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Contemporary tendencies of IHRM focus on Qatar

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to shed light on contemporary tendencies in IHRM with focus on Qatar. It reviews specific relevant areas associated with this subject. They cover globalization in International Human Resources Management, contemporary tendencies in Qatar economy, the human resources in Qatar covering human resources in public organizations, local organizations and private organizations.

Keywords: contemporary, tendencies, human resource management, Qatar

JEL codes: 015

INTRODUCTION

The world has changed considerably in the last fifty years especially in terms of business in human resources management. This imposed internationalization of different areas including human resources management and labor laws (Poor, Engle, Blstakova, & Joniakova, 2018). This report discusses different issues. It first identifies globalization in International Human Resources Management. Then, it reviews contemporary tendencies in Qatar economy. After that it discusses the human resources in Qatar covering human resources in each of public organizations, local organizations and private organizations.

GLOBALIZATION IN IHRM

Human resources play an important role in managing organizations. They have been more globalized and internationalized particularly with the emergence and extensive growth of multinational organizations in the world.

First, it is significant to identify what human resources are. Human resources are associated with focusing on personnel functions by dividing the company according to a range of activities including training, recruitment of new employees, and orientation of personnel and provision of staff benefits. Human resources are defined as part of enterprise management. Human resources are concerned with the management and training of employees as one of the most important assets of work. Human resources are defined as the management that concerns the people working in the company. Human resources are keen to follow up the records of their appointment and the disbursement of their financial dues (English Oxford Dictionary, 2018). IHRM is associated with HR problems of multinational organizations in the foreign subsidiaries like expatriate management or issues that cross national boundaries, and relationships among HRM organizations' activities and foreign places where firms work (UK Essays, 2017).

Globalization in IHRM is associated with the international presence of organizations out of the borders of the country of the organizations such as the existence of multinational companies like Toyota Cars Company or Sony which have branches outside Japan. There are three stages of globalized IHRM. The first one is called pre-scientific until the beginnings of the 20th century like East-Indian Corporation. The second one extends from the beginnings of the 20th century until the end of the 1980s where there was an expansion of some companies like American companies subsidiaries outside the American borders. The third phase started from the 1990s as globalization became very strong especially after the spread of the Internet, modern technology and communication at larger, faster and smoother scales. This made it easier for companies to grow and have investments in different world countries (Poór, 2017).

Globalization has its impacts on International Human Resources Management. Human resources management at modern time faces many challenges and transformations, such as the labor problems that have arisen for multinationals, the increasing role of professional employment, automatic and modern technology, increased social responsibility, and labor or work capacity. Globalization is a phenomenon of a special nature that has reduced the limits of time and reduced geography. It ended a stage of human life, and began a completely new phase. This has led to the transfer of different types of enterprise management from a specific entity and situation to a completely innovated and modernized entity and situation. There are phenomena linked to globalization and its role in human resources, such as globalization of productive activity, globalization of financial activity and globalization of decision-making. With regard to the globalization of productive activity, it is very difficult for any entity to close away from global influences in the production of goods, services, or the manufacture of ideas. The globalization of financial activity has led to the integration and connection of money and money markets to each other and their direction to concentration, spread, expansion, and control. Globalization has had other effects, such as the globalization of decision-making centers, the exchange of centers among world powers, the change of global infrastructure structures and the broadening of its concept to

include new unknown links and attributes. In addition, there is freedom of movement of goods, services and ideas and their immediate exchange without barriers or borders between countries, and the freedom to transfer and invest all factors of production from labor and capital. The whole world is transformed into a small cosmopolitan village by the globalized information stream (Lucio, 2013).

CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES IN QATAR ECONOMY

Associated with contemporary tendencies in Qatar, Qatar utilized globalization effectively in its modern economy through benefiting from international organizations in enhancing the national economy. Qatar's economy during the 18 years of the reign of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani has seen great leaps that made it one of the most developed economies in the world. Throughout this period, economic policy was based on the principle of income diversification away from rents by investing in the so-called knowledge economy and expanding foreign investment. Qatar's gross domestic product (GDP) of just under \$ 29 billion in 1995, the year Sheikh Hamad took power, was worth \$ 192 billion last year. Within a decade, Qatar has turned from a small oil producer to the largest exporter of liquefied natural gas in the world with a production capacity of over 77 million tons per year, and made the mass production of gas the largest source of clean energy from gas liquids and petroleum derivatives. Although oil and gas constitute the backbone of the Qatari economy by 70% of government revenues, the Qatari authorities have in recent years adopted long-term plans to diversify the Qatari economy by focusing on the knowledge economy and employing natural wealth revenues in investments outside Qatar in the financial and industrial sectors, agriculture and other industries through the Qatar Investment Authority, a sovereign wealth fund with assets of more than \$ 100 billion. Qatar has also benefited from its huge gas and financial resources to create a base of heavy industries to diversify the economy away from oil and gas. It has established several factories in the field of steel, fertilizers and petrochemicals, usually joint ventures between foreign and Qatari companies. Following the country's bid to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022, the infrastructure and construction sector has seen a boom in the past few years, with Doha spending more than \$ 150 billion in infrastructure spending, whether in roads, stadiums or railways, or building a new airport and port. Qatar has become one of the largest and most investees abroad with \$ 215 billion in foreign investments and a fixed annual investment rate of \$ 40 billion. Qatar's investment policies extend to almost all continents, ranging from investing in football clubs to global economic institutions to a skyscraper in London and elsewhere (Aljazeera, 2013).

Qatar's economic policies have been reflected in its ranking in the United Nations Human Development Index. In recent years, it has ranked the list of Arab countries. It ranked 36th globally in the World Organization latest ranking. This is based on several indicators; most notably the progress of countries or their delay in health care, education, Qatar is the world's richest country in terms of per capita income of around \$86,440 according to the World Bank. The Qatari authorities have adopted a comprehensive strategy called Qatar Vision 2030 to serve as a roadmap for enhancing the country's economic, human, social and environmental achievements. The vision of this project is to achieve sound economic management, responsible exploitation of oil and gas, diversification Economic development (Aljazeera, 2013).



Figure 1. Qatar GDP between 2008 and 2016 (Trading Economics, 2017)

Source: own elaboration.

According to latest figures as shown above, Qatar GDP rose up to 206 billion dollars by the year 2014 and it is still high ranking to 152 billion dollars by the year 2016. It can be recognized how it rose from 115 billion dollars in 2008 to settle at 152 billion dollars in 2016 (Trading Economics, 2017).

HUMAN RESOURCES IN QATAR

Human resources in Qatar have been witnessing great changes and developments in the last few years. One key reason is that the country has been passing through prosperous economic development and dealing with different international organizations and partners. This has imposed to modernize the law of human resources in the country. Through its journey with country economic growth, the law of human resources witnessed updated in 2002, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2016. It covers up to 31 articles associated with human resources management. For example, the article number one defined the role of each working person beginning from the minister and ending by any employee. It even defined the entities, administrations, salaries, bonuses, allowances, and incentives. According to the law, the employee is any person who holds a position according to the law articles (Hukoomi, 2016).

The provisions of the law apply to civil employees in ministries and other government agencies and public bodies and institutions. The law affirms the commitment of the state of Qatar to ensure that government agencies invest the best available human resources to achieve their objectives, develop the individual capabilities of their employees and provide a safe and fair work environment (Gulf Labour Markets and Migration, 2017).

Human Resources in Public Organizations:

The HR Law provides detailed information on all budgets related to job creation, job descriptions, classification criteria, recruitment processes, and recruitment and approval

procedures. Regarding recruitment and test period, in accordance with the provisions of the law, priority is for Qatari nationals in public organizations. If not available, then for the children of Qatari mothers and GCC people then other nationalities. New appointed employees must be 18 years old or above and have the qualifications which entitle them to occupy the matching positions. New recruited employees must pass through three months test period which can be renewed (Hukoomi, 2016).

Associated with training, the government organization must work to develop its human resources by providing suitable opportunities for training, development and rehabilitation, in order to develop and enhance their abilities and provide them with new skills that improve their performance of their jobs and qualify them to assume other responsibilities (Hukoomi, 2016). Training in the country is modernized and digitalized to be served fairly to all public organizations employees based on their training needs. There are different digitalized programs which work as platforms for the employees to choose the programs that meet their training needs. One of these programs is called *Mawared* which is an Arabic word that means resources. This program can be accessed by any employee who has a profile in the program regarding his or her background information, job description, job tasks, qualifications, experience and past training courses. Based on the employees training needs, the program helps them to suggest the most applicable and useful programs that suit their training needs. The program builds on the employee's past experience, training course and the current job description and training needs. Thus, some training programs are suggested for the employee to choose from. This helps the employee to improve his performance at the organization by having more knowledge and enhancing more skills relevant to job description and tasks (Mawared Portal, 2018).

As for performance evaluation, the government agency establishes a system of performance evaluation based on the performance of employees, their administrative units and the nature of their activities, in order to enhance individual achievements and team spirit. The employee may be given a copy of the performance appraisal report. The employee may complain to the manager within fifteen days from the date of his knowledge. The manager may grant an incentive bonus to the employee who provides excellent services, works, research or suggestions that help improve the working methods, increase the efficiency of the performance or save expenses, but not exceed the total monthly salary of the employee. The bonus is not awarded more than twice in the fiscal year (Hukoomi, 2016).

Associated with promotions, they should range between Grade 12 and excellent grade based on performance evaluation. At last two years have to be spent by the employee prior to each promotion. The manager has the authority to give distinguished and excellent employees exceptional promotions regardless the required period or qualifications as long as the employee is given excellent evaluation during the last two years (Gulf Labour Markets and Migration, 2017).

Moreover, there are rights and benefits. One is healthcare; the government organization provides health care to its employees and family members in accordance with the country health system. Another is vacations. The law specifies all types of leave that the employee is entitled to during his period of service, including periodic, casual, sick, special, academic, unpaid leave, etc. If the staff member is not able to carry out his full periodic leave, he / she must do at least half of the leave and transfer the remaining balance of the vacation period to the following year only. Another benefit is allowances. The employee is

entitled to the following allowances: social allowance (for the Qatari employee), housing allowance, mobility allowance, representation allowance and nature of work allowance in accordance with the regulations issued by the Prime Minister, special allowance, retention allowance, exceptional allowance, telephone allowance, overtime allowance, and furniture allowance. Another advantage is travel tickets. The government organization shall bear the official travel tickets for the employee in accordance with the conditions and regulations prescribed by the executive regulations of this law. The government agency shall bear the travel tickets of the non-Qatari employee who works under an external employment contract and the travel tickets of his wife and three of his sons under the age of 18 in the following cases. One is when he is appointed for the first time. Another is when performing periodic leave once a year. A further is at the end of service and leaves the country permanently. A non-Qatari employee is entitled to the value of travel tickets owed to him and his family in cash without requiring travel. Finally, end of service is when the employee is 60 years or due to resignation or dismissal on legal foundations. Finally, there is indemnity. A Qatari employee who has spent at least one year in service of the government organization is entitled to a service end benefit, which is calculated as follows: Basic salary for one month for each of the first five years of service, a basic salary of one and a half for each of the following five years of service, Two months for each year, which increased. As for the non-Qatari employee who spent at least one year in the service of the government organization, he shall be entitled to an end of service indemnity on the basis of one month's salary for each year of service up to a maximum of ten months, for the duration of his service in the country (Hukoomi, 2016).

Human Resources in Local Organizations:

Non-governmental local companies apply the HR laws in Qatar; however, they are not obliged to stick to the same conditions applied by public organizations. Local companies are owned and run by the local investors. The owner has the management and the HR role. He/she selects the job description and does the interview for the employees. The employee's salary is based according to his job description. Also, the owner decides the employee's salary. The local company is abided by the employment labor law which protects the employees. It is a must for any private local company to sign a contract with the employee upon which there is mutual agreement. Also, the employee has the right to get his/her annual vacations, salaries, and other rights.

However, while employees guarantee their rights in the public organizations, some violations are likely to take place in the local private organizations. Thus, there are laws which protect the rights of the employees not only by the Human Resources Law but also by other entities such as the National Human Rights Committee in Qatar and the Labor Office in the Ministry of Labor in Qatar. According to Al Meer (2015), the State of Qatar has paid great attention to the workers not only to protect their rights but to improve the standard of living and provide luxury and a decent life for them. The Department of Labor Relations in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has important roles to protect the rights of labor forces in Qatar. The role of the Department is to receive and consider labor complaints which might be connected with differences in the contract of employment, such as wages, allowances for tickets, vacations, etc. The Department examines the complaint within one week of submission. Our policy is to try to resolve the problem amicably by calling the parties and listening to them. Failure of find a solution to be agreed on by the two parties

will lead to raise the complaint to judiciary. If the employee is found to have rights and that the employer rejects giving him his rights, the organization's transactions are suspended. However, most complaints are amicably resolved in the department.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study by interviewing two key management personnel working in a well-known private organization in Qatar. The first one is Mr. Mohammed Shaji, the Head of Human Resources Department in Fraser Suites Doha. Specific questions were raised in this interview particularly on the labor laws adopted by the private organizations, vacations, salaries, incentives, motives, and training programs. The second one is Mr. Nasser Al Malki, the Head of Professional Development in the Development and Labor Institute in Doha, Qatar. Questions were about the vision and policy of the development labour institute to develop HR and the similarity between private and public organizations to manage human resources. He was also asked about how globalization is applied to manage human resources and future expectations regarding human resources.

HUMAN RESOURCES IN PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

What is meant by private organizations in Qatar is the international organizations which have different branches or offices worldwide and Qatar is one of them. When interviewing the Head of Human Resources Department in Fraser Suites Doha Mr. Mohammed Shaji, he stressed that the hotel as a private organization in alignment with all private organizations in Qatar follow the Labour Law adopted by the government of Qatar in most of its practices and policies. However, there are slight variations. For example, while annual vacations in public organizations are 45 days, they are 30 days in private organizations. The salaries in the public organization in Qatar are given based on job category which has different levels; however, they are classified according to positions in private organizations. While in some private organizations salaries are competitive or higher than those which are provided in public organizations, they might be lower than the salaries in public organizations in some other private organizations. Incentives and allowances are also provided by private organizations associated with each type of business and classifications.

Furthermore, private organizations also follow the Labour Law applied in the State of Qatar. However, the types, programs and hours of training are provided based on the training requirements for each employee. For example, in a hotel like Fraser Suites Doha, training programs are tailored based on the hotel needs. Examples of these programs are Hospitality Orientation, Work Safely, Basic Food Hygiene, Basic First Aid, Handling Guest with Special Needs, Improving Guest Experience, Supervisory Skills Development, Leadership Training, and Global Sales and Marketing Training.

However, there are some international organizations such as oil organizations as Shell, TOTAL, and ExxonMobil apply some laws which are similarly adopted in all the branches of these organizations worldwide. Yet, such laws are ensured not to be contradictory to the Qatari labour laws regarding different issues associated with the employees' rights such as working hours, vacations, salaries and incentives. All in all, the private organizations follow the labor laws adopted by the government of Qatar regarding the

employees' rights. However, there are variations which are subject to the nature of the organization and the nature of work and employees' positions. Yet, such variations have to be ensured not to be contradictory to the labor laws in Qatar (Qatar Labor Law, 2017).

Regarding the vision of major organizations in Qatar like the Development and Labor Institute in Doha, Nasser Al Malki, the Head of Professional Development and a trainer at the institute stressed that it is aimed to develop qualified human resources in Qatar to achieve the goals of the Qatar, especially Qatar National Vision 2030 which establishes for human, economic, social and environmental development. This has been done through attracting and developing qualified people and building up an organizational culture featured by commitment and continuous development.

Regarding the similarities and differences between private and public organizations regarding managing human resources, it is mainly in the tasks of similar departments that match with reference to managing human resources, especially in terms of development. However, in other terms like vacations, salaries, work days per week, the public organizations are more attractive to human resources. For example, in public organizations, vacations are 45 days per year and there are only seven hours work per day and five working days per week. However, in private organizations, annual vacations are only one month, and there are eight working hours per day, and six working days per week.

With reference to globalization standards in human resources management, according to Mr. Nasser Al Malki, up to 60% of these standards are applied in terms of employing expert expatriates from different nationalities with global experiences and qualifications. Also, teamwork is applied and enhanced among workforce of different nationalities to achieve integrated work in projects. As well, there is a training to develop human resources to working forces and it is free by public organizations like the Ministry of Development and Labor. This helps them to get promoted to higher positions they are trained to hold. In addition, there are employees and students who are sent abroad to join international organizations that qualify them to be more experienced and qualified to hold the positions they are assigned to.

PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF HRM OF FOREIGN OWNED FIRMS IN QATAR

According to Alamry (2018) human resources management is particularly important in international organizations operating in Qatar and in other countries for several reasons, including:

1. The breadth of geographical area to be managed, which requires highly qualified manpower, often able to make important key decisions in isolation from the senior management of the enterprise.
2. The different social and economic systems in the regions in which international enterprises operate, which requires a management capable of adapting the organization's conditions and policies according to these variables.
3. The investment of international enterprises in different areas of the world expose the company to many of the risks of investment in these areas (for example, nationalization and confiscation). Therefore, these international institutions must have administrations capable of predicting political and economic trends and trying to extrapolate their results and their impact on the organization.

4. For all of these reasons, international multinational companies pay great attention to planning their manpower needs in advance and in time, as is the case with an international company such as Shell Organization that plans its manpower requirements over a period of fifteen years in advance (Alamry, 2018).

Just few years ago, it was a must for any foreign organization interested in working in Qatar to be given only 49% of foreign ownership and 51% of national ownership. However, this doesn't still apply to all organizations now as a change has been made in this regard. In January, 2018 the Qatari cabinet approved a draft law submitted by the Ministry of Economy and Trade that allows foreign investors to own 100% of most economic sectors. Qatar's economy and trade minister Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohammed al-Thani said the project would help foreign capital flows, boost economic development and raise Qatar's level of global economic indicators. The project depends on the strength of government spending to attract foreign investment, increase tax revenues, and protect domestic and foreign investors. The new, which regulated foreign investment, includes a series of investment incentives that include allocating lands for investor to establish investing projects through use and lease. It also allows the import of machinery and equipment for the establishment or operation or expansion. Imports are exempted from income tax. The incentives also include exempting the project in the industry from customs duties on the imports of raw materials and partly processed, which are not available in local markets. Under the incentives, investments are not subject to expropriation either directly or indirectly, unless for public benefit and in a non-discriminatory manner. The investor also has the freedom to transfer his investments, which include: investment returns proceeds of sale or liquidation of investments in whole or in part, proceeds from settlement of investment disputes and any compensation he deserves. It is noteworthy that the percentage that Qatar previously allowed foreigners to own in the projects was not more than 49% (Aljazeera, 2018).

According to Lee (2018) , the following table shows all the features given to foreign companies working in Qatar.

Moreover, foreign companies operating in Qatar are experiencing steady growth. The growth of these companies is expanding and there is great competition among them. Although Qatar's labor law obligates foreign companies to apply the Qatar Human Resources Law in many respects, these companies have special powers and privileges to apply certain laws applied by them in many countries they invest in, especially if such laws do not conflict with labor laws in Qatar. For example, Qatar Labor Law requires institutions operating in Qatar to commit to eight-hour staff days. However, the nature of work in some foreign institutions requires the employee to last 12 hours. The Human Resources Law in Qatar does not prevent some staff members from working for 12 hours a day if they are satisfied with the company and the employees and if the extra hours are calculated as overtime hours to be paid to the employee at his satisfaction. As well, foreign companies in Qatar focus on sustainable labor costs, highlighting human resources departments. Globally, the best practices of human resources are those that focus on talent development, growth and innovation. So the focus on executive talent, whether under the nomination or evaluation or training, has become necessary to achieve business acceleration and organizational goals. For international companies operating in Qatar, the main reasons for maintaining and engaging staff are related to performance

management and rewards. Performance assessment, whether annual or quarterly, is a standard practice. Most foreign companies operating in Qatar currently use a form of performance appraisal, ranging from simple schemes to complex behavioral assessment schemes, an opportunity to look at the larger picture and seriously consider management, business and personnel objectives (Moody, 2016).

Operations and logistics	Joint venture	100% foreign-owned company	Free zone company	Branch
Doing business in Qatar permitted?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowed to sign contracts with local Clients?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Must have a contract signed before Qatar registration?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowed to invoice local Clients?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clients must deduct tax from payments?	No	No	No	Yes
Can rent local office premises?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowed to import raw materials?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowed to export goods?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accounting and tax				
Corporate tax rate?	10%	10%	10%	10%
Corporate bank account?				
Statutory audit always required?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 2. Comparison between different entity types of foreign companies in Qatar (Lee, 2018

Source: own elaboration.

WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE IHRM IN THE FUTURE?

There are directions in HRM which comply with globalization requirements. The successful organizations have been adopting more globalized HRM policies that will lead to adopting shared knowledge including thoughts, and developing new approaches of HRM. Also, such directions have led to contemporary transformations in HRM through:

- Transformation from the concept of personnel to HRM.
- Shift from managing personnel as individuals to managing them as capital.
- Change from executive role to administrative personnel to the consulting role to manage human resources.
- Shift from traditional role to manage personnel to strategic role to manage human resources.
- Transfer from managing individuals as isolated people in specific entities to managing HR as a team with integrated teams locally, regionally, and internationally.

In this context, human resources management is going to change to a strategic role based on HRM. This includes developed skills, competences, and knowledge that lead to competitiveness and enhanced awareness to adopt more strategic thoughts and concepts.

According to Mr. Nasser Al Malki, there are future tendencies to attract qualified national human resources that contribute to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030. There are also efforts to update the current training programs to be more globalized and standardized to develop human resources in both private and public sectors. As well, it is aimed to attract special leadership skills that are able to create positive culture that harmonizes with global standards in human resources management.

However, there are still challenges to HRM, particularly competitive, technological and cultural ones. Regarding competition, there are challenges how to attract new employees with knowledge, professional skills and competences on a globalized scale. As for the technological challenges, they include but are not limited to ensuring the availability of e-learning and training all over the world, and resources and training facilities required for that. A last but not least challenge is cultural, especially by attracting and maintaining staffs from different nationalities who adopt shared values for organizations and in harmony and compliance with each other despite different cultures, languages, beliefs and political attitudes (Ghania and Yemina, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper addressed three key areas: globalization in ITRM with focus on Qatar, contemporary tendencies in Qatar economy, and human resources in all types of organizations in Qatar. It has been concluded that Qatar apply competitive human resources management system to international standards. As Qatar works with multinational organizations and employs hundreds of thousands of employees from different nationalities, it adopts the latest and most globalized labor laws that comply with international labour laws. All companies in Qatar have to abide by the country labor laws despite the fact that some variations may take place based on the nature, type and field of each business.

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