

## ANALYSIS OF THE TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITIES AND THE NECESSITY OF REDESIGN OF THE EDUCATION

*We are witnessing a dynamically changing environment that imposes a new way of thinking and new competencies. Human resources activity is no exception. A number of factors shape its new look. Digitization, globalization, intelligent learning platforms, virtual teams, new jobs and dynamic jobs, social responsibility, burnout, fraud from candidates for job vacancies and many other trends require human resources leaders to initiate and support the changing environment. All this implies new competencies of human resources specialists. For this purpose it is necessary to redesign the contents of the universities syllabus and to reorganize the way of their creation and development.*

*JEL: M12; M5; M51; M53; O15; I21; I23*

### 1. Factors that shape the new look of the activities of human resource management (HRM)

Global changes have led to a number of changes in organization's behaviour, the content of competencies, respectively the syllabus in universities which develop new knowledge and skills. Among the main factors behind the global change in all areas of the modern world are globalization and digitization. Organizations have begun actively introducing software products and artificial intelligence into the labour process. They also changed their way of working. Instead of permanent staff, they prefer temporary staff.

It is "The Rise of the Contracted Workforce" (Prinzlau, 2016) (including temporary workers, independent contractors, consultants), suitable for specific projects. This in turn led to the creation of teams (real and virtual) involving people from different ethnic backgrounds, with diverse cultural traditions and behaviours. All these social and economic transformations we are witnessing undoubtedly change the state of the activities of human resources management.

The Deloitte's Report (Gamelearn, 2017) identifies the 10 trends that will shape the future of human resources departments. Among them are: modern, dynamic and networking

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organizations; constantly trained employees, talent acquisition; improving employee's professional experience, maintaining culture, engagement and motivation; introducing new ways of evaluating employees, searching for a new type of leadership; digitization of the human resources departments and introduction of artificial intelligence in the activity; Human Resources decision making based on Big Data; promoting diversity and inclusion; striking a balance between machines and workers.

In addition, results from one more study suggest that in the first quarter of 2009, the number of LinkedIn users was 37 million, while in the third quarter of 2016 it was 467 million (Statista, 2018). Facebook's active users in the fourth quarter of 2017 are 2 billion and 200 million. More and more people are looking for and finding jobs through social networks. "79% of job seekers use social media to find a job. This figure is increasing to 86% for young job seekers who are in the first 10 years of their careers" (Economy, 2018). 45% of job seekers use their mobile devices to look for work at least once a day (Economy, 2018).

The changing environment also influences the human resources training activities. "67% of people use their mobile devices to access training" (Elogic learning, 2017). "Approximately 77% of US companies offer online training as a way to improve the professional development of their employees" (Elogic learning, 2017). Although online training has often been underestimated, it has led to "42% increase in revenue for companies" (Elogic learning, 2017). More "In 2016, 98% of organizations said they would introduce videos as part of their digital learning strategy" (Elogic learning, 2017).

"Recently Evolv announced that its robots can view thousands of CVs and predict which employees are likely to stay in the company and which fit well in the environment" (Economy.bg, 2016).

The La Trobe University's robot named Matilda does one more thing – he reads the emotions of the candidates and on this basis judges who suits best to the position. At the same time, it takes care of the comfort and positive mood of the interviewed.

Robot Matilda uses 76 questions to assess the skills of candidates and draws up professional expertise. The duration of the interview is 25 minutes. The power and advantage of Matilda lies in the fairness and impartiality towards the candidates. Moreover, now it is not necessary to travel abroad for the interview for a vacancy. It is enough to include Skype.

The presented trends change the modern world, and thus the content and the nature of human resources activity, put requirements for new competences of the specialists in this field.

## **2. Proposal for a Competent Model of the Future Human Resource Management Professionals**

The changing environment has set new requirements for HR professionals. New job titles have emerged like: internal human resources consultant, talent acquisition specialist, supply manager in HRM, specialist digital selection of talent, specialist and analyst of e-learning, specialist of accountant of bonuses, employee satisfaction specialist, career development analyst, analyst of human resource management information system, wage analyst, coach, welfare specialist, organizer of social initiatives and other. There are signs showing that fundamental knowledge needs to be built on new ones that respond to global and digital trends.

A proposal for a model of the knowledge and skills of human resource specialists corresponding to future trends is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

A proposal model of knowledge and skills of human resources specialists in line with future trends

<b>Trends</b>	<b>Required competencies of human resources specialists</b>
Digitization of the recruitment and selection process	Knowledge and skills to work with software products to attract and select staff, skype interviewing skills, non-verbal communication skills, active communication skills with potential candidates in social networks, skills to attract suitable candidate using social networking .
Online education/e-learning	Knowledge and skills for resource provision of e-learning.
Develop social responsibility of business	Knowledge and skills for developing strategies for social responsibility, organizing social business initiatives, preparing social responsibility reports, conducting internal and external social audits.
Big Data in Human Resources and Business	Knowledge and skills to maintain and analyze data in human resources and business. Budgeting, control and audit in the field of human resources.
Virtual teams	Knowledge and skills for building virtual teams, supporting their activities through organizing video conference meetings.
Increased stress at work	Knowledge and skills for creating and developing employee welfare programs
The introduction of robots into the labor process	Knowledge and skills for selecting robots, Robots / people ratio analysis in the work process.
International teams	Knowledge and skills for behavior in an intercultural environment.
Cyber fraud in the area of human resources	Knowledge and skills to prevent cyber fraud in human resources.
Developing social networks and communicating on the Internet	Business etiquette and communication skills for digital communication.
GDPR	Knowledge and skills for lawful creation, processing, use and storage of personal data.

*Source: Systematized by the author.*

Analysed trends show the need for binding knowledge and skills for: working with technologies specific for human resources, maintaining, analysing and controlling a significant human resources database, conducting investigations and preventing workplace violations by potential and real employees, development of strategy for introduction of technologies in HRM, development of consultancy skills, communication skills for working with stakeholders in intercultural environment, auditing and monitoring of human the behaviour and quality of the HRM system; creating and organizing socially responsible initiatives and building a sustainable work environment to improve the well-being of human resources. All the knowledge and skills that are proposed in the competence model imply technical skills. They are necessary for survival and development in the present and the future. Are universities ready to provide this knowledge?

### 3. Current content of the Master's syllabus in which human resources specialists are trained in universities in Bulgaria and in foreign universities

Websites of national and international universities with information on HRM Master's programs are sources of information for the purpose of the diagnostic analysis of the current content of Master's syllabus for human resource specialists.

The analysis of the syllabus of universities in Bulgaria gives ground for at least four conclusions:

First. The information on the websites of some of the universities in Bulgaria regarding the content of the syllabus of HRM is limited to the name of the Master's program, which makes it difficult for the prospective students to choose.

Second. There is a variety of learning disciplines, predominantly with traditional, fundamental knowledge of human resource management. Some of the subjects are listed in Table 2.

Table 2  
Subjects studied in the Master's programs in HRM at state and private universities in Bulgaria

Studied subjects		
Policies and tools for human resource development	Leadership	Organization of social security funds
Team management	Social Audit	Training and development of human resources
Business communications	Risk management	Business Strategies and Strategic Management of Human Resources
Financial and accounting aspects of HRM	Modern developments and innovations in human resource management	Staff Insurance
Standards for Health and Safety at Work	Organizational change and development	Human Resource Audit
Managerial skills and competence, coaching;	Learning organization	Optimizing job positions and staff selection
Strategic management of human resources and change management	Management and development of organizational culture	Planning and organizing human resources
Training, career development and employee appraisal	Innovation management	HR Information Systems
Conflict of interests	Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation	Remuneration management
Motivation	Organizational Behavior and Corporate Culture	Labor and social security law
Organizational behavior	Labor standards	Managing human capital
Communication skills	Industrial relations	Managing performance and individual performance
Conflict management	Social policies and social protection strategies	Changing and Strategic Management of Human Resources

Source: Summary by the author.

*Peycheva, M. (2018). Analysis of the Trends in Human Resources Activities and the Necessity of Redesign of the Education.*

Third. The analysis shows that private universities in Bulgaria have more emphasis on teaching subjects which build soft skills needed for human resources management, while public universities have more disciplines that form "hard" skills. Moreover, some of the subjects studied in HRM Master's Programs in private universities form knowledge that is significantly closer to the competencies of human resources specialists proposed in Table 1. Among the subjects providing this knowledge are: Globalization of business and International Human Resource Management, Talent Management, Organizational Analysis, Design and Development.

Fourth. The HRM Master's programs syllabus in foreign universities do not significantly differ from those in Bulgarian universities. Some of them are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Subjects studied in HRM Master's programs in foreign universities

Studied subjects			
Staffing, training, and development	The company and the competitive environment	Work psychology	Administration of staff
Compensation and benefits	Business strategy	Organisational Behaviour	Quality audit and process
Labor relations and collective bargaining	Finance and business planning	Leadership and team management	Payroll
Key concepts in HRM	Strategic management of human resources: approaches, trends and tools	Workforce diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity employment	Strategic Human Resources Management and Organisational Behaviour
Organizational behavior and theory	Job analysis and strategic planning of human resources	Internal communication	Managing and Coordinating Human Resources
Managerial economics and labor market analysis	Selection, hiring and retention	Change management	Leadership and Management Development
Data analysis	Development: coaching, counselling, mentoring	Human resources metrics	Contemporary Issues in Human Resources Management
Human Resources Planning and Staffing	Career plan and career development	Interpersonal communication techniques and NLP	Performance and Reward Management
Training and Development	Performance management and evaluation	People management in business strategy	Employment Legislation
Effective Performance Management	Global Compensation	Conflict management	Business Research Methods
Employment Relations and Practices	Organisational theories and development	Managing Diversity and Equality in Employment	Assessment and Individual Differences at Work
Ethics in Human Resources Management	Industrial relations and collective bargaining	Crisis communication	Contemporary Issues in Strategic HRM
Human Resources Research Methods and Analytics	Workplace health and safety	Skills management	Designing and Delivering Training
Employment Engagement and Well-being	International management of human resources	Training Policy and Engineering	Employment Law for HR Practitioners
International and Comparative HRM	Project management	Social relations	International HRM

*Source: Summary by the author.*

The main differences between universities in Bulgaria and foreign universities are related to the diversity of HR programs offered in foreign universities. In addition to Master's programs with HRM fundamental knowledge, Master's programs are offered in: Human resources consultancy, International Human Resources Management, Strategic leadership in human resources, data analytics and human resource management, Human resources management and organizational consulting, International Human Resource Management and Development, Business Administration – Strategic Leadership in Human Resources,

Human Resources and Labour Relations, Adult Education – Human Resource Development, Global Human Resource Management, etc.

#### **4. Conclusions from analysis**

On the basis of the analysis, seven main conclusions can be made, related to: redesigning the content of universities syllabus in human resources, creating interdisciplinary Master's programs, changing the order for creating and developing syllabus at universities, active digitization of the learning process, presence of business in the creation of new Master's programs and syllabus, investing in teacher training and maintaining the professional qualifications of human resources specialists.

##### *4.1. Redesign of university syllabus in Master's degree in human resources management*

The analysis showed that the offered Master's programs contain the fundamental knowledge in the field of human resources. It is good to think about diversifying supply. Legislative requirements place limitations on the number of courses and hours in one Master's program. This makes it impossible to upgrade the current Master's programs, which provide fundamental HRM knowledge. In order to respond to future trends, it is advisable to create Master's programs on individual HR functions.

For example, Building sustainable strategies for the digitization of human resources activities; Digitization in attracting and selecting human resources; Digitization of training and development; Building international virtual teams and skills to work in an intercultural environment; Communication skills for international human resource management; Budgeting, control and audit of human resources; Social Responsibility, Social Initiatives and Social Audit; Prevention of fraud and cybersecurity in human resources activities and others.

Increasing the number of Master's programs offered should not be considered as a threat. The client feels free when he can choose. Therefore, it is important that the Master's programs are distinguished by a variety of content and flexible forms of training tailored to the needs of the trainees. The same applies to the offered courses of study. It is good to create an environment with a variety of training courses, beyond the regulated ones. If interested, students could join them by paying extra courses. To overcome the conflict of interest, students who will study a selectable subject (taught by the teacher) should not be current students of the teacher.

##### *4.2. Creating interdisciplinary Master's programs*

Analysed trends show that the diversity of competences needed for future human resources activity are many and vary. The creation of interdisciplinary Master's programs will contribute to the successful realization of the students. The proposal to create interdisciplinary Master's courses related to future competencies of human resources

specialists are: Cybersecurity in the field of human resources; Marketing and digitization in the process of attracting and selecting; Public Relations, Marketing and Social Responsibility Strategies; Accounting and financial analysis of human resources activities; Social Responsibility, Integrated Reports and Social Audit.

#### *4.3 Change the order for creating and updating of the Master's programs*

At present, the way of creating Master's programs in the various universities is predominantly done in the following order: establishment and approval by departments, approval by faculties and/or committees, approval and/or academic councils. Often, this involves the inclusion of courses that do not meet the needs of students but protect the interests of some of the participants in the syllabus approval committees. Continuing this practice poses risks.

I accept that it is more sensible for any professor, who would like to create Master's programs, to have the opportunity to do this. The Master's program will not rely on the university's budget. The lecturer is responsible for the content of the Master's program and for the collection of a team of lecturers and/or guest lecturers from the business. He manages the whole process – from creating, advertising, attracting students and budgeting the program to graduating the students. Predominantly, universities have created online platforms that can be used to advertise the Master's program and/or to organize online training. Maintenance will be part of the fee that students pay. In this way, the risk of syllabus filling with unnecessary learning disciplines will be ignored. In this way, we can improve the competitive environment and the preparation of students.

#### *4.4. Active digitization of the learning process*

Software products that are used in different human resource functions should actively present in the Master's degree training process. "The Global World Network is increasingly becoming a "parallel" virtual world with incredible possibilities ... But using these opportunities requires targeted work with an optimal organization because the global network also hides a number of risks to individuals and organizations "(Stefanov, 2015, 5). What better way to manage this risk, than adequate training in a real environment, with the right technical means and software products? Through this type of training – conducting a skype interview, salary analysis, job vacancy announcements, and CVs with software products, students' confidence will increase and the needs of future employers will be met.

The Implementation of this proposal requires the achievement at least two purposes. The first one is for universities. They have to digitize the learning process. Actions in this direction are necessary because "technical (digital) knowledge" is the necessary knowledge in the global economy (Atanasova, 2015, p.102). The second one is for companies offering HRM software products. They have to have the opportunity to conclude contracts with universities and offer training versions for quality student education.

#### *4.5. Presence of the business in the creation of new Master's courses and courses of study*

Businesses should be actively involved in the creation of Master's syllabus. It must be able to "order" (fund) Master's programs to provide the knowledge and skills it needs. Perhaps it would be necessary to make some legislative changes. The practice of free-of-charge participation in the teaching process of guest speakers from business is part of the social responsibility of companies and universities. This good practice should be continued. However, in order to meet the employer's future needs, it is imperative to provide opportunities for the development of Master's programs at the request of employers.

#### *4.6. Investing in teacher training*

It is not far the future in which robots will have a database of questions and they will do the exams. Probably they can also teach. In order to teach in a way relevant to the modern technical environment it is necessary to create a system for acquiring and improving the technical skills of the teachers. If this is not done, there is a risk that part of the teaching staff over forty could lose their jobs because of the inability to adapt to the changing environment in the next five to ten years. In this relation, it is good to think of a national strategy as well.

#### *4.7. Maintaining the professional qualifications of human resources specialists*

The re-qualification of human resources specialists is crucial to addressing the consequences of technological change. In this regard, it is good to consider introducing legislative changes in order to keep up-to-date the competences of people who have worked for several years (e.g. 3 or 5) in the human resources field. This requires a macroeconomic strategy.

### **Conclusion**

Competition in education has long overcome national borders. Students require education, which is expressed not only in obtaining a diploma but also and in real knowledge, because they are aware that in the search for paid employment they will face a global competition in which only the trained one succeeds. Therefore, if universities do not change themselves, the environment will change them. If the environment fails to change them, there is a real risk that employers will not require a higher education diploma as a condition for starting a job, for which a diploma was required by now.

The current analysis does not have claims for exhaustiveness but will help universities to take action not only to develop a strategy for training human resources specialists but also to develop a strategy for maintaining the teaching staff competences.

"The uncertainty of the surrounding environment is the only sure thing in today's business reality" (Dimitrova, 2017). In a situation where robots will occupy 5 million jobs by 2020 (Gang, 2018) and 75 million by 2025 (Dormehl, 2018), panic is not beneficial. There is a



need for socially responsible behaviour characterized by pooling the efforts of employers, policy makers and teachers to redesign syllabus at universities.

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