

Global Human Resource Development: Regional and Country Perspectives

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Written by leading scholars in the field of human resource development (HRD), this book aims at advancing our comprehension of global HRD in an era of globalization and increasing international business opportunities. The book is the culmination of extensive cooperative work by a team of scholars who compare perspectives beyond the Western boundaries. This book provides a synopsis of 85 countries in 17 regions by exploring the state of HRD in these selected regions and the connection between HRD and each country/region's economic development. This work is very comprehensive as it addresses multicultural and multiethnic countries and regions, allowing for an ample and global analysis of how historical, cultural and economic contexts influence HRD policies and practices. Additionally, the book discusses the influence of foreign investments within each country and the respective organizational HRD practices.

The book is divided into six key sections and 19 chapters. It starts with an opening chapter by Garavan, McCarthy and Morley who explain the importance of their collaborative work and elucidate the significance of landscaping the anatomy of HRD as an evolving field. They argue that this region-specific comparative perspective addresses the lack of scholarship in this area, which, in turn, will allow the development of HRD from a more global and societal approach.

Section I titled "HRD in Asia and Oceania" contains five chapters. Chapter 2 by McGraw and Kramar draws on the contextual and cultural frameworks of HRD in Australia and New Zealand, explaining that HRD in both countries is going through a parallel development and is similar to their economic and societal developments. That is, the shifts are moving away from state models toward more liberal ones. Chapter 3, written by Rashdi and Ismail, places the emphasis on Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. The authors note the impact human growth has on these countries. The strong commitment to invest in human assets, professional education and training programs is a core unifying theme for these three countries. Chapter 4 focuses on South Asian HRD landscape (India, Pakistan, Malaysia and others). Pandey, Hewapathirana and Pestonjee provide an overview of the historical and cultural contexts that affect HRD practices in South Asian countries, where archaic traditions of "casteism" and "narrow nationalism" obstruct the development of progressive HRD practices. These countries are also known for poor investments, inequalities, poor



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governance and poverty. The effort to adopt more modern HRD practices that are Western based often conflicts with the sociocultural values of the countries and are therefore faced with resistance. The authors predict that major HRD changes may occur in this region once their governments make a stronger commitment to change. Written by Sun and Wang, Chapter 5 covers China and North Korea. The authors reveal that both countries have similar cultural contexts impacting their HRD practices. However, HRD may fall behind because of the countries' obstructive sociopolitical governance. Considering this fast-paced business world, a shift in the standards is a must. Therefore, the evolution of the HRD field depends on how open the two countries are to giving a free hand for exploring the human capital potential development.

Section II of this book focuses on the African and Middle Eastern regions. Chapter 7 is written by Nafukho and Muyia, and it discusses HRD in the Sub-Saharan Africa region and focuses on 15 member countries (Angola, Mauritius, Zimbabwe and others). The authors argue that at least 25 per cent of the Sub-Saharan population remains illiterate, which has vastly affected and continues to affect the evolution of HRD. While the authors recognize that there is a vast potential for the region, they urge the countries to focus and invest in education, training and health, without which the region will remain deprived and underdeveloped. Furthermore, they suggest that without exploiting that potential through education, development of knowledge and critical skills, human development will remain unexploited, and the countries' physical capital and other natural resources may be at risk of being exploited by other countries.

Chapter 8 is written by Alhejji and Garavan and discusses HRD in the Middle East. The authors focus on six countries that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). A major concern unveiled in this chapter is related to the transition from being primarily an oil-based economy to becoming a more knowledge-based one. Additionally, one-third of the population in these countries consists of foreign workers, whereas nationals' employability remains very low. To address that issue, the authors suggest that resources be allocated to education to train and develop national workers, in addition to increasing females' employability. Chapter 9, also written by Alhejji and Garavan, shed the light on North African HRD, including Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. These countries observed various transformations after their independence (respectively in 1962, 1956 and 1964). Because of the paucity of qualified workers, these countries concentrated their efforts on developing educational and training infrastructures, and their initiatives have proven to be fruitful. They have enhanced their economy, improved the overall literacy and the human development index. To increase workforce effectiveness, various organizations have benefited from these reforms and started aligning their HRD practices based on some foreign ones. Nonetheless, HRD still faces some challenges, one being the resistance to apply certain policies if they do not align with Islamic law. Another challenge is that the majority of organizations are government based and do not align with market demands. In sum, the present environment requires considerable changes to improve HRD systems in North African countries.

Section III covers the Americas. Chapter 10, written by McLean and Budhwani, focuses on HRD in the USA and Canada. The latter represent internationally exemplary models for HRD practices and policies mostly to developing countries. The USA and Canada offer evidence-based practices and progressive scholarship in HRD. Their

strength lies in their continuous focus and investment in talent management and development, and education/research. Chapter 11 is written by Waight, Delgado and Lopez and focuses on Latin America. Poverty, inequality, access to education and leadership were noted as the core current issues facing Latin American countries and resulting in disintegrated HRD efforts. However, government leadership is considered to be the strongest impediment for HRD development in this region. Chapter 12 addresses HRD in Brazil and is written by Azevedo, Ardichvili, Nova and Cornacchione. Within Latin America, Brazil remains more developed in terms of HRD practices. In fact, the country benefits from various assets such as diversity, large pool of talents, growing economy, and good educational system. Nonetheless, political corruption continues to be an impediment for the country's development, and it affects various sectors. Current reforms are expected to help transform and develop the country's third sector.

Section IV places the focus on Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet Union. Chapter 13 is written by Sheehan and Buchelt. It discusses Central and Eastern Europe. The authors highlight the high diversity in the region. It has a well-educated population and an increasing amount of foreign investments. They also note that HRD policies and practices should be amended to meet the demands of modern labor markets. Chapter 14 is focused on Russia and the former Soviet Union. HRD in this region encounters various pitfalls and challenges, for instance, the authors mention the major transformations of sociopolitical institutions and economies after the separation from the USSR in 1990-1991. Occupational education continues to be unsuitable for the human capital market demands, especially with globalization and the challenges it presents. Additionally, HRD and HRM are used interchangeably in this region, unlike in the Western context. According to the authors, HRD needs to adopt a strategic orientation by focusing on building HRD academic programs and developing human capital.

Section V is focused on Western Europe. Chapter 15 places the emphasis on HRD in Ireland and the UK, which share some common characteristics in terms of HRD policy and practices. Learning and Development (L&D) in the UK is a priority for HRD professionals who aim to ensure that the workforce is prepared to address any business changes in a proactive fashion. They also aim to align those L&D decisions with organizational strategic orientations, which continue to be a challenge for both countries. Chapter 16 covers HRD in Nordic countries and was written by Heifl and Dusoye. Nordic countries place a strong emphasis on making education accessible, which results in having a highly skilled workforce, in addition to having a more feminist approach to females' employability. Nonetheless, there is no Nordic model of HRD that considers the divergent HRD practices at the micro-level in each country. In Chapter 17, the authors Mudler and Nieuwenhuis discuss HRD in Germanic Europe (Germany, Austria, The Netherlands and Switzerland). Germanic countries have solid vocational education and training programs, most of which are public. They help Germany make sure its future workforce has the skills and the knowledge needed to enter the labor market. Yet, these countries uphold an average ranking at the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) when it comes to lifelong learning, with the exception of Switzerland which ranks the highest in training and employee development. The authors believe the Swiss workforce strategic model is exemplary, and it should serve as a role model for other countries. The last chapter in this section was written by Tomé. It discusses HRD in Southern Europe (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain). Tomé points

out that the development of the workforce in this region takes place mainly in France, Northern Italy and Spain, which rank high on the skills continuum, with increasing private investments and recognition of the social importance of HRD. The remaining countries rank average on the skills continuum, mainly because of the lack of social agreement on HRD despite the European Union's efforts. This disagreement results in low wages and reduced private investments.

The last section of this book is devoted to HRD in the emerging markets. Garavan and Akdere refer to these emerging markets/countries as CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa). They assert that these evolving economies emphasize primarily the internationalization of business opportunities, and want to improve the status of their workforce. Yet, they face various challenges such as the alignment of HRD initiatives and strategic orientations, educational reforms, technological infrastructures and adjustments to political turmoil.

Abstract

This book is reflective of the work of 34 global HRD experts who have analyzed HRD institutionally and cross-culturally. It charts our understanding in the development of perspectives of cross-cultural HRD. With a total of 85 countries in 17 regions, each book chapter starts with a country-specific historical, political, economic, institutional, social and cultural context, followed by an analysis of HRD systems. A comparative analysis of HRD is also conducted by identifying similarities and differences in HRD practices and policies. These comparisons provide the readers with valuable insights into possible future research topics. This book is the first of its kind in conceptualizing the discipline of HRD from a global viewpoint, making it of particular interest to both practitioners and scholars.

Evaluation

Global Human Resource Development: Regional and Country Perspectives gives readers a compelling case about the importance of global HRD contributions. It helps understand the context of each country and the HRD evolution and countries' historical, social, economic, institutional and political contexts. What makes this book unique is that a comparative analysis is done for each region and country studied, showing some similarities and disparities in HRD policies and practices, and giving the reader the evolutionary context of HRD as well as some opportunities and challenges.

This noteworthy book is written for an audience of scholars, practitioners and graduate students. It could be used as an educational reference in HRD programs, addressing global HRD and directions for future research in countries beyond the Western world. All authors used a data-driven approach, giving substantial research evidence to support the arguments presented. The purpose of this book is mainly to argue the predominant Western constructs and present fresh insights on countries that are typically underrepresented in the HRD literature. All the contributors of this work are well-established scholars in the field of HRD. They give useful research lessons on the evolution of HRD in various global contexts, and they drive our curiosity to explore some of the future directions of our discipline.

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