

**A Qualitative Investigation on the
Impact of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS)
on the Organisation Performance in the
Retail Sector of Canada**

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MA in Human Resource Management

At

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2020

ABSTRACT

Purpose

The primary and the main purpose of the research is analysing and evaluating the impact of the HRIS on organisational performance in the retail sector of Canada. Furthermore, the research emphasises on determining the importance and functions of the HRIS along with ascertaining its impact on the performance of firms and identifying the challenges faced by organisations in implementing the portal of the HRIS, especially in the retail sector of Canada. Overall, the aim and objective of the research study is evaluating the concept of the HRIS and the implication of this software in the HR departments of various organisations.

Methods/ Data Collection/ Data Evaluation

The research approach or method used in the project is the research onion method that provides different layers for choosing or selecting distinct research methodology components. The research project utilises qualitative methods. The qualitative data is collected in the research by the help of the semi-structured interview with the integration of interpretivism research philosophy. Primary data has been collected to gather real-world data and delve into various unexplored facts of the HRIS through an interview method and secondary data has been derived by going through academic books, latest journal articles and exploring credible websites. The selection of the sample for the research has engaged the non-probability sampling technique. Further, using the purposive sampling technique, 8 HR managers were selected to obtain data. The HR managers from food, apparel, grocery, and drug retail sectors have been selected for an interview and two HR managers are recruited for the interview from each retail sector. Further, the thematic analysis method is used for examining interview data.

Findings

The primary findings show that the HRIS has profoundly transformed the HRM functions in the retail sector of Canada.

Implications

The research shows meaningful insight into the HRIS with its features and impact on the overall performance of organisations in the retail sector.

Limitations

Primary data that was integrated with the help of the semi-structured interview method requires interviewing enough individuals to draw an optimum level of conclusion and make further comparisons. Further, the interview lacks exact facts and figures, and on the other side, the secondary data generally lacks accuracy and originality. Similarly, due to COVID-19, there were various hurdles in measuring primary data through primary resources.

Research Complications: COVID-19

The complications that I faced in the research project were related to the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 due to which all the countries across the globe are suffering. Due to the current pandemic of COVID-19, I did not get the permission from the Royal Bank of Canada to conduct the research study as initially; I had submitted a proposal to carry on or conduct a research on the HRIS in the Royal Bank of Canada.

Further, I tried to switch towards various other international banks such as Scotia Bank and State Bank of India, but they also denied my request to conduct research due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, I amended my research proposal, and I proposed research on the HRIS of the retail sector in Canada. Although the company and industry of research had been changed, yet the research topic remained the same.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am highly fortunate to get the guidance from my supervisor Pauline Kelly and support of multiple HR Practitioners throughout the course of this particular research work that helped me to accomplish this dissertation efficiently. Firstly, I will like to grant my regards to the assignment guide for continuously being in contact with me for solving my issues or doubts and providing me with an optimum direction to carry out with my research.

I am more extensively grateful to the supervisor for contributing her knowledge and insight of the HRIS and the related subject areas that supported me to perform and direct the research in an adequate way. Further, I would like to praise my peers and university teachers for motivating me and providing me with various useful tips to complete the research work successfully.

Finally, I will like to thank and praise my parents, family members and dear friends for being highly supportive for my academic as well as the personal endeavour.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HR: Human Resources

HRM: Human Resource Management

HRIS: Human Resource Information System

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The HRIS has significant applications as software in the field of HRM. The application of HRIS in the HRM functions in organisations is established for the main purpose for the collection of data and storing those important data about employees of the organisation (Kavanagh and Johnson, 2017). HRIS encompasses varied core functionalities which are required for the governance of the HRM functions in the end to end manner. The implication of HRIS in organisations is significant for the maintenance of the overall organisational performance (Thomas, 2008). The HRIS makes the organisational HR functions easier and efficient and hence the companies become able to perform in a good way. With the help of HRIS, the organisation can have integration of the HR functions in such a way that information flow can be processed in a well organised manner to manage adequate HR. The presented research topic is hence focused in examining the impact of the HRIS on organisational performance specifically within the retail sector of Canada.

1.2 Background

The retail market in Canada is found to be the largest market for high-quality, high value and customer-oriented products, which have exported nearly 16 billion dollars in products in the year 2018. It usually consists of multinational firms that provides great benefits to the country and make it to be recognised as a first international endeavour for several new-to-market and new-to-export US companies. The retail market is found to be mature, which consists of five major stores integrating three traditional grocers as well as two general merchandisers who acquire approximately 62 percent of the Canadian market. Retail stores including British Columbia, Quebec and

Ontario have control of 74 percent of the retail market in Canada and are found to be the place for most of the products such as drugs, food, grocery and convenience (FAS, 2019). In the retail industry, the management of HR the most important priority for all retailers. For the same purpose, the implementation of the HRIS and its maintenance has become the integral process of the retail sector. However, having a good understanding of HR and managing HR a very critical challenge for organisations in the retail sector of Canada. Most of the retailers in Canada strive to build strong workforces because of the significant changes in market trends and demographics. Attracting top talent is found to be the critical challenge faced by retail companies in Canada because of the lack of focus on implementing advanced technology. The advancement in technology has changed the way of businesses acquiring new talent; however, it has been found that the lack of focus on retailers in Canada in applying technology such as HRIS is making HR managers struggle in attracting skilled talent which in turn is negatively affecting company's performance (McCann, 2014). In Canada, only one generation of employees work in the organisations and hence recruitment and selection of the diverse workforce is a critical challenge for the retail organisations in the Canadian retail sector. As a result of this, the implication of HRIS has become an integral process in the retail sector of Canada (Udekwe and De la Harpe, 2017).

1.3 Research Significance

In the research study field, conducting studies on HRM a very interesting area of investigation. There are several aspects of HRM that have been studied by the researchers. The presented research study is based on the subject of the HRIS which is a very interesting area of study. This is the key rationale point behind the selection of this research topic for the study purpose (Qureshi, Kaur and Sajjad, 2013). The other rationale point behind undertaking this research study is that it is focused on the subject of the

Canadian retail sector and the impact of HRIS implication on the organisational performance in this sector. During this research process, in the data collection process, some complications were faced for undertaking research for interview purposes in the retail sector of Canada because during the period of COVID-19 it was difficult to have contact with the people directly. As a future course of action, I contacted the HR managers through email in order to have online contact with them. There are research studies conducted on the subject of HRIS, however in relation to the subject of the Canadian retail sector; not much research has been conducted till the current date. Henceforth, this is the clear gap in the presented research scenario and this gap will be bridged through the presented research study. This study of research will be having the compelling implications in the different contexts. In one place, this piece of the research study will be having the significant implications within the academic field because it will pave a path for future researchers to get new directions for conducting further research studies. In other sense, this research consideration will also get symbolic implication in the Canadian retail sector in terms of helping the retail firms to have an improvement in the organisational performance through more effective use of HRIS in Canada.

1.4 Organisation of Research

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, the research topic has been introduced, and the background of the study is provided. The chapter explains the significance of conducting a thorough inquiry on the topic also.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, the credible and relevant literary sources related to HRIS and its impact on the organisational performance are explored and evaluated in a detailed manner.

Chapter 3: Research Question

The chapter illustrates the research question, the main aims and objectives of the research that are grounding the entire research work.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter of the research course, the key research methods and approaches that will be applied for data collection and data analysis purposes will be described in detail with proper justification of each one.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings

This is the very important chapter in this research study which is provided a detailed analysis of the research data which has been collected the previous chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussions

In the research study chapter is presented with the main findings in this chapter along with the detailed discussion of each finding.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

This will be the last research chapter in the study that has presented with the final concluding remarks of the research study in the form of the key conclusions. The chapter will also provide the crucial recommendations that will be helpful in real terms for having significant improvement in the organisational performance with the help of HRIS.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Guest (2011) explains the HRIS as an online solution or the software that is utilised by the HRM of an enterprise for the main purpose of the data entries, data capturing and the data informational needs for bookkeeping and payroll operations. The HRIS is generally a database that has multiple pieces of information about the HR of the organisation. The HRIS is an overall system of performance management, development and learning, recruitment and various other related functions of the HR department of the organisations (Guest, 2011). Further, in the context of the HRIS, Cascio (2015) elaborates that the HRIS is a fundamental activity that is carried by the HRM team. The HRIS is used to manage many details such as absence reports, profiles of associated employees, administration of the salary, leave request status and various other employee-related reports. The HRIS is considered as one of the initial HR practices in the emerging and changing corporate world to streamline the process of maintaining every single record of the employee status till the time the employee is associated with the organisation. Therefore, the HRIS is the primary essential part of the HR system as it helps in the rapid growth of the corporate sector (Cascio, 2015). In the context of the HRIS, this piece of the literature review emphasises on the importance and functions of the HRIS along with the impact and challenges faced in the implementation of the HRIS. In the latter part, the literature review relates to the usage of the HRIS in the retail sector of Canada.

2.2 Importance and functions of HRIS

Jahan (2014) emphasises on the importance of HRIS as an effective platform that provides a much higher speed of processing and retrieval of data and information and along with that, it leads to decrease the chances of

duplication of work or efforts that eventually prompts to reducing an optimum amount of cost. Furthermore, HRIS also provide ease in analysing and reanalysing of the information and data with better classification and help in making various effective decisions for HRM for the benefit of the organisation as a whole. HRIS provide an optimum accuracy of the report or data generated as the software generally keeps the data intact for a more extended period of time (Jahan, 2014). Further Gorla, Somers and Wong (2010) highlight in the same context that HRIS lead to the enhanced quality of the extracted reports with quick response to the issue. HRIS also prompt to creating a better work culture with proper transparency among the different parts of the management of the system that creates the establishment of systematic and streamlined work procedure. Apart from the importance of HRIS for the management, the system also helps in the self-management of employees as they can check the report for their working in a proper way and even if there is an issue in the record, they can collaborate with the HRM for necessary correction (Gorla, Somers and Wong, 2010).

Jahan (2014) highlights that all HR procedures are integrated into the HRIS. The function of HRIS is to store the information of all the employees working in the company. The information about the employees includes the joining, transfer or promotion details, reporting database, organisational structure and various other associated essential pieces of information. The tool also stores information about the recruitment, training and development of the employees engaged with the organisation in the form of recruitment requisition, storage of interview outcome and information about the interview boards as well as an essential part of training and developmental procedures, such as training calendar, developmental requisition and development and training reports and records (Jahan, 2014). In the same perspective, DeCenzo, Robbins and Verhulst (2016) described that the primary functions of HRIS include maintaining leave reports with regards to leave policy, leave

application and report, payroll information for all the systems, performance management that is approved by the management and giving information about the attendance of the employees with proper reports and records in a transparent manner (DeCenzo, Robbins and Verhulst, 2016).

In the point of view of Farndale, Scullion and Sparrow (2010), the functions of HRIS managed by the HR team of an organisation are helpful in HR accounting, HR management, HR reporting and various other related areas that are associated with HR. Proper utilisation of the HRIS brings a higher level of transparency in the overall system that profoundly helps the organisation to show a fair and accurate picture of the organisation in front of multiple stakeholders (Farndale, Scullion and Sparrow, 2010).

2.3 Impact of HRIS

Noe, Hollenbeck, Wright and Gerhart (2015) emphasised on the observation that the HRIS profoundly impact the effective working of HRM in any industry. Proper utilisation of HRIS leads to faster communication among the individuals and HR managers that helps in saving an optimum amount of time with much strategic and value-added work. The communication from HR managers become much faster because the employees are just a click away from the reach of HR managers. Even HRIS also reduce the cost of the paper usage that was required in the traditional times for making every note of the activities of the employees that started from the hiring phase till the time the employee leaves the organisation. Various services offered by the HR department are made automated due to the software that impacted the bureaucratic elimination system by introducing a self-service system that requires minimum human efforts. The software also impacted the orthodox working by the HR manager by introducing automation that gives more time to the HR personnel to frame strategies for streamlining the working of HRM (Noe, Hollenbeck, Wright and Gerhart, 2015).

Kehoe and Wright (2013) further highlight the impact of the effective utilisation of HR information system. HRIS has made the information technology sector speedier and focused on working culture as the launch of the HRIS tool leads to making employees more comfortable towards the utilisation of various software on their own. The usage of advanced technology enhances the employees' knowledge about the updated technology that is beneficial for the employees as well as for the progress of the organisation. The HRIS has made a shift in the functions of the HRM team from an orthodox strategy making to an innovative strategy formulation. The HR team gets more time an excellent opportunity to focus on multiple approaches or strategies to overcome the strategic or organisational problems as many of the higher levels of administrative services are being delivered through self-service. By using the HRIS, various services of the HR team have become automated that made the overall HR process authentic. Along with that, much of the work gets completed in a short period of time in an efficient manner (Kehoe and Wright, 2013).

Jiang, Lepak, Hu and Baer (2012) emphasise on the influence of the HRIS on the total organisational outcomes. The HRIS has all the data related to the employees of the organisation that helps in assisting the streamlined process of conducting multiple activities. Employees are one of the key pillars that support the growth and progress of the organisation, and any particular information about the employees guides the management for the formation and the development of the various strategies which will promote the actual growth of the organisation. As all the information is already present in front of management, it leads to the interpretation of larger data set in a comparatively shorter period of time that helps the administration to make changes in the ongoing strategies to avoid the occurrence of various issues or problems that can hamper the progress of business (Jiang, Lepak, Hu and Baer, 2012)

2.4 Challenges faced in the implementation of HRIS

Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2011) focused on various challenges faced by HRM of the multiple companies in effectively implementing the HRIS. These challenges pose barriers to the users cooperation with the HRIS, along with the subsequent underestimation of the interest in change management. Along with that, there is a tendency to undervalue the complex structure of the HRIS that profoundly impacts the procedure and behaviour of the organisation. The primary challenge to the success of a HRIS is the inconsistency of the benefits associated with the HR information system. It explains the outcome and various difficulties regarding the sustenance of the HRM professionals commitment towards the project along with getting the necessary resources to develop or make the upgraded or new HRIS (Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2011).

Furthermore, in the light of challenges faced by organisations in implementing the HRIS, Bamberger, Biron and Meshoulam (2014) focused on the initial challenge that is of providing training to the HRM team and employees to get familiar with the tool or software. In order to overcome the challenge of providing training, the managers and employees should be indulged in the adaptation and implementation of the system or process as much as they can, and they should be given an optimum number of times to learn the software as soon as possible. A fast grasping of the process of the tool helps in earlier implementation of a HRIS, and even managers or employees can make other people learn about the mechanism by clearing their issues or doubts. After implementation the HRIS tool, it is a challenge for the HRM team to assess accuracy and quality of the data or information as information is only accurate at those points when the correct formulas are utilised to know the data, along with correct cross-references and constraints that are utilised to interpret the data. Therefore, those organisations that have never been familiar with the HRIS faced issues or difficulties regarding

knowledge of assessing the quality and accuracy of the information (Bamberger, Biron and Meshoulam, 2014).

In the viewpoint of Sezer et al (2013), the challenge of ensuring data security is one of the primary issues faced by the organisation in implementing new or existing software for the management of the activities in the organisation. In order to overcome the problem of security of the data that has multiple pieces of personal information of the employees, the solution is to assess the security of the new software before implementation. Organisations can ask the vendors regarding the security or safety of the data at rest and the data that is in transit. It will provide an understanding and knowledge to the management of data security that is in place in the system of the organisation. Apart from this initial step, organisations should also take necessary precautions to safeguard the password management and also make sure that only related parties are assessing the data to fetch the sensitive information of the employees (Sezer et al, 2013).

Jiang et al. (2012) explained the challenge of employee chain administration or management that highlights the additional or extra support that is required by the HR managers and employees after the implementation of HRIS software. Employees and managers face various issues for becoming handy with the software initially and to combat this issue, the organisation should support the managers and employees even after the training on the tool so that individuals can adapt to the utilisation of the new software or system regularly. The more the employees and managers use the tool, the more they will overcome the shortcomings they face in using the tool by asking the solution of various issues encountered while using the tool. The management of the organisation can clearly reflect the ways by which employees and managers can reach out for discussing the problem about the new changes (Jiang et al., 2012). Jiang et al (2012), further added that complying with all the legal requirements is also a significant challenge in front of the

organisation before using the HRIS as failing to know about the legal requirements regarding the process, structure and data can lead organisation to face charges or penalties that are suspected during the time of audits (Jiang et al., 2012).

2.5 Retail sector and the usage of HRIS

Kurnia, Choudrie, Alzougool and Mahbubur (2015) describe the retail industry as a vital part of the economy of any nation as it is a business structure that deals in selling commodities through the medium of physical stores or e-commerce platforms to the general public. The retail industry fulfils the demands or desires of people by an effective supply chain by selling desired commodities or services to society (Kurnia, Choudrie, Alzougool and Mahbubur, 2015). In the context of the retail sector, Jones, Kalmi and Kauhanen (2010) explained that the retail sector is divided into unorganised and organised retailing. The HRIS are essential in organising multiple activities of the organised and unorganised retail sectors, such as recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisals and maintaining employee discipline by providing them optimum compensation by way of giving incentives, rewards and recognition. The retail sector consists of various activities that require a higher number of skilled and unskilled employees. A large number of employees need an effective HRM team so that each activity of the employee can be monitored that eventually bring prosperity for the organisation. To manage a large number of employees and their corresponding data or information in the retail sector, there must be an effective use of HRIS for making the overall process or system easy and less hectic. The use of HRIS is of great importance to manage the activities of employees in the retail sector as automation of activities makes the system streamlined that is beneficial for the employee to manage their actions as well as for the organisation (Jones, Kalmi and Kauhanen, 2010).

2.6 HRIS and retail sectors of Canada

In the point of view of Haines III, Jalette and Larose (2010), retail sectors form a crucial part of the overall Canadian economy, and due to that, the effectiveness of the HRIS is essential for all the companies operating in the retail industry. The initial process of recruitment and selection of workforce for the retail sector in Canada is profoundly impacted by the overall HRIS as this online platform takes into consideration all the data and information about the recruitment procedure and the information submitted at the time of recruitment by the individual which is utilised for a long term during the course of retail business. This tool makes an entry of all the activities carried on by the workforce that helps in checking the data for further growth and development. The growth and development depend upon the training and development provided to the workforce whose entry is made in the tool and analysed for performance appraisals and maintaining order among the workforce of the retail industry in Canada (Haines III, Jalette, and Larose, 2010).

2.7 Summary

HRIS are vital for any industry to make sure optimum workforce management and to gain a competitive advantage in the market accordingly. The businesses or different industries should consider HRIS as an investment for future growth rather than an unnecessary cost. A high level of commitment is required by the top-level management along with the collaboration of HRM for the success of the HRIS so that undesired barriers can be removed.

2.8 Literature Gap

It has been observed that the information available pertaining to the impact of HRIS on organisations performance in Canada is very limited. Therefore, there is an extensive and sufficient scope on conducting research on the effect

of the HRIS with reference to the specified industry's performance in Canada. Even the online or offline retail sector is the future of all the economies, and effective research on the same will be highly beneficial.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTION

In HRM, the use of information technology is evident in recent years. The most common software that is used in the HR functions is the HRIS. The main function of HRIS in the organisation is to have the collection and storage of the data about the employees of an organisation. The HRIS encompasses a proper function for all related HRM functions including recruitment, performance management, training and development (Härtel and Fujimoto, 2014). The efficient functioning of all these HRM functions is vital for the maintenance of good organisational performance. In order to maintain organisational performance in a good way, it is vital for all organisations to have effective implementation of HRIS in order to maintain good organisational performance.

In order to have effective implementation of HRIS, the organisations need to make significant arrangements including infrastructural development, significant investment in the IT development, training and development of employees and proper coordination of all the employees in learning the working of HRIS (Pomffyova, 2018). With the help of all these arrangements, the organisations can meet the key objectives of the performance in a good way.

In order to maintain good organisational performance, it is vital for the retail sector of Canada to have a good implementation of HRIS in the HRM functions so that overall organisational performance can be enhanced to a good level. The current research study are also focused to investigate the impact of HRIS on organisational performance within the context to the retail sector.

3.1 Research Question

The main research question which has been developed for the research study is declared as below:

How HRIS influence the performance and efficacy of organisations operating within the retail sector of Canada?

3.2 Research Aim and Objectives

In the proposed study, desires to examine ways through which HRIS functions affect the efficiency and performance of the retail sector businesses of Canada. The research consideration in the aspect aims is to examine the various concept of HRIS and the implication of HRIS software in the HR department of the organisations. The study will also explore HRIS practices of the retail sector of Canada in detail and issues faced in HRIS implementation by Canadian retail firm. The objectives are as follows:

- To examine the significance of HRIS in the contemporary business landscape
- To explore HRIS practices of retail sector firms of Canada
- To analyse the impact of HRIS on organisational performance and effectiveness with specific reference to the retails sector of Canada
- To examine the challenges encountered in HRIS implementation in the retail industry of Canada

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In order to address a research question, the selection of a suitable method of data collection and proper procedure to select it is highly pivotal. This is aimed at the present chapter focusing on explaining the research philosophy, methods, data collection sources, sample and analysis technique, with proper justification of its suitability in the present study. The selection of the suitable research methods and approaches can be done with the help of Research Onion Model proposed by Saunter's. In the Sauder's Research Onion Model, there are provided different layers for the selection of the different research methodology components (Saunders, 2003). In this way, the detailed descriptions of the methods applied in the study to explore and examine the influence of HRIS on the performance and efficacy of organisations operating within the retail sector of Canada have been made in the chapter.

4.2 Research Philosophy

The research is based upon a strong philosophical stance shaped by the assumptions, beliefs and views on reality and knowledge that persist in the domain of the area of the research. The outermost layer of the research onion model defines the main alternatives of research philosophy that are available to the researcher for the selection of any of them (Saunders, 2003). These stances in research are mainly based on three key philosophies, namely interpretivism, positivism and pragmatism, wherein, the research has integrated interpretivism philosophy to ground the current research work on the robust philosophical base. The rationale of integrating the philosophy in the research is its assumptions of accessing reality are only possible through social construction that is shaped by shared meanings, language, instruments and consciousness (Kuada, 2012). Along with this, the philosophy provides

high validity to data collected via primary sources. Interpretivism research philosophy supports human interaction in the research work. The interpretivism research philosophy also fosters and supports data collection through qualitative research method. In the qualitative data collection, the research study is conducted with the aid of the semi-structured interview and hence the inclusion of the research interpretivism philosophy is justified within the present research study for the main purpose of directing the actual research work.

However, the philosophy has the limitation of subjective nature of the inquiry, lack of generalisability of findings and greater scope of researcher bias, but it is highly suitable in performing in-depth level of study of reality by supporting a subjective inquiry on HRIS and organisational performance, and providing multiple interpretations to reality (DePoy and Gitlin, 2013).

4.3 Research Method

In support of the chosen philosophical stance, the research study has employed the qualitative nature of the investigation to examine the impact on HRIS on the performance and efficacy of Canadian organisations. The method supports subjective and non-numerical investigation into the lived experience, beliefs and experience of human beings to provide comprehensive meaning to realities (Collis and Hussey, 2013). In the research, a wider range of the qualitative data are gathered via exploring lives experiences and the views of the required set of people associated with Canadian organisations (Flick, 2017). This helped in providing greater recording and insights into the significance of HRIS, its practices and its impact on the organisational performance in a subjective manner.

4.4 Data Collection Method

The research has focussed on performing a qualitative inquiry on the research topic, on performing which, a suitable selection of data collection sources is highly crucial. In this context, to examine the ways HRIS affects the efficiency and performance of retail organisations of Canada, primary and secondary, in the both the methods of the data collection are applied in the current research. Primary data has been collected in the research to gather real-world data and unexplored facts and points on HRIS and retail organisations performance, directly from a pertinent set of respondents. The choice of primary data collection method has been conducted with alignment of the innermost layer of Saunder's Onion Model. The innermost layer defines varied alternatives of data collection namely observation, interview and questionnaire (Saunders, 2003). The primary data has been collected in the research by integrating the semi-structured interview method. This is a suitable method for the research to obtain in-depth insight into the research topic, encourage open discussion, providing flexibility to research, a greater response rate and allow detailed questioning on the research topic (Oliver, 2010). Apart from primary data, secondary data has been procured in the study from academic books, credible websites and the latest journal articles concerning HRIS functioning and process in Canada (Flick, 2017).

4.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

In order to obtain data from the chosen primary sources, the research has integrated a suitable technique to select an optimal set of sample population from a large array of population elements. For selecting the sample, the research has integrated a non-probability sampling technique to select a precise set of samples. Under it, the use of purposive sampling technique has been applied in the research, which assists in selecting the actual sample population by the basis of the research aims and objectives, and on a selective

basis to determine a most accurate sample set from the wide set of the population (Olsen. 2011). Using the purposive sampling technique, 8 HR managers of different retail companies in Canada are selected to obtain specific data about HRIS functioning and process. The HR managers from four different retail sectors, including food, apparel, grocery, and drug have been selected for acquiring information about the process and functioning of HRIS. Two HR managers have been chosen from all the four retailer sectors in order to acquire detailed information about the problems faced by them and their access to HRIS within their respective organisations. In addition to this, the HR managers have selected those with a minimum of 4 years of extensive work experience as well as their familiarity and knowledge within the retail work setting of Canada. In order to reach HR professionals, I used LinkedIn and identified information about the companies and the email id of HR managers engaged in retail sectors and tried to connect with them. A detailed email has been sent to all the 8 HR professionals explaining the purpose of the study and their contribution required for the completion of the study. After getting the confirmation email from the HR department, another email has sent that details the information about the date and time of the interview. After receiving another confirmation email from HR, I was finally able to reach out and access the HR managers to acquire information about the HRIS process and their transformation in HRIS. This helps in selecting the most optimal set of HR managers to provide pertinent knowledge on the significance, impact and challenges faced by them in implementing HRIS in the organisation.

4.6 Data Analysis Technique

The collected data in the research using the semi-structured interview method is analysed further to draw crucial findings from it. This selection is highly pivotal to convert all the gathered data of interviewing the respondents into a meaningful set of information and findings, with respect to research findings. In the research, the interview data is analysed in the research using the

thematic analysis technique. Using it, a detailed identification, comprehension and synthesis of collected data have been made in the research for drawing useful findings (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). From it, proper coding, identification of common patterns and designing of themes from the collected data has been made in the context of the research aims and objectives. This helped in examining critically each response of the interviewee in the light of the research objectives and aims which has helped in addressing the research questions focusing on examining the influences of HRIS on the efficacy of organisations operating in the retail sector of Canada.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The whole research process and work are guided with a robust set of ethical norms or considerations, which provided crucial support in ensuring greater validity and reliability of research findings. In this context, the researcher has strictly abided all the activities around ensuring the anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of research respondents. For this purpose, the researcher has not asked any question revealing their personal identity, making any intrusion to their personal lives and ensure the protection of all the collected data in a password-protected file (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Along with this, the researcher has also ensured that the interviewees should not be harmed in any way, be it physical, psychological or emotional context. The secondary data is also collected and integrated into the research on strong ethical grounds. For this, a strict consideration over not making a misrepresentation of facts and findings, distrust of data and abidance to plagiarism practices have been made in the research (Collis and Hussey, 2013).

4.8 Summary

It is discussed in the research that to examine the ways HRIS functions affect the efficiency and performance of retail sector businesses of Canada, a

qualitative inquiry has been performed on the research topic. For performing it, the use of the semi-structured method and secondary sources has been made in the research. The interview is conducted with the 8 HR managers of different retail companies in Canada, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The collected data is analysed in the research using the thematic technique of data analysis, which helped in drawing pertinent information from the interviewees' responses.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Data analysis and discussion are critical elements of research as these sections contribute to the conversion of assembled unorganised data into an organised format so that the aims and key motives of the research can be rationally attained. Thus, the following chapter evaluates the interview responses under different themes to extract common patterns and draw relevant interpretations in alignment with the stated objectives of the research project. Following, analysis of the important findings, a discussion is presented to discuss the interview findings in relation to the literature so that authentic results can be obtained.

5.2 Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: Importance of HRIS for Retail Organisations functioning in the Contemporary Landscape

In order to learn about the growing significance of HRIS, specifically in the retail domain, the separate question has been included for the interview questionnaire for this theme. In this context, the Respondent “A” said that "I think HRIS are robust platforms that help retail entities to manage HR functions appropriately. With my experience, I can say that the consideration of HRIS assure that the up-to-date information concerning HR is stored in a single platform that permits a streamlined HR process." The Respondent “B” explained that "I feel HRIS permit small retail ventures to simplify the HR processes. Tasks such as leave management, performance appraisal, benefits administration and employee on-boarding can be completed swiftly which in turn enables employees to work with their full potential without bothering about these aspects thereby leading to high productivity."

The Respondent “C” outlined the similar aspect through mentioning that "I think increased productivity via the inclusion of HRIS in the management function not only simplifies the work of HR professionals but also saves cost. It is because efficient departments are capable of upholding work even with fewer staff members." The Respondent “E”, on the other side, mentioned that “With an HRIS, the complexities in monitoring compliance are resolved as HR employees just need to specify the applicable regulations, and then the platform assists them in monitoring compliance.” Therefore, it is assessed that easy access to updated data, escalated productivity and strengthened compliance are the key benefits associated with HRIS due to which they are supportive in the enhanced HR function of the contemporary retail businesses.

The Respondent “D” specified that “With an HRIS, it is easy to identify resources as identifying employees having requisite skills and training them for promotions to higher positions, thus limiting the recruitment responsibilities to less-skills workers only.” The Respondent “F” held a different opinion and stated that "An HRIS system certainly aids our company in managing training needs, thus enabling adequate completion of mandatory and optional training programs. It is because, for instance, a training program is available; the HRIS notifies that people can register for the same thus assisting our company in automatically managing the accomplishment of training requirements." The Respondent “G” said that “Our Company is gradually automating the HR function by integrating advanced technologies capable of supporting different tasks while also enhancing the overall efficacy. The adoption of HRIS is an important move which is allowing HR processes and activities to occur electronically through HR software.” The Respondent “H” concerning the same subject signified that “HRIS significantly improvise the efficiency when it supports the decision making in the HR department. It is different functions facilitate a supportive

background for our company by offering everything from talents and skilled employees to management training services, career progression opportunities and more.” Therefore, it is examined that HRIS offers multiple benefits to the retail industry that together aid in reducing complications and elongated processes associated with the administration of HR while also maximising efficacy, thus serving competency benefits.

Theme 2: Evaluation of the Prominent HRIS practices in the Retail Sector of Canada

In respect to this theme, the Respondent “A” stated that "The retail industry is the prominent contributor to GDP and employment in the economy and the management of HR has always been the priority for most of the retailers. Teamwork is the outstanding factor that is enabling our company in the effective enforcement of HRIS, and top management takes ownership of the implementation phase." The Respondent “B” opined that “The extensive use of information system has significantly impacted the way HRM is handled these days in the retail domain. It fostered the transformation of HR practices and processes within our company prominently the way of collecting data, storing it, using and sharing information.” The Respondent “C” asserted that “Our Company follows a very systematic process for the collecting, managing, storing, retrieving and the validating data which are required by the organisations about HR with the aid of integrated software.”

The Respondent “D” signified that “With HRIS, our team of HR practitioners keeps a consistent track record of all employees, and information regarding them. It is commonly pursued in a database or often through a sequence of inter-related databases, and in this way the information systems have triggered the efficacy of HRM via efficient recruitment methods, employee involvement, and organisational committed and enriched proficiency of HR managers.” The Respondent “E”, on the other hand, suggested that “For

optimising the worth of HRIS's, our company emphasises on consolidating human capital strategies and HRM dimensions to the most inclusive technological solutions." Thus, it is assessed that the majority of the retail sector businesses established in Canada are assuring effective leadership, teamwork and integration approach to make sure that the technological solutions immensely support advanced productivity levels, and accelerate organisational performance.

The Respondent "F" concerning the same theme mentioned that "HRIS in an entity needs to be designed in a way that the data stored in it can be deployed for numerous outputs, and our organisation considers this. Due to ranging uses of data, there is a need for developing a complete system to gather, process and flow of information." The Respondent "G" explained that "For generating valuable outputs, HRIS requires to make the important calculations, and format the information in a manner that can be easily understood. Thus, it is essential to remember that the most integral element of HRIS is data instead of the automatic of the process or the software or hardware in use." The Respondent "H" mentioned that "In our entity, individual employees are the end-users of different HRIS applications like benefit options, self-service, training and development, and career planning." Thus, it is interpreted that retailing organisations based in Canada make maximum use of HRIS by following unique practices such as the use of stored data for several outputs, consideration of vital calculation to build the worth of data and following a participative approach where even employee form the part of system's working.

Theme 3: Impact of HRIS on Organisational Performance and Effectiveness

The Respondent "A" perceived that "HRIS play a critical role in the contemporary retail world by assisting in the attainment of HRM

effectiveness and it is because it streamlines the management functions of the HR department." The Respondent "B" stated that "With HRIS, many retail entities have started electronically automating the administration processes to reduce the regular transaction requirement, and conventional HR activities while also dealing with the complex transformational ones." The Respondent "C" expressed a different viewpoint reflecting that "HRIS denotes the processes and systems at the intersection between information technology and HRM; in other words, it is an integrated database available for HR functions that offer a common language and the integration of interlinked activities to raise the effectiveness of HRM." The Respondent "D" explained that "HRIS, at the functional level, is capable of tracking applicants', employees', performance appraisal, contingent workers' conditions, recruitment, payroll and retention and with such system; organisations in the contemporary arena are becoming hugely dependent on HRIS for driving the efficiency of HRM."

The Respondent "E" concerning this prospect demonstrated that "I strongly believe that with the computerisation of HR information, HRIS have speeded up performance levels, and efficacy; however; still engagement of IT department, in planning and development phase is required." Respondent F specified that "HRIS have emerged as a catalyst for the important changes in the operations, structure and organisation's management which is because of their potential to improvise productivity, control costs and strengthen decision making." The Respondent "G" believed that "Merging of information technology with the HRM leads to boost the efficacy of HRM processes, and positively influences the staff interaction, thus promoting the contribution of talents." The Respondent "H" expressed that "In our company information supplied by HRIS is substantially helping to get the accurate information in appropriate quantity at the right time with the required flexibility."

Theme 4: Challenges encountered in HRIS implementation in the retail industry of Canada

A direct question has been asked from the interviewees with respect to the theme, wherein, different challenges are explored on gaining their insights. In this regard, The Respondent “A” said, “I think poor technical skills, lack of interest in learning new things and negative perception that the new technology would replace them are the key challenges.” The Respondent “E” also claimed that “In our retail organisation, employees do not show any interest in implementing new technology due to fear of replacement, probability of removal of freedom and complexity associated with advanced technology”. In contrast to this, lack of effective training is claimed as the key challenge in HRIS implementation by the Respondents “B”, “F” and “G”. In this context, the Respondent “B” opined “Employees may remain against the placement of any technology in their day-to-day process due to their non-familiarity with the functions and appearance of the new technology, and at floor-level lack of effective training raise this issue.” The Respondent “F” claimed that “In HRIS implementation, I have faced two main challenges, primary resistance to change and secondly high-cost involvement in providing training for making employees competent to utilise the systems.” The elaborated views are made by the Respondent “G” in this context, who opined that "Human factors are the key factors that cause challenges in the effective implementation of HRIS. These are concerned with lack of user adaptation, acceptance, poor support and ineffective training on the technical aspects." The views of all these respondents have revealed that fear of replacement, training costs, resistance to change, perception and complexity associated with advanced technology are examined as the key challenges in implementation.

In contrast to this, the Respondent “H” said “Non-acceptance of HRIS by the end users and poor organisational culture is the key challenging factors in the

implementation of HRIS. I feel herein; change management is the biggest challenge in the implementation at my retail organisation.” However, the Respondent “D” said, “Managing the tension between the requirement of adapting the practice, uncertainty and customising the new technology to integrate with the existing practices is the key challenges in HRIS implementation in our organisation.” In a comprehensive manner, the Respondent “C” claimed, "There is a wide range of technical challenges such as complexity and usability, and behavioural challenges, such as user values, perception, attitude and profiles, which affect the implementation of HRIS in our organisation." From the overall views of the respondents, it is interpreted that there is a wide range of technical, organisational and behavioural factors which create challenges in the effective implementation of HRIS in retail organisations of Canada.

5.3 Summary

The key findings indicate that HRIS have significantly transformed the HRM function in the retail industry of Canada. The integration of technological solutions in the HRM results in higher efficacy of HRM processes, and favourably influences the staff interaction via communication. Moreover, such systems have guaranteed the accuracy of information about HR, comprehensiveness of such information, flexibility and time management together leading to refined organisational performance. The usage of HRIS is enabling retail businesses to seek information that is capable of developing and raising efficacy while also assuring compliance with the established standards.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

In respect of the first objective focusing on the significance of HRIS in the contemporary business landscape, the examination of the interview findings highlights that the significance of HRIS is growing significantly in the retail sector. In this context, the interview findings emphasise that HRIS have emerged as a highly robust platform to help retail firms in managing the HR more efficiently through very organised and systematic management of the data relating to the HR and simplification of the HR process.

The findings also assert that HRIS facilitates and empowers the HR managers to be able to complete a wide range of tasks such as performance appraisal, leave management and administration more promptly and with higher efficiency, thereby enhancing the overall productivity and performance of the employees and organisational operations. These findings can be further supported by the findings of the literature review that explains that HRIS serves as a highly useful and reliable platform that helps in facilitating the organisation in processing, storing, managing and retrieving data, prevention of chances of duplication of work, which together leads to a reduction in costs and enhancement in performance efficiency (Kavanagh and Johnson, 2017). The effective management of data and information and highly synchronised management of the operations and functions also lead to a harmonious environment in the organisation, thereby leading to better work culture, higher transparency among different departments of the organisation (Thomas, 2008; Kavanagh and Johnson, 2017).

Moreover, the interview findings highlight HRIS not effective in enhancing and simplifying operational efficiency, but also in controlling the costs. It allows making a cogent allocation of resources and selection of employees with the most desired skills and abilities, who can be further trained for higher positions. This also limits the responsibilities of recruitment and enhances the

skill-set of the existing employees. The examination of these findings in light of the literature reveals that the automation of the HR processes thus attained through HRIS serves to be further effective in facilitating the organisation in having access to more skilled employees. It is also helpful in improved management training, opportunities for career development and increased empowerment of the employees, which together helps in maximising the performance of the organisation (Guest, 2011). It is also revealed from the literature that HRIS offers a range of tools that ease and systematise the HRM functions including the recruitment, training, developing reports on training and development, policies on leaves, compensation and payrolls and thus serves to be highly beneficial for the organisations (DeCenzo, Robbins and Verhulst, 2016; Jahan, 2014).

In the context of the second objective focusing the exploration of the HRIS practices followed by the retail companies in Canada, the interview findings reveal that the retail companies in Canada utilise HRIS to establish a systematic process for the collection, storage, management, retrieval and validation of data regarding the HR employed by the organisations. These functions are effectively undertaken with higher efficiency through the use of the HRIS software and associated tools.

The interview findings further emphasise on the decisive role of HRIS in maintaining the data related to HR and reveal that the retail companies in Canada save employee data in the form of database and even inter-related sequence of the database that serves to be highly useful in organising the information and making the HRM operations in the organisations more efficient. In these findings, it can be discussed within the context of the literature review, which supports these findings and explains that the effective utilisation of HRIS plays a vital role increasing the efficiency and potential of the HR in the retail companies. The literature asserts that in the unorganised, as well as organised retail sector in Canada, HRIS serves to be

useful in facilitating the processes such as recruitment, selection, training, development, employee discipline, performance appraisal and recognition (Haines III, Jalette, and Larose, 2010; Jones, Kalmi and Kauhanen, 2010). The proficient management of each of these functions helps the retail companies in meeting the demands of the market and the needs of the customers by ensuring effective management and systematisation of their internal organisational processes and operations (Kurnia, Choudrie, Alzougool and Mahbubur, 2015). Additionally, the interview findings also reveal that the application of HRIS has facilitated many retail organisations in Canada in undertaking the electronic automation of the administration process to minimise the requirement for regular transactions and the traditional HR activities while managing the complex ones. From the findings of the interview, it is also interpreted that at the functional level, HRIS serves to be highly beneficial in tracking the applicants, performance of the employees, working conditions of the employees, payroll, recruitment and retention. This efficiency of HRIS has motivated various organisations in the Canadian retail sector to explore the utility of HRIS to improve the function of HRM. In these findings, it can be further discussed within the context of prevailing literature, which acknowledges the significance of HRIS in supporting and improving the HRM practices in retail organisations. HRIS can be claimed to be largely beneficial in increasing the efficiency of the HRM mainly at the functional and operational levels (Saleem, 2012). There might be numerous benefits that can be gained by retail organisations by adopting HRIS at the functional and operational level processes of HRM than at the strategic level HRM processes. Some of these key benefits include efficiency in the operations because of a reduction in the staffing of employees for routine-based functional and administrative tasks of HRM, increased focus on employee management and motivation and improvement in employee retention (Silva and Lima, 2018).

It is further revealed from the interview findings that HRIS systems in Canadian retail companies are deployed for a range of tasks including generating valuable outputs, making necessary calculations, storing data, transforming the data into useful information and automating so many operations associated with the management of the HR. Various other applications of HRIS in the Canadian retail companies include recruitment planning, planning job roles and responsibilities and allocation of resources among the employees (Haines III, Jalette, and Larose, 2010). The overall findings suggest that the HRIS tools and systems thereby, play an important role by harmonising the key operations and management in the retail organisation from the top-level management to the lowest level of management that increase synchronisation and efficiency.

The third objective of this research sought to study the impact of HRIS on organisational performance and effectiveness with particular reference to the retail sector of Canada. In this context of the objective, the interview findings revealed that the HRIS played an highly critical roles within the management of HR in the retail companies in Canada because it helps in streamlining the function of management as required to be undertaken by the HR department. The retail companies in Canada incorporate HRIS systems and practices to automate the processing of administration reduce the requirement of regular transactions and gain higher efficiency and systematisation of the conventional HR activities while dealing with the complicated functions of HRM. A substantial majority of the respondents suggested that there is a highly positive impact of HRIS in increasing the speed of performance and the overall organisational efficiency of retail organisations. It has rather, emerged as a useful tool to introduce important changes in the organisational operations such as the structure and management of the retail organisation because it has immense potential to raise productivity, control costs and to improve the quality of decision making. The literature findings support these

findings of the primary data and highlight that proper utilisation of the HRIS plays a highly useful role in improving the quality and speed of communication among the individuals and HR managers. This serves to be beneficial in saving time through strategic and value-added planning and enhances the organisational operations (Jones, Kalmi and Kauhanen, 2010; Kaygusuz, Akgemci, and Yilmaz, 2016). The avoidance of the use of paper, manual means of communication and manual handling of recruitment and training processes, saves high cost, time and labour in the retail organisation and directly transcends into efficiency and improved performance (Noe, Hollenbeck, Wright and Gerhart, 2015; Aldmour et al., 2015).

The interview findings emphasise that the HRIS processes and systems act as an intersection between HRM functions and information and communication technology that helps integrating all the functions areas of an organisation ranging from management of data to the management of the employees and thus helps in increasing the operational and organisational efficiency. The literature emphasises that its capabilities in respect of the functions relating to performance appraisal of the employees, recruitment, retention and payroll systems and tracking the applications of the potential employees make the retail organisation more equipped and competent to deal with the challenges and risks of the contemporary business landscape (Noe, Hollenbeck, Wright and Gerhart, 2015).

The last objective focuses on the exploration of the challenges encountered by the retail companies in implementing HRIS. In this context, the findings of the interview reveal that lack of interest to explore and learn new approaches and practices, absence of adequate technical skills and negative perception regarding technology and chance restrict the potential the retail organisations in gaining maximum advantage from HRIS. A substantial number of retail companies from Canada revealed that there is a significant lack of interest among the employees to adopt new technology because of the

fear of loss of freedom, replacement, and loss of employment and even the assumed complexity of advanced technology. In addition to that, most employees are also reluctant to participate in the training and development programs organised by retail companies to help employees win over their fears of technology and enhance their capabilities.

This highlights, change management as a critical challenge regarding the implementation of HRIS in retail organisations. The non-familiarity of the employees with the technological functions and usage further aggravate this issue. Some retail companies also encounter issues related to the high cost of training and implementation of HRIS. Although, post-implementation to the cost of operations reduces, however, the implementation, operationalization and preparing the workforce with the right skill set to use HRIS involves a massive cost of investment and time. The existing literature on the challenges regarding the implementation of HRIS in retail organisations also support these findings and reveal that the primary difficulty in motivating the employees and management regarding the effectiveness and application of HRIS in their operations and job responsibilities (Arefin and Hosain, 2019; Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2011). The lack of enthusiasm from the employees and their reluctance towards the adoption of new technology can, therefore, be identified as the most pertinent challenge encountered by the retail companies.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The presented research project has primarily focussed on examining the influence of HRIS on the performance and efficiency of organisations operating in the retail industry of Canada. The qualitative enquiry has been undertaken to subjectively assess this area and the research has stressed attaining four objectives to fulfil the determined purpose systematically. In order to follow a structured approach for delivering the key findings, the conclusion chapter has been presented in the light of these objectives.

In relation to the first objective centred on gaining a proper understanding of the significance of HRIS in the contemporary landscape, it is identified that HRIS are effective platforms that offer a significant speed of processing, data processing and retrieval. It decreases the possibility of any kind of duplication or effort which eventually stimulates efficacy and reduces cost. Additionally, it is found that HRIS help in evaluating and re-evaluating data and information with enhanced segregation and assists in making effective decisions for HRM to benefit an entity as a whole. HRIS facilitate an optimum accuracy of extracted data or report as the software usually keeps the data intact for a considerable time. It is also discovered that HRIS upgrade the quality of generated reports with immediate response to the issue. Enriched culture and evoked transparency in the management of different parts of the system, which helps in developing a streamlined and organised work procedure. Furthermore, the automated management systems integrated with technology, help in self-management of employees as the systems enable them to check their work report and detect whether or not they are working as per defined standards. HRIS assures that updated information regarding HR is stored in a platform that allows streamlined HR processes. The systems

also resolve the complications in governing compliance as HR executives need to inform employees about the applicable regulations, and then the platforms aids in administering compliance.

Further, concerning the second objective that intends to explore the HRIS practices of the retail sector entities in Canada, it is discovered that the initial recruitment and selection process of the workforce in the retail industry is profoundly influenced by HRIS. It is because this online platform considers every information and data related to the recruitment procedures and the information supplied by the individuals is stored for a longer duration thereby aiding robust functioning of the retail businesses as per market dynamics. Teamwork and adequate administration by the top management are the dominant factors enabling the rigorous functioning of HRIS. Systematic processes are followed by the retail entities to assemble, store, manage, retrieve and validate data demanded by organisations regarding HR with integrated software. Consolidation of human capital strategies and HRM dimensions is a common practice followed by the retail ventures of Canada for finding inclusive technological solutions with the aid of HRIS.

The third objective intends to assess the implications of HRIS on organisational performance and effectiveness. In this regard, it is discovered that HRIS play a pivotal role in the contemporary retail segment by supporting the effectiveness of HRM functions by streamlining the management functions of the HR department. With HRIS many retail firms of Canada have started electronically automating the management procedures to control the regular transaction requirement, as well as conventional HR practices while also addressing cumbersome transformational ones. HRIS's works as an integrated database for HR functions and offers a common language while also integrating the interdependent activities for promoting the effectiveness of HRM. Further, it is identified that HRIS at functional level enables proper tracking of applicants; performance appraisal; contingent

workers conditions; payroll and retention. All such tracking systems are enabling retail firms of Canada to become more efficient with exclusive dependency on HRIS. It is deduced that HRIS have also escalated the performance levels, and efficiency; however, to maximise benefits, more engagement of the IT department in the planning and development phase is essential. The findings also portray that HRIS act as catalysts for the vital changes in the structure, operations and management that are induced by their potential to stimulate productivity, reduce costs and improvise decision making. Integrating information technology with HRM fosters efficacy of the different HRM methods and processes, and favourably impacts the staff interaction, thereby raising the contribution of talents to organisational success. The findings also depict that information extended by HRIS is significantly supporting the retrieval of accurate information in optimum quantity at the right point with requisite flexibility.

The fourth research objective centres on recognising challenge encountered by the retail firms of Canada in enforcing HRIS. Concerning this objective, it is inferred that the foremost challenges obstructing the success of HRIS included inconsistent benefits. It is difficult for the HRM practitioners to entirely shift towards technology-based solutions as this requires technical expertise and major transformation from the traditional HRM functioning structure. In addition to this, it is examined that limited inclination of HR managers and executives towards learning new things and negative perspective about new technology are also dominant issues hindering optimal use of HRIS by the retail domain of Canada.

Employees are commonly against the adoption of new technology as they feel it might interfere with their freedom, and staff members at floor-level do not possess the required skills and proficiency. Human factors have been discovered as the leading factors creating challenges in the effective placement of HRIS. These are connected with limited user adaptation, lacking

acceptance, inadequate support and ineffective training sessions. Overall, it is interpreted that even though certain challenges are limiting the adoption of HRIS among the retail firms of Canada, substantial benefits offered by such systems in terms of multiplying productivity; accelerating performance and speeding up organisation growth establish the need of increasing adoption rate.

7.2 Recommendations (CIPD Requirement for MAHRM)

It has been found that the HRIS is highly effective for enhancing the operational performance of the organisations in the retail sector by advancing the work of the HRM team (Jahan, 2014). Therefore, the presented recommendations are on the basis of further advancement that can be achieved by the organisations while using the HR information tool.

Following set of recommendations can assist proper and streamlined implementation of HRIS in the retail business entities of Canada:

- The organisations operating in the retail sector in Canada should use the HRM tool for enhancing the satisfaction level of the workers as the system can be used to administer workers' survey related to the level of satisfaction they persist with the organisation. The results could be tracked by the higher authorities so that the workers' voices could be heard, and changes can be made accordingly (Gorla, Somers and Wong, 2010).
- Configuring HRIS with the processes and policies of a company can be helpful in the appropriate incorporation of such systems. In this relation, it is vital for the HR professionals to review specific workflows and policies concerning payroll, training and pay hikes, for instance. Following the reviews of these aspects, it is essential to identify how the system needs to work and assure that HRIS is capable of accommodating the pattern in which business runs in the present. Interfacing the data with related systems and transforming the historical data into a novel system can also provide needful assistance. This will need organisational preparation and may require employees to perform certain roles in different ways. Training sessions need to be developed and imparted accordingly. At times, it is advantageous to roll out the systems to a small group for testing purposes; gather feedback on the same, and accordingly pursue modifications, if required. Another strategy for linking HRIS with the prevalent systems is to form teams to deal with the

ranging activities of HRIS such as payroll and alike. Usually, HR team members recognise that original data is not updated and this is a good indication that up-to-date employee data must be procured (Kavanagh and Johnson, 2017).

- HRIS could also be utilised for rewards and recognitions that would make workers feel appreciated and valued while being a part of the organisation. It is because of being capable of checking out their respective request and information by utilising self-service mode available in the HR information tool that makes workers feel valued and empowered. Decreasing the level of time for submitting a request, viewing payroll data or information, receiving schedules and performing various other related functions might also eliminate some frustration among the workers and enhance the overall satisfaction of the workers (Al Mamun and Islam, 2016).

- It is important for the HR professionals to prepare for the system in advance, and such planning must entail budgeting capital and time for implementation, training and interactions. It is because substantial time, efforts, and money need to be invested while planning the implementation of HRIS. During such a process, a significant number of problems and stress can emerge as a lot of changes are required before, during and following the system's implementation. This might require the construction of a communication plan and coordinated working among teams for administering potential changes. It is also believed that organisations could record the higher HR planning efficiency and effectiveness when HRIS combines with the information systems strategy and the HR strategy (Johnson Lukaszewski and Stone, 2016). Thus, integration of business functions with the functions of HRIS is an important consideration to pave the way towards effective implementation.

- Further, another recommendation for organisations in the retail sector is that by using HR information tool, the organisation could set up an effective level

of communication among different people as well as departments. It is because when there are social connectivity and messaging options available in the HR information software, employees in the retail sector can better communicate among each other (Kumar and Parumasur, 2013).

- Additionally, it has been recommended that the organisation can use the data and information using HR information tool for making various strategic decisions for the progress and growth of the organisations in the retail sector. Evaluating various functions could make it possible to check the reference data or information from numerous areas of HR. These available options could support employees and managers to detect patterns that could be useful in multiple planning and decision making stances. The HRIS provides real-time data and information so that effective decision and planning could be carried on, especially for enhancing the revenue of the retail sector (Kumar and Parumasur, 2013).

CIPD REQUIREMENTS FOR MAHRM

A. Implications of Findings

The research project has exclusively emphasised on understanding the influences of HRIS on the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of retail organisations working in Canada. This has provided a precise yet accurate overview of the phenomenon concerning the retail industry only that too with respect to one setting. In the future, scholars can pursue extended research by focussing on a review of HRIS in any two industries, or of any industry in two countries. Such comparative assessment will facilitate a wider view over the topic area, thus building the scope of research, and driving theoretical and practical implications. Furthermore, the presented project has relied on qualitative investigation only to explore the research context, which although provided a detailed description of the topic area, but also limited, accurate measurements. In this regard, in the future, aspiring scholars in the similar or related subjects can undertake mixed methods to comprehensively investigate the advantages extended by HRIS, common challenges in their implementation, and possible solutions for the same. With mixed methodology, apart from the interview, a survey can be envisaged as the data collection instrument to acquire data at a large scale, thereby gaining true representativeness of the sample base.

B. Timelines for Implementation of Recommendations

For this research work, 2 prime recommendations have been given. In this regard, the first recommendation is to employ different efforts to configure HRIS with the processes and policies of the organization. In this regard, there is a need for having proper auditing of the existing workflow and operational systems followed within the organization. This will be a crucial task which will take at least 7-8 weeks to analyse all the systems and operational framework of the company which can be aligned with the HRIS. The second recommendation mentioned in the research work is to undertake a deducted system planning and preparation before implementing the system in operation. For this purpose, there is a need for a long and dedicated planning process, which will include meetings and coordination with the concerning team members. For this work, a timeline of 15 days will be taken into consideration in the research task.

C. Costing Associated with the Recommendations

The first recommendation for the research work will be a high cost occurring activity in which there is a need of having detailed auditing of the work process, which would undertake different activities such as recording of the tasks, analysis of the trends, data collection and analysis. For this purpose, there is a need to train people which will call for additional operational costs. In addition to this, data storage and compilation will also take costs. In order to implement the second recommendation, there is no need of employing heavy costs as this recommendation is merely based on planning and coordination. The major cost occurring area in this recommendation would be the meetings, communication and training of the staff.

D. Personal Learning Statement

The undertaking of this project has proved a great learning experience for me. I undertook this research with the help of deep exploration and research on the subject matter. For the data collection purpose, I used the interview technique of the data collection that proved supportive to have the collection of the qualitative data. In this research study, I could also use the survey method, but for the survey, purpose contacting with a larger sample size was not possible. This was a learning experience for me as it helped me to enhance my knowledge related to HRIS. I also gained improvement in my reading and writing skills. I learned greatly about the academic writing process. With the help of this project, I also learnt about referencing style and guidance. My time management skills were also enhanced with this project because I had to manage a larger number of research activities in different contexts. Overall, the accomplishment of this project was helpful for me to improvise my theoretical subject knowledge as well as my practical knowledge about my skills, efficiencies and quality aspects.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire

Participant Information

Age:

Gender:

Designation:

The questionnaire aims at gathering your perspectives and opinion regarding the ways through which HRIS functions affect the efficiency and performance of retail sector businesses of Canada. In light of this aim, this research aims at examining the concept of HRIS and the implication of HRIS software in the HR department of the organisations. In respect to this interview questionnaire, I assure you that your responses during this interview will be solely used for addressing the aims and objectives of the current research. I also assure you that the confidentiality of your responses and your privacy will be my prime concern and hence, it will be strictly maintained throughout the research. I request you to please feel free to share your opinions as per your experience and perspectives regarding the use of HRIS.

Questions

Question 1: Does your organisation integrate technology in the HRM function? If yes, are you aware of the concept of HRIS?

Question 2: In your viewpoint, why are HRIS crucial for retail organisations operating in the contemporary business landscape?

Question 3: What are the prominent HRIS practices followed by your company? Please explain in detail.

Question 4: In your opinion, how HRIS practices are impacting organisational performance and effectiveness?

Question 5: According to you, which are the common challenges experienced by your organisation in the implementation process of HRIS?

Appendix B: Codes for the Respondents

Respondents	Codes for the Respondents
HR Manager-1	The Respondent "A"
HR Manager-2	The Respondent "B"
HR Manager-3	The Respondent "C"
HR Manager-4	The Respondent "D"
HR Manager-5	The Respondent "E"
HR Manager-6	The Respondent "F"
HR Manager-7	The Respondent "G"
HR Manager-8	The Respondent "H"

Appendix C: Research Proposal

Research Proposal Title: A Qualitative Investigation on the Impact of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) on Organisation Performance in Retail Sector of Canada

Research Question

How HRIS influences the performance and efficacy of organisations operating within the retail sector of Canada?

Research Aim and Objectives

The proposed study aims to examine ways through which HRIS functions affect the efficiency and performance of retail sector businesses of Canada. The study will also explore HRIS practices of the retail sector of Canada in detail and issues faced in HRIS implementation by Canadian retail firm. The objectives are as follows:

- To examine the significance of HRIS in the contemporary business landscape
- To explore HRIS practices of retail sector firms of Canada
- To analyse the impact of HRIS on organisational performance and effectiveness with specific reference to the retail sector of Canada
- To examine the challenges encountered in HRIS implementation in the retail industry of Canada

Proposed Methodology

Primary data will be collected by interviewing 8 HR managers of different retail companies in Canada to gather specific data about HRIS functioning and process. In addition, the secondary data will be procured from academic books and the latest journal articles.

Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, the research topic will be introduced, and the background of the study will be provided. In addition, the research rationale will be elaborated. Research question, aim and objectives will be explained in the first chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Credible and relevant literary sources related to HRIS will be reviewed.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research methods applied for data collection will be described in detail.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion

Interview results and literature findings will be analysed and presented.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

Final concluding remarks will be provided with respect to objectives.