
Preface: The importance of human capital to find solutions for new and emerging challenges

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1 Introduction

The global health emergency created by Covid-19 has caused a major shock and unexpected disruption in livelihoods and economies around the globe. Now in the fourth quarter of year 2020, there is an even greater need to invest in human capital (HC) for the future. This knowledge-based resource (Ordóñez de Pablos and Edvinsson, 2020) plays and will play a strategic role in the creation and deployment of new solutions and tools to fight the new corona virus outbreaks and waves, increase the capacity of health systems, work on the covid-19 vaccines, recover of economy, new creation of jobs and prepare for the future.

As the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 Human Capital Report published by the European Commission (2020, p.3) states “the current COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important digital assets have become to our economies and how basic and advanced digital skills sustain our economies and societies.” There is an urgent need for improvement in the development of skills for new and emerging jobs in the present and future labour market.

2 Contents of the issue

The fourth issue of *International Journal of Learning and Intellectual Capital* in 2020 provides a rich collection of five papers that explores current and emerging issues in the – fields of intellectual capital (IC), social capital, diversity management (DM), dynamic capabilities and human resource management. This regular issue offers new views, conceptual frameworks and empirical evidence on IC in Iran, Kuwait, Namibia and Oman.

Now, we will provide a short summary of each manuscript so that our readers have an insight on main topics and views they will find in the pages of the issue.

The first paper, titled ‘Social media disclosure of intellectual capital and firm value’ by Al-Sartawi, studies:

“The relationship between firm value and the level of social media disclosure of intellectual capital by Kuwaiti and Omani listed firms. The level of social media disclosure of intellectual capital was measured by adapting a checklist of 78 items. Also, the financial reports were used to determine Tobin’s Q. The results showed that the level of social media disclosure of intellectual capital was 71% by Kuwaiti and Omani firms. Moreover, the findings indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between the firm value and the level of social media disclosure of intellectual capital. The study recommends that the Kuwaiti and Omani bourses must develop a formal guideline for social media disclosure of intellectual capital to create harmony in disclosing information and to enhance the firms’ value through taking the advantages of social media in attracting the more talented employees and to maximize the customers and investors benefits.”

The second paper, titled ‘How to use your social capital to thrive in export markets? Identifying the dynamic capabilities developed through social capital by top exporters’, by Ghaderi, Dolatabadi and Ansari, proposes that:

“Competing in international markets poses considerable challenges to companies and calls for special capabilities. The present study aims to identify dynamic organizational capabilities developed by external social capital that are, in turn, necessary for achieving success in export markets. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis have been utilized to collect and analyze data, respectively. 16 high-level and export marketing managers of top export companies operating in Isfahan Province, Iran, have been purposefully selected based on data saturation in order to participate in the research. The findings indicate that participants rely more on their business networks to develop dynamic capabilities. Moreover, thematic analysis has resulted in the extraction of 28 components in relation to dynamic capabilities which are categorized into five sub-themes. The identified sub-themes include export market exploration and exploitation, dynamic research and development, export entrepreneurial orientation and manufacturing flexibility. The sub-themes have been classified into two broad themes comprising explorative and exploitative dynamic capabilities.”

The third paper, titled ‘The development and validation of human capital measurement model using factor analysis, case study: Agriculture Bank’, by Mojallal, Owlia and Roshani, presents a research that focuses on:

“Designing a measurement model for human capital (HC) as the most important component of intellectual capital (IC). The primary model of the research was developed based on an extensive review of past studies and was tested in Agriculture Bank of Iran. Construct validity of the model was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis and its content validity was approved by the experts. The results showed, after some modification, the proposed model was valid. The model was used for measuring the value of HC in different dimensions as well as analyzing the results using importance-performance technique. The findings confirmed the need for HC and its alignment with the human resource development (HRD).”

The fourth paper, titled ‘Developing graduate attributes through multiple intelligence theory’, by Baporikar and Sony, states that:

“Education today means more to acquiring the requisite competencies and skills so that the students are capable latter to work in different cultures and contexts. Mere knowledge and grades are not going to be sufficient for success and impact. Higher education, in particular, must ensure that the students acquire the right attributes. Further, linear approaches to developing nor

measuring attributes may also not be enough for long-term success. This is where the theory of multiple intelligence (MI) is relevant as at its historical origin, intelligence tests described and predicted those who would be successful. This theory explains and deals with nine different kinds of intelligence, each independent of the other. Yet, until now, a better understanding of MI theory and its relationship between the acquisition of graduate and professional attributes is missing including how this can facilitate students to develop the right attributes. Hence, through critical analysis of extant literature, focusing on university students in Namibia, the aim of this paper is to explore the development of graduate attributes through MI theory.”

The fifth paper, titled ‘Impact of diversity management on citizenship behaviour: the mediating role of human resources management’, by Youssef, Abidi, Zaim, Keceli and Dzenopoljac, presents the results of a study that:

“Aims to prove the existence of a positive impact of diversity management (DM) practices on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), together with the mediating role of human resources management (HRM). In order to test this assumption, an empirical model was developed using data collected from companies in the service sector operating in Kuwait. A structural equation model was constructed to analyse data via the ‘lavaan’ and ‘psych’ packages in R, using R version 3.4.2 and RStudio version 1.0.153. Data analysis indicates that DM implementations are positively correlated with HRM. Moreover, the research findings provide empirical evidence regarding the positive effects of DM on OCB and the mediating role of HRM in this relationship.”

3 Agenda

With this issue, we finalise the issues of *International Journal of Learning and Intellectual Capital* for year 2020. The unprecedented global disruption caused by Covid-19 has created important challenges for citizens, economies and societies around the world. The field of IC, knowledge management and organisational learning together with the application of information technologies can provide new theories, views and smart solutions to the new problems existing in postcovid scenario. The journal will attract papers and edit special issues on new and emerging topics that can help to alleviate problems, reinforce health system, apply new technologies for education, boost economy again and create prosperity for citizens.

References

- European Commission (2020) *Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 Human Capital*, European Commission [online] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/human-capital> (accessed 8 September 2020).
- Ordóñez de Pablos, P. and Edvinsson, L. (Eds.) (2020) *Intellectual Capital in the Digital Economy*, Routledge, London.