TRAINING, MOTIVATION AND LEADERSHIP IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: THE CASE OF CONSTRUCTION FIRMS OF IRAN

by

AMIN AKHAVAN TABASSI

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
HR	Human resource
MPO	Management and Planning Organization
TVTO	Technical Vocational Training Organization
DV	Dependent Variable
IV	Independent Variable
Sig.	Significant Value

LATIHAN, MOTIVASI DAN KEPIMPINAN DALAM AMALAN PEMBANGUNAN SUMBER MANUSIA: KES FIRMA BINAAN DI IRAN

ABSTRAK

Sistem pembangunan sumber manusia yang mantap merupakan satu strategi yang kritis bagi syarikat pembinaan, kerana dalam tahun-tahun yang akan datang, modal insan memainkan peranan yang signifikan untuk sesebuah pertubuhan yang berjaya. Kajian lepas telah menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan tenaga kerja di Iran tidak berkemahiran dan pembinaan bermutu rendah juga dapat dilihat dalam projek-projek di Negara berkenaan. Oleh kerana itu, berdasarkan gabungan kajian karya dan tinjauan soal selidik, kajian ini meninjau kesan latihan, motivasi dan kepimpinan dalam amalan Pembangunan Sumber Manusia (HRD) ke atas kerja berpasukan dan kecekapan tugas dalam firma pembinaan di Iran. Pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif yang memerlukan penyediaan dan pengedaran tinjauan soal selidik dan temu bual telah diguna pakai. Kajian ini telah dilaksanakan dengan mengirimkan 220 set borang soal selidik kepada firma-firma kontraktor yang terpilih di Iran. Selepas jangka masa tiga bulan sebanyak 107 set (48.6%) borang soalselidik telah di kembalikan. Kaedah analisis dalam penyelidikan ini ialah bersifat kajian korelasi. Kajian ini mendapati, bahawa penyiasatan yang digunakan bersifat kajian korelasi. Kajian ini mendapati, bahawa penambahbaikan kerja berkumpulan dan kecekapan tugas mempunyai perhubungan yang kuat dengan latihan dan motivasi dalam amalan HRD. Tambahan lagi, amalan kepimpinan juga mempunyai kesan yang kuat untuk

memberi motivasi kepada pekerja-pekerja untuk mendapakan latihan, dan oleh itu, menyebabkan prestasi bertambah baik dalam syarikat-syarikat yang menjadi responden. Di samping itu, penemuan juga mendapati orientasi tugas yang tinggi dan orientasi perhubungan juga tinggi dalam gaya kepimpinan firma-firma responden.

TRAINING, MOTIVATION AND LEADERSHIP IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: THE CASE OF CONSTRUCTION FIRMS OF IRAN

ABSTRACT

A powerful human resource development system is a critical strategy for construction companies, as in the coming years, human capital plays a significant role in order to be a successful organization. The previous research of the authors revealed that most of the construction workforces in Iran were unskilled and low quality of construction were also observed in the projects of the country. Therefore, based on a combination of literature research and questionnaire surveys, the study explores the effect of training, motivation and leadership in HRD practices on teamwork improvement and task efficiency in construction firms of Iran. A quantitative research approach was adopted requiring the development and dissemination of a questionnaire survey and interview. The research was conducted by sending 220 sets of questionnaires to the nominated contractor firms in Iran. After period of three months, 107 sets (48.6%) of surveys were returned. The analysis methods in this research were mainly descriptive and regression analysis and the type of investigation was co-relational study. The research found that teamwork improvement and task efficiency had a strong relationship with training and motivation in HRD practices. In addition, the leadership practices had also strong effects on motivating employees for training and therefore, caused better performances in the respondents' companies. Also, the leadership style of the leaders

as well as their transformational leadership qualities were assessed through the research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A powerful human resource development (HRD) system is the most valuable asset of organizations of this century, where an enterprise's productivity is closely linked with its human resource managerial and developmental systems (Chen et al., 2003). Accordingly, human capital plays a significant role in order to success an organization. Therefore, people with high skills and expertises increase their chances of being at work; and organizations that are committed for learning their employees are more successful too (Wilson, 1999). According to Buyens et al. (2001), human resources (HR) are becoming the most important asset of an organization if they are adequately nurtured, educated, and developed. The importance of involving HR in development, planning and implementation of competency-based strategies has been emphasized by several researchers (Beatty and Schneier, 1997; Chen et al., 2003). On the other hand, the dynamic external environments within which many businesses currently operate require that they develop a capacity for training and learning faster than competitors, to find solutions to novel and complex problems and to enhance the quantity of what they do through effective leadership, training, and motivation methods (Garavan et al., 2002). Therefore, the main core threads of this research are methods of leadership, training and motivation in HRD practices.

1.2 Training, Motivation and Leadership in HRD Practices

HRD can be conceptualized as all those activities that seek to facilitate all forms of learning and development at all levels within organizations. Accordingly, the training of extension personnel contributes directly to the development of human resources within extension organizations. Training programs are directed towards maintaining and improving current job performance (Stoner and Freeman, 1992, p. 388). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that "HRD" is a term created (by academics) to differentiate strategic and business-oriented learning and development activities from old-style training and development. The critical surveys, analyses and developments of HRD theory have been mostly limited in the past two decades. According to Simmonds and Pedersen (2006), two approaches developed to HRD practices. Firstly, the British researchers have emphasised on learning and development patterns, which focused on strengthened training and development issues (Garavan et al., 1999; McGoldrick et al., 2002). Secondly, the American researchers put more emphasis on performance outcomes and employees development in order to enhance and improve organisational performance outcomes (Swanson and Holton, 2001; Sally, 2004). Much of the American approaches emerged through organisational development theory and there has been an emphasis on coaching, mentoring and leadership development (DeSimone et al., 2002; Simmonds and Pedersen, 2006).

This research is evaluating the execution of training, motivation and methods of leadership in HRD practices as well as the performance of the respondents' companies. Therefore, the definitions of HRD, which were presented by different researchers, are discussed and the most comprehensive terms and explanations are applied for this research.

Effective training is vital aspect of developing HRs. It is one of the most important strategies for organizations to help employees gain proper knowledge and skills needed to meet the environmental challenges (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990; Rosow and Zager, 1988). Thus, researchers have focused on exploring ways to increase the effectiveness of training. Accordingly, one critical determinant of training effectiveness that was emphasized by researchers is trainees' level of training motivation (Mathieu et al., 1993; Mathieu and Martineau, 1997; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992). In a training context, motivation can influence the willingness of an employee to attend the training programme (Maurer and Tarulli, 1994; Noe and Wilk, 1993), to exert energy toward the programme (Ryman and Biersner, 1975), and to transfer what they learn in the programme onto the job (Baldwin and Ford, 1988). Thus, it is likely that trainees cannot reap the full benefits of training without considering training motivation. Several studies showed an association between training motivation and training effectiveness (Noe and Wilk, 1993; Facteau et al., 1995; Mathieu et al., 1992; Quiñones, 1997). Some studies also suggested that motivation played a more determinant role than other individual factors concerning training performance (Tai, 2006). Also, Cheng and Ho (2001) reviewed studies conducted in the past decade and concluded that training motivation influences trainees' training performance and transfer outcomes. It seems as though, motivating the employee is one of the essential roles of a leader. And there is a question that what does it means to be a leader? According to Daft (2005), it means loving what you do and motivating others with energy and enthusiasm. It means developing an inspiring vision and creating an environment where employees have the ability, the freedom, and the motivation to accomplish remarkable results. Leaders should be able to give directions, aligning the workforce and motivating people in times of

changes and difficulties (Kotter, 1990). Furthermore, leadership is a topic of active research and a major concern of HRD.

Leadership and its styles research has taken different perspectives, leader traits, behaviours and the influence of situational characteristics on leader effectiveness, for example, have all been studied. In some views, there are two basic categories of leadership transactional and transformational. In the past 20 years, transformational and charismatic leadership approaches have gained in popularity (Jeroen and Deanne, 2007). The distinction between transactional and transformational leadership was first made by Downton (1973, as cited in Barnett, et al., 2001), but the idea gained little propagation until Burns (1978) work on political leaders was published. Transactional leaders focus on the present and excel at keeping the organization running smoothly and efficiently. They are good at traditional management functions such as planning and budgeting and generally focus on the impersonal aspects of job performance. Transactional leaders are influential because it is in the best interest of subordinates to do what the leader wants (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987 cited in Barbuto, 2000). As its name implies, transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms individuals. It is concerned with values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. Transformational leadership involves assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs and treating them as full human beings. On the other hand, situational leadership emphasizes that the leader should find out his subordinates' needs and then adapt his style accordingly. Leaders cannot use a single style in their leading; they must be ready and have a willingness to change their style in order to meet the situational requirements. Situational leadership identifies that employees perform

differently when doing different activities; likewise, they may act differently during different stages of the same task.

According to Brooks and Brooks (2005), one of the basic issues in today's organizations is that leaders must communicate, persuade, and inspire their subordinates. People want leaders with innate ability for managing them on teams and motivating to perform the tasks. Employee motivation affects efficiency and so part of a leader's job is to channel subordinates' motivation toward the accomplishment of the organization's vision and goals. Therefore, high employee motivation and high organizational performance and profits go hand in hand.

1.3 HRD in Construction Organizations

Construction sector is considered a dynamic and complex industry (Druker et al., 1996; Wild, 2002; Loosemore et al., 2003). It is based on projects that usually custom-built to client specifications (Bresnen, 1990; Loosemore et al., 2003). In addition, the final product of the industry is mainly non-transportable and must be assembled at a point of use (Bresnen, 1990; Fellows et al. 2002). These characteristics require construction companies to put more emphasis on the employees' development paradigm as well as the application of helpful leadership practices. On the other hand, many researchers such as Langford et al. (1995), Debrah and Ofori (1997) and Loosemore et al. (2003) state that the external sources of workforces are very common in the industry. Therefore, it has made project co-ordination more complex, with a highly requirement of skilled and experienced

management. Despite these challenging characteristics of the industry employment practices, literature on HRD within large construction organisations is scarce and much of the evidence relies on data gathered over a decade ago (Langford et al., 1995; Hancock et al., 1996; Druker et al., 1996). Furthermore, having a system of HRD in line with appropriate leadership practices are seemed vital components for every construction companies. Therefore, this research aims to find proper methods and styles of leadership that can be applied by the industry as well as appropriate training and motivation factors for developing human resources. In fact, the firms' success or failure should have the relationship on how they organize the HRD practices in various environments. How training, motivation and leadership as parts of HRD will affect prosperity of construction firms in Iran has become the question that need to be addressed.

1.4 Statement of Problems

Iran, being located in the active Alpine-Himalayan seismic belt, as one of the most active tectonic regions of the world, is an earthquake prone country that has experienced more than 130 strong earthquakes with a magnitude of seven or more in past centuries (Ghafory-Ashtiany and Eslami, 1997; Mehrabian et al., 2005; Tabassi and Abu Bakar, 2009). Just in the last decades, around 25 huge earthquakes have killed more than 170,000 people, destroyed many towns and thousands of villages, and caused extensive economic damage. Without doubt Iran will continue to be hit with powerful earthquakes in the future. According to Table 1.1, earthquakes in Iran have shown the seismicity of Iran as well as its vulnerability to earthquakes in the

last few decades. In most of these earthquakes, generally the malfunction of structures, which for the most part were inconsistent with the level of earthquake hazard, caused human and economic losses (Ghafory-Ashtiany, and Eslami, 1997; Mehrabian et al., 2005).

Considering the significance of these issues, one's mind might be occupied by the question of why many buildings were destroyed during these past earthquakes in Iran. Some of the destruction is said to be due to inefficient design and lack of standard materials (Ghafory-Ashtiany, and Eslami, 1997; Berberian and Yeats, 1999; Allamehzadeh and Mokhtari, 2003), while many of the buildings with standard materials and proper design were destroyed during the earthquakes because of low quality of construction (Berberian, 2004; Mehrabian and Haldar, 2005; Tabassi and Abu Bakar, 2009). This places blame on the lack of skilled labour in construction projects. However, most of the research conducted after each earthquake concentrated on the lack of proper design and materials (Eshghi and Zare, 2003), and little attention was given to unskilled workers in construction sectors. Accordingly, in most of these earthquakes, generally the low quality of construction and lack of skilled workers caused human and economic losses (Ghafory-Ashtiany, and Eslami, 1997; Mehrabian et al., 2005; Tabassi and Abu Bakar, 2009). Therefore, it seems human resources, particularly in the area of skilled labour, play a crucial role in quality of construction projects

For more than forty years, editorials have been written, speeches delivered, reports and books published, funds granted, rules, regulations and laws promulgated on the subject of earthquakes and their risks, and foreign helps were funnelled into the

country after occurrences of large-magnitude earthquakes. Despite these, the country still cannot minimize the death tolls and financial losses of earthquakes. On the other hand, the report of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of Iran indicates the useful life of building in Iran is about 20-30 years, whereas, it is estimated about 80-100 years in the matter of developed countries (Tabassi and Abu Bakar, 2009). Therefore, the low quality of construction projects in Iran is a vital flaw that should be overcame.

No.	DATE	Magnitude (Richter scale)	Location	No. of Dead
1.	07/02/1957	7.4	Northern of Iran	2,000
2.	12/13/1957	7.3	Hamadan and Kermanshah	2,000
3.	09/01/1962	6.9	Buin-Zahra, Qazvin	12,225
4.	08/31/1968	7.3	Khorasan	12,000 - 20,000
5.	04/10/1972	7.1	Southern Iran	5,054
6.	11/24/1976	7.3	Northwestern Iran	5,000
7.	03/21/1977	6.9	Bandar Abbas	167
8.	06/07/1977	6.5	Isfahan province	352
9.	12/21/1977	6.2	Zarand in Kerman Province	521
10.	09/16/1978	7.8	Tabas	25,000
11.	1980	5.6	Ghaen	1,500
12.	06/11/1981	6.9	Golbaf (Kerman Province)	3,000
13.	07/28/1981	7.3	Kerman Province	1,300
14.	03/141989	5.4	Golbaf (Kerman Province)	5
15.	06/20/1990	7.4	Rasht-Qazvin-Zanjan- Rudbar-Manjil	40,000 -50,000
16.	06/21/1990	5.8	Lowshan-Manjil	20
17.	02/04/1997	6.5	Bojnoord	100
18.	02/28/1997	6.1	Northwestern Iran	1,567
19.	05/10/1997	7.1	Ghaen-Birjand	1700
20.	06/22/2002	6.5	Western Iran	261
21.	12/26/2003	6.6	Bam	31,000-43,000
22.	2/ 22/2005	6.4	Central Iran, Zarand	612
23.	01/31/2006	6.1	Darb_e_Astaneh (Western Iran)	66
Total people approximately killed during above stated earthquakes				**175,450**
Total people left homeless following above stated earthquakes				**750,000**
Total estimated damages				**several billion USD**

Table 1.1 – A brief history of huge earthquakes of Iran from 1957
Source Tabassi and Abu Bakar, 2009

On the other hand, from 1978 to 2003 after the Tabass, Ghaen, Golbaf, Manjil, etc earthquakes, the damaged cities and villages were reconstructed with different policies and engineering designs (Allamehzadeh and Mokhtari, 2003; Walker et al., 2003; Eshghi and Zare, 2003). However, in the two cases of Golbaf and Ghaen-Birjand, the re-occurrence of earthquakes in March 1989 and May 1997 respectively, was a factual test and engineering appraisal of these reconstructions. The tests showed different responses. In case of Ghaen and Birjand, after the earthquake on May 1997, the majority of the ductile moment resisting concrete frame with masonry infill housing units and schools were totally destroyed due to magnitude 6.6 earthquake and created sorrowful scenes. Unskilled workforces were seen as one of the main reasons of the tragedy (Ghafory-Ashtiany and Eslami, 1997; Tabassi, 1998; Allamehzadeh and Mokhtari, 2003). In some cases, adobe and masonry buildings had less damage than the "so called" engineering buildings. In the case of Ghaen not only these buildings but steel and reinforce concrete structures that were supposed to be constructed according to the seismic code of Iran, were destroyed or highly damaged. According to Ghafory-Ashtiyany (1999), in his research, the reconstruction of Ghaen after1980 earthquake was a failure and was the key reason of large number of casualties during the earthquake of 1997.

In the case of Golbaf (500km west of Ghaen) the experience was totally different. All of the rebuilt constructions after 1981 earthquake extant with minor damages in the March 1989 earthquake. The damages involved in adobe and masonry buildings and some exterior walls outside the living units. Regarding to the sound reconstruction in Golbaf, 3,000 deaths in 1981 were reduced to five people in 1989 earthquake, considering that the earthquake happened at night and most people were at homes.

According to Ghafory-Ashtiany (1999) the design of reconstructed units in both cases of Golbaf and Ghaen was similar and done by the MHUD of the country. The differences were due to skill workforces, supervision and quality controls (Amini Hosseini et al., 2004; Tabassi, 1998; Ghafory-Ashtiany and Eslami, 1997).

In another study, Tabassi and Bakar (2009) evaluate the percentage of different types of labour in construction projects per day in Iran. The results indicated that skilled labour formed only 20 percent of Mashhad construction workforces. In contrast, 50 percent of the labour were unskilled and 20 percent were semi-skilled. This implies that most of workers involved in the construction projects of Mashhad were unskilled (Tabassi and Abu Bakar, 2009). It is mentionable that, the skilled workforce is one who is capable of working independently and efficiently and turning out accurate working. He must be capable of working on his job perfectly. Also, he should obtain the certificate of fitness of occupation from Technical Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) of Iran. Semi-skilled worker is one who has knowledge of the particular work but he can not work perfectly. He is in crucial needs of training courses in order to acquire more skills and experiences to perform better tasks with fewer problems. Unskilled workforce is one who possesses no special training and experiences in his work but he involves the performance of the critical duties such as welding, steel working, etc. Accordingly, the previous research revealed that if, for instance, ten steel workers were employed in a project, two of them has enough skilled and experience to perform their jobs with out sufficient problems and damages to the quality of works. In contrast, five of them had not enough experiences and familiarity with steel works; but they employed to this activities

with a lot of problems and low quality of works. Besides, the rest of steel workers were semi-skilled with moderate level of acquaintance with this work.

Mashhad is the second largest city in Iran in terms of population, area and construction projects. It is also located in the area with the highest risk of earthquakes (Seismic Design Code for Buildings, Standard 2800). Accordingly, 92.2% of the projects, which were investigated in that research, faced with damages due to unskilled labour and just 7.8% did not encounter any damage despite those shortfalls. Also, the study revealed that sort of damages to the construction projects in Mashhad were of low quality in construction, delays and increased prices of the project or extra costs. Also, it was revealed that unskilled workers and low quality of construction projects were vital struggles for construction companies in Mashhad (Tabassi and Abu Bakar, 2009).

All the above statements indicate that HRD practices can play an important role on increasing the quality of construction projects in Iran. Therefore, this research attempts to evaluate methods and processes of training and motivating of construction workers and find effective leadership style in HRD practices for construction companies in Iran.

1.5 Research Questions

In relation to the previous sections, the following questions could be revealed by the current research:

1. Do the construction firms in Iran implement HRD practices in order to improve their performances?

2. If it is implemented in general, are the training, motivation and leadership practices be part of their HRD planning?

2.1 Do employees' training and motivation practices have any relation with teamwork improvement?

2.2 Do employees' training and motivation practices have any relation with companies' task efficiency?

2.3 Is there any relationship between leadership components and motivation of employees for following training practices in construction firms of Iran?

3. What is the most adopted leadership style for construction companies of Iran?

1.6 Objectives of the Research

This research is mainly study of the training, motivation and leadership aspects of HRD in construction firms in Iran. That is to say, this research aims to find out the effect of leadership practices on relationship between motivating employees for training and companies' training policies on one side and evaluate their relationship with companies' performances in order of teamwork improvement and task efficiency on the other side. Accordingly, the followings are shaping the objectives of the research.

1. To find out the implementation of HRD practices on construction companies of Iran;

2. To reveal the application of training, motivation and leadership practices as part of HRD planning by the respondents' companies;

3. To evaluate the relationship of employees' training and development practices with teamwork improvement in construction firms of Iran;

4. To evaluate the relationship of employees' training and development practices with task efficiency in construction firms of Iran;

5. To evaluate the relationship between leadership components in leaders' behaviour and motivating the employees for following the training polices of the companies; and

6. To assess the leadership style that mostly applied by the leaders of construction companies of Iran.

In order to achieve these objectives, the research is conducting through construction companies of Iran. Besides, the related literatures are reviewed in order to understand fundamental parameters and investigations in training, motivation and leadership in HRD practices as a whole and particularly in construction industry. These involve different social sciences, such as theories of training, motivation theories, management and leadership styles and its theories and construction industry science and its environmental factors in HRD practices.

The literature review facilitates the identification of relevant factors and/or variables which contribute to the existing relational effects, from leadership, employee motivation for training, effective training methods and performance. Subsequently, some models are constructed to depict initially the reasonable causalities among

leadership styles, employees' motivation for training, training policies and performance of the companies.

The research results may help researchers to interpret and construe the complicated leadership behavioural phenomena and its styles for the purpose of motivating employees for effective training within the contractor firms in Iran. The research sets out the following: (1) literature review; (2) variables' identification; (3) development of research questions; (4) models' assessment; (5) results interpretations and (6) discussions, conclusion and recommendations for future research.

1.7 Scope of the Research

The scopes of the research are as follows:

1. The area of this study is limited to Iran construction companies, which are registered as contractor firms with Grade One and Two in Management and Planning Organization (MPO) of the country (see Chapter Three).
2. This study is focusing on the idea "Training, Motivation and leadership in HRD practices: A case of Construction Firms of Iran" as the basic topic for this research.
3. The primary data are collected through questionnaires mainly by postal and E-mailing to the selective groups of respondents (the personnel who has direct role in managing the construction e.g. company managers, project managers, general managers, etc).

4. The conducted sample surveys are not to be considered as a specific case in depth but to capture the main characteristic imposed to the qualification level are working experiences of the respondents.

5. As mentioned earlier, construction firms, which are to be the objects of this study, are those that registered in the MPO of Iran. Since the country has a large extent and the companies dispersed in different geographical locations, the study tries to send most of the questionnaires to the largest states of Iran in order of number of construction firms that registered there such as Tehran, Khorasan, Isfahan, Azarbayejan, Fars and Khozestan provinces.

1.8 Research Process

The research process consists of several components; including research planning, research implementation, research interpretation and writing/revision (Figure 1.1). A majority of time was devoted to the planning stage. At this stage the objectives were developed, variables were defined, concepts were explored and a hierarchy of tasks created. This was also the stage that a preliminary literature review was conducted to provide an overview of current and previous research on the topic. The literature review then was used to redevelop the research questions as well as the objectives. One way of thinking about the phases of the research process is with reference to the so-called research framework. The framework suggests that the research is contained different steps that are conducted in a timeframe. The most common entry point is some form of empirical observation. In other words, the researcher selects a topic

from the infinite array of possible topics. Therefore, the research is conducted according to the presented framework in Figure 1.1.

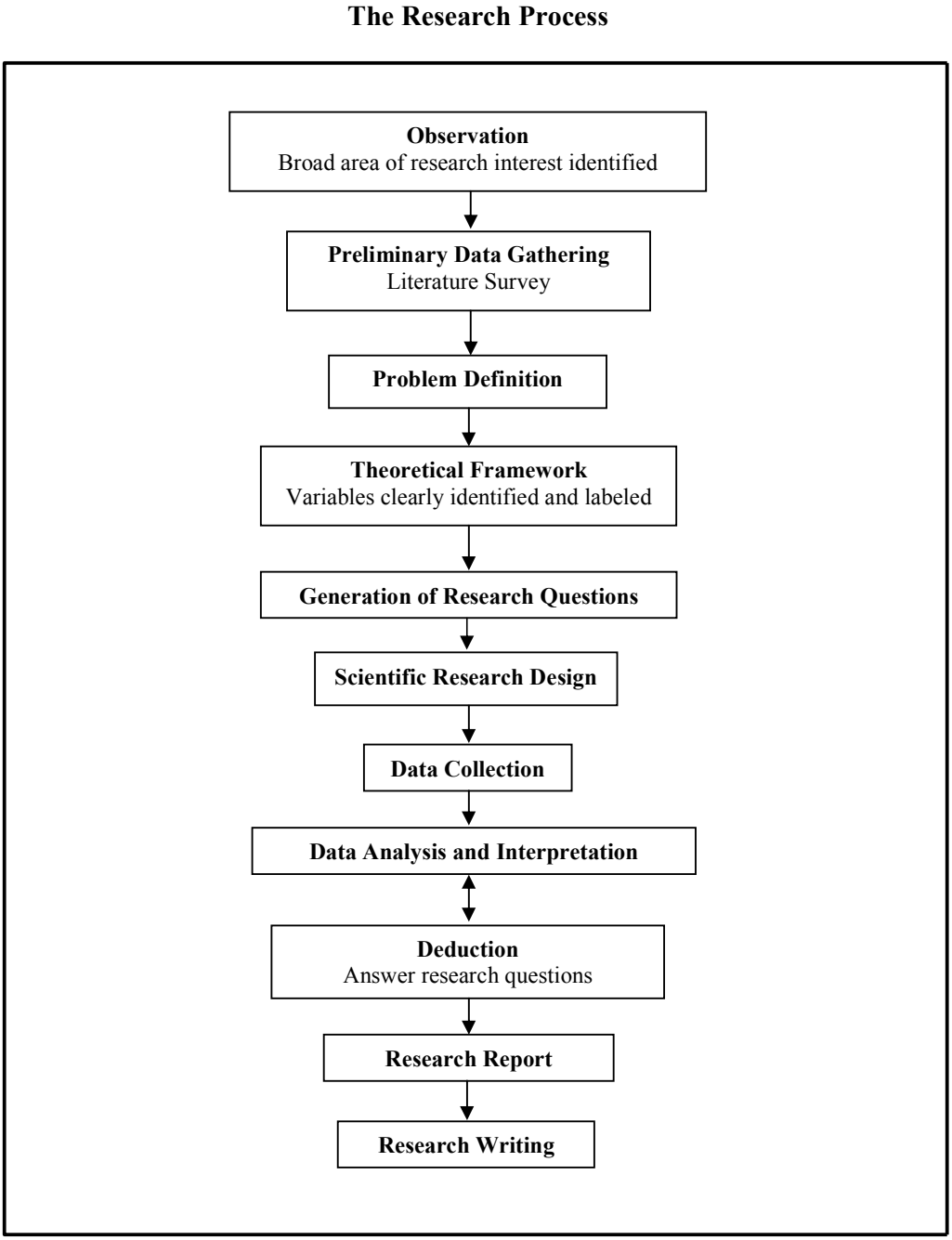

Figure 1.1- Research process for the current study

1.9 Research Methodology

The research methodology consists of two main aspects of literature review and research analysis to gather all information and pertinent feedback about the motivation, training and leadership processes in HRD practices utilization and improving performance in Iran construction companies. Because the large number of companies which are chosen for the research (see Chapter Three), and difficulties of face to face interviewing, a quantitative research approach of developing and disseminating a questionnaire survey is used. In addition, a questionnaire survey utilizes due to the population of this research being too difficult to be quantified, as the main targeted respondents would include all personnel who have direct managerial experiences in their companies.

The research is conducted through structured questionnaires which are sending to particular "qualified" respondents. As stated before, respondents are approached through their companies and firms, which are registered in MPO of Iran as Grade One and Two. The research chooses these groups of respondents as qualified because of their direct participation in construction projects. The survey is conducted by sending 220 sets of questionnaires to groups of respondents by postal mail for approximately three months period. After all the primary data are collected and processed, this data are analyzed according to the appropriate analysis methods. The analysis methods in this research are mainly descriptive and regressions analysis and the type of investigation is co-relational study. Analysis of the survey makes use of SPSS software (more discussions are conducted through Chapter Three of the study).

Research Methodology

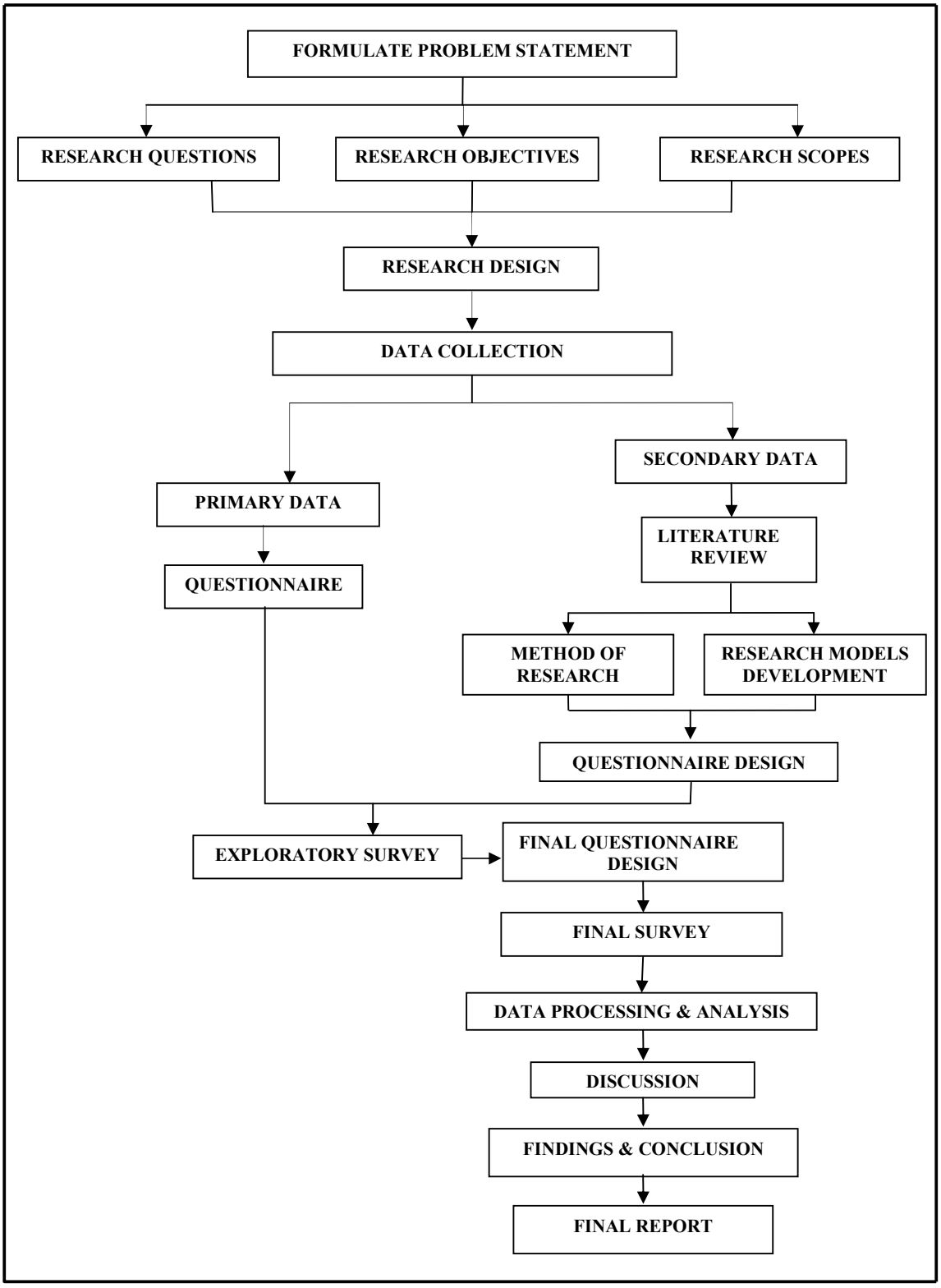

Figure 1.2- Research methodology of the study

1.10 Thesis Organization

This introductory chapter is followed by a literature review in Chapter Two that defines those key factors to training, motivation and leadership in HRD practices. All key factors are identified and discussed separately in the way they affect each other. HRD and leadership approaches in construction industry are also discussed in Chapter Two. Chapter Three narrates the methodology used in this study. The process used to acquire and analyze the data is presented in this chapter. The information is acquired from two main sources, the literature review and from surveys, respectively. The population sampled in the survey is that of top grade contractor companies in Iran. These surveys were used to verify the validity and effectiveness in implementation of the key factors defined in the literature review. Analyses on the findings of the data acquired from the surveys are presented in Chapter Four. Each key factor herein is addressed in the way it affects teamwork improvement and task efficiency, employee motivation for training and leadership. Finally, Chapter Five is the last chapter where discussions on the findings of the research, summary of the study along with recommendations and conclusion established are presented. Guides for future research are also provided in this chapter and denoting those items in need of special attention when conducting similar studies.

1.11 Limitation in Data Collection Process

In the process of data collection, there are certain limitations to this research and are highlighted as follows:

The approach of the study in this research is based on a structured questionnaire survey which is carried out based on postal and E-mailing questionnaires. Therefore, the feedbacks from the respondents provide the sole dependable source of results in supporting the research findings. Data collections for the entire local construction projects are very much help in verifying the feedback from the structural survey. If the information does not properly fill up by the respondents' firms because of lack of knowledge, experiences, incompetent position in the firm and miss judgment of the questioner form, thus some of the collected information does not follow the research target. In this case, those questionnaires are omitted from the survey or make more explanation to those respondents and want them to fill up the questionnaire again.

Since some of these problems become the limitation of collecting data activities, the actions to anticipate those problems are contrived. The questions that are given to the respondents are clear and easy to understand, in order to reduce the misunderstanding of the questions. A well scheduled time table is necessary for data collection through questionnaire is also anticipated the possibility delay. In addition, data limited to Iran construction industry only, may not applicable to other countries. More researches are needed to see how true the findings of this research to other countries.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Having a mighty human resource development (HRD) organization is the most worthwhile asset of companies, and an enterprise's fruitfulness is closely related to human resource's managerial and developmental systems (Chen et al., 2003). In the coming years, human capital will play an impressive role in order to success an organization. Consequently, people with high skills and expertise increase their chances of being at work (Wilson, 1999). Thus, successful companies or organizations will be those that are able to engage, educate and retain highly skilled employees. In order to do so, organizations must be able to match what the employee wants with what the employer is willing to give. Developing a learning environment is, therefore, essential to the future of HRD.

Human resources (HRs) can create values for an enterprise by finding ways to improve workforce managements that have a positive impact on performance. Since HR has a significant influence on the overall management system, it is well positioned to create substantial benefits. Nowadays, it is a common belief in both the business and the academic world that the HRs of an organisation can be a source of competitive advantage. In addition, the policies for managing people are integrated with strategic business planning and organisational culture (Beer et al., 1985). According to Buyens et al. (2001), HRs are becoming the most important asset of an

organization if they are adequately nurtured, educated and developed. The importance of involving HR in development, planning, and implementation of competency-based strategies has been emphasized by researchers (Beatty and Schneier, 1997; Chen et al., 2003).

HRs of an organization are now being recognized as a significant competitive advantage and one of the hidden forces behind growth, profits and lasting value of the firm (Pfeffer, 1994). In addition, the dynamic external environments within which many businesses currently operate requires that they develop a capacity for training and learning faster than competitors, to find solutions to novel and complex problems and to enhance the quantity of what they do through effective leadership, training and motivation methods (Garavan et al., 2002). Therefore, the main core threads of this research are methods of leadership, training and motivation in HRD practices.

2.2 Human Resource Development

Since the term of "human resource development" arrived, it has used in many various fields of studies. This has guided to a great deal of perplexity with different individuals, organizations and practitioners. The term of HRD has been applied to widely varying activities. For instance, Nadler and Nadler in 1989 defined the term of HRD as "managed learning experiences provided by the employer, in a specified period for the purpose of improving and increasing job performance and providing growth for individuals". Garavan et al. (1995) in their article indicate that American

Society for Training and Development (1990) asserted that HRD includes training and development, organization development and career development. Also, Garavan (1991) defines it as the strategic management of training development and management professional education interventions aimed at facilitating the achievement of organizational goals, while at the same time ensuring the full utilization of the knowledge and skills of employees.

HRD, as an academic discipline, is defined as the development of learning including knowledge and expertise and the enhancement of performance. It considers a multi-level concept in that it focuses on individual, team and organization issues. As a discipline, it relies on theories that describe the process of learning and theories of organizational learning and changes. However, HRD is still considered with formless and permeable boundaries (Garavan and Morley, 2006)

The number of critical surveys, analyses and developments of HRD theory has been limited in the past two decades. Since the inception of the term HRD emerged (attributed to Leonard Nadler in the early 1970s), two approaches developed to HRD (Simmonds and Pedersen, 2006). On one side of the Atlantic, the British researchers have followed a learning and development paradigm, which concentrated on strengthened training and development issues (Garavan et al., 1999; McGoldrick et al., 2002). On the other side, the American researchers emphasized performance outcomes paradigms which concentrated on developing employees to enhance and improve organisational performance outcomes (Swanson and Holton, 2001; Sally, 2004). Much of the American approaches emerged through organisational development theory and there has been an emphasis on coaching, mentoring, and

leadership development (DeSimone et al., 2002; Simmonds and Pedersen, 2006). Though earlier definitions of the term HRD stressed individual rather than organisational learning (Nadler and Nadler, 1970), by the early 1990s, HRD observed as a much broader notion based on organisational performance and capability in the US literature (Swanson and Holton, 2001; Sally, 2004). In the late 1980s, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) (http://www.astd.org) defined HRD as a process of enhancing the ability of the HR through development, and a process of adding value to individuals, teams or an organisation as a human system (McLagan, 1989 cited in Wan, 2007). In this definition, HRD is concerned with the capacities of individuals not only with their work skills but also with the benefit that the overall organisation derived from development.

Accordingly, the US literature is strongly biased towards performance in HRD definitions (Lengrick-Hall and Lengrick-Hall, 1988). Sally (2004), synthesizing US definitions, posits that HRD is a process concerned with developing human expertise for the purposes of improving performance. A minority of US contributors (Swanson and Holton, 2001) and the generality of European academics focus on learning as the primary purpose of HRD (Kilcourse, 1996; Garavan et al, 2000). Some UK commentators, however, focus on performance (Kerr and McDougall, 1999). The learning perspective asserts that HRD as a field of study and practice is responsible for fostering the long term, work-related learning capacity at an individual, group and organisational level. The learning school tends to explain the role of HRD, as one concerned with the enhancement of an individual's capacity to learn. Therefore, the two core threads of HRD are individual and organizational learning and