

## IN THE FACE OF NEW GLOBAL BUSINESS CHALLENGES WITH STRONG RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TOWARDS WORK

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### **Abstract**

*Regardless of the fact that new global challenges bring many new ways to improve the company's business with the dizzying progress of new technologies, human resources will continue to be the most valuable resources in the future that enable the company to correctly and successfully respond to the demands of new challenges. Employee responsibility is a trait that is difficult to examine and measure, and the impact of human resource management on employee responsibility has not yet been sufficiently explored. Only responsible employees will be able to successfully overcome the new business challenges that the future brings. In order to examine the role of human resources management in defining the responsibilities of employees, a survey of employees in the public sector was conducted. The results of the research confirmed the research hypothesis - that the influence of human resources management on defining the responsibilities of employees is significant, and therefore the impact of the contribution of human resources management to corporate performance by influencing the responsible behavior of employees is significant.*

**Key words:** human resources management, responsibility, company, employees.

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## 1. Introduction

In the present scenario of extreme globalization and rat race, success of the organization comes from reaching out to its people's potential talent and fostering a place for accountability and creativity. The key lies in creating an environment where employees feel empowered to take initiative, make decisions and take responsibility for their actions (Gratton, 2011). In the era of knowledge and innovation, organizations that want to remain competitive must constantly learn, adapt and develop, with human resources and their accountability being key success factors (Senge, 2014). In this regard, human capital, which consists of not only skills but also attitudes and cognitive skills of employees, is of great importance. Because people contain knowledge to an organization, it is essential to comprehend the factors that determine the users' attitude, behavior, performance so as to increase the level of responsibility, potency and effectiveness of business systems.

Among the major elements of human resources development, the area of focus is the determination and encouragement of employee responsibility. Ethical responsibility is exhibited in high ethical standards and a well-developed personal value system. This often stems from an inner urge to serve and promote the common good and is not only limited to the work place but cuts across every area of life. In a responsible organization, employees are encouraged to be responsible and human resource management is critical in achieving that. Employees generally want to associate with a business that is engaged in 'responsible business' particularly if the employee's values resonate with the company's core. Reckless and fraudulent conduct of employees, in any organization, is likely to have serious repercussions on the business, such as severe costs, loss of credibility, and expensive lawsuits.

On the contrary, employees' behaviors marked by high ethical standards, sense of fairness and sense of caring for others help in the development of good organizational culture. One of the sure methods of achieving ethical culture within the work environment is ensuring that there are policies practiced within the organization. The purpose of this paper is to help managers who wish to implement a culture of ethical behavior at the organization, that is beneficial not only to the organization but to the society as well.

## 2. Research methodology

### The aim and task of the work

The main goal of the research that will be presented in this paper was to determine whether human resources management develops awareness and takes measures to raise the level of responsibility of employees in public companies in Serbia.

### Research hypothesis

The hypothesis H0 Human resource management has a significant role in defining the responsibilities of employees in public enterprises in Serbia was put forward in the framework of this work.

## Research instrument

For the purpose of conducting empirical research, a survey method was applied to a representative sample of respondents. The research instrument, in the form of a questionnaire, was constructed in accordance with the set objectives of the research and the defined hypothesis of the work. The structure of the questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions, where respondents were able to select one of the offered alternative answers that most adequately reflects their individual attitude and opinion on the issue under consideration. Each statement had five response modalities: Disagree, Partially Disagree, Not Sure, Don't Know, Partially Agree, and Agree. This approach to the design of the research instrument enabled the systematic collection of quantitative data relevant to the testing of the set hypothesis and the realization of the research objectives.

## Sample research

153 respondents participated in the research, of which 80 were female and 73 male. Analyzing the age structure of the respondents, it was observed that the largest number of respondents were in the age group of 36 to 45 years (55 respondents or 35.95%). Next in terms of representation is the age group from 46 to 55 years old (54 respondents or 35.29%), followed by the group from 26 to 35 years old (33 respondents). Age groups up to 25 years (6 respondents or 3.92%) and over 56 years (5 respondents or 3.27%) were less represented. By analyzing the educational structure of the respondents, it was determined that the largest number of respondents had completed the VSC (92 respondents or 60.13%). This representation was significantly higher compared to other levels of education: higher education (18; 11.76%; p=.000) and master's (28; 18.30%; p=.000) and doctorate (15; 9.80%; p=. 000). Regarding the type of education, the highest representation was among respondents with technical-technological education (67 respondents or 43.79%). This representation was significantly higher in relation to other types of education: social and humanistic professions (46; 30.07%; p=.013), natural and mathematical professions (20; 13.07%; p=.000) and other types of education (20 ; 13.07%; p=.000).

## 3. Results and discussion

*Hypothesis H0, which states that human resources management has a significant role in defining the responsibilities of employees in public companies in Serbia, will be examined in this chapter. In the same chapter, the numerical (n) and percentage (%) representation of respondents' attitudes towards corporate responsibility (CO) towards the wider social community within the company will be presented.*

*Table 1. Representation of the views "Human resource management attaches great importance to establishing and preserving the ethical values of the company"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 16            | 13                   | 36                         | 38                | 50      |
| % | 10.46         | 8.50                 | 23.53                      | 24.84             | 32.68   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 1, it can be concluded that for the attitude "Human resource management attaches great importance to establishing and preserving the ethical values of the company", the most dominant answer is "I agree", which has 50 respondents, i.e. 32.68%. Its frequency is higher compared to the attitude "Partially agree" (38 respondents, 24.84%,  $p = .131$ ), significantly higher than the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (36 respondents, 23.53%,  $p = .076$ ), and significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I do not agree" (16 respondents, 10.46%,  $p = .000$ ) and the attitude "Partially disagree" (13 respondents, 8.50%,  $p = .000$ ).

The frequency of the response "I partially agree", present in 38 respondents or 24.84%, is significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I am not sure, I do not know" (36 respondents, 23.53%,  $p = .076$ ), as well as significantly higher in relation to the position "I do not agree" (16 respondents, 10.46%,  $p = .000$ ) and the position "Partially disagree" (13 respondents, 8.50%,  $p = .000$ ).

Furthermore, the analysis shows that the attitude "I agree" clearly prevails compared to the other options, which indicates a high level of agreement among respondents that the management of human resources in companies attaches importance to ethical values. Differences in the frequency of attitudes further confirm the significant perception of the role of management in preserving ethical standards, while relatively lower rates of disagreement and indecision emphasize the consensus among respondents.

These results indicate that human resource management plays a key role not only in setting, but also in maintaining ethical norms within organizations, which can significantly influence corporate culture and general business practices. Observed differences among respondents' attitudes additionally underline the importance of strategies used by HR management in promoting ethical values in the business environment.

*Table 2. Representation of the views "Human resource management encourages individual responsibility of employees through the development of the internal locus of control, i.e. believe that what will happen depends on their actions"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 31            | 12                   | 24                         | 26                | 60      |
| % | 20.26         | 7.84                 | 15.69                      | 16.99             | 39.22   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 2, it can be concluded that for the attitude "Human resource management encourages individual responsibility of employees through the development of the internal locus of control, i.e. the belief that outcomes are the result of their actions", the most common answer is "I agree",

with 60 respondents or 39, 22%. Its frequency is significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I do not agree" (31 respondents, 20.26%, p = .000), significantly higher than the attitude "Partially agree" (26 respondents, 16.99%, p = .000 ), as well as significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (24 respondents, 15.69%, p = .000) and the attitude "Partially disagree" (12 respondents, 7.84%, p = .000). The frequency of the attitude "I do not agree", with 31 respondents or 20.26%, is significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "Partially agree" (26 respondents, 16.99%, p = .000), significantly higher than the attitude "I am not sure /na, I don't know" (24 respondents, 15.69%, p = .000), as well as significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I partially disagree" (12 respondents, 7.84%, p = .000).

*Table 3. Representation of the views "The strength and content of the culture in the organization affects the ethical behavior of employees"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 42            | 23                   | 10                         | 40                | 38      |
| % | 27.45         | 15.03                | 6.54                       | 26.14             | 24.84   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 3, it can be concluded that for the position "The strength and content of the organizational culture affects the ethical behavior of employees", the most dominant answer is "I do not agree", with 42 respondents or 27.45%. The frequency of this attitude is higher than the representation of the attitude "Partially agree" (40 respondents, 26.14%, p = .796) and the attitude "I agree" (38 respondents, 24.84%, p = .603), and it has significantly higher frequency compared to the attitude "I partially disagree" (23 respondents, 15.03%, p = .008) and the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (10 respondents, 6.54%, p = .000).

*Table 4. Representation of the views "Human resource management encourages responsible behavior of employees towards their colleagues"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 18            | 10                   | 19                         | 48                | 58      |
| % | 11.76         | 6.54                 | 12.42                      | 31.37             | 37.91   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 4, it can be concluded that for the position "Human resource management encourages responsible behavior of employees towards their colleagues", the most common answer is "I agree", with 58 respondents or 37.91%. Its frequency is higher than the frequency of the attitude "Partially agree" (48 respondents, 31.37%, p = .231), significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (19 respondents, 12.42%, p = .000), as well as significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I do not agree" (18 respondents, 11.76%, p = .000) and the attitude "Partially disagree" (10 respondents, 6.54%, p = .000). The representation of the attitude "I partially agree", which has 48 respondents or 31.37%, is significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (19 respondents, 12.42%, p = .000),

significantly higher than the attitude "I do not agree" (18 respondents, 11.76%, p = .000), as well as significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude "Partially disagree" (10 respondents, 6.54%, p = .000).

*Table 5. Representation of the views "Human resource management encourages employees to build responsible, honest and long-term relationships with customers/users"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 39            | 21                   | 20                         | 34                | 39      |
| % | 25.49         | 13.73                | 13.07                      | 22.22             | 25.49   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 5, it can be concluded that for the attitude "Human resource management encourages employees to build responsible, honest and long-term relationships with customers/users" the most dominant answer is "I don't agree", with 39 respondents or 25.49%. Its representation is equal to the position "I agree" (39 respondents, 25.49%, p = 1.000) and the position "Partially agree" (34 respondents, 22.22%, p = .503), while it is significantly higher in compared to the attitude "I partially disagree" (21 respondents, 13.73%, p = .010) and the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (20 respondents, 13.07%, p = .006).

*Table 6. Representation of the views "Human resources management encourages the undertaking of activities among employees that are morally aligned with the morals of the social community"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 40            | 24                   | 22                         | 35                | 32      |
| % | 26.14         | 15.69                | 14.38                      | 22.88             | 20.92   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 6, it can be concluded that for the position "Human resources management encourages the undertaking of activities among employees that are morally aligned with the morals of the social community" the most common answer is "I do not agree", with 40 respondents or 26, 14%. Its representation is higher than the representation of the position "Partially agree" (35 respondents, 22.88%, p = .507) and the position "I agree" (32 respondents, 20.92%, p = .282), and significantly higher from the frequency of the attitude "I partially disagree" (24 respondents, 15.69%, p = .025) and the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (22 respondents, 14.38%, p = .011).

*Table 7. Representation of the views "Human resources management encourages employees to be self-efficacious in their work, to make independent decisions regarding their work and to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 34            | 16                   | 14                         | 62                | 27      |
| % | 22.22         | 10.46                | 9.15                       | 40.52             | 17.65   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 7, it can be concluded that the position "Human resource management encourages employees to be self-efficacious in their work, make independent decisions regarding their work and take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions" is the most prevalent. The largest number of respondents, 62 of them (40.52%), express the position Partially agree, whose representation is significantly higher than the position I do not agree (34; 22.22%; p=.001). Also, this attitude has a significantly higher frequency than the attitude I agree (27; 17.65%; p=.000), as well as the attitude Partially disagree (16; 10.46%; p=.000), and the attitude I'm not sure/ na, I don't know (14; 9.15%; p=.000).

*Table 8. Representation of the views "Human resource management sets an example of responsibility for all employees"*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 25            | 14                   | 15                         | 39                | 60      |
| % | 16.34         | 9.15                 | 9.80                       | 25.49             | 39.22   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 8, it can be concluded that the attitude "Human resource management sets an example of responsibility to all employees" is most represented in the form I agree, which was expressed by 60 respondents, i.e. 39.22%. This frequency is significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude Partially agree (39; 25.49%; p=.011), as well as the attitude I do not agree (25; 16.34%; p=.000), the attitude I'm not sure, I don't know (15; 9.80%; p=.000) and the attitude Partially disagree (14; 9.15%; p=.000). The frequency of the attitude Partially agree, expressed by 39 respondents, i.e. 25.49%, is also significantly higher than the frequency of the attitude I do not agree (25; 16.34%; p=.000), the attitude I'm not sure, I don't know (15; 9.80) %; p=.000 and the attitude Partially disagree (14; 9.15%; p=.000).

*Table 9. Representation of the views "Human resource management encourages decision-making among employees based on moral qualities."*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 46            | 23                   | 27                         | 27                | 30      |
| % | 30.07         | 15.03                | 17.65                      | 17.65             | 19.61   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 9, it can be concluded that for the attitude "Human resources management encourages decision-making among employees based on moral qualities" the most common answer is "I do not agree", with 46 respondents, i.e. 30.07%. Its representation is significantly higher than the representation of the attitude "I agree" (30 respondents, 19.61%, p = .035), and it also has a significantly higher frequency compared to the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (27 respondents, 17.65%, p = .011), with the attitude "Partially agree" (27 respondents, 17.65%, p = .011), as well as with the attitude "Partially disagree" (23 respondents, 15.03 %, p = .002).

*Table 10. Representation of the views "Employees are not evaluated solely according to the results achieved, but also according to the methods by which those results were achieved."*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 46            | 23                   | 15                         | 35                | 34      |
| % | 30.07         | 15.03                | 9.80                       | 22.88             | 22.22   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 10, it can be concluded that for the position "Employees are not evaluated solely according to the results of their work, but also according to the methods by which those results were achieved" the most common answer is "I do not agree", with 46 respondents, i.e. 30.07%. This attitude is more prevalent compared to the attitude "Partially agree" (35 respondents, 22.88%,  $p = .155$ ) and the attitude "I agree" (34 respondents, 22.22%,  $p = .120$ ), and has significantly higher frequency compared to the attitude "I partially disagree" (23 respondents, 15.03%,  $p = .002$ ) and the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (15 respondents, 9.80%,  $p = .000$ ).

*Table 11. Representation of the views "Human resource managers are aware of the importance of organizational commitment".*

|   | I don't agree | I partially disagree | I'm not sure, I don't know | I partially agree | I agree |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| n | 28            | 25                   | 17                         | 61                | 22      |
| % | 18.30         | 16.34                | 11.11                      | 39.87             | 14.38   |

Based on the analysis of the data from Table 11, it can be concluded that for the position "Human resource managers are aware of the importance of organizational commitment" the most common answer is "Partially agree", with 61 respondents, i.e. 39.87%. Its representation is significantly higher than the attitude "I do not agree" (28 respondents, 18.30%,  $p = .000$ ), and also significantly higher compared to the attitude "Partially disagree" (25 respondents, 16.34%,  $p = .000$ ), with the attitude "I agree" (22 respondents, 14.38%,  $p = .000$ ), as well as with the attitude "I'm not sure, I don't know" (17 respondents, 11.11%,  $p = .000$ ) (Šikoparija, 2023).

#### 4. Conclusions

In every workplace, the accountability or responsible business ethics might not always be available, however, it becomes very important while dealing with the customers by providing quality service and meeting the compliance system and avoiding unnecessary paying of large fines and lawsuits. Responsible and ethical culture in the company should be initiated from the management of the organization and should include defining the pressure for compliance with the ethical standards which may be beneficial to bottom-line performance, brand protection of the company and increased employee, users and customers satisfaction. In the course of a business operation, a sense of responsibility cuts across all employees, be it business personnel, team leader or a supervisor. Fair and responsible practices

should be observed by the workers in their interactions among themselves as well as with their clientele.

Practicing a good ethical behavior is a morale boost to the management of the company and good social relationships with customers. Employees can also be very loyal to an employer especially a trustworthy employer whom the employees will do their utmost to work for the good of the employer. People are eager to engage in their life's work where everybody is treated and customers are treated properly, and companies are engaged in good and responsible business. Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, points out: "Efficiency is doing things the right way; effectiveness is doing the right things" (Drucker, 2006). This idea points out the significance of formulating a proper strategy in human resource administration, since there is a concern not only on the efficiency of the said function but also the results obtained from the proper actions of the employees. This hypothesis was confirmed by the external results of the study - management of human resources does play an important part in the distribution of roles among employees of public companies of the country of Serbia. The findings of the study provide a platform for a heightened appreciation and a more active shift towards the human resource supply in the public. Please take this course of action in relation to each employee so that every worker assists towards the realization of the objectives of the organization and the betterment of society as a whole. We believe that the findings and shortcomings of this research provide an adequate framework for human resources management improvement together with employees' accountability enhancement. In such instances, a number of specific areas or processes of implementation have been specified or defined that may be addressed in order to be able to achieve the intended objectives in this case. First, redefining the selection and recruitment process is a fundamental starting point.

The application of advanced selection tools that precisely determine the necessary dimensions of candidates, particularly focusing on ethics and a predisposition to responsibility, can be very effective in promoting the development of responsible organizational culture. The motivational focus may also be taken by the introduction of an incentive scheme that is new, focuses on the results and quality of work performed. It has been established that while measurement of job performance outcomes includes quantitative aspects, other aspects such as ethics and the participation in organizational culture are also rewarding performance. Employees in the organization can also be empowered through appropriate training courses that would enhance freedom and responsibility. As Michael Porter emphasizes: "Innovation is a central outgrowth of competitive advantage" (Porter, 1990). For this reason, implementing programs that enable employees to use discretion and decide how to do their work within the scopes of their responsibilities can foster creativity and ownership. Such workshops, coaching and mentoring can foster the development of an internal locus of control in an individual, thereby encouraging an individual sense of responsibility. This is in line with the opinion of Daniel Pink who claims: "Control leads to compliance; autonomy leads to engagement" (Pink, 2009). Devising ways to foster such ethics as volunteer programs and community projects helps bring the organization closer to wider

society. Aligning performance with social welfare objectives means that any organizational policy or operational guideline has to be consistent with ethical principles and societal expectations. This is vital in relation to the public management sector since citizens' trust is paramount. Last, but not least, creating an atmosphere that promotes self-efficacy and responsibility, where taking the initiative and with it the responsibility for decisions taken is encouraged can help organizations develop significantly. Dave Ulrich, one of the world's leading human resources experts, emphasizes: "Human capital is becoming a key differentiator of organizational success. Organizations that effectively develop, engage and retain talent will outperform those that do not" (Ulrich, 2017). This belief further affirms that management of the employees and their trust is not only a moral duty of organizations in the public sector but a strategy for survival and growth of the entities in the long term. The practical relevance of this investigation is pertinent to the possibility for human resources managers to change their strategies depending on their performance in creating adequate constructs in order to fortify the central factors that describe the roles of employees. This entails an ongoing assessment of what actions have been executed and to what effects, and the willingness to modify plans as per the requirements of the organization and society. John Kotter, an expert on leadership and change, points out: "Organizational culture can eat strategy for breakfast" (Kotter, 2011). With this analogy, it is worth emphasizing the pressing need to create and strengthen an organizational culture that promotes proper behavior as even well formulated strategies can go to waste in the absence of appropriate culture. Further tendencies of investigations can be aimed at more precise differentiation of employees' attitude according to their demographic characteristics and broadening their training and development programs. In addition, these measures can be incorporated over an extended period in order to examine the effects of measures taken and the dynamics of organizational performance and accountability of employees. Gary Hamel, a leading expert on innovation management, notes, "The most important thing managers must do is to eliminate the barriers that stand in the way of natural human initiative, imagination, and passion" (Hamel, 2007). This stresses the need of establishing workplace conditions favorable to employee's proactivity and accountability.

It can be concluded that this research has shown that there has to be sustained and strategic resource commitment towards the management of human capital as well as the enhancement of personnel accountability in the government institutions in Serbia. Application of the suggested reforms can make a considerable difference not only towards achieving specific organizational goals, but also towards enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of the overall public sector, which ultimately benefits citizen welfare and societal development. Finally, the words of Peter Senge, creator of the "learning organization" concept, provide an inspiring perspective for the future: "The organizations that will really thrive in the future will be those that discover how to harness people's commitment and capacity for learning at all levels of the organization" (Senge, 1990). This vision emphasizes that the path to a responsible and efficient public sector is inseparable from continuous learning, development and empowerment of employees.

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