

CURRENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCES AND THEIR APPLICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Based on the authors' scientific cooperation, research results and teaching experience, the goal of the article is to analyse views on inclusion of new trends in human resources in teaching, to assess the nature of the novelty, whether it is a modern trend or a practical and long-term useful tool, diagnose the nature of the news and characterized new or changed roles of human resources at present in the Czech Republic and compare different approaches and practices in human resource management activities. The aim of the article is to present the main findings of the authors' semi structured interview survey on new trends in human resource management in selected organizations in Czech Republic and define the current challenges in HRM practice. The survey by semi structured standardized interviews was conducted during the years 2020 - 2022. The respondents were personnel managers of selected organisations in public and private sector. The relevant data were obtained from 32 personnel managers. The research questions are concentrated on present opinions on changes in HRM methods in private and public sector in the time of covid pandemic situation. The results show that in surveyed organisation are many changes in HRM processes which must be implemented in teaching HRM at universities.

Introduction

The covid pandemic situation and beginning of 4.0 they also brought a lot of new things to the practice of personnel management from the point of view of university teachers on human resources management there are many questions on. (Grenčíková, Kordoš & Navickas, 2021; Stareček, Gyurák Babel'ová, Makyšová & Cagáňová, 2021) Are today's management graduates (millennials) willing to take risks, have the necessary qualities, are they motivated by the study to acquire these qualities and will the school equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills? Educators should be able to answer these questions during the preparation and implementation of curricula. At the same time, they should be interested in how students are accepted through the internship, what the internship expects and requires from them. Many research studies have been carried out in this regard, but their application is often problematic. The pandemic period has had a significant impact on many business processes. It affected the work of top managers, who had to consider how they would manage companies in uncertain and unpredictable times, design and implement transitions from captured processes to new untested operations. Challenging tasks were placed on line managers responsible for putting new procedures into practice and directly managing and implementing them in practice. (Revutska, Maršíková, 2021)

Thanks to the pandemic, processes that had been going on in business for a long time and were implemented very carefully were immediately put into practice. HR took on the role of advisor

and coordinator of the implementation of these processes, when it was necessary to help management at all levels to keep motivated employees, to help implement new ways of working to ensure safety and health at work.

Teaching at secondary schools and universities must also be prepared for this fact, which should prepare flexible graduates within their teaching programs, in whose abilities and interest it will respond to unexpected situations and support flexibility as one of the key skills of HR professionals. They should be the bearers and supporters of new trends; they should always be one step ahead to prepare employees for change and at the same time they should be able to create conditions for a smooth and "safe" implementation of changes for employees. In addition to the classically introduced functions of human resources, new or modified functions are created that respond to current needs. We need to realize the need for the rapid introduction of technologies that we thought would be the music of the next unspecified future (Stachova, Stacho, Raišienė, Barokova, 2020). During the last pandemic period, HR professionals were often forced to brush up and update their knowledge of psychology (Troth, Guest, 2020), IT, health and law. And all this in a different changed context. Therefore, it is necessary to ask the question. In the division into key personnel activities, to present the new trends in human resources that we are currently encountering and are becoming very important.

1. Human resources activities

1. Creation and analysis of jobs, competency models and shadowing

Competence models have been used in companies for a long time. They are the connection between the company's strategy and the HRM, they must have a business strategy, they have an impact on the personnel strategy, they are reflected in the job description, they are used in the selection of employees and in their evaluation. Their use in the organization allows you to focus on the characteristics, qualifications, experience, knowledge, abilities, skills and personal characteristics needed to meet the goals of the organization and its profits. Today, sometimes come across the opinion that their time is limited and it will move to other more progressive forms of determining the necessary competencies. The benefits of using competency model in companies are indisputable for realizing the key company competencies, what competencies the organization needs to be successful, it is further reflected in the planning and development of employees, in the recruitment plan. A very important function of competency model is the unification of the language of human resources, managers and ordinary employees. (Strohmeier 2021, Šajgalíková, Copuš. 2020)

Competency model is defined as a list of characteristics, experience, knowledge, abilities, skills and personality characteristics that are needed to effectively perform the work tasks of a particular person. However, the problem is how to be able to implement the required competencies into practical life, how to equip existing and new employees with just the required characteristics needed to perform their work. Recently, shadowing has seemed to be the most effective. It is nothing completely new, the very principle of passing on practical experience is ancient, the whole system of masters and companions is based on it, it has been used by craftsmen for millennia. If the company has a well-established shading system, then it is one of the most effective, proven and also the cheapest ways to train new employees, the possibility of strengthening awareness of the company and its values among existing and potential employees. Why is shadowing so well received and recommended in current practice? It is a way of training during which the employee or external student follows an experienced colleague at work, which brings many benefits. These include gaining experience with minimizing mistakes, gaining instructions on how to do the job and how to avoid mistakes. At the same

time, the new employee gets to know the colleagues to whom he / she is connected or to whom he / she provides the results of his / her work. He will know the interaction between employees, established relationships and company hierarchy. He / she will gain informal relationships with future colleagues without unnecessary stress on the new employee. Working with an experienced colleague will help newcomers to penetrate corporate life. The biggest benefit of shading is gaining problem-solving experience. Therefore, it is important to select an experienced mentor in the shading program who is proficient in his profession and in the operation of the company.

2. Human resource planning and occupation of jobs (Collaborative recruitment, recruitment marketing).

Onboarding or entry process in order to try to attract qualified candidates, companies have recently begun to promote so-called recruitment marketing, which we can evaluate as one of the biggest HR trends of the recent period. Best marketing practices are currently being used to recruit new qualified employees, various marketing channels are being used, and key employees are being targeted. Thus, recruitment marketing is based on classic marketing with everything that shapes it. (Deichmann, Gillier & Tonellato, 2021)

This is, for example, a brand that reflects the specific corporate culture that the company declares in order to acquire just the employees it targets, the company can attract new employees to the personalities it presents, their motivation, goals and behaviour. When looking for employees, the company is looking for innovative ways of recruitment, trying to present the key values, benefits and benefits of the company throughout the recruitment communication. In this area, we can also encounter the concept of content marketing, which includes photos of the company, recruitment videos, blogs, infographics, eBooks, manuals, webinars. (Bejtkovský, Rózsa & Mulyaningsih. 2018; Habets, Van der Heijden, Ramzy, Stoffers, Peters, 2021)

Another no less important trend today is the so-called onboarding. Companies often focus primarily on recruitment. To be effective and to help get candidates who fit into the company. But as important as recruitment is onboarding, the start - up process and adaptation of new employees, organized in such a way that they work well and quickly, precisely so that the candidates fit in well. Preboarding is often used here. This is the period between the recruitment and the start of the employee, when there is sometimes a relatively long time when the candidate runs out of time and the company has to wait for newcomers. It's a chance to introduce myself to a new colleague and convince him that he made the right choice. The main role of the adaptation process has a direct superior, the role of HR is to set up the entire onboarding process so that the superior has a newcomer under control, but also to involve colleagues in the adaptation process.

In this, internal communication and cooperation between HR professionals and managers is important. To ensure the smooth running of the entry process, it is also possible to use modern technology of the so-called conversation robot, such as the Arnold robot, which provides feedback to managers and HR professionals on how the adaptation process takes place using short interactive chats. Over the course of 3 months, the newcomers will talk to Arnold about 7 onboarding topics. He will then provide the manager and HR specialists with a clear report. This tool is also suitable for the case when a newcomer decides to leave. This way, the company also gets information about why this happened and can prepare for similar situations next time.

3. Examples of others new trend in HRM

- Use of social networks
- Gamification on boarding and recruitment
- Chatbot in HR
- Sophisticated identification of the profession that best corresponds to the actual representation of skills, ie anthropological biotypology. (It is a very old method, but still rediscovered).
- Trends in IT boarding and robotics

Management of work performance and evaluation of employees

- Shift planning by employees themselves
- Psychodiagnosis "
- In the field of development - Arnold robot for measuring employee satisfaction
- Mindfulness to increase performance

Staff training

- Online education, online courses, webinars
- Self-learning organizations
- Virtual reality in education
- Experiential learning - team building in the form of seemingly real situations involving actors and an extensive staff

Employee care

- Being less at work - reduced working hours, which will increase the employee's efficiency and at the same time give him more time off
- The concept of free companies
- Out boarding
- Benefits - dog friendly / children friendly office, remote work

4. Goals and methodology

The goal is to analyse views on inclusion of new trends in human resources in teaching, to assess the nature of the novelty, whether it is a modern trend or a practical and long-term useful tool, diagnose the nature of the news and characterized new or changed roles of human resources at present in the Czech Republic and compare different approaches and practices in human resource management activities. The aim is to present the main findings of the authors' questionnaire survey on new trends in human resource management in selected organizations in Czech Republic and define the current challenges in HRM practice.

The survey by semi structured standardized interviews was conducted during the years 2020 – 2022 in online forms. The respondents were personnel managers of selected organisations in public and private sector mainly in Prague, Brno and Central Bohemian Region and West Bohemian Region. The relevant data were obtained from 32 personnel managers. The research questions are concentrated on present opinions on changes in HRM methods in private and public sector in the time of covid pandemic situation.

The results show that in surveyed organisation are many changes in HRM processes. All 32 interviews with personal managers in private and public administration shows new trends and approaches in HRM. Interviews was analysed and most of personnel management from small, medium and large companies are agree in many of new roles in HR.

5. Results and discussion

New trends in human resources are applied in practice faster and for human resources, functions arise that they had to adapt to quickly. They use techniques and products that free them from unnecessary administration, speed up processes while complying with all requirements.

During the pandemic, HR had to take on the new roles that the situation forced:

- a) Mentor of new technologies
- b) Manager of remotely connected teams
- c) Wellbeing manager
- d) Paramedic
- e) Data protection officer
- f) Change Coordinator

Characteristics of individual roles according to the respondents.

- a) **Mentor of new technologies.** The situation, where many employees were forced to work from home from day to day while keeping the company running, forced HR professionals to start using tools such as virtual meetings, shared files, remote project management and other tools that were previously part of office applications but were not used. Personnel had to learn to work with these tools themselves, so that as a mentor and lecturer they could pass them on to colleagues for wider use. These tools were then used for other personnel activities, i.e. recruitment of new employees, organization of virtual fairs, use of chatbots in HR, onboarding, etc. This period also changed the position of IT specialists in companies, to whom the new situation brought users and on the other hand users have stopped perceiving IT as someone who sometimes causes them complications and is unwilling to use the terminology they understand. Both sides immediately found common ground in areas where processes had to be applied quickly in practice.
- b) **Remote connected manager.** A successful manager achieves results through the effective work of his team. Teams that have clearly defined goals, are well organized and properly led, can achieve excellent results. These goals had to be achieved even when the teams operated in an online environment. Managers and HR professionals encountered the term Remote Team Management on a theoretical level before the pandemic. During the pandemic, the theory had to be put into practice quickly. With the help of audio and video conference calls, team chat, shared project documents, WBS mind maps, Gantt chart, the use of critical paths and other tools, project teams began to follow. This way of project management enabled team leaders to clearly measure and plan the time and productivity of team work, plan time and facilitate their work using checklists, time sheets, workflows, roles and user permissions, using integrated calendars. The systems enable comprehensive control and reporting of projects with the help of earned value, graphs, activity reports, time sheets and alerts. For the HR department, the use of RTM meant taking on the task of monitoring team activities in terms of "human capital" management, i.e. monitoring team members as individuals and responding in case of threat to avoid team breakdown, e.g. due to frustration at home, inability to meet with colleagues, reworking, uncertainties, etc.
- c) **Wellbeing manager.** Supporting all aspects of "employee well-being", including physical, mental, social and financial health, was essential for HR during the pandemic. The term wellbeing has so far been a term used by a small group of progressive HR

specialists. The critical period of covid and the reaction of people to it made it necessary to deal not only with the physical health of home office workers, but also to monitor their mental state, communicate government measures and their impact on, for example, critical infrastructure companies that had to be maintained. If possible, other organizations and the components that were necessary for the operation of the organization remained functional. Workers working from home and those who had to go to work were then provided with various communication tools to help, such as virtual interviews, micro-questionnaires, chatbots, corporate hotlines, psychological counselling. Wellbeing remains and is still used, in companies it takes the form of new safety rules with an emphasis on the physical and mental health of employees, company discounts on the purchase of pharmaceutical products, free vaccinations and, of course, life and group accident insurance. To support a healthy lifestyle, Kaufland is developing the "We Enjoy Health" program, which has twice won the Company for Health award. The program supports sports and relaxation activities, includes the creation of a modern workplace adapted to the needs of employees and emphasizes the balance between work and personal life. Philip Morris CR is running a global Health & Wellbeing program, which was introduced in 2018 and seeks to promote a healthy lifestyle, reduce stress and promote a work-life balance. This program is based on four pillars: prevention, exercise, nutrition and balance. Programs where employees can influence their working conditions and safety are also important. An example is Amazon, where they are constantly interested in employees' views on working conditions and safety in Safety Saves programs, where employees have the opportunity to come to their managers in person with ideas on how to improve workplace safety. They can also express themselves electronically, using software (Eureka), the third tool (Connections) is global and is used for internal satisfaction surveys. Philip Morris evaluates people's feedback on the environment in which they work. "As part of the Health & Wellbeing program, it also collects feedback on the work environment.

- d) **Healthcare.** At the time of the pandemic, the HR department also had to take responsibility for the application of government regulations concerning their implementation in the workplace. The employees also expected the company to take care of them so that they could perform their work safely, ensuring all the required safety and health conditions. This included plans for the location of workplaces, shift organization, monitoring the movement of people in the workplace, influencing the avoidance of unnecessary conflicts, ensuring disinfection, selection of suitable respirators and their distribution, ensuring appropriate tests whose results were electronically recorded, staff records and monitoring workers in quarantine and to provide compensation in the event of outages for such workers. Personnel had to demonstrate a significant dose of flexibility, physical and mental resilience, the ability to argue and negotiate, conflict management, and the ability to bear a high degree of responsibility for finance and health. Last but not least, it is necessary to mention the fact that the measures they enforced were not always positively received by management or employees.
- e) **Protector of personal data.** The pandemic measures were, among other things, a period that significantly affected the rights of citizens and the use of their personal data. This was done in the field of society as well as in the corporate field. In companies, this ungrateful role in the application of anti-epidemic measures was taken over by HR professionals, when it was necessary to intrude on the privacy of employees. Thanks to this new situation, many experts consider the protection of personal and digital privacy

of employees to be an issue that needs to be addressed in the future and specialized experts will need to be trained.

- f) **Changes coordinator.** The last two years have changed the perspective on many important life and social phenomena. People began to perceive their surroundings, neighbours, co-workers and representatives in a completely different way. Society has become more polarized and some situations that were previously only at the level of discussion have also emerged. In the corporate area, this has resulted in a flattening of the corporate structure, more responsibility is placed on project teams, salary policy is changing, more work is done and not completed work and completed projects are more appreciated. Formerly widely used micromanagement, i.e. the supervision of each employee and his performance, is becoming a thing of the past and the emphasis is more on the result. Companies with a strong corporate culture that take care of the work environment and people as the source of their success have survived. These changes are not and will not be easy to enforce, and if during the HR pandemic, the situation was handled with minimal and successful resources, the HR staff proved their worth and the need for companies to build strong HR departments.

Conclusion

The aim of the article was concentrated on analyses of examples in new views and approaches on inclusion of new trends in human resources in practice of human resources managers in companies in Czech Republic and obtain specific examples from different organizations to assess the nature of the novelty, diagnose the nature of the news and characterized new or changed roles of human resources at present in the Czech Republic and compare different approaches and practices in human resource management activities. The main findings of the semi structured interviews on new trends in human resource management in selected organizations in Czech Republic show the current challenges in HRM practice. All 32 personnel managers use new approaches in HRM. Many of them are using as necessity, for example “paramedic”. The results show that in surveyed organisation are many changes in HRM processes.

The covid pandemic situation and beginning of 4.0 they also brought a lot of new things to the practice of personnel management from the point of view of university teachers on human resources management and it is needed to integrate and incorporate these new approaches in topics of human resources lectures and seminars at universities. During the pandemic, HR had to take on the new roles that the situation forced - Mentor of new technologies, manager of remotely connected teams, wellbeing manager, paramedic, data protection officer, change coordinator,

New trends in human resources are applied in practice faster and for human resources, functions arise that they had to adapt to quickly. They use techniques and products that free them from unnecessary administration, speed up processes while complying with all requirements.

The research will be continued per enlarging interviews in organisation and by preparing online questionnaire for selected employees from private and public sector.

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