

# **Contemporary Global Issues in Human Resource Management**

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# Contemporary Global Issues in Human Resource Management

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# Foreword

As is known, today, humans are among the most vital resources for all types of organizations that endeavor to survive in a hyper-competitive environment. However, effective management of humans and other valuable resources in an organization is also significant. In the literature, there are precious scholarly resources on Human Resources Management (HRM) issues from a more classical perspective. However, as is known, we are living in an age described by various names such as the “age of computers,” “digital age,” “digital era,” “knowledge era,” “technological age,” etc. Therefore, understanding the requirements of this new era and adapting HRM processes to these new requirements seem crucial. However, majority of the literature that recognized the significance of the digital age seems to be based on interactions between requirements of the new era and organizational structures, organizational leadership, etc., neglecting the issues associated with HRM in this new age to a great extent.

Therefore, without completely ignoring traditional issues, this book provides valuable insight into HRM in this new era. In addition to including certain relatively traditional issues on HRM such as “discrimination,” “diversity management,” “ethics,” and “work–family balance”; the book also includes certain contemporary and timely issues such as “agile workforce,” “digital transformation,” “globalization,” “human resource information systems,” “industry 4.0,” “knowledge-intensive firms,” “knowledge transfer,” etc. within the context of HRM. Thus, the current book has a big potential for bridging an important gap in the field. Furthermore, contributors to the book are from entirely different countries such as Australia, Colombia, India, Italy, Malaysia, and Turkey, which would help the acquisition of a global perspective by the readers on these current developments in the field.

No wonder there will be other books and articles in journals in the future that would endeavor to link HRM and the requirements of the digital age. However, it is inevitable that this book will be among the most beneficial initial steps in a long and arduous period of time. Finally, I also hope that the current book will create various benefits for HRM practitioners as well as individuals on the scholar circles.

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# Introduction

*Mehmet Ali Turkmenoglu and Berat Cicek*

Over the last few decades, we have been witnessing macro, meso, and micro-level transformations in many areas of the modern world. These include, but not limited to, technological, societal, demographical, economic, environmental, political, legal, and cultural transformations. As a result of these transformations, tougher competition has become an issue for businesses around the world. This rivalry has forced firms to change the way of operating business. The literature suggests that human resources emerge as a critical solution in handling the rivalry. Therefore, it can be argued that firms and employees have noticed the value of humans in the workplace.

As a result, human resources management studies have been attractive to business and academic environments to solve problems at work. For instance, globalization has enabled employees to migrate to other countries, and this situation allowed employees to work in a culturally different work environment. Migrating to other countries has created both positive and negative consequences, for example, employers have obtained the talented employees they required, and employees have reached the desired labour market. Employers and employees have benefited from technological developments immensely. Nevertheless, it is argued that technology has deteriorated human relations.

Furthermore, ageing has become a significant issue for employers rapidly changing the environment, especially adapting new changes, decreased performance, and absenteeism. Opposed to ageing issues, having a rising and modernized education level created opportunities for finding better employees and employers. Political and legal changes, for example, minimum wage, maximum working hours, and union rights, have guaranteed employees' working conditions and rights. In this respect, researches on human resources have focused on employees' work-related as well as personal life issues.

Thus, there is a vast amount of research carried out both by professionals and academics to keep up with these rapidly developing environmental conditions. Theories related to human resources management are discussed in this book from different perspectives. In this sense, the book is expected to both expand the relevant literature and offer practical ideas. This book covers current and future changes, issues, solutions of human resources management from an improving, critical, innovative, and contemporary standpoint. Therefore, this book consists of 15 chapters written by academics who are experts in the human resources management field.

## Structure of the Book

This book consists of 15 chapters, each unique in human resources and dealing with different perspectives. The book begins with the first chapter entitled “Contemporary Career Approaches for the Needs of Today’s Individuals and Organizations” by Berat Cicek from Muş Alparslan University, Turkey. In this chapter, he examined the concept of career, which is one of the most significant functions of human resources. Toward the end of the twentieth century, restricted models, in which individuals work in a workplace in a classical manner, have been replaced by more flexible models. Due to certain reasons such as changing environmental conditions, increasing education levels, and the impact of employee’s values on his/her work life, individuals’ work–life have been dramatically changed. Therefore, some career approaches oriented for these changing conditions and current requirements have been proposed by both academicians and professionals. These approaches mostly include removing workplace limits, offering the opportunity to work from anywhere, using various skills at different departments without any limitations. Basing on the aforementioned changes in theory and practice, this chapter investigates up-to-date career approaches in a holistic manner. In this context, the background and practicability of these theoretically framed approaches are also discussed in the present study.

The book continues with the second chapter entitled “Exploring Appearance-based Discrimination in the Workplace” by Mehmet Ali Turkmenoglu from Muş Alparslan University, Turkey. In the chapter, he examined appearance-based discrimination in the workplace. He argues that modern society is exalting beautification and good looking, which affect not merely social relations but also the process of employment. It is argued that employees who have ‘good looking’ are recruited, paid more, and promoted rapidly, while those who have ‘wrong looking’ discriminated against. Therefore, the chapter explores how individuals encounter discrimination in the workplace due to their appearance during the decision-making process of employers. It emerges from the literature that discriminating based on appearance is not illegal in almost all countries. However, it is publicised by lawsuits against employers. There are several measures that need to be taken at different levels in order to forestall discriminatory practices. At the individual level, an embracing attitude should be internalised. A merit-based recruitment strategy should be adopted by employers. Finally, new anti-discrimination laws and regulations must be passed by authorities to tackle with ugly discriminatory practices.

Chapter 3, entitled “Diversity Management: Revealing the Need for a Context-specific Approach” is presented by Duygu Acar Erdur from Beykent University, Turkey. She focuses on diversity management, which became a noteworthy topic in human resource management in recent years. Emerging in the United States, diversity management has gained remarkable popularity and started to diffuse globally. However, as it is an Anglo-Western concept, its universality and transferability to other national contexts are questionable. Providing evidence from the Turkish context, her chapter discusses that diversity management needs a context-specific approach. Qualitative findings derived from a focused group interview with a diversity association in Turkey reveal that macro-contextual determinant

such as historical background, demographic structure, politics, legislation, culture, the religion of a country shapes the diversity management understanding and influence the adoption of related practices. Thus, rather than assuming it as a ready-made and a universal practice, diversity management should be handled by considering the context-specific realities, sensitivities, tensions through a local discourse that is responsive to the contextual differences.

Chapter 4, entitled “Work–Family Life Balance in the Changing Business World” is provided by Meral Erdirençelebi from Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey. She argues that in recent years, preparations for the transition from the Post-industrial society to Community 5.0 have been continuing at full speed. The change in this process necessitates changes in the roles and structure of the labour force in societies. The conflicts in the work and family life spaces take place in two sub-dimensions, namely ‘work-family conflict’ which is directed from work to family and ‘family-work conflict’ which is directed from family to work. The dominant aspect of the work–family conflict is often seen as work life. The conflict between work and family life leads to individual, organisational and familial consequences. In order to eliminate these negative consequences, the individual, the organisation, and the family have a number of tasks. Effective communication with the social support of the organisation and the family they are members of is of great importance for individuals not to experience work–family conflict.

Chapter 5, entitled “Human Resources Information Systems: A Recent Literature Survey” is written by Emrah Bilgic from Kayseri University, Turkey. He illustrates that with the advent of technology and science, the business environment will keep changing very fast. Today Information Technology (IT) is used in almost all business applications. The most important improvements are being realized at the management side since IT is fully supporting decision making processes now. Human Resources Management (HRM) is being affected by IT, such as web-based technologies and intelligent systems, and these systems make HRM much more effective. Today’s HRM-related software does not just deal with payrolls, and they also include recruiting and record-keeping, training, and performance appraisal, which has transitioned HRM from task-oriented to people-oriented. Today, Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) and electronic HRM (e-HRM) are being used in many organizations all over the world and play a strategic role in decision-making processes for effective and efficient HRM. His study investigates the recent literature on HRIS, e-HRM, and Decision Support Systems in HRM to identify the improvements and recent debates on contemporary Human Resources Management.

Chapter 6, entitled “Digital Transformation and Creation of an Agile Workforce: Exploring Company Initiatives and Employee Attitudes” is provided by Deepanjana Varshney from Jain University, India. The focus of the chapter is the digital transformation, which is a much prevalent process being practised in the different spheres of the business sectors. This transformational framework has been made possible by the extensive use of digital technologies. Nevertheless, companies are serious regarding the digital transformation process but hesitate in their stock of workers possessing digital abilities. The building up of dexterous teams is of paramount importance in achieving goals. In the research, there has been an examination of the techniques and methods used by select companies

to encourage and develop their employees to become attuned with the digital transformation processes implemented. She has also conducted an exploratory study to identify the sophisticated techniques used by most new companies on their workforce to upgrade their digital awareness and capabilities. Furthermore, in doing so, a model has been developed to sustain, evolve, and ultimately to transform the employees in the digital era.

Chapter 7, entitled “Human Resource Management in Knowledge Intensive Firms” is presented by Mustafa Doruk Mutlu from Yozgat Bozok University, Turkey. The chapter introduces human resource practices in contemporary knowledge-based organizations. Such organizations are called “knowledge-intensive firms,” which are distinct from traditional organizations as their main focus is innovation. These firms employ knowledge-oriented workers named as “knowledge workers” whose main task is to find creative solutions to complex problems and create new knowledge. Knowledge workers are well-educated experts, and their nature of work includes complexity, creativity, and analytical thinking. Such workers are the most important resource of knowledge-intensive firms, as they own the means of production. In this regard, attracting, retaining, and motivating knowledge workers have become crucial for knowledge intense firms to gain competitive advantage. Having these workers in hand, human resource management practices also differ in knowledge-oriented organizations. His chapter aims to introduce such contemporary practices and inform the reader about the strategies in attracting, retaining, and motivating knowledge workers in organizations.

Chapter 8, entitled “Human Resource Development Requirements in Industrial Revolution 4.0” is written by Mandy Mok Kim Man from the University of Reading, Malaysia. She depicts that in the Industry 4.0 arena, human resource management and development is an important task for public and private sectors to prepare sufficient and skilled human resources for organizations’ daily works, company operations, and agencies’ management and administration activities. Long-term investment on the employees to upgrade their knowledge, abilities, and skills will, in turn, increase their productivity and organization’s performance. Employees with new technological knowledge and technical skills will be able to contribute to their organizations and directly to the nations to boost the economy. This chapter begins with the discussion of human resource development in the advanced, developing and less-developed countries, and the importance of science, technology, innovation (STI) in the Industry 4.0 revolution. The second part of the paper highlights human capital’s importance on a nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Lastly, the chapter proposes some recommendations to overcome the challenges faced in human resource development and ends with a conclusion.

Chapter 9 entitled “Addressing Training and Development Bottlenecks in HRM: Facilitating a Paradigm Shift in Building Human Capital in Global Organizations” is presented by Ramnath Dixit from Symbiosis International (Deemed University) (SIU), India and Vinita Sinha from Symbiosis Centre of Management & Human Resource Development of Symbiosis International University, India. Their chapter discusses key training challenges that organizations need to confront with the objective of building a robust human resource management system. Given the dynamics of the current business environment, training



and development have become an indispensable function in global organizations. Building an effective human capital that contributes to continual organizational growth has become the established norm to survive in a competitive business landscape. However, the training and development function is often rendered ineffective on account of various bottlenecks existing in the organization. Addressing these bottlenecks is quintessential in ensuring the creation of a performance-driven human capital. The goal of their chapter is to draw attention to the training impediments that hinder organizational growth and to diagnose the underlying causes for the same. The chapter concludes with recommendations that organizational decision-makers can leverage in their quest to strengthen the human capital by leveraging their training and development infrastructure optimally.

Chapter 10, entitled “Educating the Global-Minded Business Professional and Manager” is written by Luis Miguel Bolívar from Universidad Tecnológica de Bolívar, Colombia. In the chapter, it is argued that one of the main concerns in human resource management around the world is how education is encouraging the understanding of global issues, cultures, technological changes and social trends to make appropriate decisions in firm management. The chapter aims to illustrate the main issues in international business theory and practice that need to be considered in configuring a global-minded curriculum that is able to produce global-minded human resources. Hence, to determine what inputs must be considered in building an exceptional curriculum and successful educational strategies, we observe the assertions from three perspectives: first, the contributors to the International Business (IB) and the multinational enterprise (MNE) theory; second, we explore the stakeholders’ perspective, who see the benefits and assume the consequences of education in the field; and third, we review the researchers who in recent years have studied the problems and trends of the discipline.

Chapter 11, entitled “Dealing with Contemporary Failings of Ethics, Training, and Wellbeing: A Developmental Foundation of Authentic Relations” is written by Joseph Crawford and Matthew Knox from the University of Tasmania, Australia. They suggest that the contemporary HRM sector is faced with continual leadership challenges. Unethical behavior in leaders is not the norm, but it is also not the exception. In addition, programmes to develop better leadership have largely failed to create more effective leaders. The result: Employee and follower wellbeing have not seen its best days. In the chapter, authentic relationships comprising authentic leaders and authentic followers are posited as a solution. The call is for more rigour, in theory, underpinning leadership development programmes, assurance of such programmes, and embedding ethics into the core of what leadership developers do.

Chapter 12, entitled “A Sociological Perspective for Understanding the Transition to Retirement” is provided by Pelin Önder Erol from Ege University, Turkey. She demonstrates that the human life course is shaped by a set of consecutive roles, such as being a worker, a spouse, and a parent in a standard biography. However, being instantly disengaged from any of these roles may have devastating effects on people’s lives. This discontinuity not only influences the very dynamics of the meaning of working but also causes ageing labour force to be excluded from the market economy. Experienced workers are drained from the pool of

labour force just because they are old. Her study aims at focusing on the effects of compulsory retirement both upon an individual and upon the structure, through the lenses of Political Economy of Aging (PEA) and Human Resources Management (HRM). The PEA perspective proposes a tripartite relationship among state (politics), market (economy), and individual (society), while the HRM perspective provides an insight of the effective use of workforce from different generations, including older generation.

Chapter 13, entitled “The Future of Seafarers and the Seafarers of the Future from the Perspective of Human Resources Management” is provided by Aziz Muslu from Ordu University, Turkey. He suggests that the impact of technologies is increasing in shipping management; on the other side, the importance of the human element has also increased. IMO has introduced regulations governing the training and social rights of seafarers. MLC 2006 has been an important improvement for the social rights of seafarers. Preventive measures for workplace bullying were started on ships. The safety regulations of STWC Manila 2010 have brought some improvements in the industry. The maritime industry will face some absolute changes brought by industry 4.0, such as IoT, artificial intelligence, cloud technology, and blockchain, although it is unclear yet what sort of changes will occur in manpower labour markets. The main purpose of the study is to determine how, from where, and how many seafarers will be demanded onboard in the future. Prospects, futurists’ approaches, opinions of sector representatives, and research reports are evaluated, and the future of seafarers is discussed in this study.

Chapter 14, entitled “Understanding Organizational Culture and Managing the Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer: A Case Study on Japanese Firms and Their Business Affiliates in Malaysia” is presented by Wong Mei Foong and Shankar Chelliah from University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia. Their chapter provides an insight into how the Japanese management style shapes the unique organizational culture in Japanese business affiliates in Malaysia that leads to an effective cross-border knowledge transfer. The focus of the chapter is on three main aspects, namely: Japanese organizational culture, their business affiliates’ learning intent, and the effectiveness of cross-border knowledge transfer. There are also three characteristics of Japanese organizational culture discussed in the chapter, such as intensive and extensive job training, and employee involvement and human relations, and Japanese management leadership style. The result of the case study of Japanese firms’ knowledge transfer to Malaysia shows that their unique Japanese organizational culture does improve cross-border knowledge transfer and that managers could focus on a few key points that could help them with their human resource management to ensure a more effective knowledge transfer.

Chapter 15, entitled “Human Resources Management in Non-Profit Organizations: An Effective Approach to Manage Volunteers” is written by Mohammed Aboramadan from the University of Milano Bicocca, Italy. He suggests that it is frequently believed that volunteers are central to the functioning of non-profit organizations. Volunteers perform their responsibilities for the non-profit organization only because they care about its beneficiaries; however, a vital part is played by HR in facilitating their involvement, dedication, and efficiency. Previously, non-profit organizations concentrated on developing and executing their

objectives for the future; however, they are now starting to accept the significance of adopting a more professional approach regarding managing the volunteers to accomplish those objectives. In this regard, the purpose of the chapter is to: (1) analyze the factors that encourage volunteering in non-profit organizations; (2) offer theoretical anchoring through which it can be comprehended how HR practices draw, involve and sustain volunteers; (3) describe the HR practices that are most appropriate for volunteers; and (4) offer the pathway for subsequent research regarding how HR and volunteering are related to each other.

As seen above, the book covers a wide range of issues in the human resources management sphere from diverse scholars. We received 36 chapter proposals, after careful consideration and two double-blind review process, only 15 chapters were successful in being included in the project. The book incorporates international contributors from Australia, Colombia, India, Italy, Malaysia, and Turkey. We hope human resources professionals, managers, executives, researchers, academics, and educators who are interested in HR issues will benefit immensely from the book.

## **The Objective of the Book**

This book aims to examine not only attitudes, behaviors, experiences, expectations of employees, and employers about HR Management but also rapidly changing business environments such as globalization, digitalization, and the spread of knowledge and economic, social, and sociological changes. In this context, we aim to contribute to the field by shedding light on the current trends of Human Resources practices. The book focuses on especially workplace issues that employees encounter before, during, and after employment, for example, discrimination, ageing, conflicts, emotions, ethics, digitalization, participation, and work–life balance. This book does not only expands the literature but also increases awareness among practitioners as the chapters investigate related to mentioned issues with an international, interdisciplinary, and critical point of view.

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