
Introduction to the special issue

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Educating the digital society: integrating humanistic and scientific values

The turn of the 21st century has been marked by heightened attention to several evolutionary trends. These include digital transformation and its scalability, multi-generational collaboration disparities, the movement toward diversity-inclusion-equity-belonging, deregulated investment and funding innovations, the COVID-19 pandemic, the predicament of leading in risky times and more (Bennett and McWhorter, 2021; Priyono *et al.*, 2020). Bankable solutions are implemented in the name of results and performance, raising the question of what will it take for organisations to sustain growth or simply to survive.

Today's organisations must be highly adaptable in employing their human resource strategies out of an awareness of unexpected incidents that might cause disruption to organisational effectiveness. It is therefore incumbent upon organisations to step up the development of their human resources. Given the indefinite number of challenges facing organisations, the need to unleash the potential of human talent becomes ever more imperative. Hence, the core concerns of human resource development (HRD) – organisation, training and career development – must be given renewed consideration in order to build up organisational, group and individual aptitude during challenging times.

Unlike training and development, organisational development focuses on both employees and their work in recognition that both may need to be changed simultaneously to sustain effective changes in individual and organisational performance. As MacKenzie *et al.* (2012) stated, HRD has been unsuccessful in postulating real transformation in organisations. The role of HRD in the work of organisations, specifically in terms of training and close association with the sister fields of human resource management and organisational development, has not been clearly defined. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that we discover organisational realities hardly acknowledge the role of HRD in the success of any organisations. This entails considering the effect of context, both internally and externally, as well as employee perceptions and understanding of HRD and its implications for learning, creativity and growth. The uncertain environment reinforces this point and the need for HRD to shape future practices. Hence, this special issue aims to provide insights on several relevant issues and recommendations for HRD practice on how to address opportunities and challenges of HRD in today's dynamic and complex environment.

The six articles incorporated in this special issue present recent scholarly discussion on aspects of HRD ranging from career to organisational development affecting various cohorts and comprising different level of analysis. Relevant discussions on career development and related topics are presented across a range of sub-disciplines such as counselling ethics competency, career engagement, career adaptability and career transition. Organisational development issues include knowledge sharing behaviour in organisational development, improving school performance and workplace incivility is critical HRD challenges. Collectively, the special issue highlights how emerging issues and challenges in different areas of HRD are being addressed in diverse ways, including ethical considerations, managing the work environment, building on individual and personal strengths and others.

Career development represents a career as more than just a job or sequence of jobs we hold in a lifetime, how much money one earns or one's attained status in their profession. A career signifies the totality of experience and work done in a lifetime. Hall (2002) emphasizes



human experience as a way to understand the contextual nature of careers in the 21st century. Throughout an individual's life, a career is the individually interpreted sequence of attitudes and actions correlated with career-related interactions and practices (Hall, 2002, p. 12).

Articles presented in this special issue contemplate how career development can be resuscitated in HRD scholarship and practice to ensure advantage to organisations. In the first article, Zakaria *et al.* (2021) recognize the importance of counselling in career development and the pivotal role it plays in human life and health as they bond career proficiencies to ethical principles of counselling. They created an online survey instrument to measure counselling ethics competency and to determine factors that predict competent, ethical practices among registered counsellors in Malaysia. This research illustrates the guide of counselling ethics and increases insight for counsellor educators to be more effective in teaching and learning ethics within the latitude of counsellor teaching training programs.

Subsequently, the second article by Anas and Hamzah (2021) accords the reader of the chance to earmark career adaptability as an increasingly important part of the HRD process. The article discusses the differences in career adaptability among recent graduates. According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), those who develop career adaptability are better able to handle career-related problems and adapt their attitudes to changes in the workplace. In this article, Anas and Hamzah (2021) examine the role of personal factors on career adaptability among recent university graduates in Malaysia. This research sheds light on career adaptability as a component of graduates' ability to deal with a variety of workplace settings. Career adaptability is an ongoing problem for organisations and individual employees.

HRD is experiencing intense changes. The surfacing of social capital is the main element for organisations in changing how HR participates and interacts with internal and external stakeholders to design a social enterprise. The article by Che Nawi *et al.* (2021) explores the challenges faced by youth social entrepreneurs who transition from conventional industries to running social enterprises in Malaysia. The findings of the study describe the process of career transition. From their findings, the authors report on two main phenomenological challenges related to this transition: acclimating to a new life and career as a social entrepreneur and not getting support from family. These challenges became valuable learning experiences for young people in developing their careers.

From career development, the special issue then moves to another core area of HRD, organisational development. In their article, Mohd Rasdi and Tangaraja (2021) examine factors influencing knowledge sharing behaviour in public service organisations in Malaysia. Organisations are increasingly dependent on knowledge workers as they compete through their employees' know-how. Since knowledge becomes a prominent source for organisational competitive advantage in an uncertain environment, organisations should create a supportive culture for knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is the provision of career information and knowledge to help others and to work with others to find solutions to obstacles, to formulate untried strategies and enact a survival strategy in the current information era. The allocation of knowledge has been related to many constructive outcomes before, for example, in the efficacy of organisation, its ability to innovate, to enhance its productivity and above all, to ensure that teams' performance in specific tasks is carried out successfully. Mohd *et al.* (2021) reveal that intrinsic motivational stimuli, time and organisational socialization both predicted knowledge-sharing behaviour among public sector administrators. The study also found that effective commitment to organisations is a

critical intermediate factor in enabling intrinsically motivated administrators to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviour.

Gill and Berezina's (2021) study looks at schools as organisations and the critical need to improve school performance. As the world we live in experiences continuous changes, educational institutions are at the core of this process. Schools are very complex and dynamic organisations that need to be understood by HR professionals. A school improvement plan is a plan which alters a school's requirements to improve students' achievement and demonstrates how and when these alterations will be conducted. Gill and Berezina's (2021) study evaluates school performance in Malaysia under the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) between 1999 and 2015. The authors compared the Malaysian data with two neighbouring countries, Indonesia and Singapore. The results show that Malaysia scored higher in educational leadership, curricular development and instructional leadership than Singapore and Indonesia, but contextual evidence suggests Malaysian principals may focus more on maintaining traditional hierarchies and harmony than performance, development and accountability.

The last issue highlighted under the organisational development sub-theme and the special issue is workplace incivility. Alias *et al.* (2021) investigate workplace incivility and its repercussions in the context of public service departments in Malaysia, involving job satisfaction, work stress, psychological contract, knowledge sharing and work engagement. Workplace incivility is on the rise globally and poses a challenge for HRD professionals. It begets toxic work environments which are not suitable for employees to learn and develop and has been shown to negatively impact organisational performance (Camps and Luna-Arocas, 2012). HRD plays a vital role in supporting the creation of a favourable and conducive work culture in organisations. In their article, Alias *et al.* (2021) show that workplace incivility was correlated with public sector employees' psychological contract, job satisfaction, work stress and work engagement. The study also found, however, that incivility was not associated with knowledge sharing in Malaysia's public service department.

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