

# Human Resource Development: The Way of Working in the Digital Age of Thailand

Bangorn Benjathikul<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bangkok Thonburi University, Thailand

## ABSTRACT

The research on Human Resource Development: The Way of Working in the Digital Age of Thailand is the qualitative research. The in-depth interview was made with 12 key informants who had passed the purposive selection from the government administrators in the policy level and the executives in the private sector involving in the human resource development. They have good knowledge and relevance in this matter using in-depth interview. The research result reveal that the corporate culture which is the core value in the digital age includes social responsibility with the emphasis on sustainable development from CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) values towards CSV (Creating Shared Value). Learning in the digital age can be made by developing the potential of life. Learning appropriately in the digital age is learning through social media. Technological competence is the ability to learn skills that are relevant to the transformation of Automation or the AI Environment. The skill required in the future is the Intuition which arises from the accumulation of experience used to make decisions when having to encounter the complex and uncertain conditions. The need for self-improvement can be made by training and learning to increase the ability to use information technology with more quality. The limitless self-learning style can fully be done anytime and anywhere from online courses.

## Keywords

Human Resource Development, Way of Working in the Digital Age of Thailand

## Introduction

The transformation of Thailand into digital disruption has made digital technology a tool to support work in the economic system, production process, trade, services, and social processes. This includes the interpersonal interaction to be both an opportunity and a challenge to make the most of digital technology in transforming work to use computers in a more advanced way. It can facilitate working to be more conveniently, quickly, accurately, and save time. It is a sudden change that causes the traditional working style to cease such as the use of robots to do repetitive work instead of human workers, film-based photography that is replaced by the use of digital camera to record images as data immediately, making the devices have the ability to make personal decisions using artificial intelligence (Office of the Royal Society, Committee for the Preparation of Lexicons in Computing and Information Technology, 2019).

The digital disruption has implications for human resource development in Thailand as a result of economic restructuring in line with innovation-driven economy or "Value-Based Economy". The digital infrastructure is a very dynamic or rapidly changing economy. For the characteristics of human resources in this era, people must not only have basic knowledge but they also need to be emotionally intelligent and get along well with others. They must be able to accept different opinion, be creative and pursue learning throughout life. The organizations need to adapt by focusing on the development of human resource skills to be able to learn and coexist with new technologies. Learning more about how to live and work with technology can integrate knowledge and skills to match new technology and see what technology is lacking or cannot do to develop the skills in such matters (Sang Woo Kim, 2014). Human resources in this era do not depend on quantity. It depends on the ability of communication, creativity, collaboration, and adaptability / Transformation. These are the "Soft Skills" as the basis of the digital age in the borderless world.

It makes "human resources in the digital age" of Thailand be able to live and work with one another across the region and around the world with differences in nationality, ethnicity, religion, culture, beliefs, etc. There is a smooth flow of work, trade and services" (Randa Grob Zakhary, 2014).

As the government aims to lead Thailand towards stability, prosperity and sustainability due to global change, Thailand has to adjust the economic structure to "economy driven by innovation". This includes the change in the structure of the labor market and the economic context that has changed. As a result, human resource development in the digital disruption era needs to be adjusted accordingly. The development of personnel to have skills, knowledge and expertise to keep up with technology is not easy. It requires high investment and changes in the concept of human resource development to enable the organization to grow in a new context in a strong, efficient, stable and sustainable manner. This should exist along with the awareness of the use of innovation to improve and develop the quality of personnel in various organizations. The knowledge, capabilities and skills of human resources should be in line with the needs of the labor market. In order to increase the competitiveness of the country, the government therefore has a policy of reforming Thailand towards "Thailand 4.0" aiming at creating an innovative economy to be able to cope with the changing opportunities, risks and threats in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The aim is to transform Thailand into a country in the first world. Thailand has to face changes in economic, social and cultural structures as well as affecting the livelihoods and work, occupation of citizens and stakeholders (Office of the Official Information Board, 2017).

## Research objectives

1. To study the approaches of human resource development: the way of working in the digital age of Thailand.

2. To study the appropriate forms of human resource development: the way of working in the digital age of Thailand.

### Research methodology

**Group of key informants:** This is the qualitative research using the method of finding the in-depth data with the weight and reliability from the informants. They were selected with the purposive selection from 12 government administrators in the policy level and the executives in the private sector involving in the human resource development. They have good knowledge and relevance in this area. The In-depth interview was used to obtain important information for this study.

**Research instrument:** The research instrument is the structured interview. The researcher reviewed the literature and related researches based on the research objectives to use as an approach for creating an interview.

**Data collection:** In this study, the researcher collected data by face to face method using the in-depth interview and structured interview with the key informants.

**Data verification:** For checking the accuracy of information, the data triangulation method was applied to seek the reliability of data from different sources (Supang Chantawanich, 2004). The researcher employed the Triangulation method by doing the followings; 1) Data: 1.1 Document aspects: Using the same data collection from different sources, 1.2 Personnel: Using the data collection on the same topic from several persons, 2) Theory: Using the studied theory as a tool to investigate, and 3) Researcher: Using the data which the researcher had studied.

**Data analysis:** Data analysis consists of 3 steps; data reduction, data display, and drawing of conclusion (Miles and Huberman, 1987). The details are as follows. 1) Data Reduction is using the data obtained from transcripts and notes to be read several times in order to understand the overview of the obtained data. The critical issues are considered and interpreted using the typological analysis by extracting relevant important texts or sentences from the interview point. 2) Data Display: After the data reduction based on the interview, the researcher presented the data in a descriptive manner with the order of issues following the research's objectives. 3) Conclusion is drawn by synthesizing the data gained from the interview to analyze and link to the consistency or difference. This creates an Analytic Induction from sub-conclusions to big conclusions. The relationship between variables and results was demonstrated. 4) The data was analyzed using the descriptive method.

### Research results

The significant **corporate culture** in the digital age includes social responsibility with the emphasis on sustainable development from CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) values towards CSV (Creating Shared Value). The awareness is raised on the value to be responsible for the society, life, environment, and nature to be integrated in the business operation from the upstream to the downstream. This is consistent with the key informants stating;

*"... Values in creating human resources to have knowledge and to develop the potential to be higher are important for driving the vision, mission and strategy to be successful in business operation by promoting good people and smart people..."*

*"...The principles of good governance in working in a transparent manner must be adhered to be auditable with the willingness to cooperate and create work as a team full of capability of communication technology, creativity, and innovation for the works..."*

**Seeking knowledge in the digital age** is for developing the potential of life and learning to create oneself into the digital age. It is about Learn, Unlearn, and Relearn to keep up with the new world changing from The 'e' decade (e-learning, e-book, e-commerce, etc.) leads to The 's' decade or the era of Social networking, Social media or Social Learning. This is consistent with the key informants stating;

*"..... All human beings must never stop in developing life potential and learning. Everyone wants to make a change in themselves, their organization, and society. They Learn, Unlearn, and Relearn, especially in the world of change..."*

*"... Various activities and projects are organized to support knowledge management processes with the development of standardized knowledge management system. Both internal and external speakers are invited to educate employees as well as providing employees with knowledge sharing and work experience to put the gained knowledge in the database ..."*

**Required skills in the future:** The properties to develop people and drive the organization towards the world of the future consist of (1) Inclusiveness: to benefit from the diverse expertise and experience, (2) Collaboration, (3) Risk Management, (4) Passion: to be enthusiastic to get the job done, (5) Opportunity Seeker, (6) Digital Mindset, (7) Agility: to be able to cope with stressful or rapidly changing situations, (8) Sense of Urgency: to be always ready to deal with urgent situations, (9) Entrepreneurship: to be a new business pioneer. It also requires skill to use intuition which arises from the accumulation of experiences to make decision when facing with complex and uncertain conditions. It includes the skills of Empathy and Work-life Integration. This is consistent with the key informants stating;

*".... The new property newly required is public mind. The property that remains forever in an era when all Thai have to be 'volunteer' allows everyone to walk together without leaving anyone behind ..."*

*"....The skills in various fields are required to develop potential and add value such as language skills, especially English which is the global language, computer skills, and various connecting devices to be able to connect to the Internet by oneself..."*

**Technological competence:** The ability to learn future essential skill sets is the skill that is correspondent with the changing of Automation or the AI Environment, especially when it comes to learning more digital or high-tech skills to comply with the nature of works in the future. As it will be replaced by robots, the executives must Embrace Digital Technologies and incorporate technology into the organization to facilitate the work of the organization. The adoption of new technologies in human resources is such as

(1) exchanging information within the organizations using cloud storage technology, (2) benefiting social media, (3) using video conferencing or teleconferencing, (4) digital workplace, (5) mobile technology, (6) culture of interconnection between the work world and the private world, and (7) creating an inclusive society. This is consistent with the key informants stating;

*"... The innovation and technology are required to seek the needs by reading the information and interpreting it correctly and completely. The use of innovation and technology is for finding and accessing unique information online which is very important ..."*

*"...The leaders must still be open to the use of technology or Embrace Digital Technologies to adopt technology as part of organizational management ..."*

**Need for self-improvement:** By practicing and learning to empower the individuals and reduce the barriers in using information technology for better quality, the 3 key concepts are adhered; 1) Collaborative to enable working altogether in the connected areas, 2) Dynamic to be able to flexibly adjust the space according to various activities, 3) Innovative to create an atmosphere with various facilities, organizing workshops, seminars and activities that enhance digital skills. A seminar with speakers and influencers, thinkers, practitioners can help sharing experiences to educate employees. The ability is to do new things to improve the employee's self-awareness through Reskill and Upskill for allowing the employees to reach their full potential. This is consistent with the key informants stating; *"....The employees are created to support the digital world at 3 levels; Live Digital, nurturing employees to embrace the use of new technology and open to learning to modify and increase digital capabilities, Execute Digital to develop the employees to be able to use technology as part of increasing work efficiency. This continuously leads other employees to new working ideas. Lead Digital enables the employees to use technology to create solutions and innovation to meet customer needs. The design of simple area of work and learning emphasizes the use of technology for maximum productivity and utilities...."*

*"... We have to look for new ways to develop people like Reskill and Upskill, which is a learning style that pushes employees to realize how to learn on their own without waiting for traditional training ..."*

**Learning nature:** With Self-Directed Learning, the employees will learn by introducing Skill Lane's Digital Learning Platform as an unlimited online learning channel. The knowledge is transferred from retired employees who have accumulated knowledge, experience, techniques and tips to the new generation of employees in finding the ways to make Gen Y more experienced and young Gen Z with the expertise to access technology. They can work altogether well. This is consistent with the key informants stating; *"....Skill Lane developed learning towards Digital Learning Platform completely with the confidence that the good potential development of personnel needs the granting of opportunities both in working and living through online learning sources which can be accessed anywhere at anytime from computer, tablets, and smartphones...."*

*".... Establishment of Express So or Express Solution units to be the basis for analysis and selection of new business*

*ideas similar to Venture Capital or venture capital businesses which will be looking for innovations already in PTT or looking for people with ideas to invent various innovations and get into business (Startup) ..."*

**Human resource development approach** is to create a body of knowledge that employees can easily access to meet the behavior and needs of the work environment. There is a variety of organizational management transformation by adapting way of thinking, working method, access to innovation and technology tailor-made to the employees. Almost everything in the future will be linked to the Internet of Things. The work is done online with the modification in the organization to be Project-Based that relies on collaboration between people in the organization and outside the organization or External Talent more. The short, project-based, or predetermined length of time can be done by collaborating as a partnership with a small company or Start up to create a Digital Work Pace so that employees can track their work systematically. This is consistent with the key informants stating;

*"... The organizational challenge today is to create knowledge that is easily accessible to employees to meet the behavior and needs of the work environment diversely. Today, every organization is inevitably faced with a Disruptive World. Access to innovation and technology is the driving force behind this change. Therefore, the adaptation of the way of thinking, working methods and the management of the organization is of great importance ..."*

*"... The constant learning is a qualification that, whether in the past or present, all employees must have. But when it comes to being digital, learning has to be more intense, more often than ever, and more specialized. It must be changeable to enter more competitions such as taking online courses by employees ..."*

## Discussion of results

**Corporate culture** which is important in the digital age is social responsibility and a sustainable development from CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) culture towards CSV (Creating Shared Value) that instills a sense of corporate social responsibility, life, environment and nature as a whole. To be a part of doing business from upstream to downstream is in line with Phat Photpanich (2017) studying human resource development under the Thailand 4.0 policy. Human resource development through innovative creation is a result of connecting human resources to financial capital and infrastructure including research and development to create ecosystems. Innovation is based on technology foundation projects. Knowledge development enhances learning skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially morality and national identity for Thai people.

**Seeking knowledge in the digital age** is to develop the potential of life and learning to create oneself into the digital age. It is learning through social media and understanding about Learn, Unlearn, and Relearn to keep up with the new world that will change from the 'e' decade (e-learning, e-book, e-commerce, etc.) to the 's' decade or the era of Social networking, Social media or Social Learning. This agrees with Ornit Thonsena (2015) studying the "Human Resource Development: A Case Study of the Civil Service



Development Institute". The research revealed that the human resource management of the Civil Service Development Institute Bangkok implemented the Bangkok Metropolitan Development Strategy in line with the Bangkok Human Resource Development Strategy B.E. 2557-2560, Strategy 2: Human Resource Competency Development to Excellence in both areas: Human resource development to create readiness in the present and in the future and the establishment of Bangkok human resource development system.

**The skills needed for the future** are the qualities that will develop people to drive the organization towards the world of the future, consisting of (1) Inclusiveness: to benefit from the diverse expertise and experience, (2) Collaboration, (3) Risk Management, (4) Passion: to be enthusiastic to get the job done, (5) Opportunity Seeker, (6) Digital Mindset, (7) Agility: to be able to cope with stressful or rapidly changing situations, (8) Sense of Urgency: to be always ready to deal with urgent situations, (9) Entrepreneurship: to be a new business pioneer. It also requires skill to use intuition which arises from the accumulation of experiences to make decision when facing with complex and uncertain conditions. It includes the skills of Empathy and Work-life Integration. In addition, the report of the National Statistical Office has classified the IT professional group that will be needed in the digital technology labor market in Thailand within 5 years (National Economic and Social Development Plan No.12). The skills of personnel that will be in demand in the digital technology labor market the most are object oriented design and programming skills including (1) cloud computing, (2) big data, and (3) mobile application and business solution. Due to technology changes that can effectively support the needs and usage behavior of diverse consumer groups, building digital competency among entrepreneurs, especially senior management, will be absolutely necessary in the current situation. It agrees with the Digital Literacy Project which the Office of the Civil Service Commission and Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (Public Organization) use to train civil servants, government personnel, and government workers to face changes now and in the near future. It can also promote and support government officials and government personnel to be able to adapt and be ready to work in the context of change effectively. They can apply digital technology to benefit the government sector.

**Technological competence** in learning the skill sets required in the future is related to the skills that are in line with the changing of Automation or the AI Environment, especially when learning more digital or high-tech skills. It complies with the nature of jobs in the future that will be replaced by robots. The executives must Embrace Digital Technologies and adopt new technologies in the human resource management. It is correspondent with Nittaya Surin (2019) studying human potential development in the digital transformation: Case Study of the Office of the Secretary of the Judicial Commission, Office of the Court of Justice. The research result revealed that personnel potential in applying digital technology to work in the current situation was that the majority of personnel had the skills, understanding and use of digital technology in the field of computer use in

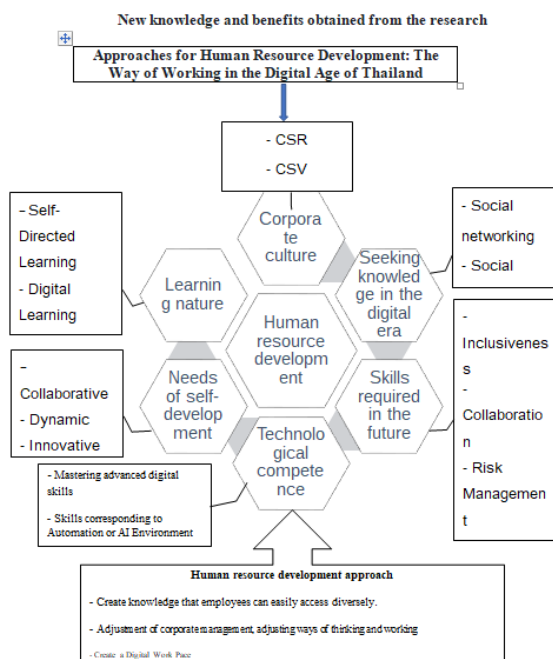
terms of using word processing programs, the use of program of calculation table and the use of Internet.

**Need for self-improvement:** By practicing and learning to empower the individuals and reduce the barriers in using information technology for better quality, the 3 key concepts are adhered; 1) Collaborative to enable working altogether in the connected areas, 2) Dynamic to be able to flexibly adjust the space according to various activities, 3) Innovative to create an atmosphere with various facilities, organizing workshops, seminars and activities that enhance digital skills. A seminar with speakers and influencers, thinkers, practitioners can help sharing experiences to educate employees. The ability is to do new things to improve the employee's self-awareness through Reskill and Upskill for allowing the employees to reach their full potential. This is consistent with the study of Phra Sayaphone Siriphanyo (Sipanya) (2560) studying "Human Resource Development of the Lao Buddhist Relations Organization, Bo Kaeo District, Lao People's Democratic Republic". The research result revealed that human resource development of the Lao Buddhist Relations Organization, Bo Kaeo Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic was mostly undeveloped. After the development, all monks have been educationally developed in the middle school, high school and up to the bachelor's degree. It was found that various temples were developed to be livable and faithful. The training had been organized in Buddhism and literature.

**Learning nature:** With Self-Directed Learning, the employees will learn by introducing Skill Lane's Digital Learning Platform as an unlimited online learning channel. The knowledge is transferred from retired employees who have accumulated knowledge, experience, techniques and tips to the new generation of employees in finding the ways to make Gen Y more experienced and young Gen Z with the expertise to access technology. They can work altogether well. This agrees with Swanson & Holton (2001) stating the learning characteristics of adults as follows; 1) Understanding the objectives of learning (Learner's Need to Know): Adults need to know the objectives and methods of learning prior to taking or participating in training. It is a starting point for the learning of adults. 2) Having their own learning approach. (Self-Concept of Learning). Adults want to be leaders in themselves because they can control and lead themselves. 3) Having experiences that accumulate for learning (Prior Experience of The Learning): Experience as a valuable resource and a treasure of knowledge. 4) Readiness to Learn: the readiness of adults is related to the development of work duties and social roles aiming at improving learning. 5) Using real situations as a learning center (Orientation to Learning): Adults have a learning approach based on real situations or problems that arise with themselves as the center of learning. 6) Motivation to Lean of adults was caused by internal factors and correlated with organizational learning with a learner-centered emphasis. These have been practiced in various activities. It is in accordance with Wiriya Leelasuthanon (2017) studying human resource management and development in the era of Thailand 4.0: Case study of Banking type financial institute. The research results revealed that human resource and organizational development tends to focus on the development and improvement of the learning process in

accordance with the characteristics and learning styles of the learners. It fosters Discovery Skill in the field of innovative ideas to create the skills in using technology. There are opportunities for personnel to plan their own career advancement as well as providing opportunities for work rotation within the organization to provide personnel with knowledge and experience as diverse as the situation.

The research on Human Resource Development: The Way of Working in the Digital Age of Thailand offers new knowledge and benefits in creating the approaches for Human Resource Development: The Way of Working in the Digital Age of Thailand to consist of relevant and appropriate elements which can be depicted as in the following diagram:



**Diagram 1:** Form of Human Resource Development: The Way of Working in the Digital Age of Thailand

## References

- [1] Jinjutha Chanprasit. (2016). Human Resource Development of Educational Personnel, Bunditpatanasilpa Institute. Independent study of the Master of Public Administration. College of Management Innovation, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin.
- [2] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. National Economic and Social Development Plan No. 12 (B.E. 2560 – 2564). Bangkok 2017.
- [3] Phat Photphanich. (2017). Human resource development under the policy of Thailand

4.0. Bangkok: National Defense University.

- [4] Nittaya Surin. (2019). Development of human potential for digital transformation: Case study office Secretary of the Committee for Deciding on the Duties between Courts, Office of the Court of Justice. Master of Public Administration Project. Ramkhamhaeng University.
- [5] Wiriya Leelasuthanon (2017). Human resource management and development in the era of Thailand 4.0: Case study of banking type financial institutes. Master of Science. National Institute of Development Administration.
- [6] Office of the Official Information Commission (2017). Thailand 4.0. Searched from [www.oic.go.th/FILEWEB / CABINFOCENTER3 / DRAWER049 / GENERAL / DATA0000 / 00000702.PDF](http://www.oic.go.th/FILEWEB/CABINFOCENTER3/DRAWER049/GENERAL/00000702.PDF).
- [7] Office of the Royal Society Dictionary of Computer Terminology and Information Technology Committee. (2019). Update IT vocabulary 2019 from the Royal Academy. Searched from [www.opm.go.th/opmportal/](http://www.opm.go.th/opmportal/)
- [8] [pageconfig/viewcontent/viewcontent1.asp?pageid=1555&directory=12904&contents=44394](http://pageconfig/viewcontent/viewcontent1.asp?pageid=1555&directory=12904&contents=44394).
- [9] Suphang Chanthawanich. (2004). Qualitative research method. (12th edition). Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.
- [10] Ornit Thonsena. (2015). Human Resource Development: Case Study of the Civil Service Development Institute Bangkok. Ramkhamhaeng University.
- [11] Phra Sayaphone Siriphanyo (Sipanya). (2017). Human Resource Development of the Lao Religious Relations Organization. Bo Kaeo, Lao People's Democratic Republic. Department of Political Science, Major in administration. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya.

- [12] Randa Grob-Zakhary et al. (2014). Playing Your Way to Work, OECD Yearbook 2014 (electronic version).
- [13] Sang Woo Kim. (2014). Samsung: Smarts Skills, Smart Future-Business Brief, OECD Yearbook 2014. Retrieved from [www.oecd.org/forum/oecdyearbook/samsung-smart-skills-smart-future.htm](http://www.oecd.org/forum/oecdyearbook/samsung-smart-skills-smart-future.htm).
- [14] Swanson, R.A. & Holton, E.F. (2001). Foundations of Human Resource Development. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.