

Is HR in a State of Transition? An International Comparative Study on the Development of HR Competencies

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Abstract : Research Objectives: The roles and activities of human resource management (HRM) have changed a lot in the past years. Driven by a changing environment and therefore, new business requirements, the scope of human resource (HR) activities has widened. The extent to which these activities should focus on strategic issues to support the long-term success of a company has been discussed in science for many years. As many economies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) experienced a phase of transition after the socialist era and are now recovering from the 2008 global crisis it is needed to examine the current state of HR positioning. Furthermore, a trend in HR work developing from rather administrative units to being strategic partners of management can be noticed. This leads to the question of better understanding the underlying competencies which are necessary to support organisations. This topic was addressed by the international study "HR Competencies in international comparison". The quantitative survey was conducted by the Institute for Human Resources & Organisation of FH Wien University of Applied Science of WKW (A) in cooperation with partner universities in the countries Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. Methodology: Using the questionnaire developed by Dave Ulrich we tested whether the HR Competency model can be used for Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. After performing confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis for the whole data set containing all five countries we could clearly distinguish between four competencies. In a further step, our analysis focused on median and average comparisons between the HR competency dimensions. Conclusion: Our literature review, in alignment with other studies, shows a relatively rapid pace of development of HR Roles and HR Competencies in BCSS in the past decades. Comparing data from BCSS and Austria we still can notice that regards strategic orientation there is a lack in BCSS countries, thus competencies are not as developed as in Austria. This leads us to the tentative conclusion that HR has undergone a rapid change but is still in a State of Transition from being a rather administrative unit to performing the role of a strategic partner.

Keywords : comparative study, HR competencies, HRM, HR roles

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