

# IMPLEMENTATION OF A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICERS IN HAPPY WORKPLACE PROJECTS AT AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITIES

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## ABSTRACT

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Ethics serve as fundamental guidelines that help build trust and transparency in operations, while promoting fairness and responsibility to stakeholders in the management of human resources in universities. However, discrimination, unfair practices, lack of transparency, and violation of personal rights affects the image and lack of trust in universities. The aim of this study was to examine the application of the Code of Ethics for Human Resource Officers in the Happy Workplace Project and Activities of State-controlled Universities using qualitative research approaches. The sample group was selected by collecting data from relevant documents, in-depth interviews with 6 experts, and focus group discussions with 11 human resource officers from state universities. The data analysis used descriptive content analysis and presented the results in a descriptive format. The research findings revealed the code of ethics among human resource officers in 3 dimensions: Dimension 1: Ethics of Honesty and Fairness; Dimension 2: Ethics of Diligence, Determination, Knowledge Development, and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence and Dimension 3: Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information. All three ethical principles were followed during the happy workplace project and activities at the universities in the following 4 steps: Step 1: Project launching; Step 2: Planning; Step 3: Operations; and Step 4: Project closure. Dimension 1 is a basic ethical principle and code of conduct that has become a behavior based on ethics consisting of fundamental moral principles. As for Dimensions 2 and 3, human resource professionals adhere to them for the equal benefits of all parties concerned, which preserves the dignity and honor of the profession.

**Keywords:** Code of conduct for human resources; happy workplace; happy universities

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ethical problems arising in public and private organizations are numerous. One persistent problem related to management is that it is non-transparent, unequal and discriminatory, accompanied by the misconduct of some workers, all of which cause damage to organizations such as the absence of morality and ethics in human resource management (Sarikaya, 2022), which leads to other subsequent problems. In many cases, the problems occurring are caused by unethical practices. For example, cases of unfair termination and

disciplinary actions rank highest at up to 24%, followed by discriminatory recruitment and selection cases at 19%, with cases arising from organizational culture problems at 15%. These problems are caused by the shortcomings of some workers who are unprofessional and do not base their actions on morality and ethics (Csillag, 2019). The World Health Organization (WHO) was the first agency to begin emphasizing the significance of a good quality of working life under a system of management, interaction, cooperation, values, and organizational culture facilitating quality of work performance. The emphasis is placed on social and business ethics. Treating personnel in the organization according to human rights principles and laws that protect personnel in working with safety and good health, so the organization can achieve sustainable success (Burton, 2010). The focus in Thailand was on social and business ethics, treating personnel in the organization based on human rights principles and laws to protect personnel to work with safety and good health for a sustainable organization. In Thailand, the Health Promotion Foundation (THPF), as a government agency, initiated the concept of the World Health Organization to drive, promote, and collaborate with various agencies in mobilizing the process of building organizational happiness and happy universities for human resource management guidelines to create long-term commitment to the organization (Wasanthanarat, 2018). For example, a study by Lakey (2013) examined perceived happiness and social support from the perspectives of individual roles and relationship processes, finding that people who have positive perceptions of co-workers and family members were happier than people with negative attitudes about co-workers Williams et al. (2015) conducted a study examining the correlations between psychological capital, perceived organizational morality, and happiness at work among educational personnel, finding that the psychological capital and perceived organizational morality of educational personnel were strongly correlated with happiness at work.

Human resource officers play an important role in connecting organizations and personnel. Therefore, they are considered representatives of the university who play an important role in managing the organization as a center for mobilizing university personnel. The role of HR officers is not limited to the above. Other roles that are apparent include the role of HR officers, such as the role of experts in that field, the role of strategic partners, the role of representatives of organizations and personnel, and the role of partners with universities in developing strategies and creating added value for the university (Pongpisutsopa, et al. (2018). At the same time, Ulrich (2017) pointed out the importance of important roles of effective HR officers) the role of activists in building relationships with personnel, 2) the role of strategists in recognizing the current and future organizational context, 3) the role of organizational analysts in creating a culture that is consistent with the strategy, 4) the role of change leaders at both the individual and organizational levels to achieve the same goals,, 5) the role of innovation leaders in creating new practices and communications to connect organizations with personnel, and 6) the role of technology leaders to increase organizational efficiency.

Therefore, implementing the professional standards for human resource officers, which are the principles of standardized professional ethics regarding the codification of rules of conduct, regulations, and etiquette established by human resource officers as a framework in order to preserve and promote the dignity of self, members, organizations, and society, as well as to prevent corruption and misconduct. For this reason, the research is interested in studying this issue.

Furthermore, one of the research questions seeks to determine how human resource officers in state universities apply the ethics of human resource officers in their work in implementing Happy Workplace projects and activities.

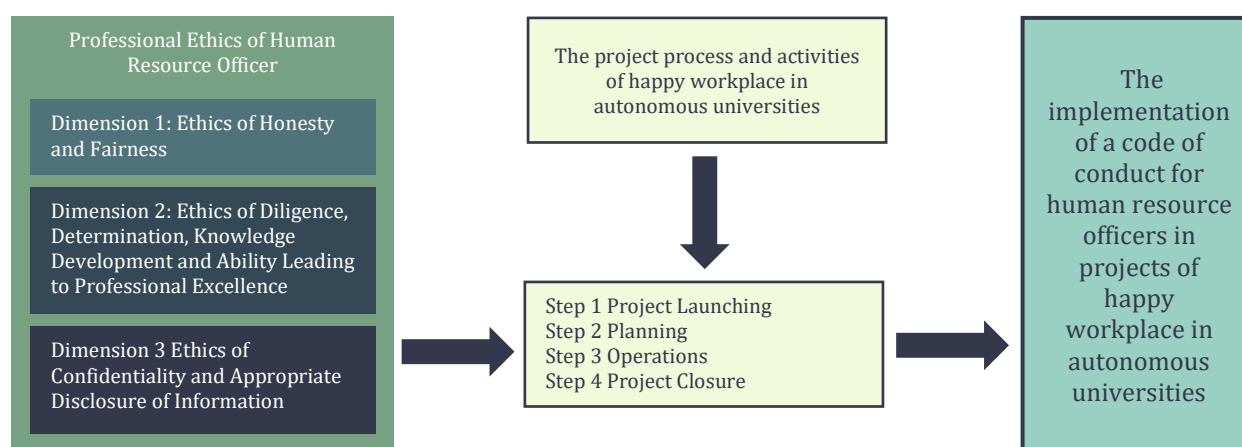
## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To investigate the implementation of a code of conduct for human resource officers in happy workplace projects at autonomous universities, the research developed a conceptual framework based on concepts, theories, expert views, human resource codes of ethics, and project life cycles, as well as the following project management concepts:

Ethical principles consist of three dimensions: Dimension 1: Ethics of Honesty and Fairness; Dimension 2: Ethics of Diligence, Determination, Knowledge Development, and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence; and Dimension 3: Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information.

The project process consisted of four steps: Step 1: Project Launching; Step 2: Planning; Step 3: Operations; and Step 4: Project Closure.

All three dimensions of the human resource officers' ethical principles were executed as a code of ethics for happy workplace projects and activities at autonomous universities, leading to knowledge and understanding about the use of professional ethics in the work of happy workplaces at autonomous universities, which can be presented in the Figure 1:



**Figure 1:** Research conceptual framework

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative method as follows:

#### 3.1 Documentary research (academic documents used in research between 2017–2020)

This step aimed to investigate the concepts underpinning the significance of ethics and principles, as well as concepts concerning ethics in organizations, organizational management and standards for government officials, as well as principles and concepts concerning professional ethics for human resource professionals. In addition, the researchers explored principles, concepts, and theories concerning the implementation of projects and activities promoting happy organizations in terms of the project life cycle, project management, elements of a happy organization, elements of a happy university, guidelines for developing a happy organization, and the context of the happiness organization network of the four universities studied, namely Mahidol University, Khon Kaen University, Chiang Mai University and Prince of Songkla University.

#### 3.2 In-depth interviews and focus groups

A summary of the Code of Ethics for Human Resources Personnel in all three dimensions was presented to experts for consideration, rendering of opinions, and reflecting on concepts and perspectives on feasibility, clarity, accuracy, and greater suitability. Next, these three dimensions of ethics were addressed in focus group discussions with practitioners creating organizational happiness at all four universities.

#### 3.3 Research area

The researchers considered specific areas of autonomous universities from four regions in Thailand that joined the Happiness Organization Network. The purposeful universities mobilized projects and activities by the Human Resources Division, Office of the President, in each university as a central unit for coordinating and communicating with departments within the university as follows (Podhisita, 2017).

1. Central Region: The researchers selected Mahidol University, a prototype of a happy university and the pilot of the Happiness Organization Network.

2. Northeastern Region: The researchers selected Khon Kaen University, which was the first public university in the Northeastern Region to join the Happiness Organization Network.

3. Northern Region: The researchers selected Chiang Mai University, which was the first public university in the Northern Region to join the Happiness Organization Network.

4. Southern Region: The researchers selected Prince of Songkla University, which was the first public university in the Southern Region to join the Happiness Organization Network and to mobilize happiness organizations.

#### 3.4 Target group selection

##### 3.4.1 The criteria for selecting experts were as follows:

(1) Experts who are academics and executives of government organizations with experience in organizational ethics and acceptance in the profession for no less than 4 years (1 person).

(2) Academics with experience in research and academic work related to ethics in implementing Happy Workplace projects (1 person).

(3) Experts in specific fields who play an important role in transforming human resource management policies into practice with no less than 4 years of management experience (4 people).

**3.4.2 The criteria for selecting 11 people who were qualified to participate in the group discussions** were as follows:

- (1) At least 3 years of experience in human resource development.
- (2) At least 3 years of experience in implementing Happy Workplace projects and activities at universities.
- (3) Knowledge and skills in the context of the discussion topics on the application of human resource ethics in implementing Happy Workplace projects and activities at universities for at least 3 years.

### 3.5 Interview questions

An in-depth interview form was used to interview the experts. The questions for the semi-structured interviews covered the ethical issues of human resources personnel at autonomous universities in implementing the professional ethics of human resource personnel in their work in the happy organization projects and activities at the autonomous universities. The focus group discussions involved collecting field data. The researchers requested permission to take video recordings and notes during the discussions, along with recording images throughout the discussions. The semi-structured questions were designed to cover professional ethics issues for human resource professionals in guided interviews for the participants as follows (Table 1):

**Table 1:** The questions asked in interviews with experts and human resource professionals

Question points	Informants
<b>Question 1</b> The Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics for Human Resources Professionals consist of three dimensions. Based on the following ethical principles, are they appropriate? If so, how? Dimension 1: Ethics of Honesty and Fairness Dimension 2: Ethics of Diligence and Knowledge Development Dimension 3: Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information	- Experts
<b>Question 2</b> How do human resource officers at autonomous universities apply the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics of Honesty and Fairness</li> <li>• Ethics of Diligence and Knowledge Development</li> <li>• Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information in conducting happy organization projects and activities?</li> </ul>	- Director of Human Resources Divisions - Human Resource Officer

### 3.6 Research process

1. Exploring and compiling principles, concepts, and theories. Furthermore, the researchers conducted a comparative analysis of ethical principles and codes of conduct based on searches of documents, books, textbooks, research reports, research articles, and academic articles, synthesizing them into morals and codes of ethics, then presenting experts with opinions and views on the framework of ethics for human resource officers.

2. Group discussion of human resource officers regarding the implementation of the Happy Organization project and activities. This step employed a process of discussion about operating conditions, problems, and barriers to project implementation and activities at all four steps.

3. Step 3: Implementation of the human resources code of ethics at all four research sites in group discussions with the directors of the human resources divisions and human resource officers to express views and perspectives on applying ethics to the implementation of projects and activities to create organizational happiness at all 4 steps: Step 1 - Project launching; Step 2 - Planning; Step3 - Operations, and Step 4 - Project closure.

### 3.7 Data analysis

1. The data obtained from the study of documents were analyzed by employing analytical methods and document synthesis through content analysis. A descriptive method was used to present the data.

2. The data obtained from the in-depth interviews were analyzed by employing the conceptual framework of ethics in three dimensions, namely, Dimension 1: Ethics of Honesty and Fairness; Dimension 2: Ethics of Diligence, Determination, Knowledge Development, and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence; and Dimension 3: Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information.

3. The data from the focus group discussions involved the implementation of the 3 dimensions of the human resources code of ethics in the Happy Organization project and activities in 4 steps: Step 1- Project launching; Step 2 - Planning; Step 3 - Operations, and Step 4 - Project closure.

## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research employed content analysis in combination with thematic analysis to analyze the data obtained from the focus group discussions. This involved identifying and categorizing underlying content within the interview data, followed by interpreting the data in terms of content and context based on the three ethical and professional dimensions of human resource practitioners.

The findings revealed that the implementation of the code of conduct for human resource officers in happy workplace projects and activities consisted of the following main elements:

### 4.1 Synthesis of the code of ethics for human resource officers at autonomous universities

The findings from all three dimensions of human resource ethics revealed the following:

#### 4.1.1 Dimension 1: Ethics of Honesty and Fairness are presented by topic as follows:

4.1.1.1 *Honesty involves the basic moral principles* that are inherent to each person. Honesty in particular is considered a moral virtue in the basic conscience possessed by all and one that is fostered from childhood to adulthood. Professional human resource officers should adhere to honesty as a framework for performing their duties to achieve work results. This concept is expressed by honesty and integrity with responsibility, discipline, and attention to duties to self and others.

4.1.1.2 *Fairness* involves maintaining an honest state of mind, unbiased thinking, not thinking of cheating, not thinking of taking advantage for personal gain or the gain of associates. The coexistence of honesty and fairness shows that people with integrity can maintain fairness. People performing duties in human resource management possess a volunteer spirit of service, sincere service mindedness and fairness, not siding with or discriminating against anyone, or secretly taking advantage work-related duties for personal gain, regardless of the situation.

#### 4.1.2 Dimension 2: Ethics of Diligence, Perseverance, Development of Knowledge, and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence are presented by topic as follows:

4.1.2.1 *Diligence and perseverance* are good ethical principles that show diligence, industry and painstaking effort in performing duties with patience and endurance in overcoming obstacles.

4.1.2.2 *Knowledge Development and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence* means developing oneself in a correct and appropriate manner to apply knowledge for cognitive development leading to excellence in the performance of work-related duties to reach potential and achieve excellence in the human resource profession.

#### 4.1.3 Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information are presented by topic as follows:

4.1.3.1 *Confidentiality* is keeping information safe, protecting information from disclosure, and not using information for the benefit of self or associates, committing a particular action or refraining from doing so to prevent confidential information from being released. Confidential information may be personal, corporate, or government information. If this kind of information is revealed, the disclosure may cause damage to the owner of the information.

4.1.3.2 *Appropriate disclosure of information* is obtaining permission to provide information and disclosing correct, complete and factual information that is not distorted. The information should cover all relevant issues in a timely manner in fairness to relevant stakeholders, so they can make correct and appropriate decisions. Disclosure of information must be fair without discrimination against any particular stakeholder.

### 4.2 Problems in implementing happy organization projects and activities

In studying information about the problems in the implementation of the happy organization projects and activities at autonomous universities and based on the focus group discussions of human resources officers in small group meetings aimed at brainstorming on opinions, problems were found in the practices of some workers. These are summarized based on the individual characteristics as follows: (1) workers lack dedication in performing duties, have conflicts of interest, and seek personal income for themselves; (2) workers lack development, training, education, research, and the creation of new innovations. Some workers do not have knowledge and ability about data analysis, report presentation, and communication in addition to not paying attention to training; (3) workers lack detail, are ignorant of the importance of the rights of others and unable to maintain confidentiality, which can be summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Summary of problems in implementing happy organization projects and activities with work ethics

Ethical issues	Lack of ethical principles among workers who create organizational happiness		
	Ethics of Honesty and Fairness	Ethics of diligence, determination, knowledge development and ability leading to professional excellence	Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of dedication in performing duties and conflicts of interest</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of development and practice; lack of creativity and innovation; and lack of experience</li> </ul>		✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of attention to detail; Lack of awareness; Lack of importance given to others; inability to keep secrets</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓

The data were obtained through interviews, and analyzed based on the three dimensions of the Human Resource Professional Code of Ethics.

#### 4.3 Analysis of the implementation of a code of conduct for human resource officers in happy workplace projects and activities at autonomous universities

The analysis of the process of applying the professional ethics of human resource officers in all three dimensions to the implementation of projects and activities involved the following four steps (Table 3):

##### Dimension 1: Ethics of Honesty and Fairness

*Step 1: Project launching:* It was found that launching a project requires preparation and examination of information about the organization's context and environment, information about personnel such as gender, age, type of personnel, academic and professional positions, and health information. This is information that workers in this role should approach with caution, detail, and respect for the owner of the information. Data and statistics are collected, analyzed, and reported to various types of personnel with factual and unbiased information, which is fair to personnel of various types, because the information obtained in preparation influences the design of projects and activities, so personnel have equal access to the activities.

*Step 2: Planning:* The human resources officers were found to value planning as a process that sets the direction and goals of work, and that planning needs to be straightforward. Importance must be given to personnel-centered planning with understanding of the organization's context and environment, using real information based on referenced, traceable statistical evidence with transparency, acceptance of limitations and risks in straightforward planning, including flexible decisions in writing the plans adjusted to suit everyone in the organization with equality for everyone to participate in activities without discrimination.

*Step 3: Operations:* The human resources officers were found to exercise honesty, sincerity and fairness toward all project participants with equality and non-discrimination, regardless of race, religion, gender, age, or social status. They explained the details of the project, activities, work objectives, start-end times and dates, food services, location, with clarity and straightforwardness without distorting information to cause misunderstanding among the project and activity participants. From start to finish, every process should be explained honestly with a willingness to provide services for all types of personnel.

*Step 4: Project closure:* The human resources officers were found to emphasize and demonstrate punctuality in preparing performance reports by adhering to the principle of not exaggerating, but reporting on project results and activities in a straightforward manner aligned with the actual outcomes without interpreting in favor of the organization to create a good image. The evidence-based information can be referenced, particularly in reports on budgetary spending, project participants, and activities. Reports are candid with no personal feelings. Furthermore, human resource officers interpret outcomes received with equally pure intentions toward all types of personnel information, considering the interests of all parties involved, including personnel at all levels, with fairness.

##### Dimension 2: Ethics of Diligence, Determination, Knowledge Development, and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence

*Step 1: Project launching:* The human resource officers were found to be diligent in designing needs assessment surveys, conducting studies, finding information, activity formats, preparing locations, dates and times, coordinating work, finding common ground, and preparing meetings until a consensus is reached. Knowledge development and ability leading to professional excellence involve being proficient about changes in the organizational environment, changes in information technology, and changes in emerging diseases. This step involves self-development by attending training, meetings, seminars, and exchanges of knowledge from



networks within the happy organization and outside the university. Next, knowledge is applied to thinking, analysis, general preparation, preparation of information, and coordinating work with relevant people to receive accurate and appropriate information for taking the next steps.

*Step 2: Planning* – In planning, apart from dependence on information inside the organization, personnel development was found to have a need to look toward the future and environmental changes. On this issue, workers have to become more diligent, study more, seek more information, analyze data and situation trends, and compare previous data to future estimates in order to accompany planning and better plan for situational changes with improved flexibility. Good planning resulted in good operations, reduced mistakes, and enabled effective plan modifications. Good plans were able to encourage positive changes for the organization and project participants in addition to leading to good productivity.

*Step 3: Operations* – The human resource officers were found to be dedicated and enthusiastic without avoiding work. They performed duties by adhering to work objectives and success, offering to assist project and activity participants with politeness and generosity. Human Resource workers created networks of cooperation and built good attachments and culture for organizations. When errors were found during work, human resource officers hurried to make corrections to be in step with situations and reported problems and barriers to executives along with solving problems to ensure projects and activities continue with readiness and trust. Human resource officers created acceptance in professional circles and among those involved with an aim toward work success and maintained quality standards with transparency and accountability.

*Step 4: Project closure* – The human resource officers were found to have summarized, prepared reports, and collected project and activity information, including photographs within the specified time with diligence and no negligence. Human resources worked to succeed according to schedule, presented reports on operations, and reports on the project's budget and evaluation completely along with closing the project. Afterwards, this led to development of knowledge and abilities toward professional excellence by including points of knowledge from projects and project evaluation activities in university lessons in order to determine errors, activities that failed to achieve objectives, and points of success for further development before conducting R2R research and creating a corporate culture of learning until the findings could be presented in share-and-show with affiliated happy universities in all four regions.

#### Dimension 3: Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information

*Step 1: Project launching* – The human resource officers were found to place importance on data, exercised caution in maintaining confidentiality, collecting data, and classifying data based on significance. Workers who are not thorough and neglect duties may damage organizations and the people involved. On this issue, human resource management was found to have clear specifications of duties and responsibilities concerning data confidentiality and access. Appropriate disclosure of information was a recognition of importance and consideration of necessity in disclosing only necessary data at the start of projects. The disclosed data did not clearly show identifying information of individuals. Workers respected personal rights. Before information was disclosed, approval was required from supervisors or data owners in advance and violations would result in ethical and legal penalties.

*Step 2: Planning* – In preserving organizational interests, past data, numbers, and statistics were found to have been used to determine or predict the future when planning projects or activities in advance to effectively make plans succeed according to specified objectives. Statistical data were significant because it requires planning of systems for data collection, confidentiality classification, specification of roles and duties of the persons responsible, and classification of data confidentiality during use and after use. In addition to maintaining confidentiality with honesty and fairness to every person, committee, and team member, human resource officers must also maintain the confidentiality of personal data. When in-depth data use was necessary, workers were required to obtain consent from data owners every time before operations.

*Step 3: Operations* – In maintaining confidence among project and activity participants, the human resource officers were found to have communicated and recorded personal information and images in the course of work. Therefore, this step was an important one in which violations should not be committed and inappropriate data or images should not be disclosed to the public. The human resource officers were found to have awareness and did not record data leading to personal damage and overall damage to the organization. In addition, when information disclosure was necessary, human officers were found to have appropriate information recording and storage. Moreover, information was presented in only an overall view. With regard to in-depth personal health information, personal information was reported to the owner and collected. In projects, confidential health information was collected to monitor individual personnel in health examinations and future treatment.

*Step 4: Project closure* – Confidentiality was found to be the respect and maintenance of confidence in personal data obtained from projects, activities, operation reports, budget disbursement reports, reports, statistics, various dimensions of health, and overall happiness without wrongfully disclosing personal and

organizational information, except when performing duties or when consent had been obtained from data owners in addition to not seeking illicit gains from accessing the organization's information in the course of duties. Appropriate disclosure of information was proper disclosure of useful information to the organization and individuals. For example, happiness was reported by using overall and dimensional mean scores. In disclosing information, caution was exercised with consideration of personal and organizational data protection laws while strictly maintaining responsibility to duties in protecting personal and organizational data.

**Table 3:** Summary of human resource officers' code of ethics and implementation of happiness organization projects and activities

Code of ethics	Implementation of happiness organization projects and activities			
	Project launching	Planning	Operations	Project closure
Dimension 1: Ethics of Honesty and Fairness	Truly respect data owners, collect and store truthful information, and do not discriminate.	Work planning sets direction and goals. The plan is equally flexible for all types of personnel.	Be sincere, provide honest service, and receive fair benefits from personnel.	Report performance results with transparency, honesty, and traceability.
Dimension 2: Ethics of Diligence, Determination, Knowledge Development, and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence	Be diligent in gathering information and preparing to coordinate in a timely manner.	The program is modern, appropriate, and accessible to all types of personnel, including disabled persons.	Be diligent and enthusiastic in providing services, clarifying information, and providing sincere assistance.	Closing the project with lessons learned, doing R2R and leading to Share & Show.
Dimension 3: Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information	Presenting information gathered as an overview, statistics, and risks for forwarding in event planning only.	Define the roles and duties of responsible persons, maintain confidentiality to use information for planning with care, honesty, and fairness to all parties involved.	Respect and request permission from data owners to record images, various activities, and keep statistics on project operations.	Maintaining reports, statistics, and overall information and report in-depth information directly to the data owner only.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study of the application of human resource officer ethics in happy organization projects at four government universities can be discussed as follows:

### 5.1 Code of ethics for human resource officers, dimension 1: Honesty and Fairness

Honesty and fairness are foundational ethical principles in each person's moral subconscious. Ethics in this dimension also provide an important foundation for people in every profession, particularly human resource officers who play important roles involving organization personnel in connecting and communicating with many parties to understand the organization's objectives and personnel objectives. Therefore, creating happiness in organizations is an important and essential mission for human resource officers, who are tasked with improving happiness among the organization's personnel in working and enabling personnel to produce results and become attached to the organization. When human resource officers adhere to ethical principles of honesty in carrying out projects and activities for happiness from the beginning of the project to planning, operation and project closure, ethical principles of honesty and fairness were expressed by performing duties in a straightforward manner without distorting information. At the same time, human resource officers must maintain transparency, non-discrimination, volunteer-mindedness, and service-mindedness at every step. Dimension 1 of the code of ethics is vital for use as a good management principle that is inseparable from the academic principles of successful management according to objectives. This code of conduct can be considered a set of morals and ethics. In other words, human resource officers who think well, do well or have good ideas also require good practice; to achieve good management, the management must have good governance with ethical principles included in every process and step while constantly recognizing positive and negative effects on stakeholders inside and outside the organization. This finding was consistent with a study conducted by Phiphatanakul (2019) on ethics and management with a view that small or large organizations need to have management to ensure that the organizations can compete with other organizations with sustainability. To achieve good management, good governance based on ethical principles in the organization's management is required to build stability, confidence, positive image, and trust in other organizations. Ethics among



organization members who express the right physical and verbal behaviors are characteristic of values and morals in making themselves and other people in society happy. Therefore, ethics is a matter of practicing good habits. On the contrary, corruption, cheating, and oppression in various forms degrade society through lack of ethics. Similarly, the findings from a study conducted by Kuchinke (2017) presented ideas regarding the ethics of human resource officers in a research article entitled "Ethics in the Work of Human Resource Developers" where moral and ethical frameworks of interest were used as options in producing results when considering what should be done for human resource developers in terms of morals and ethics in work contexts, work processes, learning, consultation, organizational design and development, including organization management and behaviors that should be performed while placing importance on guidelines in using intelligence, which should recognize human resource development issues and education in the field of human resource development. The findings were also consistent with those of Braga et al. (2019), who conducted a study entitled "Ethical Human Resource Management Guidelines: A Comparison of the Works of Brazil, Columbia, and the United Kingdom." According to the findings, expression of equitable and fair human resource management work behaviors is a key characteristic for human resource officers. In addition, the issue of managing ethical conflicts of human resource officers should be balanced between organizational goals and employees with the necessary ethics being justice and equality. In another study conducted by Osibanjo et al. (2018) on the correlations between human resource ethics and the effectiveness of technology-driven work at a bank in Nigeria, the findings revealed appropriate morals as ethical indicators of human resource workers consisting of employee benefits, employee expectations, balance between work and remuneration, and opportunity of fair treatment. These findings create appropriate morals for human resources. Therefore, organizations should enhance work efficiency by placing importance on work ethics and increase ethical value to be consistent and suitable for work regulations. At the same time, organizations in the government sector, private sector, and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development of the United Kingdom (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2020) have prepared professional ethics for human resource officers to provide guidelines on human resource management practices for members in addition to outlining ethical and integrity standards for human resource officers to work by building, maintaining, and developing business relationships on the basis of confidence and trust while always demonstrating professionalism and honesty in addition to protecting personal rights and secrets. Furthermore, the Institute for Human Resource Professionals of Singapore (IHRP, 2017) determined main ethical principles on integrity for human resource professionals, stating that human resource professionals must be committed to working ethically in order to build professional reputation, honor, dignity, and credibility as the first ethic along with setting the principle of objectivity requiring human resource professionals to work with equality, non-discrimination, and fairness in order to build credibility and trust. Similarly, Panchan (2017) proposed an idea, stating that personnel managers may affect the lives of some people, possibly referring to opportunity or the lack thereof in Ethic 1: Professional Honesty and Respect for Organizational and Executive Privilege with the following main principles for adherence: 1) belief in the profession; 2) responsibility to the profession; 3) honest use of the profession; 4) use of the profession to benefit all parties; 5) non-interference in executive authority; 6) not seeking benefits from any party; 7) conscientious diagnosis of problems; 8) focus on performing duties successfully; 9) seeking of knowledge and self-improvement; and 10) protecting the reputations of personnel managers.

## **5.2 Code of ethics for human resource officers, dimension 2: Diligence, Determination, Knowledge Development and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence**

Application of ethical principles in the areas of diligence and determination to develop knowledge and ability leading to professional excellence among human resource officers in steering projects and activities in happy organizations at the action step required implementation of ethical principles on diligence to work with diligence, determination, enthusiasm, and dedication toward success with perseverance. In terms of diligence, endurance, and not faltering in the face of difficulties or barriers, the ethical behaviors of human resource officers included studying, seeking new guidelines, seeking knowledge, self-training for competence and expertise in work and activities for public benefit, and ensuring that work procedures succeed and achieve organizational goals. The findings in this area partially align with a study by Simões et al. (2019), who examined unethical practices in human resource management. The study aimed to explore HR professionals' perceptions of unethical behavior in their work, particularly regarding actions that neglect consideration for others, discriminatory practices, and failure to prioritize the well-being of others. Therefore, fostering ethical behaviors, specifically in the dimensions of diligence and perseverance, is considered a fundamental foundation enabling HR professionals to engage in self-improvement, create valuable outcomes, and effectively drive a happy and sustainable organization.

### **5.3 Code of ethics for human resource officers, dimension 3: Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information**

In applying the ethical principle of confidentiality and appropriate disclosure of information to steer projects and activities of happy organizations, confidentiality is vital and necessary at every stage, particularly during project closure when the project's performance is evaluated according to objectives specified in project approval documents or expectations. The use of project documents is to record for future learning, including in unofficial meetings to determine factors leading to success. The synthesis of guidelines from all four universities found the guidelines to have the same model of reflecting results from operations for presentation to internal and external units to gain experience and utilize results as models for other units. In closing this project, the data were indicated to have been used in every activity. Therefore, human resource officers need to be cautious in presenting information to the public, because results from the operations may include personal data. Data confidentiality classifications may become leaked to the public. Hence, workers need to exercise caution to prevent disclosure of information to uninvolved people. At the same time, disclosure of information is highly important and permissible if permitted by the data owner. Violations of confidentiality may lead to violations of ethics and laws. According to the *Personal Data Protection Act B.E. 2562* (2019) announced in the Royal Thai Government Gazette on 27 May 2019, the main content of the Act concerns collecting, using or disclosing sufficient personal data to meet needs and in a suitable, transparent, and accountable manner under the scope of working within the organization's authority and duties. In using or collecting data, consent must always be obtained from data owners beforehand. And in using or collecting sensitive personal data such as data on ethnicity, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, sexual behavior, criminal records, health, disability, labor union information, genetic data, biological data or any other data with effects on the personal data owner, explicit consent must be obtained from the personal data owner, unless the data is to be used or disclosed on other lawful bases for processing personal data in compliance with personal data protection laws on sending or transferring personal data overseas, including penalties in legal provisions. The Personnel Management Association of Thailand (PMAT) in collaboration with human resource management institutions, associations, and clubs, has specified human resource officer ethics as human resource management guidelines (Personnel Management Association of Thailand, 2005). In using and disclosing personal and organizational data, human resource officers must respect and maintain the confidentiality of personal data obtained from employment without using or disclosing personal and organizational data illegally, except when performing duties or when such acts are approved. Human resource officers must not use or seek illicit gains from accessing the organization's information by using personal positions or duties. Furthermore, human resource officers must be cautious and consider copyrights before disclosing personal and organizational data to others. At the same time, the findings were consistent with the findings of Csillag (2019), who studied the issues of ethical conflicts and moral uncertainty in the human resource management profession and found the most frequent human resource management conflicts in Hungary to consist of termination of employment, disciplinary action, recruitment, and corporate culture. Therefore, to reduce these conflicts, human resource management ethics need to be added because, in current management work, human resource officers continue to lack knowledge of organizational ethics. At the same time, Simões et al. (2019), who studied unethical work contexts in human resource management with an aim to study awareness in the work of human resource officers of lack of ethics, found human resource officers to have committed ethical violations in cases involving discrimination and non-consideration of the benefits of others. These unethical work behaviors gained less acceptance than the view that organizations lack corporate social responsibility.

### **5.4 Utilization of research findings**

The findings of this study can be used as guidelines for policy formulation, human resource management development processes, and a knowledge base for future research focused on integrating ethics with human resource capacity development in order to build tangible and sustainable happy organizations in the future as follows:

1. In developing systematic approaches to promote ethics within organizations, particularly in the dimension of honesty and fairness, ethics should be integrated into all organizational processes, not limited to specific departments, but applied organization-wide to foster an organizational culture that adheres to ethical frameworks to ensure that operational impacts on all stakeholders are considered.
2. In enhancing the competencies of human resource personnel through the ethics of diligence and commitment to self-development, the findings can be applied in the design of staff development programs that focus on both skill development and the cultivation of professional ethics, which will enable HR personnel to develop higher competencies and capabilities in driving organizational missions with quality and professionalism.

3. In strengthening knowledge and understanding of ethics related to confidentiality and appropriate information disclosure, training or internal communication guidelines should be established to raise awareness and foster correct understanding of this ethical dimension among personnel at all levels. Legal and ethical considerations regarding data confidentiality should be emphasized to reduce the risk of data breaches and errors in operational processes.

4. In expanding and developing a model for promoting HR professional codes of ethics, the findings can serve as a best practice model for extension other universities or organizations that have not yet participated in Happy Workplace initiatives, so the HR professional code of ethics can be applied as a key tool in building a sustainable culture of happiness within these organizations.

5. In comparing and studying the success factors of Happy Organizations in the university context, these findings can be used as a basis for designing comparative research between organizations that have implemented the HR professional code of ethics to drive Happy Organizations and those that have not. This can help analyze key factors and approaches contributing to success and lead to the development of ethical human resource management practices that are both adaptable and applicable across various organizational contexts.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The implementation of a code of conduct for human resource officers in projects for a happy workplace in autonomous universities employs three significant ethical principles. Dimension 1, Ethics of Honesty and Fairness, is the basic ethical principle as the foundation of good thinking and morality in mind and heart, resulting in the behavior of ethical people in every dimension. If people have ethics and honesty in their behavior, every action will have a positive effect on fair conduct and non-discrimination, with equality in every process of creating happiness. Dimension 2, Ethics of Diligence, Determination, Knowledge Development, and Ability Leading to Professional Excellence, is considerable and necessary for human resources professionals who play a role in creating organizational happiness. Human resources professionals need to constantly study, research, and develop themselves, because the benefits will be passed on to personnel throughout the university. Finally, Dimension 3, Ethics of Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information, is a code of conduct governed by law and ethics. Human resources professionals should be aware of the importance of personal information and be careful to prevent infringement. Any violation may lead to penalties under the Personal Data Protection Act.

In addition, the study recommends the development of systematic and continuous processes to promote ethics within organizations while expanding the application of these practices to other departments or organizations interested in ethical human resource management. This approach aims to foster the creation of genuinely happy and sustainable organizations in the long term.

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