

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ANALYSED FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF THIRD EUROPEAN SURVEY ON WORKING CONDITIONS FROM 2000 AND SIXTH EUROPEAN WORKING CONDITIONS SURVEY FROM 2015

Olivia Roxana Popescu
Lecturer Phd. , “Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu-Jiu

Abstract

In the last ten years, in both the UK and USA, the vocabulary for managing the employment relationship has undergone a change. ‘Personnel management’ has increasingly given way to ‘human resource management’ (HRM) or, better still to ‘strategic human resource management’. Nor is this shift exclusively confined to those followers of fashion, the commercial management consultants. It may be charted first in the writings of US academics and managers (for example, Tichy et al., 1982; Fombrun et al., 1984; Beer et al., 1985; Walton and Lawrence, 1985; Foulkes, 1986). Quickly, however, the term was taken up by both UK managers (for example, Armstrong, 1987; Fowler, 1987) and UK academics (for example, Hendry and Pettigrew, 1986; Guest, 1987; Miller, 1987; Storey, 1987; Torrington and Hall, 1987). By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the floodgates were open. The more broadly defined field of International Human Resources Management is about understanding, researching, applying and revising all human resource activities in their internal and external contexts as they impact the process of managing human resources in enterprises throughout the global environment to enhance the experience of multiple stakeholders, including investors, customers, employees, partners, suppliers, environment and society. [1]

Keywords: *Management, Human Resources, Global economy, organizations, working conditions.*

As the global economy expands, as more products and services compete on a global basis and as more and more firms operate outside their countries of origin, the impact on various business functions becomes more pronounced. [2] Practitioners in all business functions must develop the knowledge, skills, and experience in the international arena which will enable them and their firms to succeed in this new environment. This new reality is just as true (if not more so, as this book will demonstrate) for the HRM function as it is for other business disciplines, such as finance or marketing, which often get more attention. [7] The purpose of this article is to describe the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for the successful management of the IHR function, a function that is increasingly performed by all employees in companies, including HR professionals (in the HR department), managers and non-managers. [1]

In the case of Human Resources Management, internationalization can take many forms. For practical purposes, HR managers in most types of firms can or will confront at least some

aspects of internationalization. This is to say, the globalization and technology factors that have led to there being “no place to hide” for business, in general, have also led to there being no place to hide for the HR professional. Human resource professionals can find themselves involved in – and therefore must understand – IHRM issues in any of the following possible situations (which include HRM positions in all types of firms, not just international HR positions within the types of firms usually focused on, working at the headquarters of an multinational enterprises or in the parent-country operations). In all cases, the international aspects of the situation increase the exposure and liabilities for HR managers and place on them ever-increasing demands for new, internationally focused competencies. This text is dedicated to helping develop the understanding and competencies necessary for HR managers to succeed (personally and professionally as business contributors) in the international arena. [1]

The discussion that follows is based on a comparison between the working conditions in European countries, based on the Third European Survey on Working Conditions undertaken by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions made in March 2000 [4] and Sixth European Working Conditions Survey made in 2015. [5] The Third European Survey on Working Conditions was carried out in each of the 15 member states of the European Union (EU) in March 2000. The survey questionnaire was directed to approximately 1500 active persons in each country with the exception of Luxembourg with only 500 respondents. The total survey population is 21703 persons, of which 17910 are salaried employees. The survey methodology is based on a multistage random sampling method called ‘randomwalk’ involving face-to-face interviews undertaken at the respondent’s principal residence. The analysis of work organization developed here is based on the responses of the 8081 salaried employees working in establishments with at least 10 persons in all sectors except agriculture and fishing; public administration and social security; education, health and social work; and private domestic employees. In order to describe the principal forms of work organisation across the 15 nations of the EU, a factor analysis and hierarchical clustering method have been used on the basis of the following 15 organisational binary variables: [3] • a variable measuring the use of team work; • a variable measuring job rotation; • two variables measuring autonomy in work: autonomy in the methods used; and autonomy in the pace or rate at which work is carried out; • four variables measuring the factors or constraints, which determine the pace or rate of work: ‘automatic’ constraints linked to the rate at which equipment is operated or a product is displaced in the production flow; norm-based constraints linked to the setting of quantitative production norms; ‘hierarchical’ constraints linked to the direct control, which is exercised by one’s immediate superiors; and ‘horizontal’ constraints linked to way one person’s work rate is dependent on the work of one’s colleagues; • a variable measuring task repetitiveness; • a variable measuring perceived task monotony; • two variables measuring the way quality is controlled: use of precise quality norms; and individual responsibility for quality control; • a variable measuring the tasks complexity; and • two variables measuring learning dynamics in work: learning new things in one’s work; and problem-solving activity. [3]

Main dimensions of work organisation presents factors of the multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). The first factor, accounting for 18% of the inertia or chi-squared statistic, distinguishes between Taylorist and ‘post-Taylorist’ organisational forms. Thus, on one side we find the variables measuring autonomy, learning, problem-solving and task complexity and to a lesser degree quality management, while on the other side we find the variables measuring

monotony and the various factors constraining work pace, notably those linked to the automatic speed of equipment or flow of products, and to the use of quantitative production norms. On another side we have, accounting for 15% of the chi-squared statistic, is structured by two groups of variables characteristic of the lean production model: first, the use of teams and job rotation, which are associated with the importance of horizontal constraints on work pace; and second, those variables measuring the use of quality management techniques, which are associated with what we have called ‘automatic’ and ‘norm-based’ constraints. The third factor, which accounts for 8% of the chi-squared statistic, is also structured by these two groups of variables. [4] However, it brings into relief the distinction between, on the one hand, those organisational settings characterised by team work, job rotation and horizontal interdependence in work, and, on the other hand, those organisational settings where the use of quality norms, automatic and quantitative norm-based constraints on work pace are important. On the third side of the analysis it is underscored that the simple dichotomy between taylorist and lean organisational methods is not sufficient for capturing the organizational variety that exists across European nations. [3]

The sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) underlined the complex reality with which Europe’s policymakers are confronted as they seek to build a fair and competitive Europe. The findings drew attention to the range and scope of actions that policy actors could develop to address today’s challenges. Through their studies it was discovered a series of positive developments in several areas: [6]

- Reported exposure to posture-related risks, while still significant at 43%, has declined through years

- Nine out of ten workers report being either well informed or very well informed about the health and safety risks related to the performance of their job.

- A high proportion of workers (58%) report that their manager supports them all or most of the time, and a very high proportion (71%) receive support from colleagues all or most of the time.

- The proportion of employees whose immediate boss (supervisor) is a woman has increased from 24% in 2000 to 33% in 2015.

- The majority of the workforce (58%) report being satisfied with the working time in their main paid job.

- One-third of employees (31%) work in a ‘high involvement organisation’, characterised by a high level of task discretion and a high level of organisational participation.

- Almost two-thirds of workers agree that the organisation they work for motivates them to give their best job performance: 39% ‘tend to agree’ and 24% ‘strongly agree’.

Issues relating to specific groups of workers [6]

- Gender differences remain important, both in work and in life outside work.

- Men more frequently work longer hours (48 hours or more – self-employed workers in particular) and women more frequently work shorter hours (fewer than 20 hours).

- Men report more paid working hours, but the total number of working hours (paid work in main and second jobs, commuting time and daily unpaid work) is higher for women than for men.

- Workers in smaller companies are less frequently informed about the health and safety risks related to the performance of their job.

- Young workers are more exposed to work intensity, shift work, adverse social behaviour and job insecurity than other workers.

- Workers over the age of 50 report lower prospects for career advancement and inadequate training provision.

Issues of concern[5]:

- Between 2010 and 2015, there has been a rise in the level of exposure to handling chemicals (from 15% to 17%) and infectious materials (11% to 13%).

- Many blue-collar workers remain exposed to high levels of work intensity, while reporting low levels of autonomy, job security and employment security.

- Almost one in six workers (16%) reports having been subject to adverse social behaviour – such as acts of violence, harassment and unwanted sexual attention – with potentially serious negative consequences for the workers concerned and for their continued participation in work.

- The proportion of workers who always experience the feeling of work well done has fallen sharply, to 40%. • Gender segregation is still prevalent, with two-thirds of employees (67%) having a male supervisor and 85% of male employees having a male supervisor.

- In 2015, 16% of employees ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that they might lose their job in the next six months – the same proportion as in 2010.

- Some workers experience poor job quality in a few or several domains, suggesting that actions are needed to support workers across their working life.

Conclusions

The adoption of new organizational forms adapted to specific national HRM is now clearly on the European political agenda.[9] Although there is increasing recognition at both the European and national levels of the importance of new forms of work organization for competitive performance, debate and policy initiatives are seriously hampered by the idea of a uniform direction of organisational change. This has impoverished the policy debate by precluding a serious discussion of the normative consequences of the alternative models that are available for achieving the combined goals of organisational learning and problem-solving. Furthermore, the debate up to now has failed to address in a serious manner the relation between organisational change and wider labour market and institutional setting.[2]

In this paper I have taken an initial step towards providing this mapping and relating it to widely recognised differences in the way labour markets are regulated across European nations. “Paid work contributes to quality of life both positively and negatively. Paid work provides income as well as identity and social interactions, but it may also be a source of negative experiences and risks. ...This underscores the importance of collecting more systematic information on the quality of paid work ...”

Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (aimed at identifying the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress) Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, 2010

References

1.Dennis R.Briscoe, Randall_S._Schuler, International Human Resources Management, Second edition 2004 by Routledge, ISBN 0-203-67977-6, pp.39-40

2. Panagoreț Andreea Anamaria, „Tendințe și perspective în evoluția managementului întreprinderilor mici și mijlocii din România”, Editura Bibliotheca, Târgoviște, 2012, ISBN: 978-973-712-687

3. LORENZ E., VALEYR A., ORGANISATIONAL INNOVATION, HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR MARKET STRUCTURE: A COMPARISON OF THE EU-15, THE JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS December 2005

4. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2001/working-conditions/third-european-survey-on-working-conditions-2000>

5. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys/sixth-european-working-conditions-survey-2015>

6. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2016/working-conditions-industrial-relations/developments-in-working-life-in-europe-eurwork-annual-review-2015>

7. Roxana Dobrițoiu *ASPECTS REGARDING THE ORIGINS OF THE POWERS' SEPARATION INSIDE THE STATE IN A HISTORICAL-JURIDICAL APPROACH*, Analele Universității „Constantin Brâncuși” din Târgu Jiu, Seria Științe Juridice, Nr. 1/2014, pp.83-98

8. Roxana Dobrițoiu, *BRIEF CONCERNING THE INSTITUTION OF THE OMBUDSMAN AND THE LAW ON ADMINISTRATIVE CONTENTIOUS. CERTAIN ASPECTS CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT*, Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Letter and Social Science Series, 2/2015, pp.60-66.

9. Ina Raluca Tomescu, *Strategia Uniunii Europene pentru punerea în aplicare efectivă a Cartei drepturilor fundamentale*, Analele Universității „Constantin Brâncuși” Tg-Jiu, seria Litere și Științe Sociale, nr. 2/2012, pp. 80-92.