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ABSTRACT

This document contains three papers on human resource development (HRD) in Asia. "The Experiences of HRD Professionals Participating in Continuing Professional Development in Taiwan" (Yu-Shu [Jason] Chen) reports on a study that was based on the method of hermeneutic phenomenology and conducted to describe and interpret the experiences of Taiwanese HRD professionals participating in continuing professional development. "What Is It Like to Be a Taiwanese HR Practitioner Performing HRD Tasks?" (Ya-Hui [Bella] Lien, Gary N. McLean) discusses the following themes, which were identified during an interpretive study in which seven HRD professionals were interviewed about their daily work experiences as HRD practitioners: (1) HRD is one aspect of human resource management; (2) HRD is equated with training in Taiwan; and (3) HRD success relies on the visions and support of top management. "A Study of Human Resource Development in Indigenous Firms and Multinational Corporations in East and Southeast Asia" (Kenneth R. Bartlett, John J. Lawler, Johngseok Bae, Shyh-Jer Chen, Tai Wai David Wan) presents a comparative study that revealed significant differences in the attitudes of HRD professionals toward provision of short-term and longer-term job-related training in multinational and locally owned corporations in four Southeast Asian countries. All three papers include substantial bibliographies. (MN)

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The Experiences of HRD Professionals Participating in Continuing Professional Development in Taiwan

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The purpose of this study is to describe and interpret the experiences of Taiwanese human resource development (HRD) professionals participating in continuing professional development (CPD). Using hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology, the researcher conducted face-to-face conversational interviews with 14 volunteer participants. Three major themes emerged from thematic analysis: (a) "I felt changes," (b) "I felt a drive for learning and development," and (c) "I felt CPD was part of my working life."

Keywords: HRD Professionals, Continuing Professional Development, Taiwan

Taiwanese economic development has caused a transition in the economic structure from labor-intensive industries to capital- and technology-intensive industries (Lee, 1995). To maintain a competitive advantage, and to develop Taiwan as an Asia-Pacific Regional Operations Center and as a Technology Island, both the Taiwanese government and private enterprise pay increasing attention to developing corporate human resources. In Taiwan, the role of human resource development (HRD) is much more important than ever. As McLagan (1989a) noted, HRD professionals assume increased responsibility to "integrated use of training and development, organization development, and career development to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness" (p. 7). Due to the accelerating pace of economic, social, and technology change, and to ensure the smooth execution of their professional duties, most Taiwanese HRD professionals are aware of the importance of maintaining, broadening, or raising their competencies through continuing professional development (CPD). In the modern Taiwanese workplace, it is essential for HRD professionals to participate in CPD; it has become an important part of their working lives. This hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and meaning of the lived experience of Taiwanese HRD professionals participating in CPD.

Problem Statement

Recently, human resource development in Taiwan has received much attention and recognition for its value from the business sector, academia, and the government (Chen, 1997). During the 1990's, many studies were conducted that were related to Taiwanese HRD (Kuo & McLean, 1999). However, most of them were positivistic, and none focused on HRD professionals' continuing learning and development. Since little was known about Taiwanese HRD professionals participating in CPD, the purpose of this study was to explore, describe, and interpret the experiences of Taiwanese HRD professionals participating in continuing professional development. It attempts to explicate and understand the structures of meanings of this unique experience. As a researcher, I was interested in textual reflection on the lived experiences, with the intent to increase our understanding of HRD professionals' CPD. This study uncovered the meaning of those lived experiences to HRD professionals and the nature of these phenomena.

Theoretical Framework

No preconceived notions, theories, or frameworks guide researchers as they conduct phenomenological research (Creswell, 1994). This section addresses some models and concepts for CPD; in order to study the essential structures of the lived experience, it brackets the researcher's beliefs, prejudgments or prejudices.

What Is CPD?

Continuing professional development is often used interchangeably with the terms "professional development" or "continuing professional education." There are several definitions of CPD; it is helpful to review

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those important definitions to clarify the thoughts about what CPD means. Chalofsky and Lincoln (1983) define professional development as "a process of keeping current in the state of the art, keeping competent in the state of practice, and keeping open to new theories, techniques, and values. It is related to present and near-future positions and usually based on work objectives" (p. 21). Chalofsky (1990) emphasizes that CPD is a continuing process, especially in the HRD field where new theories, techniques, and approaches constantly emerge. McCullough (1987) defines professional development as "the process by which individuals increase their understanding and knowledge, and/or improve their skills and abilities, to perform better in their current positions or to prepare themselves for a position to which they can realistically aspire in the near future" (p. 37). The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) defines professional development as "the ongoing growth of knowledge, skill, and values through deliberate learning efforts to enable individuals to more competently perform their professional roles, support their organization's objectives, and contribute to the evolution of the profession" (McLagan, 1989b, p. 57). Woodward (1996) states that "the term CPD describes learning activities that are undertaken throughout working life and are intended to enhance individual and organizational performance in professional and managerial spheres" (p. 1). According to the above definitions, two key features about CPD are identified: (a) CPD is a continuing learning and developing process by which professionals maintain, broaden, or raise their knowledge, expertise, or competencies through their working lives; and (b) the purpose of CPD is to improve individual, organizational performance, or both.

Models Related to CPD

As Nadler (1981) noted, "the value of a model is that it enables us to communicate ideas" (p. 73). No single model is meant to represent all facets of the field; rather, each model presents its author's concept from that person's perspective, and makes a unique contribution to the professional field of HRD. Two CPD models merit more complete description and analysis.

Nadler's Model for Professional Development. Nadler (1981) constructs a model that is essentially directed at practitioners who are internal to an organization. His model for professional development is based on the following assumptions: "(a) the core of the field of HRD is in learning; (b) an HRD practitioner must know more than learning; (c) most HRD practitioners entered the field through other routes; and (d) the field of HRD is changing" (p. 74). Nadler (1981) identifies HRD practitioners by looking at three variables: activities, categories, and levels.

1. Activities: The three major roles of HRD professionals and their major activities are learning specialist, human resource administrator, and organization consultant.

2. Categories: There are three categories for HRD practitioners. Category 1 is professionally identified. In this category, professionals are cosmopolitans who take their leadership from HRD professional organizations. Category 2 is organizationally identified; its practitioners are those who work for an organization and have been temporarily assigned to HRD functions. Category 3 is comprised of collateral duties; it consists of those people who do not spend full time in HRD but are involved in HRD operations.

3. Levels: Three different levels of competency are labeled as basic, middle, and advanced. However, Nadler has not made clear distinctions among these levels.

This model can assist HRD practitioners to understand themselves and their organizations. As Nadler (1981) noted, using this model, practitioners could identify what they want from the job and from the HRD field. "The model allows practitioners to identify where they are now, and where they might go in the future. It helps them clarify their own growth needs" (pp. 83-84).

Chalofsky's Professional Self-Development Model. Chalofsky's model is a fairly simple process that is based on the premise that "HRD professionals can have a great measure of control over their own growth" (Chalofsky, 1990, p. 13.5). The model consists of eight linear steps in the circle and one step is common to all in the center. Step 1 is to identify what professionals do. Professionals may need to construct a list of their tasks and make sure that their lists are proactive and consider what they should be doing now and what they may do in the future. Step 2 involves prioritizing the list of tasks, since professionals might not be able to work on everything at once. Step 3 asks what knowledge and skills are required to perform a particular task, and requires that professionals think about what the results of a task should be, then think about what they need to know to reach those results. Step 4 is to assess level of proficiency against the list of competencies. Professionals must identify the gaps and then go to step 5 to specify learning objectives that are based on that assessment. Step 6 is to develop the CPD plan, including learning objectives, learning strategies, and evaluation plans. Step 7 and step 8 involve actual performance and

performance assessment to determine the level of proficiency on the task. Significantly, evaluation and feedback occur at every step to ensure consistency and organizational support (Chalofsky, 1990).

Research Question

"Phenomenology always asks the question of what is the nature or meaning of something" (van Manen, 1997, p. 184). In this study, I will attempt to describe and interpret the nature and meaning of the lived experience of Taiwanese HRD professionals' CPD participation. The central research question is: "What is the lived experience of Taiwanese HRD professionals participating in their continuing professional development?"

Methodology

Hermeneutic phenomenology, the research methodology in this study, is a human science that attempts to achieve awareness of different ways of thinking and acting in search of new possibilities of looking at life. It is the systematic approach used to uncover and describe the structure, the internal meaning structures of lived experiences (van Manen, 1997). Hermeneutic phenomenology attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of our everyday experiences and to describe such meanings to a certain degree of depth and breadth. It matches the research purposes of this study, which is to attempt to explore Taiwanese HRD professionals' experiences of participating in CPD and to explicate the meaning of these phenomena.

Hermeneutic Phenomenological Interview

In hermeneutic phenomenology, an interview has a unique potential for obtaining access to and describing the lived experience. The interview is a conversation about the human life world that is transformed into texts to be interpreted (Kvale, 1996). In this study, I developed research texts through face-to-face conversational interviews. I used open-ended questions; there were no strictly pre-formulated interview questions in order to allow study participants to tell their own stories using their own words. Each participant was interviewed twice in order to obtain a rich understanding of his or her lived experiences; each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese, although some participants used some English words. All interviews were tape recorded, with the participants' consent. All interview data were first transcribed verbatim into Chinese—with the exception of English words—and the Chinese transcripts were used to do thematic analysis. All transcribed texts were translated into English only after the thematic analysis was finished in order to maintain fidelity to the participants' original descriptions without language-based distortion or cosmetic revisions.

In the first interviews, I gathered information about study participants' backgrounds and attempted to extract as much description about their lived experiences of CPD participation as each participant was willing to share. In the second interviews, we clarified misunderstandings that I might have had about the descriptions and the meanings of their experiences from the previous interviews. Participants were asked to review the emerged themes and engage in deeper description in order to determine the deeper meanings or themes inherent in these experiences. Researcher and participants intersubjectively interpreted a draft of themes through hermeneutic conversation or collaborative discussions. Emerged themes were examined, articulated, re-interpreted, omitted, added, or reformulated to achieve the intersubjective agreement that was the means of validation for this study (van Manen, 1997).

Participants

I invited volunteer participants from a pool of contacts among members of the Human Resource Development Association of Republic of China (HRDA, ROC), one of the largest HRD professional associations in Taiwan. Fourteen HRD professionals participated in this study. They represented a mix of individual and corporate backgrounds, with positions that ranged from specialist to director, and job titles that included HRD/HR specialist, HRD/HR senior specialist, training/business consultant, HR section assistant manager, personnel manager, HR manager, training manager, and administrative division director. Study participants had varying lengths of HRD work experience from 3 to 25 years. In order to protect his or her identity, I used an English pseudonym for each participant in this study.

Thematic Analysis

The purpose of phenomenological reflection is to understand the meanings of the human phenomenon. To grasp the structure of meanings in texts, it is useful to describe the experience in terms of themes (van Manen, 1997). Such "theme analysis" refers to "the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work" (van Manen, 1997, p. 78). van Manen (1997) proposed three approaches to uncover or isolate themes: wholistic, selective, and detailed. The textual analysis in this study combined the wholistic and selective approaches to uncover thematic aspects of a phenomenon in the developed texts; the two approaches were used interchangeably. Using the wholistic approach, I attended to the developed text as a whole and attempted to find out "what sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole" (van Manen, 1997, p. 93). I listened to the tapes and read the transcripts multiple times as I attempted to find the general meaning in each transcript. Using the selective approach, I read and re-read individual texts several times as I attempted to ascertain "what statement(s) or phase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described" (van Manen, 1997, p. 93). By using the wholistic and selective approaches to text analysis continuously and interchangeably, several significant themes emerged.

Results and Findings

Three major themes—each of which expressed an essential aspect of the Taiwanese HRD professionals' CPD experiences—were identified and explored in this study. Each theme consisted of several sub-themes that deeply explored those lived experiences. Due to the interrelationship of Taiwanese HRD professionals' lived experiences, some themes were strongly connected.

Theme 1: "I Felt Changes"

The single-syllable, six-letter word "change" is the central thought for the first theme in this study. In the modern Taiwanese business world, no matter where HRD professionals turn, change is the only constant. HRD professionals' survival depends on how well they react to on-going changes. Three sub-themes describe how the participants feel about changes in the workplace while they participated in CPD.

"I Felt Changes in the Business Environment". The Taiwanese business environment recently has undergone fundamental changes. The subsequent increase in competition is clearly apparent, as HRD professionals experience organizational changes related to the rapid change in business. Gary is an HR manager at a large-scale electrical company. Like many Taiwanese companies, Gary's company went through a significant transformation, as it became technology-intensive. The company was reengineered several times, which changed Gary's job content, and required that he developed his new professional expertise and knowledge by taking extension courses. He described:

> I have been working at the HR division at this company since I graduated from the university. In the 1980's, with the changes of Taiwan's business environment, our company had to conduct reengineering. As an HR staff, the project of reengineering was a big challenge for me. From 1985 to 1986, our company laid off half as many as our employees. In 1985, we had 3700 employees. After the reengineering, only 1500 remained. It was a huge transformation for our company transferring from labor-intensive to technology-intensive. Although the number of employees decreased, our productivity still had to increase.... The reengineering resulted in a big change in my company. The changes gave me a lot of pressure. I felt my previous learning from the university was not enough. I had a strong desire to go back to school again to collect more information to help our company development. Therefore, I went to take some extension courses at several universities.

"I Felt Changes in the HRD Field". HRD is an emerging and dynamic field that is undergoing transformational change from outside pressures on enterprises as well as from new developments in learning, organization, and career theories and methods (Rothwell & Sredl, 1992). New knowledge and approaches emerge constantly as cutting edge knowledge changed from one wave to another. When they recalled their experiences of CPD, many participants were impressed by the dynamic changes in the HRD field. Ingrid, an HRD senior specialist with a master's degree, mentioned that there are many new things in the HRD field, and to know those new theories and approaches, she continues to participate in CPD. She said:

> In the HRD field, leading knowledge changes often. Several years ago, "competency" was popular. Before that, we only knew "job analysis" and "job evaluation." When "competency" emerged, we started to learn

what "competency-based" means.... Because of my job needs, I have to learn leading knowledge in the HRD field. Recently I went to learn of "knowledge management," which is the most popular leading knowledge now. What is knowledge management? How can we put it into action? Looking from the business perspective, the rules of the game are changed almost every 5 to 6 years. The rules of the game in HRD are also changed.

"I Felt Changes in My Career". Labor market analysts estimate that each year in America, one-third of all job roles are in transition, one-third of technical skills turn obsolescent, and one-third of workers leave their jobs (Charland, 1997). The labor market in Taiwan is also changing dramatically. The volatile working environment and the need for lifelong learning produce careers for modern Taiwanese that look quite different from those more traditional careers of previous generations. Most workers will go through several major job changes during their lifetimes (Bard, 1987). Similarly, career paths in HRD are as diverse and individualized as the backgrounds of HRD practitioners and as constantly changing as the field. A wide variety of career-related transitions are common occurrences for HRD professionals; as they recalled their CPD, many participants recognized the transition-based experiences in their careers. Mary, an HR section assistant manager, felt that focus of her CPD changed with her career stages; at different career stages, she needed different levels of CPD and information. She stated:

> When I was a corporate training specialist, I took courses related to training. Because I was in charge of training affairs, I took those courses. Now, I am in a different career stage. I am a HR assistant section manager. I needed to enhance my HR competencies. I searched for courses related to HR and I took courses that I need at my present stage.... What information I need to collect and what courses I need to take have much to do with my career stages. Definitely, the focus of my learning was different in different career periods.

Theme 2: "I Felt a Drive for Learning and Development"

HRD professionals are busy; most of them work at least 8 hours a day. Then, as is true for most workers, HRD professionals also spend many hours attending to family and community issues and to other concerns. With such tight daily schedules, why do HRD professionals still enroll in formal learning classes, engage in independent learning activities, and establish their professional networks? One major reason for such involvement is the drives for learning. When they reflected on their CPD experiences, HRD professionals clearly recognized some drives that push them to participate in learning and development activities.

"I Was Preparing for My Future". Too many uncertainties exit in today's constantly changing business environment. A modern professional's career path is no longer linear and stable; rather, it is marked by frequent and often complex changes in both responsibilities and directions (Scanlan, 1985). Many of my participants were interested in participating in CPD to get better jobs; the "I was preparing for my future" drive pervaded those interviews. Neil, a 52 years old consultant with 15 years' work experience, spoke of his CPD experiences as it related to consulting certificates. When he prepared to enter the consulting field, he went to the China Productivity Center (CPC) to take two certificate programs. He recalled his experience:

> I took two series of certificate courses at CPC; one is for consultants and the other for advanced consultants. CPC is regarded as the cradle of consultants in Taiwan. They have good programs and instructors for training consultants.... The program for fostering consultants lasted two years, took more than 400 hours and cost me NT$75,000. The other program for fostering advanced consultants took more than 300 hours and cost me NT$30,000.... At that time, I prepared myself to be a consultant; I needed to know what consultants do and what competencies a consultant should have. Therefore, I was interested in CPC's certificate courses. My main purpose was to get the consultant certificates, which were useful for my consulting career.

"I Desired to Keep Myself Active". Learning drives emerge as a result of either intrinsic or extrinsic factors; extrinsic factors consist of external incentives or pressures, while intrinsic factors are composed of a series of inner pressures or rational decisions which create a desire to learn (Rogers, 1996). An intrinsic drive for learning does not arise from specific objectives; rather, it arises from self-discipline. CPD participation is not done for the sake of specific knowledge; rather, it is done because of the belief that learning maintains or strengthens mental processes (Houle, 1984). Many participants reflected on the internal drive that maintained their desires to keep active or the knowledge that continuing learning activities kept them active. They believe in the old axiom, "If I rest, I will rust." This sub-theme revealed a nature of learning that is reminiscent of Houle's (1961) activity-oriented

learners who participate in learning activities primarily for the sake of the activity itself. Dorothy is a 47 years old director who passed the graduate institute entrance examination after she took several academic credit courses. Dorothy enjoys learning with her young classmates, who keep her active. She described:

> I did feel excited when taking academic credit courses at Sun Yat-Sen University. I felt as if I went back to my college days again [smiles].... Continuing learning keeps me young and active [laughs]. I felt I could keep abreast of the times. The feeling is very nice.... Most of my classmates are much younger than I. I liked to study with young and active people. I don't like to waste my time gossiping. It is nice to keep a young and active heart to study.

"I Desired to Know More". Learning is a natural activity for human beings. It is the continual process of adapting to various changes that we confront, such as changes in our social and cultural contexts, in our own workplace, and in our own personal growth and development (Rogers, 1996). We all have learning desires. Some learning desires are very pressing and arise from or are reinforced by urgent matters; however, some learning desires lie dormant, overlaid by more immediate concerns, and await either a suitable learning opportunity or an increased sense of need to come to life. For many people, these desires for more learning have been buried by other experiences; nevertheless, they still exist and can be awakened in appropriate circumstances (Rogers, 1996). Amy is an HR specialist working in an American-owned company. After working several years in the HRD field, Amy felt she only sees the HRD/HR "trees" rather than the "forest." The drive to know the whole picture of HRD/HR pushes her to take some courses. She expressed:

> In the past, I only focused on a single task on my job. For example, when my boss said we had to do this, then I concentrated on this task. Next time my boss said we have to do that; then I concentrated on that task. However, the tasks are "trees"; I did not see the "forest".... I desired to know the whole picture of HR. I also want to know which parts of HR suit for me for specialization. Therefore, I took some courses from the HRDA, ROC and Sun Yat-Sen University.

"I Felt Self-Actualization". Humanists consider learning from the perspective of the human potential for growth. They see learning as the main process by which to meet the compulsion of inner drives rather than to respond to stimuli (Rogers, 1996). To a certain extent, study participants were active in continued learning and development for self-growth and self-challenge. They attempted to prove their abilities or pursue self-actualization through CPD. The strong drive that pushed Ingrid to participate in CPD was her desire to be in the leading place in the HRD field; she did not care about the job title or salary. Ingrid seemed to be pursuing the highest level of Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs, which consists of a need to create, to appreciate, to know, and to understand. She firmly stated:

> I have a thought that I must be in the leading place in the HR or HRD field. This is my goal of CPD. If achieving this goal, I will feel very happy and proud of myself. In fact, I did not care about my job title. It is not really important for me.... Everyone runs his or her own brand in this competitive business environment and I am not an exception. I hope I could be a benchmark in every wave of change. This is what I want.

Theme 3: "I Felt CPD Was Part of My Working Life"

HRD professionals' working lives are as diverse as the organizations and positions they represent. Study participants came from a mixture of individual and corporate backgrounds; naturally, each participant faced different challenges in their working lives. Even similar experiences may mean different things to different people; however, several essential attributes can be mentioned. In this section, two sub-themes explore CPD that is related to HRD professionals' working lives.

"I Learned While Working". There is growing consensus that experience forms the basis of many learning activities (Rogers, 1996). My participants thought of experience as the best approach to CPD in their working lives. As they reflected on their CPD experiences, participants described many important learning experiences they acquired at work. Participants believed if they performed specific activities instead of listening to instructors talk, they would be able to return to work with some practical skills. These HRD professionals did learn from experience and many study participants expressed firm convictions about the effectiveness of learning from experience. John, a senior HR specialist, stated:

> I developed many projects with which I was unfamiliar. However, I have to try. For some projects, even my boss did not have related experience. He cannot give me effective direction. Developing projects were

different from daily routines. It was not easy to find out ready-made resources.... For example, I once developed an "assessment center project." I could not find out related resources from my company. Therefore, I read books, searched on the Web, and consulted experienced predecessors.... A large proportion of my learning is from working. It was the most effective one. When taking a course, I felt there is a gap between the theory and practice. By working, I could find out the solution and have some outcomes. Working was an important learning process.

"I Perceived Organizational Cultures Influenced My CPD". Whether or not we are aware of it, culture is all around us. When we travel to a different country, we may be struck by unique buildings, customs, or behavioral patterns. In the world of work, companies also have cultures. Organizational culture is not limited to what is written in a formal statement; it is ingrained in the behavior of every person in the organization. As they worked in different companies, participants felt different corporate cultures. Some cultures were learning supportive and others are not; corporate cultures could help participants or choke their CPD. Emma, a senior HR specialist, works in an electronic company with a pro-learning culture. She said:

> Lifelong learning is one aspect of our expected corporate culture which was listed on our business philosophy [shows me their business philosophy on the company profile]. Our company strongly encourages employees to be lifelong learners.... Our company adapted the job rotation system. We hope our employees can develop diverse competencies rather than just focusing on one field.... In addition to our annual training plan, we can apply for taking courses outside. As long as the course is related to one's job and the cost is within the training budget, the application is always approved. Our company did encourage employees to learn and develop themselves.

Unlike the situation in Emma's company, the corporate culture in Dorothy's company did not support continuing learning and development. She felt frustrated by her boss's negative attitude against her CPD participation. Dorothy described:

> In the past, I often requested taking courses or attending seminars to develop myself. One day, my boss told me in an ironic and unhappy tone: "You seem to have taken many courses haven't you?" I dare not take any course this year.... Learning resources are limited in our company. I have to let other employees have opportunities to use them. In the past, I did use little more than others.... Our company lacked a leaning climate. Sometimes I dare not even apply for taking courses outside even if the course is very important.

Conclusion

In the modern Taiwanese workplace, it is essential and necessary that HRD professionals participate in CPD. This study explores, describes, and interprets the experiences of Taiwanese HRD professionals participating in CPD. The findings of this study provide a deeper insight into the structure of meanings of this unique experience. Listening to the voices of my participants helps us to have a sense of how Taiwanese HRD professionals perceive their CPD. Learning from these selected participants' experiences helps us to rethink the meaning of CPD participation in their working lives of modern Taiwanese HRD professionals. Hopefully, this research will prompt further research to enrich understanding about Taiwanese HRD professionals.

Study Contributions to HRD

This hermeneutic phenomenological study contributed to new knowledge in HRD by providing a deep description and interpretation of HRD professionals' CPD experiences. This study provides a richer and deeper understanding of this lived experience as well as offers an intersubjective interpretation of this experience. This study adds the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with HRD professionals' CPD activities. It is important to understand these phenomena. Increased understanding of their lived experiences will directly contribute to those Taiwanese HRD professionals who rely on CPD to update their competencies and expertise. The study also provides valuable insights for adult educators, HRD/HR managers, and other individuals who are interested in fostering and developing HRD professionals.

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What is it Like to be a Taiwanese HR Practitioner Performing HRD Tasks?

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This interpretive study describes the lived experiences of Taiwanese Human Resource (HR) practitioners who are performing Human Resource Development (HRD) tasks. Using hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology, seven participants were interviewed about their daily work experiences as HR practitioners. Three major themes emerged about HRD in the Taiwanese work culture: (a) HRD is one aspect of HRM, (b) HRD is equated with training in Taiwan, and (c) HRD success relies on the visions and support of top management.

Keywords: Global HRD, Taiwan HRD, HRD Tasks

As will be seen from the brief literature review presented below, Human Resource Development (HRD) has neither a standard definition nor roles that are universally accepted. In fact, as the contexts in which HRD is done change, the understanding of HRD in those contexts change. One significant context is the country in which HRD is performed. In this research, the meaning of HRD for seven practitioners in Taiwan is explored.

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a relatively new area of professional practice and academic study, even in the United States (Jacobs, 1990). DeSimone and Harris (1998) indicated that "human resource development is a relatively new term, but not a new concept" (p. 3). In Taiwan, it is even more recent.

In order to contribute to improved organizational effectiveness and success, HRD in the United States is a discipline charged with the development of people, processes, and organizations (Wimbiscus, 1995). According to Ruona (2000), scholars in the United States have different points of view about HRD as a profession. Even core beliefs are different due to different value systems. With such differences existing within a country, it should not be surprising to find that different definitions of the HRD profession will exist in other countries (Gilley & Eggland, 1989; McLean, 1999).

In the United States, Nadler (1983) defined HRD as "organized learning experiences, in a given period of time, to bring about the possibility of performance change or general growth for the individual within an organization" (p. 9). Swanson (2000) indicated that "HRD is a process of developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development (OD) and personnel training and development (T&D) for the purpose of improving performance" (p. 8-2). Watkins and Marsick (1997) suggested that HRD practitioners should broaden the concept of HRD. From an adult education perspective, Watkins (1989) suggested that

> Human resource development is the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long term, work-related learning capacity at the individual, group, and organizational levels. As such, it includes--but is not limited to--training, career development, and organizational development. (p. 427)

McLagan (1989) suggested that the fundamental HRD roles are administrator, evaluator, HRD manager, HRD materials developer, individual career development advisor, instructor or facilitator, marketer, needs analyst, organizational change agent, program designer, and researcher. Marquardt and Engel (1993) argued that HRD should focus on needs that relate to the global workplace. They argued that HRD practitioners should have interpersonal and cultural competencies, including "developing a learning climate, designing training programs, transmitting information and experience, assessing results, providing career counseling, creating organizational change, and adapting learning materials..." (p. 63).

In Taiwan, in contrast, there is limited information about how HRD is defined and its roles. According to Kuo and McLean (1999), "Taiwan's economic success supports the idea that developing human resources through education has an important bearing on economic growth" (p. 444). Developing human resources starts with managing human resources. Managing human resources as a strategy has a significant impact on Taiwan's economic development. Human Resource Management (HRM) has been taught in business administration departments for a.

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long time. Most HRM textbooks are focused on the administrative matters of HRM activities with little emphasis on what would be included in the United States as HRD. Although activities in HRD and HRM do have some overlap, in Taiwanese business settings, Human Resource Management (HRM) is considered to be far more significant than HRD. Some scholars (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1999; Jean, 1995) from different perspectives defined HRD functions as a part of HRM. When they discussed human resource development, they focused on career development and task-related development for employees (Chang, 1999). In the 1990s, many Taiwanese scholars studied aboard and returned to Taiwan to convey, broaden, and differentiate human resource management and development concepts (Chen, 1995; Jean, 1995; Lin, 1991; Lin, 1996). Within the country's higher education community, the relatively new concept of HRD is becoming an increasingly important subject. This is especially true due to the number of studies related to Taiwan and HRD that accumulated during the 1990s (Kuo & McLean, 1999). In spite of this growth in usage, however, the components have not been defined in the literature, and it is not clear if the users of the term in practice clearly differentiate it from HRM. That is, in fact, one of the motives for this study. From this lack of careful distinction among fields in Taiwan, some confusion still exists, and HRM, HRD, personnel, training, and even industrial relations (IR) are often used as synonyms in Taiwan. Within this confusing context of terms, the question that emerged for research was, What is it like to be a Taiwanese HR practitioner performing HRD tasks?

Research Questions

Determining the meaning of HRD in Taiwan for a small group of HR practitioners was one of the focuses of this study. Since HR remains the primary term in Taiwan, the researchers decided to focus only on HR practitioners who might perform HRD activities, however they define them. At present, there are no studies identified that address the experiences of Taiwanese HR practitioners. The major research question for this study was: "What is it like to be a Taiwanese HR practitioner performing HRD tasks?" The following specific questions were posed in the interviews as beginning points in the guided conversations with the participants.

1. What roles do the identified HR practitioners fulfill in Taiwan?
2. What functions and definitions of HRD do these Taiwanese HR practitioners use in a business setting?
3. What is the essential meaning of HRD for these Taiwanese HR practitioners?
4. How do these HR practitioners feel about their work?

Each of these questions was selected as they represented a major component of previous research that has emerged from research in other countries, primarily the United States. While it would be preferable to have these questions emerge from the research in Taiwan, this study was exploratory exactly because the desired research in Taiwan has not been identified, if it exists. Further, while these questions were asked to begin the conversations, as van Manen (1998) specified, the researcher's role in phenomenology is to have a conversation with the interviewees. Thus, questions were used to probe for the interviewees' experiences as HR practitioners performing HRD activities.

Methodology

According to Marsick (1990), qualitative research is useful when research attempts to (a) build new theory rather than imposing existing frameworks on existing data, and (b) explore uncharted territory. In order to explore the complexity of the relatively unexplored concept of Human Resource Development in the Taiwanese workplace, a qualitative study seemed appropriate as a means of conveying the participants' experiences.

The purpose of this study was to establish shared understanding among seven Taiwanese HR practitioners about their lived experiences in performing what they identify as HRD tasks. Hansen (1998) advised telling the story from the viewpoint of informants and using their vocabulary and definitions in the form of raw quotes as the basis of emergent theory. Given the inadequacy of existing frameworks in Taiwan, this study attempts to explore and understand only these Taiwanese HR practitioners' experiences first. In addition, it also adds to the growing body of knowledge in international HRD.

Seven Taiwanese HRD practitioners participated in semi-structured interviews. The study used hermeneutic phenomenology as the research methodology through which to understand the inherent phenomena (phenomenology)--the ambiguous role and concept of HRD in Taiwan--and to interpret the lived experiences (hermeneutics) of Taiwanese HR practitioners who claimed to perform HRD activities (Hultgren, 1989). The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the text was analyzed by repeated readings, identifying themes that emerged with the use of a highlighter and codes placed in the margin of the transcripts. The text analysis was based on the principle of hermeneutic cycle (van Manen, 1998). First, the researchers read the verbatim transcripts many times until the themes emerged. Second, the findings were shared with the participants to obtain intersubjectivity and to determine whether mutual understanding of their experiences had been identified. Third, the

themes were modified if the participants did not agree that the themes identified accurately reflected their shared experiences.

Study Participants

The interview subjects were seven Taiwanese HR practitioners who ranged in age from 27 to 50+ years. Although all of the practitioners claimed to be involved in HRD activities, they all considered themselves to be HR practitioners rather than HRD practitioners. By title, the seven participants were a training supervisor, an HR manager, two independent HR consultants (who used to be internal HR consultants), an independent OD consultant, an HR supervisor (Human Resource Division), and an HRD professor (Industrial Relations Department). The study participants were purposefully selected by using the snowball technique (Patton, 1990). A more detailed description of the participants is included in Table 1, below.

Table 1. The Profiles of Seven Taiwanese HR Practitioners

Category, Name	Current Job Title	Age	Years of HR Experiences	Past Work Experiences
Miss L	HR Supervisor	32	7	Training Specialist, HR Specialist
Miss A	Training Specialist	30	3	Training Specialist
Mister Y	HR Manager	40	7	IT consultant
Mister N	Independent HR Consultant (HR Executive to CEO)	40+	10	Engineer, HR Manager,
Mister W	Independent OD Consultant	60	15	Project Manager, Consultant
Mister E	Internal HR consultant	55	20	Engineer, Specialist
Professor J	Associate Professor of Labor Relations Department	40+	5	

Findings

The text analysis produced three major themes: (a) HRD is one aspect of HRM, (b) HRD is equated with training in Taiwan, and (c) HRD success relies on the vision and support of top management.

HRD Is One Aspect of HRM

HRD is a relatively new term in Taiwan. As HR is currently a trend in Taiwan, most Taiwanese companies, according to the participants, have changed the name, Personnel Department, to Human Resource Department. Basically, most companies, however, have not extended the functions of human resources; their activities still focus on functions such as compensation, benefits, and labor law issues. One participant stated that HRD includes training, CD, and OD activities. He pointed out that HRD as a discipline is too weak to develop in Taiwan because most HRD activities, compared with HRM activities, are more difficult to measure and to get business results immediately. Therefore, most of the time, HRD does not get the attention of management. As one participant said:

> In Taiwanese organizations, the so-called HRD practitioners still deal with low-end matters. Instructional design or teacher planning is just a small portion of their daily work. We spend a lot of time on administrative work. HRD in Taiwan is just part of the HRM function. I don't think they pay much attention to HRD here. Most of the time, the so-called HRD practitioners deal with compensation, how to count fringe benefits, and labor law issues.

Another participant said:

> HRD is supposed to have the big picture of how to develop human capability; HRD is supposed to help people develop their competencies; HRD is supposed to include activities related to learning, teaching, and evaluating. Unfortunately, all we can do now is HRM activities. HRD tasks are a small portion of daily

work; we do not have enough people and time to develop and do all the HRD tasks. Hey, I am a training specialist; what I do is collect the training needs of employees and send them out for training. In addition, can you believe that in our department (HR), I need to take care of benefits stuff?

Another participant said:

In the past, Taiwanese enterprise business was not like we have now. Foreign-owned companies try to find local people to deal with personnel matters. Translators in the military are hired to transform HR policy and know-how from the foreign-owned company to the local subsidiary company. Little by little, personnel administration as part of HR management was developed in Taiwan. As I remember, HRD was just as a small portion of the HR function in the company at that time. HRD focuses on the future; we need to think about "now." There were a lot of personnel administration matters to deal with, such as compensation, labor laws, legislation, and labor relations related issues. It is daily, routine work...In the 1970s and 1980s, all the business administration graduates, if they were interested in personnel matters, focused on entire administration techniques of HR. It was not necessary for them to know what HRD really is. No wander, HRD since then has been just one aspect of HRM.

From my point of view, HRD should be management development (MD); it should include a good succession plan for employees and the business. My past company does have such a plan to match employee interests and company needs. I think that is part of HRD. But most companies focus on low-end personnel matters; HRD may not be a first concern of their daily work.

In Taiwan, the participants observed that most of the time organizations do not appreciate HRD as a separate profession and do not distinguish HRD activities from HRM. Thus, the best strategy for HRD practitioners at this moment is to rely on HRM-related professional associations, while participating in HRD activities with an HRD philosophy. Unlike many studies in the U. S. (Cummings & Worley, 1993; McLagan, 1989; McLagan, 1996; Willis, 1996) that highlighted one of the traditional HRD roles as change agent, Taiwan's HRD practitioners barely recognized their role as change agents within organizations. For example, the OD functions of HRD are not significant at this moment in Taiwan's HRD activities, all according to the participants.

HRD is Equated with Training in Taiwan

According to DeSimone and Harris (1998), instructional design, teacher planning, and performance technology are each areas of HRD. HRD practitioners in Taiwan are referred to as training specialists, since a large part of their responsibility is to deliver training. Does HRD in Taiwan include performance technology or teaching planning or evaluation? The answer is both yes and no. According to the participants, Taiwanese organizations do not see a broad scope of activities associated with HRD or even training and development; they just see training. The purpose of training is to solve current problems. Development may not be as urgent as other business functions. Sometimes, Taiwanese organization may do simple evaluation along with the training, but it is just because "everybody does," not necessarily for developmental purposes.

Watkins and Marsick (1992) explained that the learning perspective involves "facilitating or monitoring all types of learning in the workplace, including formal, informal and incidental learning, implying at least that human resource developers should be responsible for enhancing the organization's learning system" (p. 118). In Taiwan, if companies are large enough, they may have a training center--separate from the HR department--to deal with all aspects of training, including some elements of teacher planning and performance technology. If companies are small, they generally buy ready-made materials and ask their HR Specialist to deliver the training. Sometimes, they do not even do an evaluation. They just deliver the training that they think is useful. This finding is similar to Walton's (1999) conclusion that, in some literature, HRD and training and development are interchangeable notions.

One participant, who is an HR supervisor, noted:

The thing that I deal with most is to call the labor bureau and ask what benefits our employees can get. There's a lot of law that we need to follow, a lot of paper that we need to fill out. I've been thinking about planning some training activities for our employees, but it seems that it is not our company's first priority. If we really need a training program, my boss just sends people out or buys a training program and asks us to deliver it. I am more interested in planning and developing a training material, which fits the employees, but first of all, I don't have time; second, my boss doesn't see it as necessary.

I don't think so-called OD can survive in Taiwanese organizations. Training may be more visible. I believe my boss thinks so-called HRD is training, nothing else. However, organizational change is not what we need to consider; that kind of issue belongs to top management.

Training is considered by the participants to be an HRD activity. Although HRD is not limited to T&D, one participant kept referring to HRD as training when asked about his daily HRD tasks. He said:

> Training is an important part of HR. We really care about the training. Training and development are the most important parts of our business strategy... In addition to me, I have two colleagues, and they help me to design training classes.

HRD Success Relies on the Vision and Support of Top Management

As with many organizational activities in Taiwan, without top management commitment, many HR activities barely succeed. Thus, on the one hand, if the leader of the company has a clear vision and supports training and other HRD-related activities, HR practitioners are able to do more meaningful work. On the other hand, some leaders who lack a vision of HRD as a profession seek only their company's immediate financial results instead of long-term business results. With this management philosophy in mind, HRD practitioners in Taiwan do have some strategies to re-educate top managers. One participant explained:

> I really appreciate my boss, who supports my training program. Even when he asks me about the results [of training on performance], and I cannot give him an answer, he still lets me do it. And it pushes me to think about performance as a result of the training. As an HR practitioner, I think the boss' appreciation and support are very important. If they (boss) have vision, I will enjoy working in the HR department, and I can do lots of HRD activities. Otherwise, I don't think that I can happily work as a training specialist.

Another participant said:

> HRD practitioners in Taiwan had better take the HRM position and work it as their strategic plan. Because we don't have enough HRD people, we need to wait and cultivate our own HRD people who share the same vision and shift the paradigm. I think it is not important to be called HRD practitioners or HR practitioners as long as we practice HRD tasks.

Still another participant said:

> The mind of top management is what really matters. I seize every opportunity to educate my boss on how important HRD is and try to give him the whole picture of what HRD is. I hope someday my boss can listen to me and realize that the HRD function is different than HRM activities. Then I can deal with real HRD activities, such as developing a career development plan for employees in which I have more things to do..., or, officially, I can perform HRD tasks without any confrontation or conflict with my boss.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Given the nature of the research methodology, it can be concluded from this study that, for the seven Taiwanese HR practitioners involved in this study, (a) HRD is one aspect of HRM, (b) HRD is equated with training, and (c) HRD success relies on the vision and support of top management. It also appears from the participants' observations that there will be more opportunities for development in HRD-related areas in the future. These Taiwanese HR practitioners, at least, do not perform many HRD activities, such as training planning and development, career development, organization development, and performance technology. And most of time, when these HRD tasks are performed, they are not the focus of their job due to external constraints. All they practice are parts of training activities, parts of performance technology, and parts of organizational interventions, depending on the business tasks in which they are involved.

It is interesting to observe that the three themes are not completely parallel to the research questions posed at the beginning of this paper. One of the observations from this study, also experienced in other interview studies conducted in Taiwan, is that the interviewees were often not direct in responding to questions. Thus, while probing questions were asked during the conversations relative to the four research questions, the interviewees often responded in indirect ways to the questions. This raises interesting questions about doing qualitative research in this context. For example, one participant mentioned that it does not matter what people call them, at this moment, the most important thing for HR is to educate business and society to appreciate HRD as a discipline.

In the future, it will be very helpful to extend the findings of this study. It would be extremely helpful to replicate this study by interviewing those who identify themselves as HRD practitioners, or those who identify themselves in some aspect of what some see as HRD, i.e., organization development practitioners, performance technologists, career counselors, and so on. As this database grows, it will also be helpful to begin to move towards quantitative measures of the broad field of Human Resources and its sub-components, so that the field can be mapped more fully for Taiwan.

Contributions of Research to HRD

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in HRD by providing a deeper understanding of a select group of Taiwanese HR practitioners and their HRD practices. In addition, through a deeper understanding of Taiwanese HR practitioners, this study also provides additional information about theory and practice in Taiwan, adding to the growing database of countries for which such information is becoming available. Further, this study serves as a foundation on which to build theory in Taiwan, which is of interest to Taiwanese HRD practitioners, researchers, and educators, as well as international HRD researchers, to help them also reflect on HRD in Taiwan.

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A Study of Human Resource Development in Indigenous Firms and Multi-national Corporations in East and Southeast Asia

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Short-term focused training and broader human resource development (HRD) practices of non-managerial host country nationals (HCNs) are examined in a study of multi-national corporations (MNCs) and locally owned corporations (LOCs) operating in four Southeast Asian countries. Significant differences were found in the attitude of human resource managers towards the provision of short-term job-related training and longer term HRD for non-managerial HNCs between locally owned firms and MNCs from Europe, Japan, and the United States.

Keywords: International HRD, Multinational Corporations, Host-country Nationals

The growing significance of international corporations and the search for optimal management practices within these organizations has resulted in major impacts to the field of human resource development (HRD). As noted by Schuler, Dowling, and De Cieri, (1993) the globalization of business is making it more important than ever to understand how multinational organizations can operate more effectively and efficiently. The HRD function is emerging as a critical competitive factor in the success of international organizations that warrants further investigation (Baumgarten, 1995).

Problem Statement

The vast majority of international HRD literature focuses on the policies, programs, and practices associated with preparing employees for current and future international assignments (Landis & Bhagat, 1996). However, noticeably lacking from the international HRD literature is an examination of the training and development of non-managerial host-country nationals (HCNs) employed in multi national corporations (MNCs) compared to those Host country nationals employed by indigenous firms, also referred to as locally owned corporations (LOCs).

Literature Review

The role of international HRD has traditionally been limited to selecting, training, and supporting expatriates rather than focusing on serving the global employee population of the entire organization (Pucik, 1997). A shift is occurring within MNCs as the vital role of host country nationals in the operation of multinationals is increasingly recognized (Baumgarten, 1995). The increased reliance of host country nationals coincides with the continued high costs of expatriate employees as compared to the employment of citizens from the host country (Townsend, Scott, & Markham, 1990). Other advantages offered by host country nationals include the ability to speak the native language, and their familiarity of local business norms and practices (Barratt, 1995). Not surprisingly, many MNCs

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are increasingly selecting managers and other top executives from the host county (Hayden, 1990).

For many years a stereotypical view persisted that characterized host country employees as being unsophisticated, untrained, and technically incapable as compared to expatriates (Mendenhall, Punnett & Ricks, 1995). As a result, expatriate employees were selected for a variety of overseas job assignments with very little thought given to the HRD needs of entry level HCN employees with which the expatriate would work. Expatriate managers have often failed to emphasize HRD for the non-managerial HCN workforce reflective of their focus to the short duration (usually less than three years) of their overseas assignment.

Increasing concern at the number of expatriate failures, as measured by early return, together with the rising costs of salaries, benefits, and travel expenses has seen MNCs attempting to circumvent the expatriate problem by recruiting and training host country nationals (Bhagat & Prien, 1996). Wes (1998) suggests that managers adopt a process of "localization" by using HRD practices to develop host country nationals to replace expatriate staff. Vance, Wholihan, and Paderon (1993), suggest that well trained host country nationals can assist expatriates in succeeding in their assignment and avoid certain costly mistakes that might seriously undermine the success of the foreign assignment. It has also been said that multi national corporations have an ethical responsibility in providing training and development for the host country workforce (Vance & Paderon, 1993). Providing HRD for the host country workforce reflects a long-term developmental approach to the global workforce and reduces existing stereotypes that multi nationals exploit cheap labor. It also supports the notion that a long-term investment perspective is required for building truly global organizations.

Research Hypotheses

Within the last two decades countries in the Southeast Asia have experienced much global business activity capitalizing on the competitive advantage represented in their human resources. Studies by the World Bank highlight that pre-existing education priorities for the nation may be the single most important element in any national or firm level HRD strategy (Asia Development Bank, 1991). Because both MNC and locally owned companies utilize the host country workforce, it is thought that the percentage of HCN workforce receiving training would be the same for LOC and MNCs.

Hypothesis 1: The percent of the HCN workforce receiving training in the past year will not be significantly different for host country nationals in U.S., Japanese, and European MNCs compared to locally owned firms in Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.

U.S. companies operating internationally are said to invest less in HRD as they transfer their short-term financial performance approach to management often resulting in HRD for host country nationals taking a back seat (Russ-Eft, Presskill, & Sleezer, 1998). Meanwhile, Japanese firms are often cited as investing heavily in HRD to reflect their values towards training and development (Lindberg, 1991). Locally owned corporations are general thought to adopt a long-term developmental approach to their human resources whereas MNCs have tended to focus on the competitive advantage represented by an abundant and cheap labor force.

Hypothesis 2: Locally owned firms are more likely than MNCs to engage in HRD activities with a long-term focus on HCN development,

Hypothesis 3: MNCs will be more likely than locally owned firms to engage in short-term training activities.

In additional to the transferability or local adaptation of HRD policies, various organizational structural and performance variables may also influence the amount and type of HRD provided for host country nationals. The existence of a centralized human resource department has been shown to relate positively to formal HRM standards. Extending this argument, it could be suggested that HR professionals within a centralized HRM department would be more likely to support the provision of both short-term training and long-term HRD for host country nationals as it increases the role and visibility of HRM within the organization and because it reflects practices consistent with modern effective HRM.

Hypothesis 4: Firms with a centralized HRM department are more likely to engage both in short-term training and HRD activities with a long-term focus on HCN development.

The size of the firm and number of years of operation in the host country are also expected to influence HRD for host country nationals. Existing research confirms that larger firms provide more training (Osterman, 1995). It was also thought that firms in operation for a number of years may have determined the amount and type of training and development needed to ensure that local employees posses the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Hypothesis 5: Larger firms are more likely to engage in HRD activities with a long-term focus on HCN development and also more likely to engage in short-term training.

Hypothesis 6: The length of operation in a host country will increase the likelihood of a firm engaging in both short-term training and long-term HRD activities.

Firm performance, turnover, and the number of employees recruited at entry level are also expected to influence HRD. Higher performing firms are likely to have the resources necessary to undertake training and HRD activities. The voluntary turnover rate was included as high turnover among host country nationals may result in reluctance for training and development investments. Previous research has identified increased training and development in firms with low turnover (Lynch & Black, 1998). The number of employees recruited at entry level may increase the amount of training required to ensure that all employees have the required job skills despite potential shortcomings resulting from their formal education.

Hypothesis 7: Firms with greater levels of organizational performance are more likely to engage in HRD activities with a long-term focus on HCN development and also more likely to engage in short-term training.

Hypothesis 8: Firms with high voluntary turnover rates are less likely to engage in HRD activities with a long-term focus on HCN development and also less likely to engage in short-term training.

Hypothesis 9: Firms that recruit a high proportion of host country nationals at the entry level are more likely to engage in HRD activities with a long-term focus on HCN development and also more likely to engage in short-term training.

Method

Data and Procedures. A survey questionnaire was developed as part of a larger comparative study of HRM systems in South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Singapore. The questions focused only on non-managerial employees in narrowly defined categories of similar jobs. The questionnaire was translated into Korean, Chinese, and Thai, with back translation to assure validity of the items; the survey instrument used in Singapore was administered in English. The instruments were mailed to individuals with principal responsibility for HRM in a random sample of both MNCs and LOCs who were identified in business directories of major companies in each country. A total of 402 organizations were included in the analysis with return rates for each country being in the 25% to 30% range, which is typical for international HRD studies (Tregaskis, 1998).

Variables. All of the variables included in this study were derived from items on the questionnaire. The dependent variables for this study included a scale of training practices for host country nationals and a scale of more long-term HRD practices for host country nationals. Items in the training scale reflected a short-term, job related approach to developing human capital within the firm. Responses were scored along a six-point Likert-type scale with the end points reading 1 = very inaccurate, 6 = very accurate. These items were based on those used by Snell and Dean (1992). The scale consisted of four items and the reliability of this scale was within acceptable limits (α=.67). The four-item HRD scale included items to reflect a long-term and broader perspective to improving employee skills. The reliability coefficient for the HRD scale was on the low side, but certainly acceptable for an exploratory study (α=.62). Two other dependent variables in the study (percent of employees receiving training and hours spent in training) were single item questions asking for specific numbers from the respondents.

As for the independent variables, host country and country of origin were measured by dummy variables. The reference category was U.S. multi-national firms with dummy variables indicating if the firm was a Thai, Taiwanese, South Korean, or Singaporean indigenous firm or the affiliate of a Japanese, or European multi national. These variables were used to test Hypotheses 1-3. A dummy variable indicated if the firm had a centralized HR department was used to test Hypothesis 4. Respondents were also asked the number of individuals currently

employed by the firm (Hypothesis 5), which was converted to its logarithmic value, and the number of years the firm had operating in the host country (Hypothesis 6), also converted to its logarithm. An organizational effectiveness scale, based on the work of Khandwalla (1977), was used to test Hypothesis 7. Only the items relating to firm financial performance were used from this scale; the scales reliability was high (α=.81). Finally, two questions asked the voluntary turnover rate (Hypothesis 8) and percentage of employees recruited at the entry level (Hypothesis 9). Means and standard deviations appear in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations (n = 402)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Percent non-managers trained	48.03	34.96
Hours trained in past year (Log)	2.75	1.26
Training scale	3.62	.96
HRD scale	4.19	.77
Indigenous Taiwan Firm	.28	.45
Indigenous Thai Firm	.098	.30
Indigenous Taiwanese Firm	.01	.28
Indigenous Korean Firm	.28	.45
US Firm	.15	.36
Japanese Firm	.15	.36
European Firm	.13	.34
Organizational Effectiveness	4.39	.81
Percent Recruited at Entry Level	44.25	33.15
Years in Host Country	21.91	17.69
Free-standing HR Department	.73	.44
Voluntary Turnover Rate	13.20	19.29
Number of Employees (Log)	5.43	1.45

Results

As the regression results show in Table 2 each column corresponds to a separate dependent variable and standardized regression coefficients and t-statistics are reported for each independent variable. All four equations are statistically significant.

Hypothesis 1 relates to differences in the percent of non-managerial host country nationals trained by multinationals and indigenous firms. Dummy variables representing the firm's country of origin are used to test this hypothesis. Thus "Japan" and "Europe" indicate that the company is the subsidiary of a Japanese or European-based MNC, regardless of host country. "Korea," "Singapore," "Thailand," and "Taiwan" indicate the firm is locally owned and situated in the indicated country. The excluded (reference) category represents subsidiaries of U.S.-based MNCs. The addition of the country of origin dummy variables to the regression equation in which percent of host country nationals trained is the dependent variable significantly improves the fit of the model ($F_{6,402}$ = 7.43, $p < .001$), which would tend to result in a rejection of Hypothesis 1. That is, there are systematic differences by country of origin with regard to the proportion of employees trained. In contrast, however, the country of origin dummy variables exert no statistically significant effect on the average time spent on training ($F_{6,381}$ = .695, ns), so given that a firm provides training, the typical duration of the training experience does not vary by the cultural context of the country of origin nor does it differ between MNC subsidiaries and indigenous firms.

Table 2. Regression Results (Standardized Coefficients and t-Statistics N = 402)

	Percent Non-Managers Trained	Hours Trained (Past year)	HRD Scale	Training Scale
Japanese Firm	-.169	-.065		
	(-3.10)***	(-.1.113)		
European Firm	-.045	-.049		
	(-.994)	(-.838)		
Indigenous Thai Firm	-.301	-.049	-.189	.020
	(-5.46)***	(-.83)	(-3.558)***	(-.400)
Indigenous Taiwanese Firm	-.017	-.048	-.103	-.027
	(-.338)	(-.929)	(-.2.012)***	(-.566)
Indigenous Singaporean Firm	-.140	-.095	.029	-.015
	(-2.65)**	(1.717)*	.564	(.305)
Indigenous Korea Firm	.-.007	-.072	-.062	-.009
	(.279)	(-1.121)	(-1.010)	(-.165)
Organizational Effectiveness	.115	.178	.195	.304
	(1.97)**	(3.59)***	(3.867)***	(6.456)***
Percent Recruited at Entry Level	-.13	.029	-.049	-.017
	(-.2.70)***	(.563)	(-.94)	(-.358)
Years in Host Country	-.067	-.086	.010	-.026
	(-1.34)	(-1.66)	(.18)	(.519)
Free-standing HR Department	.107	.107	.058	.140
	(2.17)**	(2.071)***	(1.102)***	(2.878)***
Voluntary Turnover Rate	-.028	.060	-.040	-.094
	(-.612)	(1.243)**	(-.802)***	(-2.012)**)
Log of Number of Employees	.252	-.286	-.014	.199
	(-4.12)***	(-.4.47)***	(-.210)	(3.737)***
Adjusted R^2	.202	.127	. 076	.19
-F	9.425***	5.729***	8.059***	3.696***

***p < .01 **p < .05 *p < .10

Hypotheses 2 and 3 are assessed by the country of origin dummy variables in the HRD and training scale equations, as these two scales represent the nature and qualities of the HRD and training efforts, rather than intensity or breadth. To test these hypotheses, we include only the dummy variables that indicate locally owned companies, since we investigate the issue as to whether the indigenous firms differ from MNC subsidiaries and, if so, in which countries. The country dummy variables for the training scale are not, as a set, statistically significant ($F_{4,408}$ = 1.015, ns), though they are in the case of the HRD scale ($F_{4,408}$ = 4.467, p < .01). The former results would lead to a rejection of Hypothesis 2, whereas the latter results would be supportive of Hypothesis 3. Yet, the impact in the latter case is limited to indigenous Thai and Taiwanese firms, which are significantly more likely to pursue long-term development activities than MNC subsidiaries; indigenous firms in the other two countries in the study are not significantly different from MNC subsidiaries on this dimension. Thus, the effect is fairly weak.

Other variables exerting a significant effect on percent host country nationals trained include organizational performance (positive), percent recruited at the entry level (positive), and organizational size (positive). These effects are consistent with Hypotheses 7, 9, and 5 respectively. In the case of average training time, organizational performance exerts a positive significant effect consistent with Hypothesis 7. The organizational size and presence of a centralized HR department exert significant positive effect as well and these are consistent with Hypotheses 4 and 5 respectively. Other variables are not significant at the .05 probability level.

Organizational variables have effects on the training scale. Organizational performance, the presence of a centralized HR department, and organizational size had positive and statistically significant effects on the training scale, thus supporting Hypotheses 7, 4, and 5 respectively. Voluntary turnover is negatively related to the training scale, which is consistent with Hypothesis 8. Few organizational variables effects on the HRD scale. The only strongly significant variable is organizational performance, which is positive and thus consistent with Hypothesis 7. The presence of a centralized HR department is also positively related to the HRD scale (as is consistent with Hypothesis 4), though this is only significant at the .10 level.

Conclusions

This paper has explored the role of national origin of firms in attempting to explain the amount of training and development offered to non-management employees in large multi national and locally owned corporations in four selected Southeast Asian countries. The results suggested a variety of other variables might also affect the amount of HRD opportunities afforded to HNCs. Although various control variables in our analysis performed as expected, our principal hypotheses, relating to differences in training and development as a function of country of origin, were not strongly supported. This, in fact, indicates that a convergence effect may be at work here; that is, companies make decisions based on economic and organizational structural variables rather than national cultural and other influences. This bears further inquiry and model refinement.

This study contributes new knowledge to international HRD in that there is currently a shortage of empirical work existing to explain the differences in the level and types of HRD activities for host country nationals in MNCs. The findings of this research challenge many commonly held beliefs about international HRD. Specifically, despite all firms depending on existing local education systems to provide employees it appears as though the country of origin does influence the percent of the HCN workforce receiving training. The oft cited over investment on long-term HRD by Japanese firms and under investment by U.S. multi-nationals was not supported in this study. Results showed that U.S. multi national corporations were training a larger percent of their HCN workforce as compared to Japanese multi nationals. The results of this study support the idea that indigenous firms recognize the value of training and developing their human resources. The results also highlight the influences on short-term training and longer-term HRD activities from a range of organizational structure, strategy, and policy variables which would seem to support existing research that finds the variable most related to participation in HRD is organizational commitment to training and policies and regulations that facilitate attendance at training events (Tharenou, 1997). However, much additional research is required to understand possible barriers to the implementation of widespread HRD initiatives for host country nationals employed in multi national organizations. Ideally such future studies would be cross-cultural, employ diverse research methods, and use longitudinal designs to address the influence of variables other than national and organizational culture as has been discussed above.

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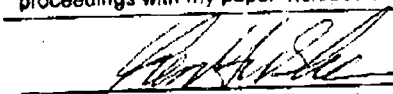

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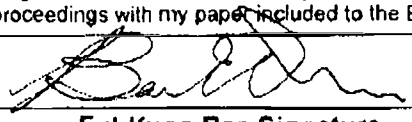

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