

SOME THOUGHTS ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT RESPONSES TO CURRENT GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Henrik HEGEDŰS

Hungarian Association of Military Science, Budapest, Hungary
henrikdrhegedus@gmail.com

László UJHÁZY

University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary
ujhazy.laszlo@uni-nke.hu

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the authors share their thoughts on globalization and global challenges, followed by some thoughts on their impact on postmodern societies of our age, the economy, the labor market and employees. Global and local risks in human resource management brought about by the pandemic are also discussed. A great deal of attention is given to how human resource management can respond to various current global challenges, predominantly COVID-19, since the current crisis has the potential of entirely transforming the world of work. Existing paradigms of employment may disappear; new ones may come into existence. The aim of the article was partly to support the best possible foundation of efforts in overcoming these challenges.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, globalization, human resource management, knowledge management, labor market

1. Introduction

Today's postmodern societies are undergoing a process in which the industrial society, impacted by the industrial revolution, is losing ground to the information society – a spinoff from the communication revolution. Today, normal and extra profits in the economy are generated globally by services rather than production. In his book *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*, Francis Fukuyama refers to the problem of rapid, intense changes that both the society and the economy are undergoing. At the same time, mention is made of several negative trends such as increased crime rates along with a

major structural transformation affecting the texture of family life. Equally detrimental is the disintegration of families, the higher-than-before unemployment figures, the higher inactivity rate in national economies and mass impoverishment. The author concludes that instruments of primary socialization – the process of reorganization within genuine human communities, the strengthening of family bonds and the establishing of stronger ties between relatives and friends – are uprooted by the overabundance of an individualistic (egocentric) culture. This often eliminates socialization, a process vital during the formation of an individual's personality traits (Fukuyama, 1999).

Globalization, when considered in its complexity as a worldwide phenomenon, can be interpreted both as a notion and as the manifestation of practical experiences. It is a series of interconnected phenomena, which we often view as a black and white issue. Sometimes it is the devil incarnate; sometimes it is regarded as the entrance into Canaan (O'Rourke & Williamson, 1999; Stearns, 2010; Seavoy, 2003). When dealing with organizations and individuals, the need for an increased capacity of knowledge, the regular maintenance of acquired standards of knowledge or the transfer of knowledge, are all essential qualities when faced with the challenges posed by current trends in the global arena and by rapid, ongoing changes. Not only do these qualities have socio-political and social management implications: modernity is a precondition of their existence (Hegedűs, 2008). The realization that modernization and innovation are notions of the first importance and that existing contradictions need to be eliminated, will necessitate a larger pool of knowledge with more fundamental and comprehensive attributes if current standards of human resources are to be improved. At the same time, various alternatives of personality development and the corresponding limitations need to be borne in mind. Core elements of knowledge management should be an individual's success competences (soft competences). If improved, those competences might secure a transfer between competitive businesses and non-profit organizations.

Our approach to this issue has been adopted in the context of a logically closed system. Initially, global challenges will be examined. This will be followed by an analysis of their impact on society, the economy, the labor market and employees. Another subject – the global threat posed by COVID-19 today in all parts of the world – is also dealt with in our paper. As we have yet another crisis situation – that of consumer societies – to address, today's

crisis is limited neither to the economy, nor to issues related to the current pandemic (Firat, Kutucuoğlu, Arikán Saltık & Tunçel, 2013). The current crisis has the potential to entirely transform the world of work. Existing paradigms of employment may disappear, new ones may come into existence (De Lucas Ancillo, Del Val Núñez & Gavrilá Gavrilá, 2021). Could one such paradigm be the work-life or life-work balance? The latter has definitely gained ground in the lifestyle-related priorities of salary earners.

In examining crisis management in states, we have undertaken – as part of the bigger picture of interdependence – to look into the problem of international integration and various phenomena that are related to multiculturalism as coherent elements of interconnected, interrelated entities. However, make no mistake; it has to be underlined that the biggest worldwide challenge is the creation of a knowledge-based society (Kefela, 2010). The correlation between the acceleration of technology-related development and a series of other phenomena (lifelong learning, generation of knowledge, knowledge enhancement, knowledge maintenance, knowledge management and talent promotion) have formed a strong bond in establishing the foundations of value added activities.

In the second part of the article, we discuss two stages of “KoronaHR”, a survey conducted in Hungary from 12 June to 31 July 2020, followed by the second phase from 1 August to 15 November 2020. In the first period, 508 evaluable questionnaires were returned, in the second online survey 1,014 analyzable responses from various organizations, mainly companies and institutions were received. The main method used was questionnaires, but top managers were probed as well as HR managers by using semi-structured interviews (Poór, 2020a; 2020b).

2. The Notion of Globalization, Its Manifestations and Challenges Today

We need to emphasize, that globalization as a trend is a necessity, both from a social and an economic perspective. It is a direct consequence of modernization and the development of technology – particularly the free flow of worldwide activities driven by the economy, money markets, modern transport systems, telecommunication and technology (Thomson, 1999). A characteristic feature of big, complex systems is their propensity for instability and their ability to trigger self-perpetuating processes. This could trigger off events that are far too complex and unpredictable to bring under control. How can anyone, you may ask, gain insight into the inner workings of a big company that employs hundreds of thousands of people and runs diversified operations with a wide range of activities such as financial services, the manufacturing of airplane engines, energetics or illuminating engineering? In our age, even an insignificant incident can catch a transnational company off balance (metaphorically speaking, even the flutters of a butterfly's wings can have a devastating effect). This is what happens when a big company is caught red-handed in the handling of its financial affairs. Even if the thrust of a direct hit has detrimental effects, say, on another continent, its repercussions might even be felt in Hungary. In the wake of such an incident, the damage inflicted upon a global international company will lead to reorganization, discontinued production or layoffs. The repercussions will also be felt by the employees of remote manufacturing plants.

Ours is an age in which anxiety and hope go hand in hand (Scioli & Biller, 2009). There is a bright side and a dark side to globalization. Employer resilience and mobility contribute to high capital efficiency and to a continuous technical and technological renewal, which in turn are the foundations of the individual's active

employment thus prolonged by several years. Given the current crisis, the first question is whether permanent growth is a sustainable option or if it should be replaced by a paradigm of new economic policy. Modernization is a challenge we cannot get rid of, not least because many countries worldwide have, for a long time, been behind schedule with the implementation of the principles of modernity (Hegedűs, 2010a).

When it comes to reforms, the choice in turbulent times during our history often fell on inorganic growth – revolution, as it were – rather than organic growth, an alternative of maturity achieved during a period of gradual change. The biggest challenge for all of us today – apart from the problems related to the concept of innovation – is globalization itself, along with the fallout from that same globalization. In every country worldwide, the effective remedy still lies in public education, vocational training, medium-level training, a more advanced higher education, and adult training.

Globalization is a worldwide phenomenon, as is the cohesion policy aimed at compensating for its negative effects. It is also a challenge that needs to be met by every country in every part of the world. However, the experience gained from recognizing and analyzing that challenge and the search for a solution is a process that goes back only a few decades. This seems to verify the fact that there is an underlying economic and social aspect to every kind of activity. Education and training – a system with a mandate to inspire rational action, designed to reflect economic and social expectations – is a reservoir of knowledge aimed to provide answers to existing challenges. Knowledge needs to be regarded as a more valuable asset – we agree with that proposition –, but the significance of a system in which the training of highly qualified professionals is considered a crucial element also needs to be re-emphasized via a new set of priorities. As for vocational training, special attention

should be given to the re-establishment of the original form of training in which the rational, craftsmanship- and profession-oriented attitude of trainees is encouraged through practice, so that they can become skilled workers equipped with intelligent craftsmanship, they can become good middle-level managers or technicians while the efficacy of dual training is also enhanced. When it comes to dealing with the specifics of this problem, it is the task and responsibility of each member state to elaborate on the 'how'. The expansion of education was a process that took place during the 1960s and 70s in most EU countries (Field, Kuczera & Pont, 2007). To minimize the effects of poor education and the resulting functional illiteracy is, even today, the most important objective, along with the need to advocate the principle of equal opportunities in trying to reduce the number of those affected. In most countries, the expansion of higher education is an ongoing process, thanks to lobbyists working with determination to advocate the interest of those working in education (Bergan & Damian, 2010). At the same time, the expansion of the 'knowledge industry', while turning adult education into a high-priority trend, has additional, multiple objectives. It has to work towards a knowledge-based economy, satisfy the needs of the labor market, contribute to the creation of social cohesion, assist those lagging behind in the process of catching up, and create the conditions upon which the foundations of equal opportunities can be established. Flexibility, effectiveness and mobility are generally considered achievable goals.

It has been common knowledge since the 1970s that the unique trajectory of globalization is characterized by a rapid upswing followed by a sudden collapse, which at the time brought about a global economic crisis. In one of his books, David Korten (founder and president of the People-Centered Development Forum) uses the

phrase 'vulture funds' in describing the local culture of the economy, i.e. the business and investment policy pursued by private companies, which has upset the ecological balance of the region in question while aiming for maximum profits (Korten, 1995). The aim of these companies has been to achieve extra profit (or even luxury profit) along with permanent growth. The fallout from the crisis today is a harsh reality based on the kind of experience we all share as individuals. A broader interpretation will, however, reveal that cooperation or confrontation between states is largely responsible for the fundamental elements of international stability and security. Accordingly, the framework of cooperation will be established by factors such as contacts, integration or, as it was mentioned in the introduction earlier on, interdependence, in other words, globalization itself.

In the course of history, therefore, various patterns of integration emerged between states willing to cooperate (Hurrell, 1995). One such pattern is globalization. Theoretically, any state capable of developing and being self-sufficient at the same time should be considered modern (Keynes, 1933). However, in a globalized world no country has so far been able to achieve that status on its own. This has also led to clashes and delays in the context of modernity. Conflicts caused by globalization – which are no longer to be considered domestic affairs with no relevance for other states – will, in addition to those already mentioned, make themselves felt in various interrelationships which Wallerstein saw as: the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery (Wallerstein, 1974).

The world economy is becoming increasingly global, while security policy varies depending on individual regions (Tidwell & Lerche, 2004). The question is whether we have seen the last of the kind of welfare state that has failed to sustain the unemployed and the elderly. Put differently, the poor will become even poorer; the rich

even richer, the middle class will have to make do with slower growth or will initially see itself lag behind, then disintegrate (Lawlor, Spratt, Shaheen & Beitler, 2011).

Both our research and the studies we have undertaken so far seem to indicate that globalization is far from affecting multinational companies alone. The existing interrelationships in the world of business and competition, i.e. all the positive and negative consequences have been revealed to all of us. To emerge victorious in this competition is only possible for those who are better and also better prepared. Victory, however, is not something you clinch at any cost. To emerge victorious, employers need to secure an individual career path for gifted, creative employees by making sure that those employees will gain rapid promotion in their jobs. Globalization is a challenge. The prospect of change and a potential pool of opportunities to benefit from are inherent to the current crisis, we reckon. The world as we know it has become more than just one huge market place. It has also become a global market place for labor force – not just in a virtual but in a physical sense as well. Topping the list of items gone global is information and money. Products have also gone global, albeit to a lesser extent. Least global of all is the free movement of labor. However, this trend is on the change today. The engine of globalization cranked up – in an economic sense – is up and running at full throttle in the conditions created by the market economy. By the early 19th Century industrial revolution and technology, which had travelled its trajectory of development, became a drive towards stability. The permanent influence of the existing system is here to stay. Meanwhile, the national identity or nationalism of majority ethnicities in multi-ethnic states is on the rise. This can – or will – lead to a bitter clash with minority ethnicities. Even armed conflicts have become more global (Ujházy, 2015). At the same time, one should bear in mind that whenever the components of an

international system undergo a qualitative change, the turmoil or chaos that follows will be inevitable. Order, therefore, will necessarily produce chaos, along with the fictitious assumption that order can only be produced by chaos. How on earth can sovereign states work or cooperate with each other in a chaotic situation, while being guided by the principle of trust stemming from the notion of reciprocity? The answer lies in the future – in other words, multiculturalism could well be one possible answer to this dilemma. More than a few share the view that we live in an age of transition (Kissinger, 1994). What we are seeing today, they claim, is the emergence of a new trend. As the likelihood of interconnectedness between states gradually becomes a fact of life, along with the prospect of this situation turning into a permanent trend, the question arises as to what kind of principles might be followed in establishing a new world order. Put differently, will it be created of its own volition or will it be the outcome of an organic development? Globalization has given renewed impetus to a global economy driven by free, fierce competition. But, the current funding alternatives provided for the economy – along with other resources available for permanent development – seem to be on their last legs. The key driving forces of globalization today are productivity, profit-based work and a quality-oriented attitude – but only in conditions suitable to achieve sustainability. The vision of a creative society cannot hide the fact that “*a creative society is a society in crisis*”, in which a problem solved will immediately generate new, unsolved problems. Viewed from this perspective, creativity is nothing but knowledge empowered with the ability to generate performance. The end product is what we call achievement. It is an amalgamation of acquired knowledge combined with the added value of the work effort put in by individuals. Today this is a key element of

any activity based on added value. It is also the trademark of a knowledge-based society. Public awareness in a society should stem from collaboration, cooperation or creative competition, along with the improvement of personalities, to be carried out on a permanent basis. While abandoning the concept of permanent growth, giving up moneymaking as a top priority and renouncing the notion of making the values of “*economy’s creature of instinct*” transparent (Taylor, 1911), our attention will, in the future, be guided by a different set of priorities. Mainly the impact of humans on the environment, the ecosystem’s potential for renewal and the re-creation of balance between the environment and humanity.

Globalization does have pitfalls. If we try to avoid them by improving both the quality of life and the productivity of the work of citizens living in disadvantaged states, the chances of a healthier economic development can be enhanced. True, the ability of states to interact was – and still is – a key element in the emergence of a global system. No country is capable of comprehensive development by relying solely on its own resources or even by finding humane solutions to the above problems. The ability of states to interact has been determined fundamentally by technologies used to overcome the problem of long distances along with other socio-political and socio-economic solutions (Matus, 2003). Today, the scope for interaction at the level of a system operating internationally has been extended as a result of globalization. Ties between states have become stronger, interdependence between states has been growing even in the midst of an economic and pandemic crisis. One significant consequence of the economic processes in this global system is the fact that the financial aspects of national economies have been pushed to the forefront. Regrettably, performance at the level of national economies is measured exclusively by money therefore utilitarianism has become

the dominant point of reference. The human aspects of the economy, it appears, have temporarily been side lined. The devaluation of knowledge has, as it were, put social progress and development at risk. These observations throw light on the trappy pitfalls of globalization. The real challenge for the future is our ability to identify them and to provide a sensible definition for all of us.

We have adopted the view that these problems can – and should – be kept under control by prioritizing the quality element of education and also by humanizing organizations, (i.e. working conditions and human relationships). This could also help develop a competitive advantage. We mentioned earlier on that the world order today is a transitional one with pitfalls of its own. A new turning point in the history of permanent globalization – which we are about to experience in the near future – will, we believe, be a spinoff from information explosion and a revolution in electronics – the Internet. However, not only has the speed of growth become faster, a rapid change in quality and quantity has also occurred. This increased the magnitude of risk. Earlier stages of globalization mainly impacted the elite: only a select group of beneficiaries profited from its advantages. The consequences can be felt even today. While that small group was able to obtain huge benefits from the situation, large chunks of the population were unable to catch up. They also found themselves less and less capable of moving away from the position of the economically disadvantaged, lagging behind in the process of acquiring knowledge and qualifications. Hundreds of thousands of those in employment have either become jobless or are about to lose their jobs. A very serious problem today is the high number of unemployed among those searching for entry-level jobs. Jobless young graduates with a degree or diploma also constitute a significant problem that needs to be addressed (International Labour Organization Office, 2020).

3. Global and Local Risks in Human Resource Management Brought about by a Pandemic

Today, as a result of the global threat posed by COVID-19, we are confronted with the problem of an even higher number of young jobseekers looking for entry-level jobs. More young people are waiting for job opportunities. There are more long-term jobseekers as well (Su et al., 2021). The number of those who find job opportunities on the black market is also on the rise. Employment statistics are likely to show lower employment figures. This in turn may lead to a higher inactivity rate. The question to ask ourselves is this: is a particular stage in the process of globalization tantamount to the impoverishment of masses of people? Does it imply a growing number of those considered economically inactive? The answer, sadly, is yes. A growing number of people fail to acquire useful knowledge. They lag behind in the race for job opportunities. The vulnerability of the digital world is no longer news to us. A computer virus can, almost immediately, disrupt drinking water and food supplies in any huge metropolis. Thanks to the digital system, an individual's lifestyle has undergone a complete change. Simply put, the community we live in is a mixture of 'techno crazy' and 'techno illiterate' people. It is not rocket science to realize that the coexistence of these extremes has an adverse effect on social integrity and on the cohesion of social sub-systems (Hegedűs, 2020b). If this is not a catch 22 situation, what is it? Should everyone jump ship? What next?

What we now is that the profit maximizing strategy of the open market economy driven by free competition is struggling to withstand the pressure it is under. In our globalized world, resources vital for permanent or sustainable development are dwindling. The impact of the global economic crisis in 2008 was felt simultaneously in every part of our planet. However, it produced then (as it produces

today) different social effects and labor market changes in different states. In the context of center – semi-periphery – periphery relationships, these changes have different implications in various states. These states are at different stages of development. Economists seem to share the view that the developed part of the world – countries in the center – experienced the latest crisis presumably, by what can be illustrated as the shape of the letter “V”. In other words, those countries saw a gradual worsening of the crisis, followed by a gradual but relatively short period of improvement. In this way, they become beneficiaries of the ensuing economic recovery. Countries in Central and Eastern Europe, having been pushed into the region of half-periphery or periphery, experienced a plunge into the depths of the crisis. Then, following a crisis that in some cases lasted several years, they went through a long, “U” shape recovery from their economic and social problems. This necessitated the tackling of conflicts caused by a worsening set of social problems.

In dealing with the issue of transition to an information society, Francis Fukuyama, in his book which we mentioned earlier on, does not fail to mention mass impoverishment, rising crime rates (including crime driven by poverty), the disintegration of families, the aggressive presence of individualism (which is overwhelming communities to the point of madness), the falling apart of families and genuine communities. These are “*liberal pitfalls*” which, in the context of a particular state, have the potential to trigger a social explosion. That explosion should be prevented at any cost. From our perspective, this seems to substantiate the concept that certain phenomena have repercussions in the context of the national security of a particular state. This should be reflected in the commitment of citizens and governments to safeguarding social order at a local level (Fukuyama, 1999).

COVID-19 has led to a global pandemic. In the current situation, the threat to mankind is felt globally and locally as well. From the vantage point of a state, the risk involved is a matter of security policy and issue pertaining to pandemic preparedness. “KoronaHR”, a survey conducted in Hungary in 2020, consisted of two exploratory stages. The principle aim of the survey was to support the best possible foundation of the country’s efforts against the coronavirus, also by enabling the participants to disseminate the results through the highest possible level of publications. It was assumed necessary to monitor the changes in the corporate/institutional sphere of Hungary, the human resource management (HRM) practice, to the challenges of the crisis caused by the coronavirus, in different phases of the pandemic. This can help to develop the relationship between theory and practice in HRM in the midst of a crisis caused by a pandemic. The empirical study was basically based on the opinions and factual data related to the observation period. The questionnaire included both closed and open questions. In the framework of the closed questions, the respondents were asked to indicate the most characteristic of the pre-formulated answers.

In the first period 508 evaluable questionnaires were returned and 1,014 answers were received in the second online survey. The survey was geared, among others, to the needs of experts, specialists working in HRM, and HRM trainees. In Stage One, the vast majority of our respondents were representatives of business ventures, while around 15 % of those polled were organizations in the public sector and non-governmental organizations. More than 70 % of the organizations polled were Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises or organizations. Around 30 % of those polled were representatives of business organizations that employ more than 250 people. Fewer than half of the business

organizations involved in the polling have their own HRM directorate, department or section. The overwhelming majority (over 40 %) of respondents are in the service sector. More specifically, commercial and accommodation providers account for approximately 15 % of the total number of those polled. Around one third of respondents were representatives of industrial and construction businesses (Poór, 2020a). Apart from using questionnaires, top managers as well as HR managers were probed by using semi-structured interviews. They were sounded out on research objectives, focus groups and the main thrust of crisis management. With Phase Two of the polling now completed (Poór, 2020b) and Phase Three in progress, members of the staff involved in the survey are getting prepared for the publication of a “*Case Study*”. Concurrently with the polling, word got around about various ‘non-typical’ employment solutions such as Airport’s unpaid off-duty period and other solution alternatives such as “part-time”, (50 % work for 50 % salary) or standby for 20 % of the normal salary. In the wake of the crisis, maps of competence were drawn in various organizations. Registers of job-related competences were created to make organization-level knowledge maps used as a basis for internal transfers and (temporary) in-company redeployments.

Those in senior managerial positions allocated part of their remuneration to set up – with approval from the owners of businesses – a so-called “Social Policy Fund” to help disadvantaged employees. Meanwhile, several business organizations were forced to announce mass layoffs carried out in accordance with the current statutory guidelines. Communication inside the company during the period in question became, understandably, more intense. The protection of employer and employee branding, the strengthening of group cohesion and the concept of togetherness were regarded as top priority issues. Despite

all the positive effects and reactions, the stress caused by COVID-19 has also become part of our everyday life. Employees and managers were forced to step out of their comfort zone and had to break their daily routine. This often meant losing control in a big way – even in matters such as time management. Having to work from ‘Home Office’ also became a rather serious ‘stress factor’ in the world of work, affecting the lives of many employees and their families. All in all, these negative factors, experienced during the pandemic, pushed stress management programs to the forefront. Other priorities such as moral support and the issue of health conscious lifestyle also started gaining traction. However, the situation was further aggravated by the fact that employees were beginning to experience – apart from an existential threat bearing down on them – livelihood problems arising from the dwindling reserves of cash in the family. These problems often turned into an overwhelming mental burden that was almost impossible to cope with. Today we cannot make an accurate assessment of the extent of damage inflicted by the worldwide pandemic on the economies of states. Judging by the trends so far, certain sectors such as air traffic, the entertainment industry, the catering industry and tourism, have all suffered a grave setback. This in turn might put business ventures and companies out of business and lead to a huge number of jobs being axed. Incidentally, working from home and the introduction of flexitime were new challenges for companies and in most cases; employers were able to cope with the new situation and reacted positively. By exploiting the technological alternatives offered by digitalization, companies have used the communication alternative of online meetings and were able to benefit from this technology through in-company training sessions. They also provided mental support to their employees. The digital alternatives available in Hungary are, for example,

online platforms accessible via Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams. They have provided massive support in advocating collaboration, greatly contributing to democratization. This made existing levels of corporate hierarchy disappear. They provide easy and simple access to knowledge, achieving ‘transfer of knowledge’ and an achievable aim that organizations have set themselves. Business organizations have shifted their focus towards the ‘operation by project’ options. These are forms of management in which the flattened pyramid, a structure known to be effective, has been used. Most online support platforms had various subject areas in several organizations. They released complete packages, aimed firstly at sharing knowledge, secondly at education, thirdly at mental support. The force of the community was exploited and it created an opportunity for cooperation. By the uploading and sharing of materials – even, for instance, materials in English on management training – these platforms were used by employers and employees alike. Typically, events such as interactive management forums – which advance the cultural improvement of a corporate group – were transferred to online platforms. This means that a few topics, typically one or two, are thought to be relevant for the company as a whole. When a particular topic is selected, someone in a management position acting as a ‘role model’ will be interviewed. As for the negative impact of the pandemic, in many cases the HR managers claimed that the company experienced none of the negative consequences of the pandemic such as temporary layoffs, reduced working hours and reduced salaries or shared work shifts. At the same time, the current situation had a positive outcome in several organizations that made good on their earlier promises and took care of salary imbalances. As for employees who continued to turn up for work during the most critical period of COVID-19, they were offered cash bonuses. This was the companies’ way of giving them

credit for their commitment. Employers made a special effort to both comply with and enforce pandemic regulations, and to ensure healthy working conditions. Luckily, not every company had to use redundancy as a solution to its current problems. What's more, in companies where everyone was able to do some work, the employer found a way to help employees contribute to the company's operational agenda, and the situation helped underscore, once again, the necessity of employee retention. Flexitime became an oft-used operational alternative. Labor organizations were able to reduce pre-pandemic backlogs by performing many unfinished jobs. They prioritized in-company trainings, self-study projects, administrative tasks, procedural updates, job description updates or the mapping of job-related competences for individual positions.

4. The Significance of Human Resource Management in Crisis Management

When faced with the challenges of crisis management, leaders of organizations need to train themselves to acquire better skills to help the economy return to "business as usual" mode as soon as possible (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). A study by John-Eke & Eke in 2020 examined the correlation between crisis management and strategic planning. According to the authors, it is easier to keep a crisis under control through proper strategic planning if the planners are safe in the knowledge that some elements of the strategy can be altered in the course of events by adopting the method of "*re-planning*". At the same time, the crisis management alternative selected will determine the seriousness and extent of a catastrophe, which for reasons well known to us, will be inevitable. Organizations adopting a strategic approach to crisis management will thus become proactive in dealing with a crisis. Moreover, as a result of continuous feedback during events unfolding, they will be able to interfere with

those events (John-Eke & Eke, 2020). Never before has so much attention been given to crisis management – particularly in information technology, education, healthcare, the pharmaceutical industry, logistics – as during the COVID-19 crisis. The current situation threw light on the extreme vulnerability of citizens when the global economy (and the service industry in particular) was hit by the pandemic. It is for this reason that crisis managers and strategic planners need to work in concert to help companies arrive at the best solution in the course of continuous re-planning.

Based on the findings of the first and second stages of the "KoronaHR" poll, we can now establish facts related to measures most often taken by HRM crisis management organizations. We also know what percentage of various organizations adopted those measures in these 'unusual circumstances'. The concept of 'work-life balance' was replaced by that of "life-work balance" – a change of paradigm, as it were – a shift in employee attitude and a fundamental objective. The cohesive force and the feeling of togetherness, experienced in workplace communities, became more of a priority and an asset. Expectations were aroused towards a "managing affairs together" kind of management style. A large number of business organizations adopted the view that HR managers have a specific responsibility in dealing with – mitigating, if possible – the impact of the pandemic, and that crisis management should have a key role in tackling the issue. In terms of the methods normally applied by the HR managers, it is imperative that in this "calamity situation" various elements of research, change management, crisis management and counselling constitute a blend of methods to be used. Moreover, the research reveals the companies' determination to invest in physical assets or manpower to achieve desired levels of production capacity (technological development, in-company training sessions)

(Poór, 2020b). These are progressive solutions, irrespective of the pandemic. At the same time, the risks posed by the current pandemic may have been a major driving force in adopting them. The crisis can have positive results, too, given the experience people will have gained from the pandemic. As for business organizations, they will have undergone the process of introducing new methods, while governments have started to look for effective solutions in dealing with the pandemic.

5. Conclusions

Looking at existing security risks and challenges, the specificities of globalization can be integrated into a single framework. Simultaneous globalization and regionalization, nationalism, transnationalism, integration and disintegration justify the transitional nature of the existing world order. The question is how the epidemiological situation created by COVID-19 and its management can predict the emergence of a possible new world order, even through inorganic development. The task is to make significant efforts today, within a particular framework, to create opportunities for the development of human security and, in particular, health, the preservation of working capacity, employment, employability, value-added work, and the ability to work. All through the pandemic, up until now, companies, small and medium enterprises involved in the survey have been able to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 through making their best effort to take firm decisions, enhancing employee commitment, creating an atmosphere of consistent, continuous dialogue between employee and employer, and maintaining a relationship of trust. The emergency powers exercised by

the Government during the pandemic brought about various alterations in operability, business and operational organization, where strategic, tactical and operational decisions, along with the outcome of improvements in digital technology, all helped organizational culture, communication and strategy formulation as well as work culture reach a higher level. Human resources, a notion denoting humans ready for and capable of improvement, has become a factor now considered indispensable for digital transformation. Consistency in managerial decision-making, along with a competent communicative approach adopted in relaying pertinent information, have greatly enhanced a sense of security among employees. Moreover, these factors have become a potential for corporate-level and institutional improvement/development efforts. In the current situation, there are beneficiaries both in a global context and at the level of states. For instance, logistics (clusters, product or supply chains, warehousing, online sales), and IT itself, together with business ventures involved in the operation and development of IT systems. In-company training options have been prioritized, particularly in the form of vocational retraining, vocational or professional training. All the above, we believe, indicates that a solution-oriented crisis management should be a guideline to follow if the fastest possible recovery from the crisis is an objective to be attained. Somewhere along the way, an unexpected, new discovery in the aftermath of this calamity might even emerge as a significant contribution to help better understand the socio-economic context of our globalized world.

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