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INNOVATIONS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: GERMAN PRACTICES IN MIGRANT INTEGRATION AND REDUCED WORKWEEK EXPERIMENTS

Modern challenges such as globalization, migration, and evolving employee expectations demand innovative approaches to human resource management (HRM). Germany, with its advanced economy and robust social system, serves as a model for effective HRM, particularly in migrant integration and experiments with reduced workweeks. This paper examines key aspects of the German HRM system, its strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities for adaptation in Ukraine, focusing on migrant integration and innovative work organization practices.

The German HRM model is rooted in the principles of a social market economy, ensuring strong employee protections. According to the Federal Employment Agency, employees are entitled to at least 24 days of annual leave (for a 6-day workweek, prorated for 5 days) and a maximum of 48 working hours per week under EU directives [1]. The dual education system, combining classroom learning with on-the-job training, produces highly skilled professionals: in 2023, 51% of vocational school graduates opted for dual education [2]. Migrant integration is another key strength: in 2022–2023, Germany streamlined foreign qualification recognition, enabling over 300,000

Ukrainian refugees to enter the workforce [3]. Labor market stability is supported by long-term contracts and low turnover rates (averaging 2.9% in 2023) [4] (Figure 1).

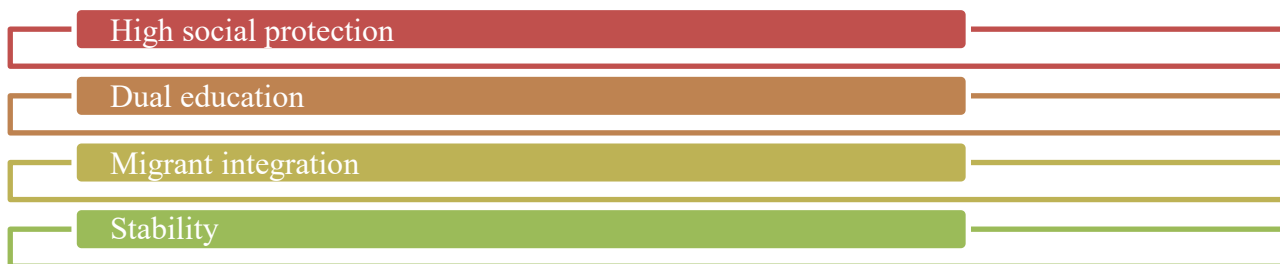


Figure 1. Strengths of the German HRM System

Source: developed by the authors

Despite its strengths, the German HRM system faces challenges. Bureaucracy is a significant hurdle: according to the OECD, recognizing foreign qualifications can take up to 6 months, limiting migrants' access to skilled roles [5]. Language barriers pose another issue, with 68% of migrants reporting difficulties due to insufficient German proficiency, per the German Economic Institute [6]. Digitalization lags leaders like the Netherlands, with only 45% of German companies using digital HR platforms for recruitment and training [7]. Additionally, migrants face limited career advancement due to cultural barriers and lack of professional networks, as noted by the Bertelsmann Stiftung [8] (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Weaknesses of the German HRM System

Source: developed by the authors

Experiments with reduced workweeks, particularly the 4-day workweek, have gained traction in Germany. In 2023–2024, 45 companies participating in the Perpetual Guardian pilot reduced workweeks to 32 hours without salary cuts. Results showed a 24% increase in productivity and a 71% reduction in employee stress [9].

However, implementation proved less effective in sectors requiring constant presence, such as healthcare and logistics, due to resource constraints. Research from the University of Munich highlights the need for process optimization and government support for broader adoption [10] (Figure 3).

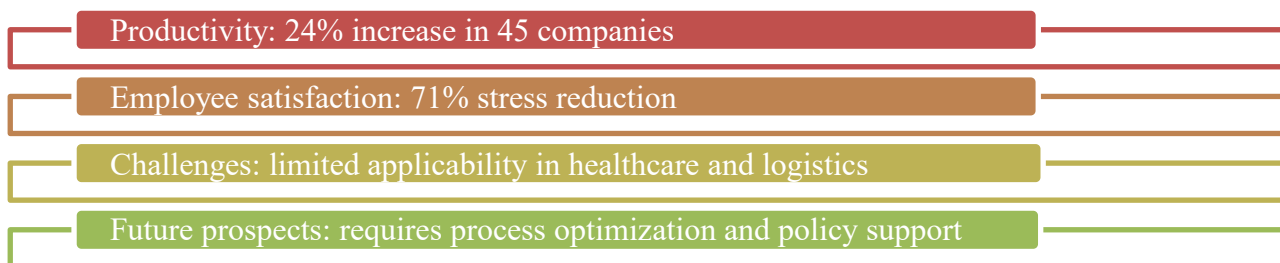


Figure 3. Reduced Workweek Experiments

Source: developed by the authors

Ukraine can adapt German HRM practices to modernize its labor market. The dual education model could be implemented through university-business partnerships, as seen in Germany. Simplified employment procedures for migrants and internally displaced persons, modeled on Germany's approach, could enhance integration. Reduced workweek pilots could be tested in Ukraine's IT sector, where flexibility is common, drawing on German findings. Digitalizing HRM through unified platforms for recruitment and training could reduce bureaucracy and boost efficiency, aligning with global trends (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Opportunities for Implementation in Ukraine

Source: developed by the authors

The German HRM system balances social protection, education, and innovation but faces challenges like bureaucracy and migrant integration barriers. Reduced workweek experiments offer insights into improving productivity and employee well-being. Ukraine can adopt dual education, streamlined migrant employment, digitalization, and

reduced workweek pilots to modernize HRM and enhance labor market competitiveness.

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