

Dottorato di Sistemi Informativi Aziendali  
XXII Ciclo

Libera Università degli Studi Sociali  
“Guido Carli”  
Roma

**Human Resource Information  
Systems and the performance of the  
Human Resource Function**

Tesi di dottorato

Dott. Maria Chiara Benfatto

## **English Abstract**

The objectives of this thesis are: to present a comprehensive literature review of human resource information systems (HRIS) and to explore the impact of information systems on HR performance. Extensive research has been done to address the benefits in the introduction of HRIS. Little investigation, instead, is available to measure the effects of HRIS on HR performance.

This study is important in that it defines HRIS, examines the current status of HRIS empirical research, and proposes an architectural model to explain the integration of different human resource processes into a single management system. In the proposed framework, integration is presented not only as the ability of the HR function to respond to cost cutting plans, but also as its capability to evolve into a service centre where time is spent on firm's competitiveness issues.

Our research question, in particular, is as follows: how do we measure HRIS effectiveness and what factors determine HRIS overall success? Researchers and consulting firms have developed models to assess HRIS either through attitude, belief and behaviour variables (Haines and Petit model) or through progression and cost effectiveness of implemented HRIS (Watson Wyatt model). However what their outcomes suggest is that the first model lacks a "hard" performance basis whereas the second one does not confirm any direct correlation between higher HRIS progression and better HR performance. This also implies that implementation effectiveness may be a necessary but not sufficient condition for HRIS effectiveness. While these models offer a point of departure for researchers, clearly more work is needed in developing a causal model of HRIS success.

By matching the two previous models and integrating them with Ostermann's concept of environment maturity and HR value generation and other relevant studies on the measurement of HR performance, we propose a conceptual model for investigating what HRIS practice produces the best results in an organization. In the last part of this work, a prediction on how HRIS will continue to develop

in the future and its likely impact on the human resources function form another chapter of this thesis. We conclude with suggestions for further research.