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Hertfordshire

AL10 9AB

United Kingdom

'International' Human Resource Management:

a study of editorial boards of the top 21 IHRM journals

Despite over twenty years of academic hype, IHRM text was only partly successful in its claim to offer a universal panacea for complexities of managing people that can transcend national, cultural and economic divides. This paper provides evidence from earlier studies on limited nature of geographic coverage of the main IHRM journals and surveys the editorial membership of a select number of journals with a view to contribute to the understanding of North American and Western European domination in their publications. Exploring the major constraints in representativeness of the IHRM journals and their editorial membership, the paper offers strategies for change.

Key words:

International Human Resource Management
Academic journals
Academic exclusion
Diversity
Research ethics

Dr. Mustafa F. Özbilgin
Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management,
University of Hertfordshire Business School,
Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG13 8QF, UK
Direct Line: 01707 285446
Fax: 01707 285455
Email: m.f.ozbilgin@herts.ac.uk

Introduction

Despite over twenty years of academic research and writing in this field, IHRM text was only partly successful in its claim to offer a universal panacea for complexities of managing people in a way which can transcend national, cultural and economic divides. Identifying and exploring the geographical, cultural, linguistic and contextual boundaries inherent in international human resource management (IHRM) texts, this paper aims to examine the reasons behind the current inertia and ineptness of this area of study with a view to posing challenging questions in order to affect positive change. The limited nature of the geographic reach of International Management (IM) and IHRM texts have been extensively studied and criticised by authors such as Baruch (2001) and Clark et al. (2000, 1999). Therefore, the research that informs this paper provides a review of this earlier literature, surveys the geographic distribution of the editorial membership for a select group of IHRM journals, explores their membership policy and guidelines for paper submissions in order to understand why and how their geographic reach is limited.

Two distinct experiences have led me to research this area. Last winter I visited a number of Turkish universities in order to discuss possibilities of building collaborative research links with them. I met two Turkish professors during these visits. Both of them were sitting on editorial boards of international management journals. As an aspiring researcher, I enquired about the kind of activities that an editorial board membership involves. They responded that they were invited to join but despite two years of membership neither of them had any further communication from the journals. An immediate question that came to my mind was: Why would these journals invite academics from Turkey to sit on their boards, but fail to involve them in the editorial activities of their journals? Several months after these conversations, I was conducting a literature search in order to locate academics who are published in the field of career development in the Middle East. I was very surprised with the search results. A search with the key words 'Middle East and career' generated only career histories of military officials from North America or Western Europe who spent a number of years in the Middle East. This research alarmed me that the literature on work, organisation, employment or career in the Middle East in English language was indeed at a rudimentary level. Since then, I have turned my attention to international management and human resource management texts, including periodicals and books, aiming to understand the silences, omissions and exclusions in the international management texts.

Development of the IHRM literature

Exploring historical development of human resources can shed some light on our understanding of its geographic imagination. Human resource management has a complex and elusive history of development. It is complex because rhetoric and practice of human resource management have different historical paths of developments. The practice of various methods and techniques of human resources management has a history as old and

complex as the history of work and organisation. Although its links with state control, corporate strategy and unionisation and professionalisation may vary across national borders, people management is a universal phenomenon. However, human resource management, as an academic area of work or as discourse, is claimed to have originated only in the 1950s in North America with the works of Drucker (1954) and McGregor (1957). In his seminal book, The Practice of Management, Peter Drucker has coined the term human resources. However, the concept has gained wider international recognition in academic and practitioner circles by the 1980s, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, which consists many of the English speaking countries (Sparrow and Hiltrop 1994).

While the academic concept of human resource management was coined in North America, it has been adopted by academics in Western Europe and elsewhere only in the last two decades. The 1990s has also seen the wider adaptation of this concept in the developing and less developed countries. Therefore it is important to make a distinction between academic rhetoric and managerial practice of human resource management. Although the functions and operational aspects of human resource management have been practiced since much earlier internationally, the rhetoric of human resource management, as coined in North America and espoused by both American and British academics, has been enjoying wider popularity and international recognition only in the last two decades.

History of human resource management is also elusive because a series of changes of name and transformation of strategic direction has encouraged seamless academic debate on what constitutes human resource management and if and how this 'new' concept differs from its predecessors such as personnel management, manpower management and welfare management. The change from personnel management to human resource management is considered as the most debated turning point in the historical development of human resource management. This change was considered both as a change of name, simply an attempt at reviving a weakening area of work with a new buzz phrase, and also a change of strategic direction, recognising human resources as one of the strategically important resources of an organisation. Legge (1995) explains that the hype of changing the name from personnel management to human resource management was an inevitable outcome of the political economy and market conditions of the 1980s.

Furthermore, Sisson and Storey (1998) argue that human resource management is a controversial concept. They attribute its controversy to problems with its definition, divergence of its implementation and discourse, and unexpected consequences of its implementation. Although the theory and implementation of human resource management is in need of demystification, human resource management is a clearly interdisciplinary and fast changing area of study and work, encompassing earlier notions of welfare, manpower and personnel

management and being in close association with employee and industrial relations and sociology and psychology of work.

Despite its interdisciplinary and eclectic nature, the overwhelming majority of the earlier theoretical works on human resource management originate from North America and the United Kingdom. Mainstream literature continues to rely heavily on the contributions from the industrialised countries. An evaluation of its significant contributors may reveal the limited reach of HRM theory.

Several schools of management in the USA and the UK have made significant contributions to the development of the mainstream theory of human resource management. The *Michigan model* was developed by Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna (1984). They proposed that in order to address their inefficiencies, companies must build a direct link between their corporate and human resource strategies and structures (Mabey et al. 1998). Their formulation was promoting an instrumental use of human resources in order to realise corporate objectives. In the same period, a group of academics from Harvard Business School argued for a broader framework for human resource management decisions and strategy. The *Harvard model*, which was formulated by Beer et al. (1985), suggested that human resource management decisions should be informed by both stakeholder interests and also a set of situational factors. The model illustrates the influence of situational factors on stakeholder interests, and their impact on human resource policy choices which are destined to deliver a raft of predetermined human resource outcomes such as commitment, competence, congruence and cost effectiveness. These outcomes consequently produce long term and sustainable benefits for the individual, organisation and the society. This is a highly prescriptive model of human resource management which emphasises a number of presumed long term benefits of acting on stakeholder interests and situational factors, assuming that there is a set of predetermined and 'superior' human resource policy choices (Sisson and Timperlet 1996, p. 163) The Michigan and Harvard models were often compared and contrasted in terms of their approaches to the use of human resources. While the Michigan model accentuated the strategic resource aspect of human *resources*, the Harvard model emphasised the human element in the *human* resource formulations.

These two classical models of human resource management have later underpinned the 'hard' and 'soft' variants of human resource management, respectively. The 'hard' variant of human resource management considers employees only as resources of the organisation. Therefore, it argues that human resources should be used effectively in order to achieve organisational goals. On the other hand, the 'soft' human resource management considers employees first and foremost as human beings who contribute to the organisation (Maund 2001). These two distinctively different approaches to human resource management have been classically used to account for differences in management of people in organisations.

The debate on the relative and context-specific usefulness of these two approaches continues. Based on a recognition of the significance of both approaches, more contemporary formulations of human resource management incorporate and display a combination of soft and hard human resource management attributes, rather than rejecting one for the other.

The *New York* model has introduced and elaborated on the concept of 'strategic fit' between corporate and human resource strategy, which was also evident in the Michigan model. The New York model was formulated by Schuler and Jackson (1987) and advocated that a range of 'needed role behaviours' could be deduced from Porter's earlier works on competitive strategies and these could provide a set of prescriptions for desirable strategic choices for human resource management and industrial relations functions. The Harvard, Michigan and New York models share a common attribute. As Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994) so succinctly explain it, these three models could be named as 'matching models' of HRM, because of their common aim to match the human resources strategy with that of the corporation.

The MIT model, which was introduced by Kochan et al. (1986), provided a framework for the development of the industrial relations in the USA. The model describes three phases of development: the 'New Deal' model is attributed to high levels of regulation in the work place. The 'non-union' model is identifiable by extensive human resource management policies, designed to promote individual commitment. The authors argue that these two models could be incorporated into what they call as the 'New industrial relations' model, which assumes that joint consultation between employees and employers, and increased levels of cooperation and flexibility in the workplace will provide companies with adaptability and representation which were evidently missing from the other two models. However Sisson and Timperlet (1986, p. 164) from the UK argued that this model, similar to Harvard model, has a prescriptive approach, advocating the use of the 'New industrial relations' model as an ideal model for industrial relations.

The *Warwick model* was developed by Storey (1992) in the UK. It contrasted attributes of personnel management and human resource management and examined evidence of their practice in the UK industry. This model provided a number of key attributes and indicators of people management and highlighted the differentiation between personnel and human resource management approaches.

Despite an apparent domination of the mainstream human resource management literature by models, theories and concepts developed in North America and the UK, the *Aix model* from France was able to gain mainstream recognition in texts. The Aix model, which underlines the significance of social and educational systems in management of human resources, was propagated by Maurice et al. (1980, 1986). Another similar model outside the English speaking world was the *Japanese model* of human resource management (Tung

1984). This was introduced in the 1980s and emphasised how quality considerations can be integrated into people management techniques.

The mainstream HRM theories, which were overwhelmingly formulated in management schools in North America (Beer et al. 1985, Fombrun et al. 1984, Schuler and Jackson 1987, Kochan et al. 1986) and the UK (Storey 1992) in the 1980s have quickly found their way to other developed (Maurice et al. 1986, Maurice et al. 1980, Tung 1984, Tung 1993) and later to developing countries (Budhwar and Debrah 2001) and gained much wider international recognition since the 1990s. However, a consensus has emerged in the last three decades that the mainstream human resource approaches and theories are inadequate in addressing the human resource issues facing international and multinational companies (Clark et al. 2000, 1999). Out of this recognition and also as a direct outcome of growing number of MNCs' pursuit of effective ways of managing their international human resources (Taylor et al. 1996), IHRM has emerged as a new area of academic study and management practice. The theory of IHRM has been receiving growing recognition only since the late 1980s (Scullion and Starkey 2000).

While various approaches IHRM were implemented my international, multinational and transnational companies, Caliguiri (1999) with her study on academic journals in the field of IHRM identified that IHRM has established itself a respectable scholarly interest between the disciplines of International Management (IM) and HRM. She also contended that the interest in the field of IHRM is not a passing fad. It is set to grow further due to the relevance of its issues such as cross-national comparative human resources, expatriate management and cross-cultural diversity within multinational enterprises to the effective management of human resources internationally.

However, the apparent success of IHRM text is clouded by three constraints that IHRM, as an academic area of writing, faces: First, as explained earlier the human resource management is a manifestly 'Western' concept, originating in and dominated by empirical and theoretical knowledge generated in North American and Western European countries. Similarly, authors originating from this cultural and geographic area author majority of the IHRM texts in English language. Therefore, IHRM texts display a kind of constrained diversity, and socio-cultural specificity in terms of their authorship and their geographic reach. This is well documented by earlier research carried out by Baruch (2001) and Clark, Gospel and Montgomery (1999). Both publications identify that North American research dominates the international management journals. They are closely followed by Western European research. Both authors indicate that the international in the title of IM and IHRM journals does not reflect the geographic reach of these journals. They also reveal that the Middle East, Africa and Latin America are severely understudied geographies in these journals. Although these earlier

studies have illustrated the limited coverage of these journals, they have overlooked the (lack of) diversity in their editorial boards.

Second, language poses one of the major challenges to two assumptions in Human Resource Management (HRM): a) that HRM is a globally recognised and universally applicable concept and b) that IHRM texts may capture the international diversity of people management practices. Use of English language as the sole source of academic theory in these journals falsifies these assumptions. In the mainstream English-language IHRM texts, there is only rudimentary evidence of references to publications in other languages. Exceptions to this rule are French, German and Spanish language publications which are only very occasionally referred to in English language texts. Inclusion of publications in other languages is left to the competence of the individual authors. Inclusion of references in other languages may indeed h suspicion from the reviewers. How could then IHRM or HRM claim to have a reach beyond the boundaries of English language?

Using Adler's (1991) notion of 'parochialism' in management writing, Clark, Gospel and Montgomery (1999) identified two forms of parochialism in the IHRM texts: a) the IHRM texts often fail to acknowledge earlier works on and methods of cross-national studies and international work. The complexity of methods employed in earlier international and cross-national research have not been fully studied by contemporary writers. b) The cross-national and international studies conducted outside the English-speaking world do not sufficiently inform theory making in English language journals. Although this may appear to be an obvious problem, it is yet the most insidious one as it simply demarcates our knowledge and imagination of HRM practice to those geographies where English language is spoken.

Lastly, difficulty of formulating overarching conceptual frameworks, theoretical models and critical approaches is a recurring theme in IHRM texts. Empirical studies on IHRM are rare. However, once made available, their assertions find their way to mainstream texts and they are used extensively in teaching and further research. Such studies come with extensive expressions of limitations of method and analysis. However, due to rarity of their occurrence, great significance is attributed to these studies while their findings were often overstated, misinterpreted, or used out of context. Although Hofstede's work in the 1960s and 1970s challenged the assumption that the theoretical frameworks developed in the US would be universally applicable (Schneider 2001), later treatment of Hofstede's IBM studies as a clear indicator of convergence and divergence of management practices, without much questioning of the nature of his study, epitomises this unusual academic phenomenon. Over-reliance to large scale cross-national studies as the basis of cross-national research the wealth of data from smaller scale qualitative studies do not reach the readership of these journals.

In this age of unprecedented internationalisation at organisational and national levels, socio-cultural specificity, linguistic and regional parochialism and rarity of international and comparative publications in human resource management are both surprising and alarming. It is argued in this paper that an evaluation of the geographic distribution of editorial board membership and the nature of editorial policy and paper submission guidelines also reveal why IHRM texts had been thwarted in their pursuit of diversity of coverage.

Method

This article is based on three types of desk research. First, previous studies on international management and IHRM writing were reviewed and their key concerns were summarised. Secondly, based on Caliguiri's (1999) classification the top 21 IHRM journals, listed below, are reviewed in terms of editorial board membership, editorial policy and paper submission guidelines. Three of these journals were excluded from the research as their editorial membership was either in the process of change or not accessible at the time of research.

The original research used a list of countries from the UN database, juxtaposing them with numbers of editorial board members based in each of these countries. This method proved relatively unsuccessful as several countries such as Malaysia were represented only once and there were more countries that were excluded than the number of countries that featured in the headcount. A geographic cluster approach was adopted in order to present the data in a coherent and concise manner. Using the geographic clusters identified by the International Journal of Human Resource Management for their editorial board membership, this study developed the following clusters and countries: Africa, Asia Pacific, Canada, Europe (excluding the UK), Latin America, Middle East, UK and USA. Some countries which are in between two or three geographic clusters were located by geography rather than their social or cultural proximity to these clusters.

Journals reviewed for this article are:
1 International Journal of Human Resource Management
2 Journal of International Business Studies
3 Academy of Management Journal
4 Academy of Management Review
5 Management International Review
6 Human Resource Management
7 Journal of Applied Psychology
8 Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources
9 Journal of World Business
10 Journal of International Management
11 Human Resource Management Journal
12 International Business Review
13 Administrative Science Quarterly
14 Journal of International Compensation
15 Academy of Management Executive
16 International Labor Review
17 Journal of Management
18 International Journal of Intercultural Relations
19 European Management Journal

20 International Journal of Selection and Assessment
21 Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology

The research so far has focused on the international coverage of the content of management and human resource management journals. This method of desk research has been well established and implemented previously by authors such as Adler (1991), Baruch (2001), Clark et al. (2000, 1999) and Caligiuri (1999). These previous publications have already noted that the IM and IHRM texts are limited in their geographic reach. Therefore, this research has drawn on the conclusions of earlier studies in this field and chosen to examine the diversity of editorial membership and policy.

The major limitation of this method in evaluating the IHRM literature is its focus on texts in English language. This approach excludes any publications of IHRM in other languages. It should be also noted that the countries which editors of these journals are not always their country of origin. Therefore the paper assumes that their place of work would be a significant determinant of their approach to IHRM work. However, another constraint is observable where European and North American expatriate academics appear as participants from geographic clusters where editorial board membership is low.

Results

It is interesting to note that while many IHRM texts only provide a partial account of the international context, they still continue to claim international in their titles. The review of editorial board membership by country of residence/employment in the studied journals reveals that there are three patterns of geographic representation in IHRM text (Table One). These are termed as 'blind spots', 'shadows', and 'spot lights'.

Table One: Editorial Board Membership of Top 21 International Human Resource Management Journals by Country of Employment

Geographic Clusters	International Human Resource Management Related Journals																					Total	%
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
Africa	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	na	0	1	na	0	0	0	1	6	1
Asia Pacific	17	4	4	0	7	2	0	1	14	2	3	4	1	na	0	5	na	6	0	4	14	89	9
Canada	6	6	4	1	2	0	1	0	4	1	1	1	2	na	1	2	na	5	0	2	1	40	4
Europe (excl. UK)	10	9	3	0	22	1	0	0	17	1	4	18	1	na	6	9	na	1	19	14	13	148	17
Latin America	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	na	0	2	na	0	0	0	2	13	1
Middle East	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	na	1	0	na	1	0	0	1	10	1
UK	10	8	1	0	5	2	1	0	7	3	18	9	2	na	1	6	na	1	6	13	2	95	10
USA	13	55	69	4	21	35	68	0	43	37	1	12	63	na	26	14	na	39	6	15	18	539	57
Totals	64	84	81	5	58	40	72	1	89	46	27	45	69	na	35	39	na	53	31	48	52	940	100

Notes: These clusters are adopted from the editorial membership categories of the International Journal of Human Resource Management.
8 – There was only editorial information available regarding this journal. Board membership could not be obtained.
14 – At the time of research this information was not obtained.

Journals Covered

1 International Journal of Human Resource Management	12 International Business Review
2 Journal of International Business Studies	13 Administrative Science Quarterly
3 Academy of Management Journal	14 Journal of International Compensation
4 Academy of Management Review	15 Academy of Management Executive
5 Management International Review	16 International Labor Review
6 Human Resource Management	17 Journal of Management
7 Journal of Applied Psychology	18 International Journal of Intercultural Relations
8 Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	19 European Management Journal
9 Journal of World Business	20 International Journal of Selection and Assessment
10 Journal of International Management	21 Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology
11 Human Resource Management Journal	

'Blind spots' denote those regions of the world that are completely ignored in the IHRM literature. Preliminary findings of the research that informs this paper highlight that the Latin America, Middle East and Africa fit in this definition of 'blind spots'. There is only rudimentary level of editorial participation from these regions. Israel in the Middle Eastern, Brazil in Latin America and South Africa in Africa dominate the overall representation in these geographic clusters. Therefore the under representation from these clusters is more problematic than first meets the eye.

'Shadows' are those regions of the world, which have a moderate level of coverage in terms of editorial membership. Eastern Europe and parts of Asia Pacific fit well with this definition. Although Eastern Europe is not used as a cluster in analysis, it was apparent that Western European members overwhelmingly dominated the European category (excluding the UK). Indeed, there was only one representation from the Newly Independent States (NIS) and only two others from Turkey.

Using the same metaphor of light to illustrate representation, 'spot lights' are defined as those regions that are over represented in IHRM related publications. These regions and countries include North America (both USA and Canada), Europe (particularly the UK) and in the case of Asia Pacific cluster; Australia, Japan and China.

The situation is exacerbated when the home countries of main editors of these journals were considered. The main editors of all the journals studied are located the over represented regions, i.e. the North America, Europe and Australia. The problem with this is that the centralised management of editorial policy could negate the limited gains made in geographic reach of editorial membership.

Although the cluster approach has some merit in explaining the exclusions, silences, and over subscriptions in editorial membership it is interesting to note that the areas where editorial board membership fail to reach converge with geographies of poverty and economic weakness, e.g. Africa, Middle East and Latin America.

The ethical challenge that this exclusion poses to academics is twofold: a) How far does continuing to exclude those regions, which are already underprivileged, from academic imagination contribute to the vicious cycle of their poverty? b) Could IHRM strip itself of its heritage as an academic area, which deals with issues in a moral or political vacuum, and adopt a more emancipating role? Far from addressing these ethical issues, in some journals guidelines for paper submissions have an adverse exclusionary impact on submissions from certain regions. Some international journals charge fees up to £20 for considering paper

submissions. This would be a clearly aversive policy for authors from developing and less developed countries.

As explored in the literature review section, IHRM texts face three constraints. The first constraint is the domination of the North American and Western European research in these journals, This situation is also reflected in editorial membership demographics in the IHRM journals. As illustrated in Table One geographic reach of most reputable journals are highly constrained. Furthermore the editorial policies and submission guidelines of these journals do neither seek redress nor acknowledge the existence of such a problem with the geographic distribution of their editorial boards. The only attempt at being more inclusive in submission guidelines or editorial policies of the journals studied is their policies which aim to eradicate the use of sexist, racist, offensive or anthropomorphic language in paper submissions (see for example Academy of Management Journal for detailed guidelines on appropriate use of language). However, these attempts are far from being relevant or adequate in terms of widening access or improving geographic reach of the journals.

Second constraint discussed is the IHRM journals' over reliance on English language sources for theoretical development and methodological advances. At the same time, most of these journals boast in their introductory statements of their diverse reader profile. The following statement introducing the Academy of Management Executive (AME) epitomises the overall approach adopted by the editors of IHRM related journals:

> The Academy of Management Executive is the practitioner journal of The Academy of Management. Founded in 1936, The Academy is the leading international organization of academics and practitioners that works to foster the advancement of research, learning, teaching, and practice in the management field. It has over 12,000 members in more than 75 countries.

Although the AME boasts about its diverse readership, it fails to offer its readers anything beyond the American pie equivalent of coverage. Juxtaposing their diverse readership profile with their limited distribution of editorial membership and geographic coverage reveals a parochial paradox. Clearly, if a journal can achieve readership in 75 countries, they may also assume a responsibility to ensure a similar diversity in their subject matter and editorial boards. Review of editorial policy and submission guidelines reveals that the journals studied do not pursue diversity in their published products and editorial ranks.

Third constraint in improving diversity of these publications is their over reliance on the way of large scale publications or established research methods. This approach is likely to cause premature closure on methods and theory. Nearly all of the journals have items in their submission guidelines discouraging paper submissions that are not grounded in the established literature:

The Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS) welcomes manuscripts on multinational and other firms' business activities, strategies and managerial processes that cross national boundaries… We are interested in papers that are exceptional in terms of theory, evidence, or methodology and that significantly advance social scientific research on international business. As a methodologically pluralistic journal, JIBS welcomes conceptual and theory-development papers, empirical hypothesis-testing papers, mathematical modeling papers, case studies, and review articles… We therefore welcome inter-disciplinary scholarship and commentaries that challenge the paradigms and assumptions of individual disciplines or functions; such papers, however, should be grounded in conceptual and/or empirical literature.

As the mainstream literature that these journals are already constrained in terms of their understanding of cultural and geographic diversity, the current policies only serve to widen the representation gap, effectively preventing submissions from regions that are understudied or underrepresented.

Strategies for change

Having explored the limited nature of diversity IHRM texts and editorial board membership, several strategies could be offered in order to redress the skewed representation in terms of subject area and editorial membership. The first step towards change would be the acceptance and acknowledgement that there is a problem with the current skewed profile of representation.

Current approaches to management of strategic direction of the editorial policy should be addressed in order to make them more welcoming for submissions and applications from underrepresented regions. This would warrant further study for profiling the current approaches with a view to improving them.

In terms of the ethical challenges that are facing this area, it could be suggested that IHRM journals may part to play or even assume an ethical responsibility in promoting access to those parts of the world that are understudied and underrepresented. The journals could indicate this intention in their editorial policy statements.

The editorial membership could reflect the overall readership profile of the journals. This could be achieved through deliberate targeting of members for editorial boards from 'Blind Spot' and 'Shadow' area. However, this should be supported with genuine integration of the editorial board members in strategic direction of the journals. The experiences of the two Turkish professors indicate that an increase in representation is not sufficient to change attitudes towards these underrepresented regions unless the new members are fully incorporated in decision-making processes.

A review of editorial policies indicates that there is an overall lack of transparency in

recruitment of editorial members. Transparency in recruitment strategies could enable aspiring applicants from underrepresented regions to partake in this process. Although transparency does not prevent informal influences coming into play, nevertheless it would allow greater possibility of applications from underrepresented regions.

The current submission guidelines could also be made more welcoming for submissions from underrepresented regions. For example, smaller scale comparative or international projects could be incorporated, as these often can give voice to views and experiences from margins that larger scale comparative studies fail to capture. This would also require current editorial teams to recognise different traditions of research across national borders. The current North American and Western European domination means that research traditions in this limited geography is considered common currency. The assumption behind the current practice is that academic rigour and best practice transcends national borders. However, this assumption fails to recognise the subjective nature of research and hence the cross-national differences in traditions of research.

Only hope for change would be the conscious efforts of writers of IHRM texts in promoting inclusion of those issues, themes and geographies, which are currently marginalized, into their future research and publications. At the level of editorial membership this could be achieved with deliberate targeting of academic and practitioners from these underrepresented regions. In the short term, commissioning special issues on human resource issues in Latin America, Middle East and Africa could be a way of addressing the current imbalances.

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