR would provide access of HRIS to related functional departments and individuals to encourage them in decision making based on HRIS information and self-services.

e) Limitations of Current Study

The current study has revealed interesting findings in relation to HRIS practices in private enterprises in Bangladesh. However, the research is still not free from some limitations which must be recognized to generalize the context. Firstly, the study was conducted focusing only on private enterprises. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the public and autonomous bodies. Secondly, convenient sampling is used and the sample size was relatively small, therefore, the findings may not comprehensively represent the population. Thirdly, data were collected only from the enterprises located in Dhaka City. Finally, HRIS implementation information are highly confidential in nature due to its strategic importance, therefore organizations were reluctant to share comprehensively. Hence, the justifications of results cannot be generalized widely.

f) Scope of the Study

Even though some limitations shrink the significance of this study, this investigation can be forwarded to a number of directions. First of all, the prospective researchers are inspired to focus on the longitudinal study to inspect the changes regarding the use of HRIS and its strategic contributions by the passage of times. Secondly, similar to the present study, investigations can be extended to examine the practices of HRIS for each specific industries (e.g. Insurance, Financial services, Food and beverage, Telecommunications, Textiles, and Pharmaceutical companies). Finally, similar type of researches could be conducted to the neighboring countries within South-East Asia and South Asia to find out cooperative picture of the level of HRIS implementation and its use in strategic purposes.

IV. Analysis of Questionnaire

In case of individual practices of HRIS, the mean for *HR Planning and Job Analysis is* $\bar{x} = 4.3042$ and a smaller standard deviation of $\sigma = .43816$, meaning that there is a better HRIS practice for HR Planning and Job Analysis prevailing in private organizations operating in Bangladesh. Empirically, private organizations in Bangladesh provide the highest emphasis on HR Planning and Job Analysis in terms of HRIS implementations and usages.

Besides, in case of uses of HRIS for *Strategic and Corporate Decision Making* $\bar{x} = 4.1031$ incorporating a higher standard deviation of $\sigma = .80413$, signifying that use of HRIS in decision making is above average, however, uses of HRIS in decision making deviates a lot among the private organizations. Moreover, in case of *Recruitment and Selection* the use of HRIS in business organizational setting achieves a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.1250$ which is also above the mid-point, however, associated with a standard deviation of $\sigma = .52189$. Therefore, implies that use of HRIS is greatly evident for recruitment and selection than Strategic and Corporate Decision Making, however, HRIS is not equally used for this purpose in private organizations operating in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, use of HRIS technologies for *Training and Development* practices yields a mean value of $\bar{x} = 3.9167$ which is the lowest of all the HRM practices considered in this present study and accompanying a moderately higher standard deviation of $\sigma = .56816$. Thus, it is evident that the private organizations in Bangladesh use less of HRIS technologies for training and development purposes relative to other major HRM practices.

In addition, in case of *Compensation Management* practices the use of HRIS in private organizations achieve a mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.2135$ which is the second highest among all the HRM practices considered for this research, surprisingly, the standard deviation for this practice achieved the highest score of $\sigma = 1.85965$. Therefore, denotes that the implementation of level of HRIS in case of compensation management varies a lot from organizations to organizations, significantly, some organizations use it highly and some use it poorly, therefore results in inconsistency in use.

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Table 4.1: Shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of Relevant HRIS Practices

	Particulars	Mean	Std. Deviation
Individual HRIS Practices	HR Planning and Job analysis	4.3042	.43816
	Strategic and Corporate Decision Making	4.1031	.80413
	Recruitment and Selection	4.1250	.52189
	Training and Development	3.9167	.56816
	Compensation Management	4.2135	1.85965
	Performance Appraisal	4.1736	.51180
Overall HRIS Practice		4.1461	.50326
Importance of HRIS		4.3576	1.03194

Finally, it is evident that there is a stronger practices of HRIS for *Performance Appraisal* since the mean score resulted as $\bar{x} = 4.1736$ which is second highest among the HRM practices considered for this research. Besides, the standard deviation $\sigma = .51180$ is relatively low in case of five-point scale, thus indicates that the level of implementation and uses of HRIS for Performance Appraisal practice has relatively lower variations among the private organizations operating in Bangladesh.

a) Overall Practices of HRIS in the organization

The overall HRIS practices combines all the items used for different individual HRIS practices for better HRM practices in private organizations in Bangladesh. The overall HRIS practice scored mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.1461$, that means the HRIS practices in private organizations is above average and it seems good. Besides, a lower standard deviation of $\sigma = .50326$ in terms of five-point scale entails that on an average the variation relating to HRIS implementations and usages are relatively low among the enterprises observed.

While the enterprises have higher practices of HRIS in case of individual HR Planning & Job analysis, Compensation Management and Performance Appraisal practices of HRM than the overall HRIS practices. However, the area of Strategic and Corporate Decision Making, Training and Development as well as Recruitment and Selection practices have lower of such implementations and usages in terms of overall HRIS implementations and its uses.

In a question about to *rate respondents' organization with regard to HRIS practices*, 52.88% individuals rate their organization's current HRIS practices as moderate relative to the full implementation of HRIS, besides, higher practices of HRIS are reported by 47.16%, and however, only 3.85% respondents reported that their organizations have all the criterion required for full implementation of HRIS.

Specifically, one of the core objectives of HRIS development is to make better strategic and corporate decision making, however in the reality, in private organizations in Bangladesh such decision making from HRIS is still lag behind although organizations implemented a good HRIS for their organizations to cope up with operational activities.

b) Importance of HRIS

The HRIS is getting importance world-wide as a tool for improved decision making in case of complex decision making relation to human resources. The current study evaluates the organizational perceptions how they value the HRIS implementations and its usages. The average rating from the respondents in case of importance of HRIS practices is $\bar{x} = 4.3576$, implies that the private organizations in Bangladesh feel HRIS has a greater importance to their firm's performances. However, a moderately higher standard deviation of $\sigma = 1.03194$ denotes that, all the organizations do not equally consider HRIS as it has higher importance. In a question regarding the *Importance of HRIS to gain competitiveness,* 93.26% respondents believed that HRIS is important for both public and private firms to gain competitiveness.

V. Findings & Discussion

Majority of the private organizations believe that effective and full implementation of HRIS contributes to the organizational performance by increasing competitiveness and efficiency in decision making, and it has direct impact on employee job satisfaction, retention and relations. Besides, HRIS can save time and cost of organizations thus increase efficiency in HR activities and contributes to organizational profit and competitiveness. However, a greater portion of

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organizations in private sector still far away to full implementation of HRIS.

Most of the private organizations implemented computerized system for HRIS to record employee profiles, data related to HR planning, job analysis (job descriptions and job specifications), recruitment and selection, training and development, employee performance appraisal and data related to health and safety issues of employees. Though HRIS helps to use these relevant HR information to take decisions in all the functional departments, organizations are still lag behind to provide such access to other departments since all departments are not provided required authority to pool/retrieve required information. Since HRIS is implemented to improve strategic decision making, but fewer organizations very repeatedly use HR information from HR database to makes important strategic decision, surprisingly some organizations have very low use of HRIS information in strategic decision making though they implemented HRIS.

Besides, sharing HRIS data to stakeholders (e.g., Government, employees, legal authority, and employment agency) is still restricted to some extent. Moreover, most of the organizations generate reports from the HR database, surprisingly, more than one-third HR departments of these organizations very low to moderately share HR reports whether printed or electric to other departments. Further, top management and HR departments reserve the sole authority to modification, replacement and change and deletion of data. Further, less than one-third of the organizations provide the opportunity of sharing payroll information to employees to submit their tax return online.

Though there is a poll of software available for enabling HRIS, however about one-third HR departments of these organizations use software like Oracle, SAP, and SQL. Besides, most of the user/employees from both the HR departments and other functional departments are extensively trained to ensure efficient running of HRIS. Though, about half of the organizations reported highest rating regarding the full implementation of HRIS that implies that their organizations have the entire criterion required for full implementation of HRIS. Remarkably, more than two-third of these private organizations have high to very high back up programs and network security for HRIS.

VI. Conclusion & Recommendations

Success in business is determined by well-designed corporate and business level strategies to manage resources and proper utilization of intellectual resources, such as, knowledge, skills and abilities of the employees. To achieve strategic fit, HRIS helps HR executives to make important decisions regarding human resources, therefore, organizations are focusing more on designing, implementing, and maintaining use of HRIS. Though the focus of HRIS in organizations is strategic in nature, this study found HRIS is generally used for operational business activities in private companies in Bangladesh.

Empirically, approximately half of the studied firms fully adopted HRIS, however, among these firms more than 15% do not use HRIS for making important HR related strategic decisions. Most of the enterprises based on their requirements focus on specific aspects for HRIS implementation rather full adoption, and accordingly, HR planning & job analysis, compensation management and performance appraisal practices got the highest preference. Consequently, implementation of HRIS for effective training and development and decision making is still drop behind. Therefore, complete HRIS practices are not evident in private sector enterprises in Bangladesh.

Since, human resources management practice is the key driver in organizations, therefore, this requires rapid steps to embrace technology as a competitive tool to extract intellectual capabilities of available human resources. Actually, HRIS is such a combined technology which offers advanced operation and strategic blueprint to effective and efficient management of organizational productivity.

Therefore, enterprises should adopt full implementation of HRIS, specifically, in order to manage the necessary budgetary and non-financial support HR executives should play an active role to facilitate such full implementation by convincing top management about the strategic benefits of HRIS. In addition, to improve the current status and to adopt full implementations of HRIS practices, private enterprises should concentrate on launching appropriate training and development programs to use HRIS and to emphasize more on strategic and corporate decision making by using HRIS.

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