Guide to Methodology

This project aimed to analyse the activities, values and organisational influence of human resource (HR) practitioners, at different career stages and in different organisational contexts, in the UK and Hong Kong in order to compare those experiences (a) to the recent moves to enhance the professional status of HR by the respective professional bodies in each country and (b) to each other in order to identify what aspects of HR practice are context specific.

The empirical research was conducted in four distinct stages:

1. Comparative documentary analysis of policy statements, professional standards, ethical codes and accreditation documentation
2. Elite interviews amongst national-level stakeholders ascertaining the perceived role of HR as a profession, in organisations across the UK and Hong Kong.
   1. From the UK, fourteen interviews were conducted among sixteen interviewees. Eleven full interview transcriptions are available.
   2. From Hong Kong, sixteen interviews were conducted among nine interviewees. Seven full transcriptions are available.
3. Two paired electronic questionnaire surveys of members each of the two countries’ HR professional bodies directly from a (email) mailshot from the professional bodies directly. 987 CIPD members and 316 HKIHRM members responded.
4. Semi-structured interviews, were then carried out among a sample of survey respondents volunteering further contact. Eleven interviews were conducted in the UK and two in Hong Kong.
5. A series of case-studies were then established, initially identified from survey respondent volunteers, but then snowballed from initial contacts from stage (2) and (3). Semi-structured interviews were carried out among a purposive sample of individuals in each case study. For larger organisations, this allowed interviewing HR practitioners at varying positions of authority and non-HR managers. For smaller case studies, just the person responsible for HR decisions was interviewed. The aim was to examine more deeply the explanations behind participants’ activities, experiences of HR practice and on-going professional development in an organisational context.
   1. Nine case studies were conducted in the UK, involving a total of thirty interviews of twenty eight individuals
   2. Nine case studies were conducted in Hong Kong, involving a total of sixteen interviews of fourteen individuals.

The research was underpinned by principles of the British Sociological Society ethical code and approved by both the researchers’ institutions’ ethics committees.

**Questionnaire Survey Details**

Consent form part of opening statement on (on-line) survey which has now closed.

For SPSS data sheet, switch to variable view to see variables.

* Unit of analysis for part 2 to 4 = individual
* Unit of analysis for parts 5 = organization in which respondent works
* Unit of analysis of part 6 = HR profession

Coding

Part 1 of survey is coding sheet, one for HK and one for UK. The codes can become predictor variables in multiple regression analysis. Notice that associate and graduate levels of CIPD are equivalent. Since the coding variables were constructed in conjunction with HKIHRM and CIPD categorical data was used which was converted to dummy variables for purpose of regression analysis.

Parts 2-3 of survey is an inventory with items and scaling properties. For part 2 the 16 items are derived from a combination of a) 8 operationalized MCIPD level standards/professional criteria b) 8 operationalized MIHRM level standards/professional criteria. In each case, scale reliability of items is above 0.7. For part 3, the 29 items include 3 challenge items (not used in scaling), plus four scales corresponding to the ‘Associate’ (one for HKIHRM and one for CIPD ) and ‘Professional’/‘Chartered’ (i.e. MCIPD and MIHRM) level of membership (one for HKIHRM and one for CIPD). In each case scale reliability of items is above 0.7.

Parts 2 and 3 of survey can also be organized thematically (e.g. items pertaining to basic skills, strategy, leadership etc).

Part 4 of survey asks respondents to rate balance of ability versus experience, results can be compiled as necessary

Part 5 examines role of HR department operationally and strategically, respectively.

Part 6 raises questions of role and influence of HR in general. Again results can be compiled as necessary and compared for UK and HK respondents alike.

Our own analysis of inventory (part 2-3)

For our own work, we selected certified members only. In one form of analysis we also excluded self-employed respondents.

First, items scaled and tested for reliability

Second, exploratory factor analysis used to reduce data set and explore composition of factor loadings

Third, multiple regression analysis to predict scales of factor profiles depending on various research questions posed.

For parts 4-6 various descriptive work is possible

Data files – named complete = all survey responses, named cleaned = what we used for our own analysis