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## **Diffusion of International Projects Ecosystem and Human Resources Management in Universities**

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### **Abstract**

Universities play the role of «knowledgeable» organizations and therefore do not always have time to adapt to new methods in training employees, improving their qualifications, and expanding the list of competencies. To remedy this situation, universities must review their policies and become an «ever-learning» organization in the field of human resources management to achieve their strategic goals. This article explains the impact of human capital management on the activity indicators of international project work using an example of Kahramanmaras Sutcu Imam University (Turkey), Hryhorii Skovoroda University in Pereiaslav, Muğla Sıtkı Kocman University (Turkey). The general **purpose of this study** is to consider the impact of human capital management as a concept in the organizational activities of three universities in the field of international academic design work. In particular, the study sought to examine whether management is related to human capital management on the results of international design work (quantitative aspect). **The methods** used in the research are method of analysis, analytical descriptive method, questionnaire, average statistics, the Pearson's product-moment correlation etc. **The results.** It has been proposed that performance evaluation

was not positively correlated with perceived employees» performance; besides, for performance effort, employee behavior in the workplace has important implications and HRM practices have an impact on individual employee behaviors. The authors believe that change management, international projects, project structure and management and project effectiveness are significant predictors of performance effort, and increased job satisfaction is also related to greater faculty members» operational performance effort. Change management is working with the organization's personnel, which helps to change the perception of change within the company, to ensure a positive attitude of personnel to innovations and prepare employees to receive new knowledge and apply it in practice. Implementation of changes is an ongoing process that accompanies a project, from the stage of its conception to the stage of achieving the planned results. During analyzing the results, including open-ended questions, the following statements can be distinguished as the basis for planning human resources management in universities in the aspects of initiating active international project work. The degree of resistance to change depends on the corporate culture of the company, the participation of employees in the implementation of changes is encouraged and supported by management at all levels in the organization, the involvement of the organization»s employees in the change process depends on the degree to which senior management supports the change, the speed and effectiveness of implementing changes depends on the existing IT platform in the organization and the degree of automation of business processes. The wider the automation, the faster you can transform the business, the process of transfer, exchange and accumulation of knowledge within the organization affects the effectiveness of the implementation of transformations, the presence in the organization of a manager / team for change management has a positive effect on the implementation of transformations. The analysis of the results showed that human capital management has a significant and positive impact on the

results of activity in the field of international academic design work. The researchers used the analytical descriptive method through a questionnaire to the sample of 150 staff from the universities. **Conclusions.** The results showed that the universities highly value the role of HR in the implementation of the mission and goals. However, practical exercises on personnel management and the implementation of human resources are not always implemented. Human capital management positively correlates with performance indicators in international academic design work. Recommendations on improvement of human resources management in universities are offered.

**Keywords:** human resources management, Universities, international projects, Pearson correlation, educational ecosystem.

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### **Introduction**

The advent of the era of liberalization and globalization, Industrial Revolution 4.0 has transferred the world around us. It has brought to centre stage the importance of human resources, more than ever before (Horwitz & Mellahi (2018); Stone & Deadrick (2015); Zhong et.al. (2016); Tung (2016). For social development the importance of human resources is a question of special consideration in contemporary globalizing society suffering a number of problems in its social and economic development (Terziev & Venelin, 2018). Some economists also recognized the «theory of labor value», in which, in addition to nature (natural resources), human is considered a determining factor. Due to its active properties, the human factor is the engine of every system.

Now, every country tries to increase their reputation, competition advantage and technological capacity. For this reason, research and development studies and centres go up day by day. Workers' capabilities and knowledge are factors that a company can use to boost its productivity (Ferrari, 2019).

Human resources capacity building is more important than previous. Human capital is an important construct in a variety of fields spanning from micro scholarship in psychology to macro scholarship in economics (Boon et.al., 2018). At research-intensive universities, building human resources management (HRM) capacity has become a key approach to enhancing a university's research performance (Nguyen, 2016).

The impact of Industrial Revolution 4.0 on employment will be a shift from labor-intensive to knowledge-intensive and technology-intensive production. For universities, Industrial

Revolution 4.0 requires much better training of human resources with new skills than in the previous decades, because the market requires human resources with more skills and better education levels (Vu & Le, 2019).

Universities, institutes, colleges and all the higher education institutions in general create some of the world's most important assets – knowledge and innovation. Nowadays dramatic changes in economic, social, political and cultural aspects urge for adequate response and mechanisms to strengthen society through lifelong learning. Work places have significantly altered in the last few decades. The ability to adapt to new situations and to work cooperatively in multi-cultural environment has become imperative. Knowledge is supplemented with creativity, while innovation has become a prerequisite for entrepreneurial success.

Often, universities act as «knowing organizations» and this turns out to be a mistake, because not only scientific knowledge does not stand still, this also applies to human resource management concepts. While few organisations have transformed themselves into «learning organisations» the concept has value as an aspiration, or guide, to what individual managers and universities can do to optimise the contribution of their staff – for the benefit of the individual and the university (McCaffery, 2018). In view of this, the concept of the «learning organization» can be life-saving for the university as an organization. It is also important in connection with further research on service sustainability at all levels has been increasingly stated within the past years (Nie et.al., 2019).

Wiley et.al. (1998) considered the value, rareness, imitability, and organization framework to examine the role that the human resource (HR) function plays in developing a sustainable competitive advantage. In the context of the development of information technologies that allow virtual communication, growing academic mobility, activity in the field of academic grants and project proposals, the sustainable development of the university should be considered in the context

of international academic cooperation to achieve the goals of the development of science.

Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall (1988) posits a reciprocal interdependence between a firm's business strategy and its human resources strategy. We are also trying to connect the personnel development strategy of the university, namely its educational potential, with the achievement of the strategic goals of the university in international project work. This is justified by the fact that HR activities are supported in order to reach the partial goals of HR as defined in the strategic map (Gabčanová, 2012).

Mercado-Salgado et.al. (2014) think that universities should consider managing IC. They are knowledge-based organizations and intangibles are the base of their actions and decisions; their activities must be integrated into the management of knowledge, innovation and service to society. In view of these findings, we view international design work as activities integrated into the management of knowledge, innovation and service to society.

Pandey (2018) considers manpower planning, proper selection of personnel, motivating, training, updating human skills, appraisal of performance, and caring for their welfare are all considered as important aspects of HRD. Education helps to improve all aspect of human life and make the person of resources of country. In this aspect, it is important for our study that universities should not only provide knowledge, but also receive it systematically, based on current trends in the development of science.

Khasawneh (2011) explores the status of human capital planning in higher education institutions in Jordan. The survey consisted of a pool of 38 items distributed over five dimensions (i.e. planning, analyzing, organizing, directing, and monitoring). The results of the study indicate that based on participants' perceptions, the higher education institutions under study have a strong level of HCP. Examples of HCP include identifying sources of relevant employment and workforce data, establishing competency models, training internal talent, updating and

ensuring the accuracy of all job descriptions, and establishing organizational learning practices that encourage employees to engage in lifelong learning.

This study is valuable to us by stating that the higher education institutions in Jordan under study have a strong level of HCP. We decided to check and compare human resources management in selected universities to compare trends in European and Arab universities. It should also be noted that studies on human resource management in Arab, Palestinian universities are systematic. So, we conducted a study in Islamic University, Al-Azhar University, Al-Aqsa University and concluded that the level of Palestinian universities' adoption of the criterion of concentration on human resources got a high degree to some extent.

Krasniqi & Mustafa (2016) made the conclusion that growth aspirations, managerial capacities and training are among the most significant variables associated with growth. In view of their findings, we examine how growth aspirations, managerial capacities and training (see questionnaire) affects the activity of university personnel reserves in international design work.

Researchers study the problems of training specialists in the field of human resource management at universities. So, C. Gaudet, Brown & Lunsford (2017) claim that undergraduate HRD programs are uniquely positioned to academically prepare entry-level professionals with the research-based knowledge, skills, and abilities required to develop the people needed for today's organizations.

Talla et.al. (2018) explores that making more efforts in the planning, management and development of human resources in universities, working to identify and develop the continuity of knowledge and qualifications of human resources through training courses and scholarships for the members of the academic body, working to increase the participation and empowerment of human resources in decision making, and work on the design and development of academic programs and

internal services according to the needs of students and to meet the labor market.

Important research is analysis of Värmland region in west central Sweden as a successful example of human capability planning and building through engaged learning with place (Garlick, 2014). He explores the human capital planning and actions that take into account capability enhancement at critical and sensitive stages of life and in critical and sensitive places of attachment appear to be useful initiatives in which universities could take the lead in their engagement with other formal and informal education sectors and with the wider communities in which they are located. This study gives practical recommendations on how to organize systematic work with leading stakeholders, so that academic staff has access to current trends in the professional industry identical to educational programs.

Despite the work of numerous authors, there are no studies linking university human resources management with active international project work. This is important due to the fact that the work is related to training. Unleashing the potential, the formation of relevant competencies of employees finds return in multiplying university influence in the international scientific arena. Therefore, it is important to prove that there is a connection between human resources management and the number of implemented international projects. Subsequently, universities will be able to analyze the effectiveness of human resource management through increasing or decreasing project activity.

Higher institutions as an educational organization that has a high hope to work professionally and to improve the quality of its employees should manage the existing resources (Wu, 2016).

### **Objectives of the Study**

An analysis of the sources of the university HR development vector indicates the predominant role of theoretical research, namely, the role, importance, prospects of personnel management, as well as the study of specific conditions (talent,

leadership) in HR organizations, the description of practical studies predominates (description of methods, experimental / innovative approaches, etc.). This indicates that universities highly value the role of HR in the implementation of the mission and objectives. However, practical studies of HR management, the implementation of human resources are not always implemented. There can be many reasons for this – from the lack of HR departments to the non-actualization of HR management problems in university strategic documents.

The overall goal of this study is to consider the impact of human capital management as a concept in the organizational activities of three universities in the field of international academic design work. In particular, the study sought to examine whether management is related to human capital management on the results of international design work (quantitative aspect).

The purpose of the article is to consider the impact of human capital management as a concept in the organizational activities of three universities in the field of international academic design work.

### **Research Methodology**

HRM practices have increasingly been studied in connection with distinctive organizational outcomes like employee process satisfaction, organizational performance, worker performance and employee commitment. Moreover, it has been proposed that performance evaluation was not positively correlated with perceived employees» performance. Besides, for performance effort, employee behavior in the workplace has important implications and HRM practices have impact on individual employee behaviors. Therefore, regarding to these conclusion, we state our first hypothesis on HRM practices within international project ecosystem and operational performance as:

*H1: Institutional HRM practices (seven practices) have a significant impact on faculty members» perceived operational performance effort.*

Recent studies show that job satisfaction and job performance have positive correlation that is when job satisfaction generates better operational performance. Regarding to these, we state the second hypothesis of this research as:

*H2: Increased job satisfaction within international project ecosystem is related to the greater level of faculty members» operational performance effort.*

The survey was carried in 3 universities in Turkey and Ukraine, during the September 2019-December 2020. A structured questionnaire was developed with questions based on faculty members» perception towards institutional existing HRM practices in relation with international project ecosystem. The questionnaire was distributed to 450 faculty members from different disciplines including social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences, educational sciences and engineering; and 406 completed questionnaires were received. The questionnaires were collected online. The sample consisted of 131 Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University, 196 Muğla Sıtkı Kocman University and 79 Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi Hryhorii Skovoroda State Pedagogical University, 211 males and 195 females, 297 married and 109 single faculty members, the age rank was 30-57, and the majority of faculty members having experience 10-15 years. The questionnaire for faculty members has been distributed in their local languages as Turkish and Ukrainian.

### **Results and Discussion**

This study uses seven independent variables as «Change Management», «Personal Characteristics», «Training and Development», «Work Environment», «International Projects», «Project Structure and Management» and «Project Effectiveness»; and one dependent variable «Operational Performance». All variables were rated on 5-point Likert Scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Details of the questionnaire instrument measures are discussed below:

– The Operational Performance effort was measured by the 8-item scale such as «You are happy to give more time to your

job» and «You can perform all what the authority instructs you to do». The scale reliability was 0.82.

– Training and Development System by 4 items scale, e.g., «The department systematically organizes staff training in the field of information and communication technologies to expand international project research staff to enable them to perform well», «The department provides training for international academic mobility», «I have the opportunity to innovate and develop work», «I have priority contacts of international colleagues and planned joint research» and Cronbach alpha was 0.72.

– Work Environment measured by 5-item scale, e.g., «I have the ability to adapt to working conditions», «Coordinate and collaborate with others to carry out work», «Be sure to do the work in accordance with plans and programs», «The department provides appropriate training for staff to enable them to perform well», «The department provides training for international academic mobility», «I have the opportunity to innovate and develop work», «I have priority contacts of international colleagues and planned joint research». Reliability of the scale was 0.67.

– Overall Job Satisfaction is measured by 3 items, e.g., «You are satisfied with your work environment» «You are happy to work here and satisfied with the job» and «You are satisfied with existing HR policies and practices». Scale reliability was 0.84.

– Change Management is measured by 4 items, e. g., «I feel the changes that are related to the innovation policy of my organization in my professional conditions», «I have the opportunity to propose to the management / administration the aspects that need to be changed / regulated», «I know what changes are occurring (were) in the management of my organization at this time», «I agree that change management is a process aimed at the successful implementation of planned transformations». Reliability of the scale was 0.83.

– Personal Characteristics is measured by 5 items, e. g., «I've participated in several trainings on the formation of emotional intelligence, which were conducted (organized) by your organization?», «I've had successful experience with adaptive communication in your organization?», «I've participated in several trainings on the formation of communication skills, which were conducted (organized) by your organization?», «I've participated in trainings on the formation of management skills, which were conducted (organized) by your organization?», «I've participated in several trainings on the formation of flexibility skills, which were conducted (organized) by your organization?». Reliability of the scale was 0.81.

– International Projects is measured by 2 items, e. g., «Your expectations from international projects promote are the wider use of appropriate scientific and technical information to meet nationally identified development goals» and «Your expectations from international projects are the development of national institutional capacity to use scientific and technical information to meet identified needs in order to ensure progress towards key national development goals». Reliability of the scale was 0.79.

– Project Structure and Management is measured by 4 items, e.g. In project management, evaluate the role of each component: «the adequacy of the project document as a guideline for the implementation of the project and evaluation of the results achieved», «the adequacy and usefulness of monitoring, self-assessment and reporting tools in terms of providing the project team and key stakeholders with the information necessary for decision-making», «whether the risks were identified in the revised project document implemented, or they were mitigated», «relevance of the project in terms of responding to new trends, technologies or other external factors». Reliability of the scale was 0.80.

– Project Effectiveness is measured by 3 items, e.g. Assess the role of each project performance indicator: «The usefulness of the project in promoting the increased use of appropriate

scientific and technical information to meet nationally defined development needs», «the effectiveness and usefulness of the project in terms of creating national institutional capacity in the use of scientific and technical information to meet identified needs», «the effectiveness of the project in terms of coordinating the extraction of appropriate scientific and technical information and the provision of appropriate know-how in the relevant technological field for the practical and effective implementation of the identified technologies.». Reliability of the scale was 0.78.

In Table 1, we present the means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients and correlations among the major study variables. The correlations between the study variables are in positive correlation and statistically significant.

*Table 1*

### Pearson»s Correlation Coefficients

Variables	Mean	SD												
Operational Performance	4.21	0.56	1	0.82										
Job Satisfaction	3.67	0.94	.467*	1	0.84									
Change Management	3.78	0.73	.491*	.469*	1	0.83								
Personal Characteristics	3.99	0.77	.509*	.501*	.699*	1	0.81							
Training and Development	3.83	0.76	.437*	.567*	.692*	.642*	1	0.72						
Work Environment	3.23	0.91	.377*	.693*	.544*	.673*	.633*	1	0.67					
International Projects	3.78	0.82	.394*	.588*	.476	.688*	.626*	.716*	1	0.79				
Project Structure and Management	3.44	0.79	.465*	.716*	.568*	.643*	.675*	.678*	.731*	1	0.80			
Project Effectiveness	3.79	0.84	.501*	.654*	.602*	.675*	.741*	.616*	.632	.681*	1	0.78		

Note. Items in upper diagonal are Cronbach’s reliability alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of dependent and independent variables.

Correlation coefficients are significant at \* $p < .001$ .

*Table 2*

**Operational Performance Regressed on HRM Practices and Job Satisfaction**

Independent Variables	Operational Performance			
	$\beta$	t-test	Sig.	VIF
Change Management	0.196	1.857	0.0667	2.39
Personal Characteristics	0.344	3.005	0.004	2.71
Training and Development	-0.062	-0.549	0.586	2.81
Work Environment	0.056	.0434	0.662	3.46
International Projects	0.09	0.626	0.034	2.56
Project Structure and Management	0.321	3.012	0.092	2.54
Project Effectiveness	0.303	.626	0.033	2.54
Job Satisfaction (Z-score)	0.305	2.398	0.006	2.47

In Table 2, we present the results of regression analysis of criterion and predicted variables. Change management, international projects, project structure and management and project effectiveness are found as significant predictors of performance effort. Increased job satisfaction is also related to greater faculty members’ operational performance effort. So, the first hypothesis is partially accepted because out of seven institutional HRM practices in international project ecosystem; change management, international projects, project structure and management and project effectiveness have a significant effect on faculty members» perceived operational performance effort. But, the second hypothesis has got full support and accepted as the increased job satisfaction in international projects ecosystem is related to the greater level of operational performance effort.

**Conclusion**

A project is an activity that is a coordinated process of performing interrelated actions and aimed at achieving a certain result. Change management is the direction of work within the framework of project activities in organizations, aimed at ensuring the implementation of changes. Change management allows you to improve the efficiency of project work by preparing

the staff and the business environment of the company to accept the changes that the project envisages. Change management is working with the organization's personnel, which helps to change the perception of change within the company, to ensure a positive attitude of personnel to innovations and prepare employees to receive new knowledge and apply it in practice. Implementation of changes is an ongoing process that accompanies a project, from the stage of its conception to the stage of achieving the planned results. Change management ensures the transition of the organization from the current state to the target

While few organisations have transformed themselves into «learning organisations» the concept has value as an aspiration, or guide, to what individual managers and universities can do to optimise the contribution of their staff – for the benefit of the individual and the university.

The successor of the Lisbon Strategy – the Europe 2020 Strategy has focused on the widely discussed priorities for smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. This policy is the logic continuation of the efforts to establish synergies between Bologna process and Copenhagen process and to initiate collaboration and sustainable networking of public authorities, universities, teachers in the European members and the partner countries outside the Europe. The present research involves countries that took part in the Bologna process – Turkey, Ukraine and Bulgaria; and is perceived as a way whereby the mutual understanding for the need to improve quality of life could be operationalized through mutual learning, knowledge exchange and comparison of good practices.

Human resource is one of the sources of institutional wealth. In the era of digitalization, globalization, 4.0 information revolution international relations, information technology, communication and knowledge transfer play a key role in achieving the goals that are expressed through the initiation of international academic projects.

In this regard, universities are faced with the task of initiating the active involvement of employees in international design work. This is possible with the help of the organization of human resources management in universities, since the results of our research reflect the positive dynamics in the satisfaction of the human resources management organization and the number of implemented international projects. During the questionnaire of teachers, questions were asked regarding motivation, satisfaction with teacher training, access to information technology, the need to formulate relevant competencies, etc.

Analysis of global trends, the necessary competencies for international project work make it possible to highlight relevant skills for designing teacher training in the framework of human resource management.

1. *Increasing need for innovation, growing need for cooperative and collaborative work, increasing virtual work* require skills such as intercultural skills, language skills, time flexibility, process understanding, ability to be compromising and cooperative, ability to work in a team, communication skills, networking skills, entrepreneurial thinking, creativity, problem solving, work under pressure, state-of-the-art knowledge, technical skills, research skills, process understanding, conflict solving, communication skills, ability to be compromising.

2. *Climate change & resource scarcity* – sustainable mindset, motivation to protect the environment, creativity to develop new sustainable solutions.

3. *Data security & personal privacy* - understanding of IT security, media skills, technology skills.

4. *Industrial Revolution 4.0* - ability to work in teams, virtual communication skills, networking skills.

5. *Migration and reverse migration (also referred to as «brain circulation»)*, *the ascendancy of emerging markets, the demand for people with a global mindset, and the worldwide war for talent* – ability to transfer knowledge, leadership skills, intercultural skills, research skills.

During analyzing the results, including open-ended questions, the following can be distinguished statements as the basis for planning human resources management in universities in the aspects of initiating active international project work: the degree of resistance to change depends on the corporate culture of the company, the participation of employees in the implementation of changes is encouraged and supported by management at all levels in the organization, the involvement of the organization's employees in the change process depends on the degree to which senior management supports the change, the speed and effectiveness of implementing changes depends on the existing IT platform in the organization and the degree of automation of business processes: the wider the automation, the faster you can transform the business, the process of transfer, exchange and accumulation of knowledge within the organization affects the effectiveness of the implementation of transformations, the presence in the organization of a manager / team for change management has a positive effect on the implementation of transformations.

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### **Дифузія міжнародної проєктної екосистеми та управління людськими ресурсами в університетах**

#### **Анотація**

У статті пояснюється вплив управління людським капіталом на показники міжнародних проєктів на прикладі Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University (Туреччина), Університета Григорія Сковороди в Переяславі (Україна), Mıgla Sıtkı Koşman University (Туреччина).

Загальна мета цього дослідження полягає в тому, щоб розглянути вплив управління людським капіталом як концепції в організаційній діяльності трьох університетів у сфері міжнародної

академічної проєктної роботи. Зокрема, дослідження мало на меті перевірити, чи пов'язане управління людським капіталом з результатами міжнародної проєктної роботи (кількісний аспект). Методи, використані в дослідженні: метод аналізу, аналітичний описовий метод, анкетування, статистичний, кореляція Пірсона тощо.

В ході експерименту було доведено, що поведінка співробітників на робочому місці має важливе значення для підвищення продуктивності, а практика управління персоналом впливає на поведінку окремих працівників. Управління змінами, міжнародні проєкти, структура та управління проєктом, а також ефективність проєкту вважаються важливими факторами прогнозування ефективності роботи. Підвищена задоволеність роботою також пов'язана з більшою продуктивністю працівників.

Управління змінами – це робота з персоналом, яка допомагає змінити сприйняття змін всередині, забезпечити позитивне ставлення персоналу до інновацій і підготувати співробітників до отримання нових знань і застосування їх на практиці. Впровадження змін – це постійний процес, який супроводжує проєкт від етапу його задуму до етапу досягнення запланованих результатів.

Під час аналізу результатів, у тому числі відкритих запитань, були сформульовані твердження про основи управління персоналом в університетах в аспектах активної міжнародної проєктної роботи. Ступінь опору змінам залежить від корпоративної культури. У компанії участь співробітників у впровадженні змін заохочується та підтримується керівництвом на всіх рівнях організації, залучення співробітників організації до процесу змін залежить від швидкості впровадження змін і розроблених адаптаційних стратегій. Впровадження змін залежить від існуючої ІТ-платформи співпраці в організації та ступеня автоматизації процесів: чим ширша автоматизація, тим швидше можна трансформувати процес передачі, обміну та накопичення знань всередині організації, що впливає на ефективність змін.

**Ключові слова:** управління людськими ресурсами, університети, міжнародні проєкти, кореляція Пірсона, освітня екосистема.