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Korean HRM in the global context

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Call for Papers

Korean HRM in the global context

Scholars have been involved in an ongoing debate as to whether globalization will result in a convergence in HRM policies and practices or the trend of necessary divergence will prevail. Temple & Walgenbach (2007) attributed this dichotomy of convergence versus divergence to the two institutionalist traditions in organization theory, i.e. new institutionalism versus the business-systems approach and suggested the cross-fertilization of these two theories (i.e. a cross-vergence perspective) to seek a more balanced understanding of both streams. This special issue seeks to shed light on how globalization has influenced the following three areas: (a) the institutional contexts that affect the HR practices of Korean multinationals, (b) the changes and evolution of Korean HR policies and practices, and (c) the transferability of such policies and practices to host countries. Although a rich stream of literature is available on Japanese HRM and increasing attention has been paid to Chinese HRM (Morris et al. 2009; Cooke 2005), relatively little has been written on Korean HRM and its international HRM strategies and practices (e.g. Glover & Wilkinson 2007). As Ouchi's Theory Z has emerged in the early 1980s as part of an effort to examine the unique aspects of Japanese HRM practices that have contributed to the strong performance of Japanese firms, the more recent emergence of Korea as a global competitor has ignited the desire by many people to understand the idiosyncrasies of Korean HRM systems and practices. Korea, Japan, and China are often regarded as part of a 'regional cluster' because of their geographic and cultural proximity to each other, leading some to assert the existence of an 'Asian model' of HRM (Chris et al. 2004; Zhu et al. 2007). Although there is some convergence, it may be overly simplistic to assume that a unique model of Asian HRM exists.

Korean scholars often talk about 'the 10-year cycle' of Korean HRM. The three historical milestones in Korea's recent history include 1987 (the democratization movement), 1997 (the Asian financial crisis), and 2008 (the global financial crisis). At the risk of over-simplification, each distinct phase exhibits different HRM features: the pre-1987 adopted an essentially seniority-based paternalistic approach; between 1987 and 1997, it was ability/performance based; between 1997 and 2007, the approach can be characterized as a performance-based system with numerical flexibility; and the country is still searching for a new paradigm after the 2008–2009 global financial crisis.

Brain circulation (Saxenian 2002; Tung 2007), the global war on talent, and an increasingly volatile global business environment have rendered the role of HRM more important than ever before for Korean companies to sustain their international competitive advantage. In light of the increasing awareness of the success of Korean MNCs, can we expect similar development of any of the theoretical underpinnings of Korean HRM that may explain the strong performance of Korean companies? Moreover, an important question arises as to whether these HRM practices are transferable to other countries? Many developing countries in Asia and other regions are eager to emulate Korea's

economic achievements. This special issue will provide useful resources for academics as well as the practitioners to not only understand the key ingredients of Korean HRM that separate them from Japanese and Chinese HRM but also identify new ideas for developing future research agenda.

A partial listing of topics that will meet the objectives of the Special Issue is:

- Global financial crisis and its influence on Korean HRM
- Institutional approach to analyzing the new HRM practices of Korean firms
- Competitive strategy and HR practices at foreign subsidiaries of Korean companies
- Managing Korean expatriates at foreign subsidiaries
- Merit-based compensation and firm performance in Korean companies
- The main features, patterns, and directions of global HRM strategies in major Korean multinationals
- The idiosyncratic features of Korean HRM compared with those of Japanese and/or Chinese HRM systems and practices
- Gaining global competitiveness through people in Korean multinationals
- The continuities and discontinuities of Korean HRM practices, i.e. what aspects of Korean HRM have changed? What aspects have remained the same?

Manuscript submission and review

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Authors should prepare and upload two versions of their manuscript. One should be a complete text, whereas in the second, all document information identifying the author should be removed from files to allow them to be sent anonymously to referees. When uploading files, authors will then be able to define the non-anonymous version as 'Complete document with author information' and the anonymous version as 'Main document without author information'.

To submit your manuscript to the Special Issue on 'Korean HRM in the Global Context', choose the title of the Special Issue from the Manuscript Type list when you come to submit your paper. Also, when you come to the 'Details and Comments' page, answer 'yes' to the question 'Is this manuscript a candidate for a special issue' and insert the title in the text field provided.

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