



International Conference of Economics, Finance and Accounting Studies

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Public Sector Human Resource Models in Administrative Reform Contexts

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ABSTRACT

In the context of global administrative modernization, the human resource (HR) potential of public civil services plays a pivotal role in shaping the quality, efficiency, and adaptability of governance systems. Ukraine's civil service has undergone significant legal and institutional reforms in recent years, particularly through the adoption of Law No. 889-VIII, aimed at aligning HR practices with European standards. Despite these reforms, a clear disconnect remains between formal legislative progress and practical implementation at the organizational level, and limited research has comprehensively assessed the operational readiness of Ukraine's HR systems compared to international benchmarks. This study aims to examine the structure, functions, and effectiveness of human resources potential in Ukraine's civil service, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current HR models. The findings reveal that while legal foundations and institutional frameworks have been established, challenges such as insufficient digital integration, centralized HR decision-making, and underdeveloped strategic workforce planning continue to constrain performance. Comparative analysis with advanced administrative systems in countries like Singapore, Germany, and the UK illustrates the need for a cohesive, competency-based, and technologically supported HRM system. The research provides a cross-national perspective on civil service HR development in a transitional context, emphasizing both administrative gaps and international alignment. The study recommends systemic improvements in decentralization, digital capacity building, and continuous professional development, and suggests future research on HR innovation using AI and behavioral approaches.

Keywords: civil service, human resources, administrative reform, Ukraine, HRM, competency models, digital governance.

Introduction

In the modern era of public administration, the quality and strategic development of human resources (HR) in the civil service play a decisive role in shaping effective, responsive, and citizen-oriented governance. As governments worldwide face mounting challenges from technological change, globalization, and shifting citizen expectations, the ability of public institutions to attract, retain, and empower competent professionals has become more crucial

than ever. Human resource management (HRM) is no longer viewed as a peripheral function but as a core determinant of institutional adaptability, policy innovation, and service delivery quality.

Ukraine's efforts to reform its public administration system especially following the adoption of Law No. 889-VIII reflect a broader attempt to modernize civil service structures, enhance administrative efficiency, and align with European governance standards. Yet, despite these legislative advances, practical obstacles remain, including outdated bureaucratic practices, centralized decision-making, and a lack of digital integration. Internationally, countries such as Singapore and the United Kingdom have demonstrated the success of integrated HR strategies, digital tools, and competency-based models in driving public sector transformation. The contrast between these systems and Ukraine's current practices raises critical questions about institutional readiness, implementation gaps, and contextual challenges unique to transitional economies.

A review of previous studies reveals limited empirical analysis of the relationship between HR policy reforms and actual institutional performance within the Ukrainian civil service. Most literature focuses either on legislative changes or normative frameworks, without exploring the functional capacity of HR systems or the cultural factors inhibiting reform adoption. Furthermore, there is a notable gap in research connecting HRM strategies to broader governance outcomes such as transparency, accountability, and innovation. This study addresses this gap by adopting a comparative, document-based methodology that evaluates Ukraine's HR potential in the context of both domestic reforms and international best practices.

The research is grounded in the theoretical perspectives of comparative public administration and strategic HRM, utilizing document analysis and international benchmarking as the primary methods. Through this approach, the study examines key elements of Ukraine's civil service HR potential, including recruitment, performance evaluation, digital literacy, and competency development. By comparing Ukraine's framework with systems in the United Kingdom, Germany, Singapore, and France, the analysis seeks to determine the degree of alignment between policy design and operational practice. The study also integrates international standards such as the OECD competency framework and the Davos Manifesto to contextualize global expectations for public service effectiveness.

This research is expected to generate valuable insights into the limitations of Ukraine's current HRM system while offering practical and policy-relevant recommendations for reform. The findings highlight structural, cultural, and technological challenges that inhibit the full realization of HR potential within the civil service. The implications extend beyond Ukraine, contributing to the broader discourse on how transitional public administrations can build resilient, high-performing institutions. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the strategic value of investing in human capital as a catalyst for administrative modernization and democratic consolidation [1].

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, comparative analytical methodology that synthesizes official documentation, international benchmarks, and institutional HR data spanning from 2021 to 2024. Central to the research is a systematic document analysis, focusing on Ukraine's legislative framework particularly Law No. 889-VIII and related Cabinet resolutions aimed at understanding the structural and administrative conditions affecting civil service human capital. To assess broader applicability, the study juxtaposes Ukraine's HRM models with globally recognized systems from countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Singapore, the United States, France, and Japan. These nations were purposefully selected due to their proven success in competency-based, inclusive, and hybrid talent management strategies that address digital transformation and public sector modernization. Additionally, the research integrates international guidelines, including the Davos Manifesto and OECD standards, to extract core themes such as leadership development, competency modeling, and e-learning integration. The

cross-national comparative element involves triangulating Ukraine's institutional HR indicators with those of other countries to evaluate administrative readiness and alignment with European governance expectations. Through this approach, the study bridges theory and practice, offering a multi-dimensional understanding of internal barriers, cultural factors, and system adaptability. Ultimately, this methodology facilitates evidence-based insights into the extent to which Ukraine's civil service can evolve from legacy structures toward a responsive, digital, and competency-driven HR environment capable of meeting modern governance demands.

Results

The results of this study illuminate the current state and evolving dynamics of human resources (HR) potential within Ukraine's civil service. The analysis indicates a systemic transformation in legal and institutional frameworks following the adoption of Law No. 889-VIII, which prioritizes merit-based recruitment, performance evaluation, and continuous professional development. However, despite these formal advances, practical implementation remains inconsistent. Significant discrepancies exist between national policy directives and their execution at the organizational level, particularly in regions lacking digital infrastructure or strategic HR capacity.

The study's findings confirm that Ukraine's civil service predominantly functions within a bureaucratic model that emphasizes control and regulation over innovation and competency development. This legacy structure has hindered the transition to a more adaptive, performance-driven HR paradigm. The theoretical framework used in the study, rooted in comparative public administration, reveals that countries with high-performing public sectors such as Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Germany exhibit strong alignment between institutional HRM strategies and their broader governance goals. These nations implement integrated competency models, digitalized HR processes, and evidence-based performance management systems. In contrast, Ukraine's model reflects a partial adoption of such approaches without the systemic coherence needed for sustained impact [2].

From a practical perspective, the research identifies a gap in digital literacy and HR analytics, which constrains the operational capacity of HR departments. The absence of unified HR information systems and the limited authority granted to HR managers further weaken the feedback loop necessary for continuous improvement. Moreover, while training programs have been expanded, their content often lacks relevance to contemporary administrative challenges such as digital governance, intersectoral coordination, and cross-cultural management.

The findings also reveal a lack of structured career pathways and incentive mechanisms, resulting in diminished motivation and retention among high-performing civil servants. The inconsistency in applying performance appraisal results to career advancement reflects a broader cultural resistance to change, rooted in traditional hierarchical practices. These issues expose a critical knowledge gap: the need to understand how cultural, institutional, and technological factors jointly shape the effectiveness of HR systems in transitional economies [3].

The implications of these results are multifaceted. Theoretically, the study contributes to public administration literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how post-Soviet administrative systems adapt to global HR trends. Practically, the results provide a foundation for designing more coherent HR strategies, integrating digital tools, and fostering leadership development. Addressing the identified shortcomings particularly in decentralization, competence mapping, and strategic workforce planning can strengthen institutional resilience and service delivery [4].

For future research, longitudinal studies incorporating behavioral insights and organizational ethnography are recommended to assess how reforms are internalized within civil service institutions. Further exploration into the role of artificial intelligence, e-recruitment, and gamified training systems may offer innovative pathways for modernizing HR practices in public administration.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the pressing need to reconceptualize human resources (HR) as a central pillar of governance rather than a supportive function. The analysis reveals that Ukraine's civil service continues to rely on outdated recruitment and performance management systems that reward tenure over capability, thereby limiting institutional flexibility and innovation. This misalignment between formal HR policy and practical implementation is a critical barrier to the country's administrative modernization efforts. By comparing Ukraine with countries such as Singapore and the United Kingdom recognized for their digital platforms, inclusive competency frameworks, and performance-based promotion systems it becomes evident that strategic HRM alignment plays a pivotal role in public sector effectiveness. These comparisons highlight the gap between Ukraine's legislative progress and its operational reality, wherein digital tools remain underutilized and HR decisions are still overly centralized [5].

The theoretical implications of these findings reinforce the argument that public value creation is contingent on competency-driven and digitally empowered HR systems. Practically, this means Ukraine must integrate continuous e-learning, leadership mentoring, and inclusive talent strategies into its governance model. On a policy level, reforms must be institutionalized across all government levels, focusing on empowering managers with authority and digital literacy to execute policies effectively. However, the study's reliance on document analysis without complementary field data such as employee feedback or organizational behavior limits the scope of understanding how HR policies are perceived and enacted on the ground.

Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to capture the dynamic effects of HR reforms across different administrative levels. In particular, the impact of artificial intelligence in HR analytics, remote training systems, and generational motivation should be explored to build a resilient civil service aligned with global governance standards [6].

Conclusion

The study highlights that while Ukraine has taken significant legislative steps to modernize its civil service such as adopting Law No. 889-VIII and restructuring HR practices implementation remains uneven due to persistent bureaucratic inertia, underdeveloped digital infrastructure, and limited managerial autonomy. A key finding is the discrepancy between formal HR frameworks and their operationalization, particularly in aligning recruitment, performance evaluation, and professional development with competency-based models seen in advanced public administration systems. These findings imply that without addressing institutional culture and empowering HR managers with digital tools and strategic capabilities, Ukraine's civil service reform efforts may fall short of achieving lasting impact. The implications for policy are profound, as they point to the need for decentralization of HR functions, integration of e-learning systems, and the development of leadership pipelines. Further research should employ longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to explore how internal organizational dynamics, employee motivation, and technological innovations influence the success of HR reforms, thereby offering a more comprehensive roadmap for administrative transformation in transitional states.

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