



# From Policy to Practice: An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Human Resource Development Programs for Social Science Teachers

LORRAINE SHIRAI J. DEDUMO<sup>1</sup> ,  
LOUELLA N. RAMBUYONG<sup>1</sup> ,  
CRISHELLA N. TUYOR<sup>1</sup> ,  
MIDINA L. LUMIGUID<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>North Eastern Mindanao State University, Tandag City,  
Surigao del Sur, Philippines

*Corresponding author: [midina.lumiguid@deped.gov.ph](mailto:midina.lumiguid@deped.gov.ph)*

## ABSTRACT

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The rapidly evolving landscape of 21st-century education demands that Human Resource Development (HRD) policies transcend administrative theory to foster genuine pedagogical innovation. This study evaluates the effectiveness of HRD programs for social science teachers, focusing on the alignment between institutional policy mandates and classroom implementation. Utilizing a descriptive-evaluative research design with a mixed-methods approach, data were gathered from social science educators and school administrators through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal a significant “policy-practice gap,” characterized by high levels of policy awareness



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but limited participation due to administrative overload and resource constraints. While general pedagogical training was perceived as accessible, a critical deficit was identified in subject-specific professional development tailored to the unique complexities of social science curricula. Statistical analysis indicates a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.48$ ) between specialized HRD participation and the adoption of student-centered inquiry; however, “implementation leakage” persists due to a lack of sustained institutional support and curriculum misalignment. The study concludes that the “one-size-fits-all” approach to HRD is insufficient for the multidisciplinary needs of social science educators<sup>13</sup>. Recommendations include the decentralization of program design, the institutionalization of protected professional time, and the prioritization of subject-specific Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

## INTRODUCTION

In the current global educational landscape, the quality of an academic institution is increasingly defined by its human capital. As pedagogical demands shift toward 21st-century competencies, Human Resource Development (HRD) has evolved into a strategic imperative for institutional excellence. For social science educators, this evolution is critical; the multidisciplinary nature of the field requires constant adaptation to shifting societal norms, digital transformations, and evolving civic frameworks.

However, a significant disconnect often persists between the theoretical intent of policies and their practical execution. Recent literature highlights that effective HRD is a continuous process of enhancing teacher performance through systematic training and organizational support. Despite robust HRD frameworks, many programs suffer from “implementation leakage”—where lack of resources and administrative bottlenecks dilute impact. This study seeks to bridge this gap by providing an evaluative assessment specifically for social science teachers.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this research is to evaluate the alignment between institutional human resource policies and their practical implementation. Specifically, the study aims: (1) To evaluate the current landscape of institutional frameworks and policy provisions. (2) To examine the extent to which these policies are translated into actual training modules and workshops. (3) To analyze participation rates and the perceived relevance of programs. (4) To investigate

the relationship between HRD participation and the enhancement of classroom teaching strategies: (5) To determine the organizational, financial, or personal challenges hindering effectiveness. (6) To propose an optimized HRD framework for policymakers and administrators.

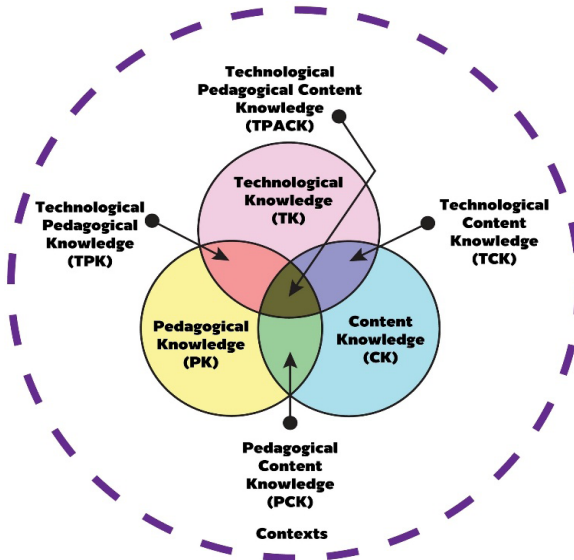
## LITERATURE REVIEW

**The Strategic Imperative of HRD** The conceptualization of Human Resource Development (HRD) has shifted toward a strategic investment in human capital rather than a mere administrative cost. According to the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, an institution's competitive advantage lies in its human resources—specifically their rarity, value, and inability to be easily imitated (Barney, 1991). In the educational context, this implies that the unique pedagogical skills and collective knowledge of faculty are the primary drivers of institutional quality. HRM is defined as a formal structure responsible for strategies, decisions, and methods related to managing people at work (Bratton et al., 2021). For teachers, HRD serves as the primary vehicle for professional vitality and “upskilling” to meet the demands of digital literacy and evolving curricula (Pascua & Japos, 2023). Furthermore, strategic HRD aligns individual development with the broader organizational goals, ensuring that teacher growth translates into institutional excellence (Garavan, 2007).

### *The Policy-Practice Gap*

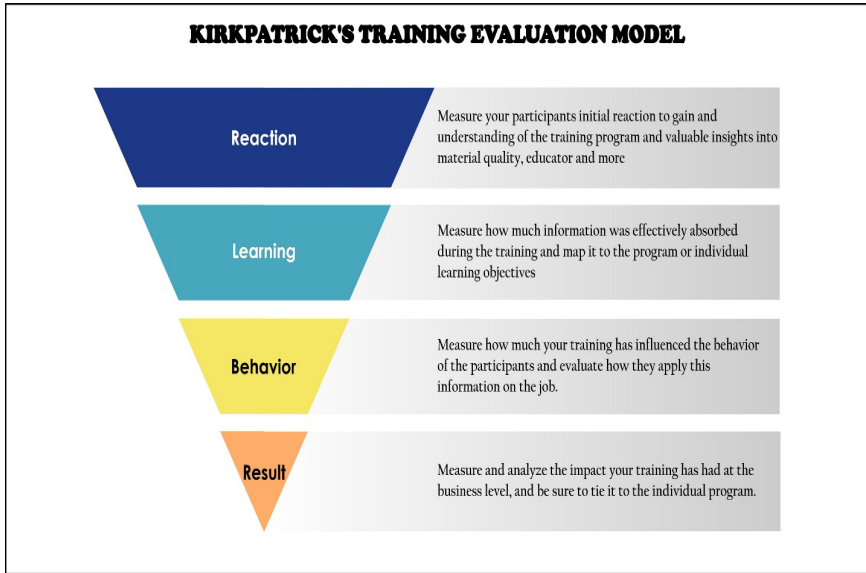
The “decoupling” of official policy from classroom reality suggests that while top-down mandates may be robust on paper, implementation is frequently fragmented. This gap, often termed “implementation leakage,” occurs when the intended goals of a policy are diluted by organizational realities, conflicting priorities, or lack of local buy-in (Ball et al., 2012). Systemic factors contributing to this include resource dependency, communication asynchrony, and bureaucratic inertia. Research indicates that the simplest method for an organization to overcome competition is by implementing proper HRM practices; however, administrative challenges and “policy resistance” from staff—often stemming from a lack of involvement in the decision-making process—impede this progress (Bratton et al., 2021). Lipsky (2010) refers to teachers as “street-level bureaucrats” who ultimately exercise significant discretion in how policies are executed, often reshaping mandates to fit the practical constraints of their classrooms.

### Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)



### *Professional Development and Training in Social Sciences*

Training and development are helpful once the desired group of employees has been acquired, as new hires do not always automatically adapt to organizational culture. Development is a gradual learning process that prepares individuals for more challenging roles (Nimmo & Clapham, 2016). For social science educators, this must include Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) to facilitate critical thinking on complex issues like globalization and social justice. The TPACK framework illustrates the complex interplay between a teacher's understanding of technology, pedagogy, and the specific subject matter (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Unlike general education training, social science HRD must address the “controversial issues pedagogy,” requiring teachers to navigate sensitive political and social narratives while maintaining objective academic standards (Hess, 2009).



### *Evaluative Frameworks for HRD Effectiveness*

Assessing the effectiveness of these programs requires a multi-dimensional approach that moves beyond simple attendance metrics. Literature frequently cites Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation: Reaction (satisfaction), Learning (knowledge gain), Behavior (application in the classroom), and Results (impact on student outcomes). While many institutions focus on the first two levels, true effectiveness is found in "Level 3" (Behavior change), where teachers integrate new strategies into their daily instruction (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Effective HRD must coordinate training that assists workers in acquiring the specific knowledge needed to perform effectively within their unique institutional context, emphasizing that professional development is most impactful when it is sustained, collaborative, and content-focused (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a descriptive-evaluative research design utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Quantitatively, stratified random sampling was used to administer surveys measuring program accessibility and participation<sup>40</sup>. Qualitatively, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis of policy documents were used to identify systemic bottlenecks.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Disconnect in Participation: The Awareness-Engagement Gap***

Quantitative analysis revealed high policy awareness (88%) but low consistent participation (36%). This discrepancy suggests that while communication channels regarding HRD opportunities are functional, the operational environment is prohibitive. Primary deterrents included “administrative overload” and “rigid scheduling.” This aligns with the findings of Bratton et al. (2021), who argue that heavy workloads and job pressure often render even the best-designed HRD programs inaccessible. When teachers are overwhelmed by clerical tasks, professional development is viewed as an additional burden rather than a growth opportunity, leading to a “decoupling” of institutional intent and faculty engagement.

### ***General vs. Subject-Specific Effectiveness: The Specialization Deficit***

A significant disparity was observed in training efficacy: general pedagogical training received a high mean score ( $M = 4.05$ ), while subject-specific HRD for social sciences was rated significantly lower ( $M = 2.15$ ). This data indicates that while teachers are gaining generic classroom management skills, they are not receiving the specialized Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) required for the social sciences. As Mishra and Koehler (2006) posited, effective teaching requires an overlap of technology, pedagogy, and content. Generic training fails to address the unique complexities of social science, such as facilitating discourse on sensitive civic issues or interpreting shifting global narratives.

### ***Implementation Leakage and Institutional Inertia***

The study identified “implementation leakage,” where skills acquired during training fail to manifest in classroom practice. Participants noted a conflict between inquiry-based training and rigid standardized assessment policies. This illustrates the “policy-practice gap” described by Ball et al. (2012); institutional inertia—characterized by a “business as usual” mindset—often smothers innovation. If the school’s evaluation metrics do not evolve alongside its training programs, teachers will naturally revert to traditional methods that align with existing rewards and assessments.

### ***Correlation with Innovation: The Impact of Specialization***

Pearson correlation analysis indicated a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.48$ ,  $p < .05$ ) between specialized HRD participation and the use of innovative teaching technologies. This suggests that when training is contextually

relevant and subject-specific, teachers are more likely to adopt 21st-century competencies. This supports Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), who found that the most effective professional development is content-focused and allows for the immediate application of new strategies within the teacher's specific discipline.

## CONCLUSION

The transition “From Policy to Practice” remains a complex journey hindered by systemic friction. This study concludes that HRD effectiveness is significantly diminished during implementation due to a “specialization gap,” where programs prioritize generic administrative skills over multidisciplinary social science competencies. While institutional policies appear robust on paper, they are often stifled by the “street-level” realities of administrative overload and resource scarcity (Lipsky, 2010). Furthermore, the “one-size-fits-all” approach to teacher development is insufficient for the evolving demands of social science education. Ultimately, the success of HRD is not measured by the frequency of workshops or the level of policy awareness, but by the tangible enhancement of the teaching-learning process. Without bridging the gap between top-down mandates and the practical constraints of the classroom, HRD remains an unfulfilled strategic promise.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) For Educational Policymakers: Move away from centralized, generic training mandates. Decentralize program design to allow for localized customization and prioritize Subject-Specific Continuous Professional Development (CPD) that addresses the nuances of the social science curriculum. (2) For School Administrators: To combat “implementation leakage,” administrators must institutionalize “Protected Professional Time.” Reducing administrative loads and establishing peer-coaching networks allows teachers the cognitive space to integrate new pedagogical strategies into their daily routines. (3) For Social Science Teachers: Educators should transition from passive recipients of training to active advocates for their own development. Taking an active role in proactive skill mapping will help teachers articulate and advocate for the specific technical and content-based training they need. (4) For Future Research: There is a need for longitudinal impact studies that move beyond “Reaction” and “Learning” metrics. Future research should track long-term skill retention and, most importantly, the direct correlation between specific HRD interventions and student achievement in social science competencies.

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