In Taiwan, human resource development (HRD) is defined as the systematic education, training, and development employers provide for their employees as well as organizational development for corporations. A history of HRD development indicates that in the 1960s, the government began to implement planning measures for HRD in business and industry; in 1972, the Vocational Training Funding Regulation acknowledged enterprise responsibility for workforce training; and in 1983, the Vocational Training Act specified that vocational training referred to both preservice and inservice training. Large enterprises tend to be more concerned about HRD than small and medium-sized businesses. However, there is a shortage of training professionals and there is not a high level of interest in or satisfaction among policymakers, employers, and employees. Small and medium-sized enterprises tend to hold a positive attitude toward training but are restricted by their inherent limitations. HRD must confront such external and internal influences as the following: internationalization of HRD; aging of the population; rising proportion of women; employee evaluation emphasizing personality, accountability, competency, and interpersonal relations; and changes in working content and style. Enterprise and HRD specialists must apply continuous efforts in these areas: setting up a comprehensive HRD system; drawing up an HRD policy for businesses; and strengthening training for HRD professionals. (YLB)
An Introduction to Human Resource Development

in Taiwan, R.O.C.

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March 1998
In the Republic of China on Taiwan, the most important aspects of workforce training consist of schooling education, public training and enterprise training. The areas of Human Resource Development (HRD) covered by this booklet are mainly concerned with in-business education and training. That is, HRD is defined the systematic education, training and development which employers provide for their employees to promote career development for employees and organizational development for corporations. This booklet is divided into three sections, covering the historical development and current status of HRD, as well as its future outlook.

I. HISTORY

Under the guidance of its government, Taiwan began the transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial one in the 1950s, when the greater part of the workforce moved from farming to manufacturing. At that time, manpower was only assessed from the point of view of satisfying the demand for human resources, and quality was largely overlooked.

It was in the 1960s that the government began to implement concrete planning measures for HRD in business and industry, although at the time the concern was mainly with public training of entry-level skilled-workers. As far as linking HRD with public training was concerned, there was still little encouragement or incentive to do so.
In 1972, the "Vocational Training Funding Regulation" formally acknowledged enterprise responsibility for the training of the workforce. The enactment of this regulation led to the creation of a number of business management consulting firms which planned training programs, compiled training budgets and provided a number of other related services. Although the regulation was revoked in 1975 as a result of the oil crisis, enterprise was already gradually accustoming itself to the concept of personnel training.

The "Vocational Training Act" was introduced in 1983. More reasonable and flexible than the "Vocational Training Funding Regulation," it specified that "vocational training" referred to orientation for people not yet in employment as well as in-service training for those who were. HRD activities in business also fell within the scope of this act. A new provision "Promoting Industry Regulation", introduced in 1990, allowed that expenditure on personnel training could result in business tax deductions for enterprises.
II. CURRENT STATUS

Human resource development in large-scale enterprises is vastly different from that in small and medium-sized businesses. Therefore, the two subjects will be discussed separately, as follows:

A. HRD in large-scale enterprises

Numerically, large enterprises comprise only a small proportion of companies in Taiwan but account for about half of total production. Compared with small and medium-sized enterprises, they generally offer greater resources, better working conditions, more job security and better opportunities for advancement. In consequence, the effectiveness of HRD tends to be more obvious. Dr. Chian-Chong Jean's survey made in 1993 of the state of HRD in 1,000 large-scale enterprises yielded the following findings:

1. Most large enterprises conduct some sort of HRD activities, and more than half had organized training departments.
2. The majority of personnel in charge of training departments are male.
3. Currently, training is concentrated mainly in three areas: in-service specialized training, orientation for new employees, and leadership training for potential heads. The last of these, leadership training, will become the main focus in the next three years, followed by in-service training and orientation, in that order.

4. As regards training instructors, most businesses rely on a combination of inside management and professional personnel as well as experts brought in from outside, with the last being more commonly used.

5. In the past, the difficulties that businesses faced in training employees were, in order of importance, as follows: a lack of enthusiasm among employees, a lack of qualified training personnel and insufficient support from policy-makers. Nowadays, the emphasis has shifted, with the lack of training professionals being the main problem, followed by unenthusiastic employees, and the lack of support from policy-makers in third place. This sequence is likely to remain unchanged for the next three years.

6. In general, business policy-makers, along with the majority of employers and employees, are neither exceptionally concerned about nor greatly satisfied with the current state of training.
B. HRD in small and medium-sized enterprises

The majority of firms in Taiwan are either small or medium-sized. These enterprises have traditionally played a key role, providing a great many job opportunities, and are expected to continue to do so. However, the main problem with small and medium-sized businesses has always been the limitations on both research and development and opportunities for advancement. Dr. Chian-Chong Jean's survey conducted in 1993 on the HRD situation among such enterprises in Taiwan yielded the following findings:

1. Most firms did not have organized training activities. The main reasons for this were a perceived lack of necessity, a lack of personnel to conduct training and a lack of funds.

2. Very few small and medium-sized businesses have a training department. In cases where one exists, it is usually part of the personnel department, and the head in charge is invariably male.

3. The most important element of training is orientation for new employees, followed by safety and hygiene training and then in-service specialized training. In the future, in-service specialized training is expected to become the most important, followed by orientation of new employees and leadership training for potential heads.
4. Instructors involved in the leadership training for potential heads are mostly provided by management consulting firms, with other types of training activities usually taught by insiders.

5. Previously, the greatest difficulty facing training was a lack of enthusiasm among the employees. Currently, the chief problem is the lack of know-how in training methodology. In the future, the high turnover rate of employees will be faced.

6. In general, both small and medium-sized enterprises tend to hold a positive attitude towards training; those in charge are quite supportive of training activities, although they are not, on the whole, very satisfied with the effectiveness. High employee turnover rates make them less keen to conduct formal training. As with large enterprises, interest in and satisfaction with training among both employers and employees is inclined to be low.
Several factors are having a drastic influence on small and medium-sized enterprises in Taiwan. Changing international economic and political trends, the rapid development of technology and the status of cross-strait relations all mean that such enterprises can no longer operate according to past rules. Indeed, only by adjusting their organizational structure, raising technical levels, improving quality and adopting new technologies will they be able to remain competitive. At the present time, HRD is growing in importance, with the result that small and medium-sized enterprises are placing a greater emphasis on personnel training than in the past.

To sum up, in Taiwan large enterprises tend to be more concerned about HRD. However, there is a shortage of training professionals, and there is not a high level of interest in or satisfaction with training among policymakers, employers and employees. Small and medium-sized enterprises are still restricted by their inherent limitations, but there is a widespread and concerted effort to break free of them.
III. OUTLOOK

As far as the future is concerned, HRD in enterprises in Taiwan will have to confront the following internal and external influences, and will have to overcome powerful challenges in order to ensure further progress.

A. External factors

1. Global economic change will result in the increasing internationalization of HRD.

2. Due to the direction of cross-strait relations and related policies, there will be a need for greater awareness of the personnel requirements of the businesses which Taiwanese citizens who invest in mainland China.

3. The promotion of the Asia-Pacific Regional Operations Center (APROC) plan and the concept of Taiwan as a technological island have created a need to advance the development and training of personnel for high-tech and service industries.

4. With the increasing numbers of highly-educated people, a greater level of connection and cooperation with schooling education will be desirable.

5. The aging of the population means there will be a need for further training opportunities for older workers.

6. The proportion of women in employment is continuing to rise, and so the training of female personnel will require increased attention.
B. Internal Factors

1. Due to organizational changes and the restructuring of enterprises, HRD will have far-reaching effects on operations.

2. In the past, businesses evaluated their employees on the basis of their loyalty, but this is being replaced by an emphasis on personality, accountability, competency and interpersonal relations.

3. The widespread implementation of total quality management techniques has led to the tendency for employees to become more involved in their work and more concerned about satisfying their clients.

4. Improvements in information technology has led to changes in working contents and styles.

Both enterprise and HRD specialists will have to be aware of the above trends, and must apply continuous efforts in the following areas:

1. Establishing awareness of HRD and setting up a comprehensive HRD system.

2. Drawing up a HRD policy for businesses.

3. Making good use of every aspect of available training resources, and establishing the right atmosphere of learning within organizations.
4. Strengthening training for HRD professionals.

5. Placing emphasis on promoting various HRD measures.

6. Conducting long-term research study with a view to improving HRD in Taiwan's enterprises.

Appendix:

The Department of Industrial Technology Education, National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) offers HRD programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Its web site is http://www.ite.ntnu.edu.tw.
I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: An Introduction to Human Resource Development in Taiwan, R.O.C.

Author(s): Lung-Sheng Lee & Ya-Yan Chen

Corporate Source: National Taiwan Normal University

Publication Date: March 1998

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