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## EVALUATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH IN POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims* to conduct a bibliometric analysis to reveal the status of human resource management (HRM) studies in Post-Soviet countries while exploring research trends and future directions.

*Methodology.* We have used bibliometric analysis to examine a bibliometric data. Web of Science database was chosen because it ensures that the studies identified for analysis are relevant to the field. In total, 133 articles were selected for bibliometric analysis. The VOSviewer software tool was used to construct and visualize bibliometric networks. Overall, these methods provide a comprehensive and reliable picture of the state of research in the field being studied.

*Originality / value of the research.* This study is the first bibliometric analysis of HRM in Post-Soviet countries research. It contributes to the literature by bringing HRM studies in Post-Soviet countries and revealing the current position of the inquiry by determining the most cited authors, articles, journals, and organizations. It also sheds light on the future directions in HRM research in Post-Soviet countries.

*Findings.* The findings revealed that the most frequently used keywords were Human resource management, Russia, hrm practices, and firm performance. Bjorkman et al. (2007) were the most cited authors and Minbayeva et al. (2003), Andreeva & Kianto (2012), Bjorkman et al. (2007) were the most cited documents in HRM in Post-Soviet countries. The study also revealed a focus on human resource management, performance, capitalism, model, and transition economies. Additionally, the study found a trend toward exploring the HRM practices in MNCs and knowledge management. If research in the field of HRM was diligently conducted in Kazakhstan from post-Soviet countries in early 2010, then research on the practice of personnel management in Kyrgyz enterprises actively began to take turn from 2018.

*Keywords:* HRM, Post-Soviet countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, bibliometric analysis, co-word analysis, science mapping.

### INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new states faced serious issues of reforming existing governance structures that would promote economic growth and provide distinct conditions to their residents. Achieving sustainable and inclusive growth, creating job opportunities, promoting social inclusion, strengthening democratic institutions, and protecting human rights are the major issues facing the countries in these newly independent states. The success of government reforms in this region will depend on the commitment and leadership of governments, the involvement and empowerment of citizens, and the collaboration and support of the international community [1]. Kazakhstan is actively implementing HR practices and methods of personnel management; as human capital is considered as one of the key factors for the success of companies in the market. The beginning of personnel management was laid back in the years of the existence of the Soviet Union under the state-planned economy. With the beginning of independence, the economy began to develop into a private economy and enterprises began to introduce modern methods of personnel management. Personnel management structures were organized at medium and large enterprises. The universities of the country began to train certified managers in personnel management. Kazakh students also went to study at foreign

universities in this discipline for public and private money. All the countries of the post-Soviet space have followed this path to some extent. Currently, it is not uncommon to find a KPI (Key Performance Indicator) system in companies, and research on employee engagement, loyalty, and satisfaction. The Association of HR Managers was founded in the Republic in 2010. However, there is still much to be done in Kazakhstan in the field of human resource management, especially in terms of scientific study in this area [2]. While there is evidence of a gradual shift towards more modern and Western-style HRM practices, such as performance appraisal and training and development, the traditional Soviet-style practices, such as the paternalistic approach to employee relations and low employee involvement, remain prevalent. HR managers face a number of challenges, such as a lack of resources, language barriers, cultural differences, and legal and regulatory issues, which may hinder the adoption of modern HRM practices. Nonetheless, they are in a major role in bridging the gap between the headquarters and local operations, and in driving change towards more effective HRM practices [3]. Minbaeva, Muratbekova-Touron [4] in their studies identified the impact of clannism on HRM practices in Kazakhstan. The complexity of the local labor market and diverse types of companies in the region affects the degree of influence of clannism on HRM. There is the influence of western MNCs in shaping HRM practices in Kazakhstan and ultimately lessening the effect of clannism [4]. The control-oriented HRM practices in the Kyrgyz SMEs prioritize economic incentives and treat workers as commodities. The reward practices used are primarily quantitative and calculative, with little emphasis on building loyalty or recognizing performance beyond economic incentives [5]. There is also a lack of skilled workers, an absence of training and education opportunities, low wages, and dependence on informal employment in the tourism sectors of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The sectors are also heavily dominated by men and suffer from a lack of diversity of age, gender, and ethnicity [6]. Despite the global trends toward more modern and flexible HRM practices, Russian companies seem to cling to their traditional HRM system [7]. HRM practices of Russian manufacturing subsidiaries of Western MNCs are essential in ensuring the robustness of business operations during periods of economic turbulence [8]. The cultural fit and the state of institutional development in the MNCs' choice of HRM transfer strategies in Russia are important [9]. Other researches have proved the importance of considering cultural and organizational contexts when attempting to transfer HRM practices from one country to another [10]. There are a few differences in HRM practices in transition periphery economies in terms of employer-employee independence and employee delegation, flexibility of employment, outsourcing, and dismissal procedures [11]. The broad implementation of flexible working time and pay arrangements across different sectors of the Russian economy served as a crucial factor in stabilizing employment during the turbulent years of economic transition in the 1990s. While such arrangements were initially viewed with suspicion by some labor advocates, they ultimately proved to be a key factor in protecting jobs and ensuring a measure of stability in the labor market [12]. Multiple articles summarizing the critical issues around HRM practices in MNCs have been published [13; 14]. While one of the findings of the authors suggest that MNCs should invest in specific HRM practices to enhance their subsidiaries' absorptive capacity, which in turn leads to effective knowledge transfer [15]. This study has several implications for HRM research and practice in post-Soviet countries. It provides a useful reference for future research in HRM, highlighting key research themes and identifying gaps in the literature. It also offers insights into intellectual interactions and structural collaborations among researchers, indicating areas where further collaborations can be fostered. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of keywords in representing research themes and facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration. The study revealed a growing interest in HRM research in post-Soviet countries since the early 2000s. It also identified key research themes, including the exploration of HRM practices in transition economies, cultures, and international business.

The aim of the study is to explore the state of HRM research in Post-Soviet countries while exploring the key contributors to the field, the main research themes, and the most influential publications. To evaluate the performance of HRM in Post-Soviet countries, we address the first research question (RQ1): What is the status of HRM in Post-Soviet countries research? The next question (RQ2): What are the latest themes in HRM in Post-Soviet countries? Based on both research questions, we address the last research question (RQ3) what are the future directions of research in the field of HRM in Post-Soviet countries?

There are a theoretical and practical implications of the research. The study provides valuable insights into the state of HRM research and practice in Post-Soviet countries, and it offers a starting point for future research in this area. The remainder of this scientific paper is structured in five Sections. Section 1 is a description of the research methodology. We provided brief information about our search strategy in Section 2. Then, in Section 3 we identified the results and interpreted it. We have identified the future research avenues in Section 4, then in Section 5 we have discussed the limitations of the study. Our research conclusions are presented in Section 6. Overall, this bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of HRM studies in Post-Soviet countries and identifies key areas for future research. It highlights the importance of considering cultural and institutional factors when studying HRM practices in these countries, especially in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia, and suggests that further research would be beneficial for both academia and practitioners.

**Methodology.** This study used bibliometric analysis to map HRM literature in Post-Soviet countries since 1993. Performance analysis was used to examine scientist contributions through publication and citation metrics. Science mapping was also conducted to analyze publications, top sources, productive countries, co-occurring keywords, and top publication media. VOSviewer software aided in identifying key documents, authors, sources, and organizations and visualizing relationships graphically [16].

**Search strategy.** The search and selection process started in March and April 2023, covering the period of 1993-2022. Figure 1 illustrates the search strategy, including filtering metadata based on keywords in titles, abstracts, and author keywords. Non-English publications were excluded, and focus was placed on articles from main journals identified in Table 1. Review articles were excluded to focus on original research. Two specific journals were also excluded. The final sample included 133 publications for analysis. The graph in Figure 1 demonstrates a significant increase in HRM research publications in Post-Soviet countries from 2018 to 2020 (Figure 1).

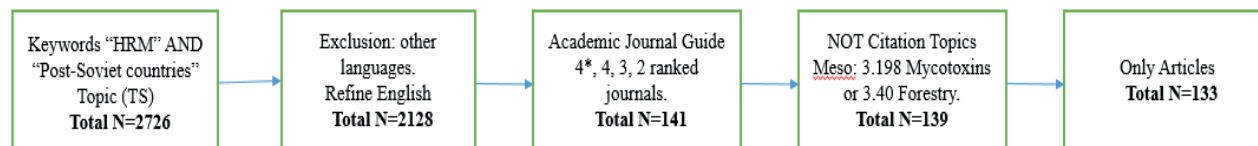


Figure 1 – Keywords search on Web of Science

Note – compiled by the authors based on VosViewer

**Results and interpretation.** This study examined 133 articles from 64 academic journals published in Post-Soviet countries between 1993 and 2022. Findings reveal a significant increase in HRM research in recent years. Most studies were published in economics, management, and business fields. However, articles on HRM in Post-Soviet countries, particularly in Kazakhstan, are predominantly found in local journals not indexed by international platforms. Figure 2 shows a gradual increase in article publications from 1993 to 2001, followed by a faster growth rate after 2003. The peak year was 2017, indicating a rising interest among researchers to understand HRM challenges and opportunities in these countries.

We have built Table 1 according to the rankings (4\*, 3, 2) of Academic Journal Guide [17]. Table 1 demonstrates that the main sources on HRM in Post-Soviet countries are the International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of International Business Studies, and Employee Relations. A large number of articles were published in the field of Human Resource Management and Employment Relations (HRM&EMP), following by International Business and Area Studies.

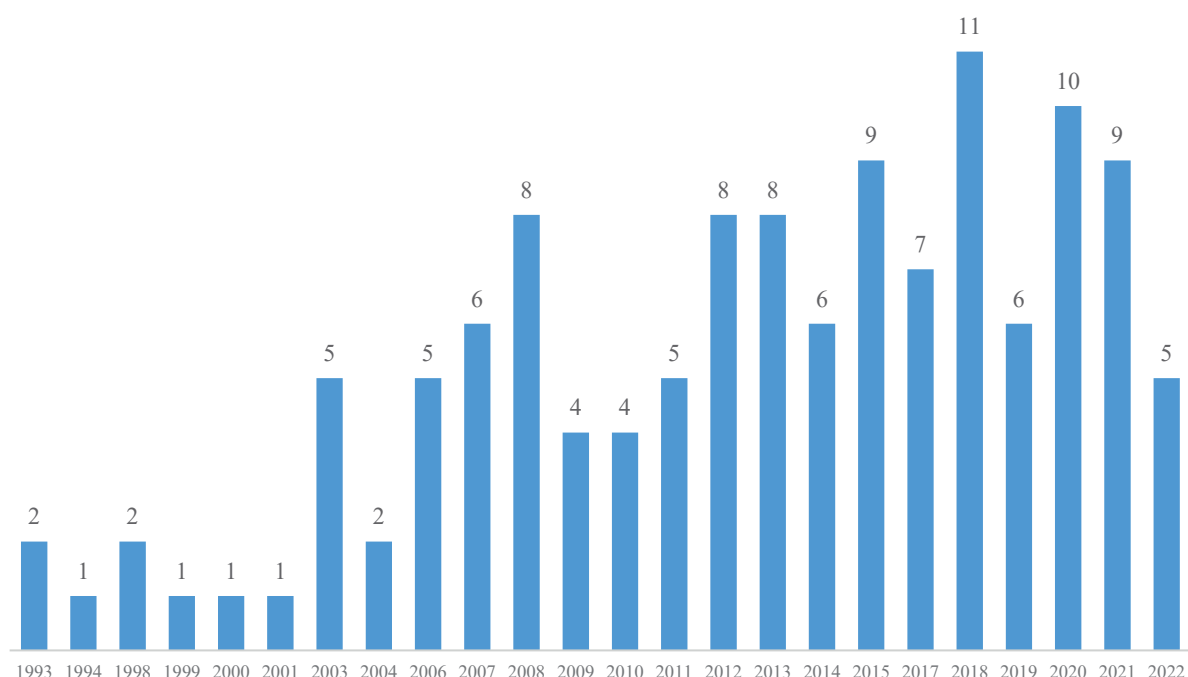


Figure 2 – Number of Articles Published between 1993-2022 in HRM in Post-Soviet countries

Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer

Table 1 – Top publication media by journal

Sources	Articles	Fields
Journal of Economic History	1	BUS HIST & ECON HIST
Journal of Human Resources	1	ECON
Others ECON	5	
Journal of Business Ethics	4	ETHICS-CSR-MAN
Journal of Business Research	3	
Others ETHICS-CSR-MAN	8	
International Journal of Human Resource Management	21	HRM&EMP
Employee Relations	9	
Others HRM&EMP	14	
Journal of International Business Studies	9	IB&AREA
Journal of Business Economics and Management	6	
Others IB&AREA	21	
Enterprise Information Systems	1	INFO MAN
Others INFO MAN	2	
Journal of Technology Transfer	1	INNOV
Others INNOV	1	
Advances in Developing Human Resources	2	MDEV&EDU
Others MDEV&EDU	2	
International Journal of Technology Management	1	OPS&TECH
Others OPS&TECH	1	

Journal of Knowledge Management	4	ORG STUD
Others ORG STUD	4	
Public Administration Review	3	PUB SEC
Others PUB SEC	6	
Tourism Management	2	SECTOR
Others SECTOR	4	
Journal of Environmental Management	2	SOC SCI
Others SOC SCI	3	
Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer		

The study further revealed that Finland, Russia, and Sweden lead in HRM in Post-Soviet countries research output, with several researchers exhibiting high productivity and citation impact (Table 2). The study also identified cross-country collaborations, indicating that researchers in the post-Soviet region are increasingly collaborating in the field of HRM.

Table 2 – Countries by high productivity and citation

N	Country	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
1	Finland	11	1680	89
2	Russia	15	1603	79
3	Sweden	8	1443	80
4	USA	14	1366	69
5	Denmark	4	813	14
6	France	5	373	40
7	England	6	155	56
Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer				

Table 3 represents the 6 most cited sources for the topic of HRM in Post-Soviet countries, with the Journal of International Business Studies being the journal that tops this list with a total of 1282 citations. Followed by the Journal of Knowledge Management and the International Journal of Human Resource Management with 372 and 316 citations, respectively.

Table 3 – The most cited source

N	Source	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
1	Journal of International Business Studies	7	1282	20
2	Journal of Knowledge Management	3	372	0
3	International Journal of Human Resource Management	9	316	17
4	Journal of International Management	3	57	8
5	European Journal of International Management	3	54	6
6	Employee Relations	3	53	7
Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer				

Keywords play a vital role in representing research themes and bridging interdisciplinary gaps. The article-wise analysis identified 50 articles with a minimum of 44 citations. Table 4 presents the top 10 most cited documents. The article by Minbaeva et al. [15] on MNC knowledge transfer, subsidiary absorptive capacity, and HRM received the highest number of citations (692). Andreeva and Kianto's [18] article on knowledge management techniques, company competitiveness, and economic performance ranked second with 301 citations. Bjorkman et al. [13] explored HRM practices in MNC subsidiaries using an institutional theory framework and received 210 citations. Overall, the top 10 cited articles cover two major themes: «HRM practices in MNC» and «knowledge management».

Table 4 – Top 10 most cited document

S. no.	Author/Year	Title	Citations	Links
1	Fey&Bjorkman (2001)	The effect of human resource management practices on MNC subsidiary performance in Russia	144	4
2	Park et al. (2003)	The effect of human resource management practices on Japanese MNC subsidiary performance: a partial mediating model	79	2
3	Bjorkman et al. (2007)	Institutional theory and MNC subsidiary HRM practices: evidence from a three-country study	210	1
4	Fey et al. (2009)	Opening the black box of the relationship between HRM practices and firm performance: A comparison of MNE subsidiaries in the USA, Finland, and Russia	92	1
5	Fey et al. (2000)	The effect of human resource management practices on firm performance in Russia	131	1
6	Andreeva & Kianto (2012)	Does knowledge management really matter? Linking knowledge management practices, competitiveness and economic performance	301	1
7	Hussinski et al. (2017)	Assessing the universality of knowledge management practices	51	1
8	Judge et al. (2009)	Organizational capacity for change and firm performance in a transition economy	46	1
9	Minbaeva et al. (2014)	MNC knowledge transfer, subsidiary absorptive capacity and HRM	68	0
10	Minbaeva et al. (2003)	MNC knowledge transfer, subsidiary absorptive capacity, and HRM	692	0
Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer				

An author-wise analysis identified 74 authors who have at least three documents with a minimum of three citations. Table 5 presents top six cited authors. Bjorkman is the most authoritative author with three documents and 302 citations, followed by Fey (two documents, 275 citations), and Pavlovskaya. (two documents, 163 citations) and Minbaeva (two documents, 53 citations) (Table 5).

Table 5 – Top 6 most cited authors

S. no.	Author	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
1	Bjorkman	3	302	10
2	Gurkov	3	41	10
3	Fey	2	275	7
4	Pavlovskaya	2	163	6
5	Minbaeva	2	53	2
6	Buciuniene	2	50	0
Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer				

The following Figure 3 shows the frequency of keywords that were encountered in articles about human resource management in Post-Soviet Countries. The most common words were: human resource management, Russia, firm performance. This figure allows us to demonstrate the trend of the occurrence of words. Newer articles that are marked in yellow indicate that recent articles have been devoted to topics such as: HRM practices, enterprises, companies, transition economies, and China. Thus, it can be assumed that recently the publications of articles have had a bias- towards describing the effectiveness of practices in the field of human resource management at enterprises in China, during the transit of its economy.



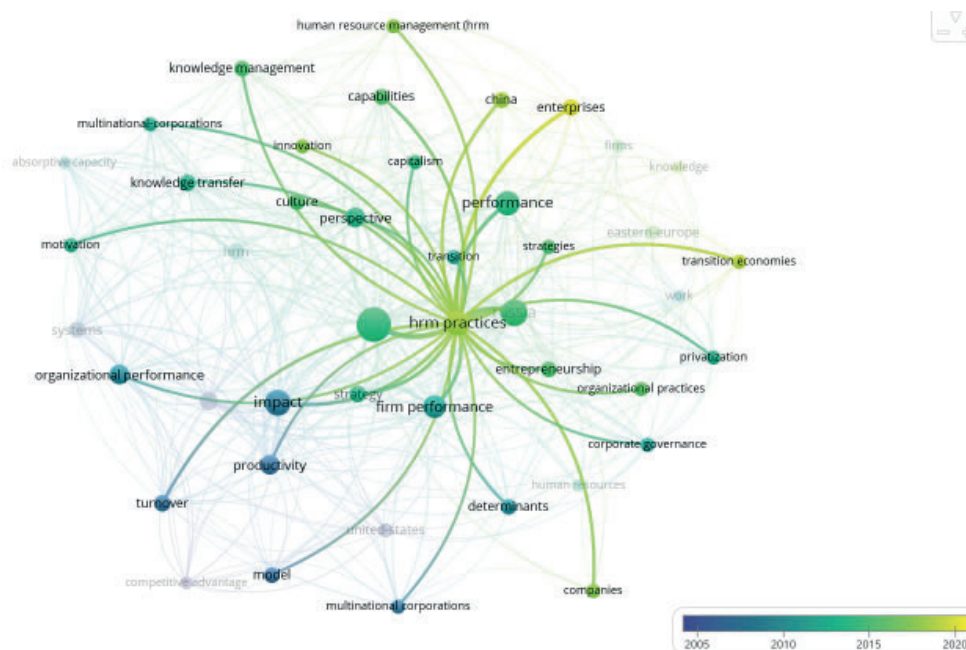


Figure 3 – Co-occurrence Keywords  
Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer

Among the keywords, there was a mention of Kazakhstan several times. Kazakhstan has an association with such keywords as: human resource management, performance, capitalism, post-soviet, model. However, the articles in which Kazakhstan was mentioned belong to a rather late time, since the word Kazakhstan has a coloring that refers closer to 2010, respectively, more recent articles about Kazakhstan have not been published recently (Figure 4).

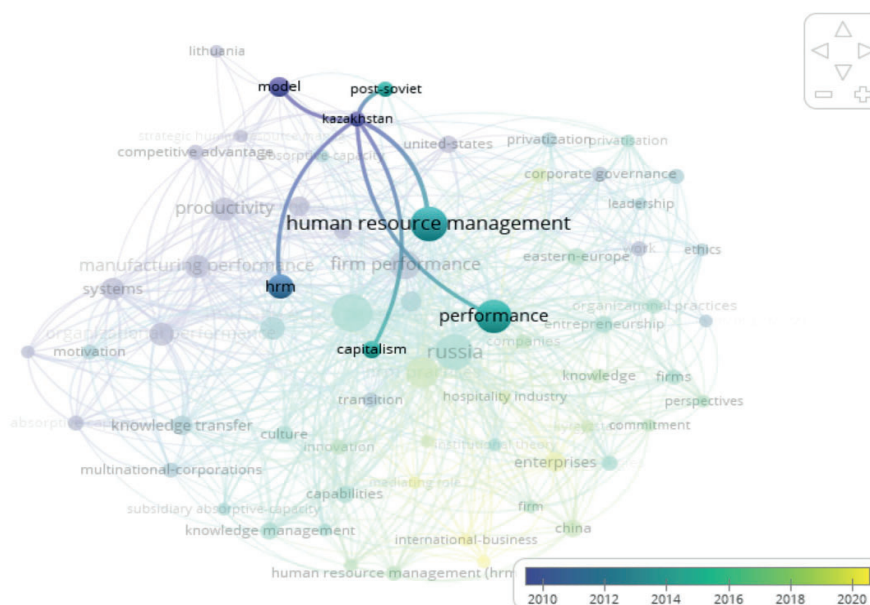


Figure 4 – Co-occurrence Keywords associations with Kazakhstan  
Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer

As a result of this shift in research focus, there has been a growing interest in exploring the various HRM practices that are being adopted by Kyrgyz companies. Some of the key areas of investigation include the hospitality industry, enterprises, HRM practices (Figure 5).

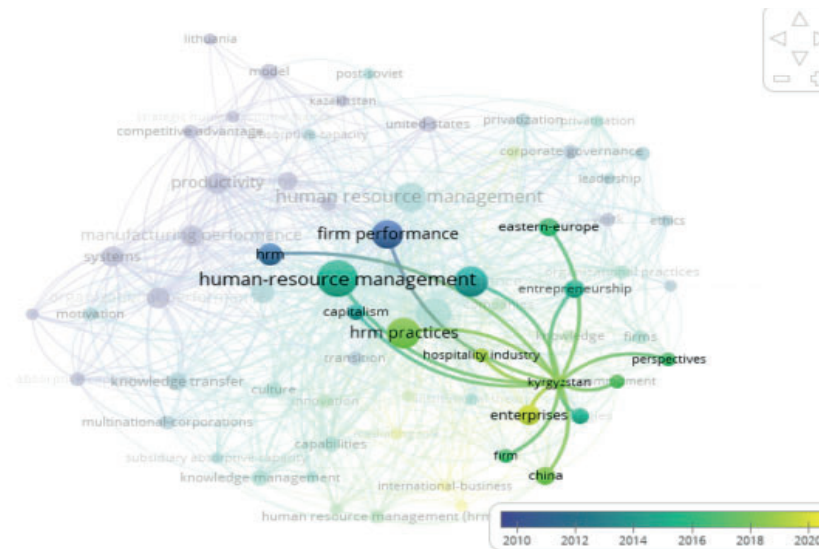


Figure 5 – Co-occurrence Keywords associations with Kyrgyzstan

Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer

In the context of the countries in which articles on HRM were published, the United States and Russia are leading, but they belong to a later time. Recently, articles on HRM have been published in the Eastern Bloc countries: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Serbia, as well as Ireland. For these countries, the most recent articles on HRM were published in China (Figure 6).

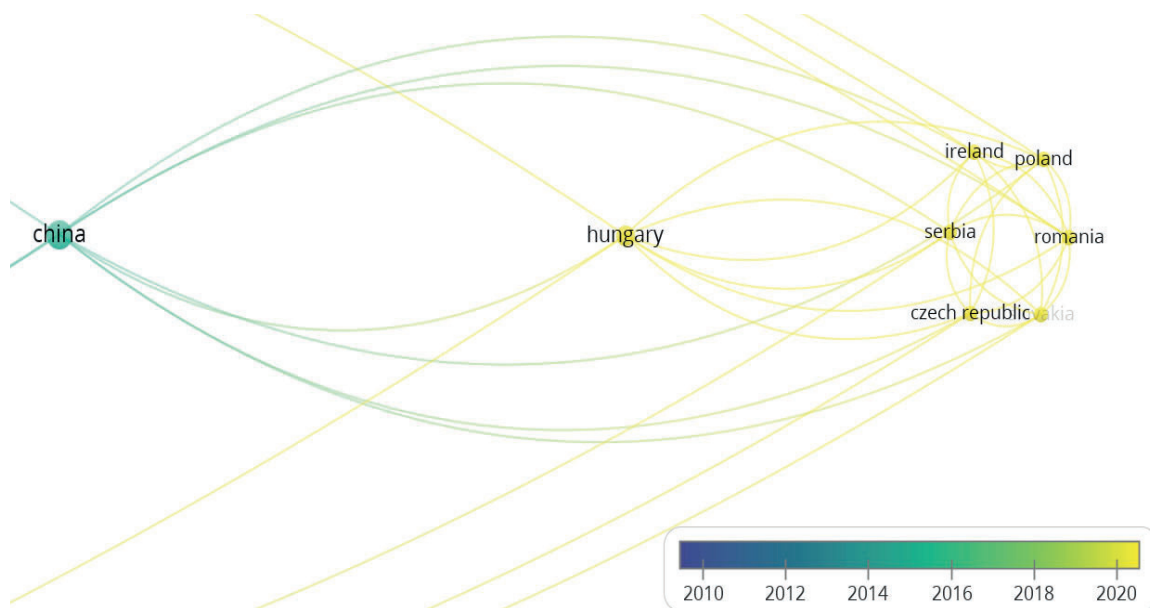


Figure 6 – Co-authorship by countries

Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer



**Future research directions.** Increasing trends in publication numbers suggest that HRM in Post-Soviet countries is an important and growing area of research, which has implications for both academia and practice. As Post-Soviet countries become increasingly integrated into the global economy, understanding the challenges and opportunities facing HRM in these countries will become even more important.

The bibliometric analysis identified several future research directions, including the exploration of HRM practices, values, firm performance, strategy, and job satisfaction (Figure 7).

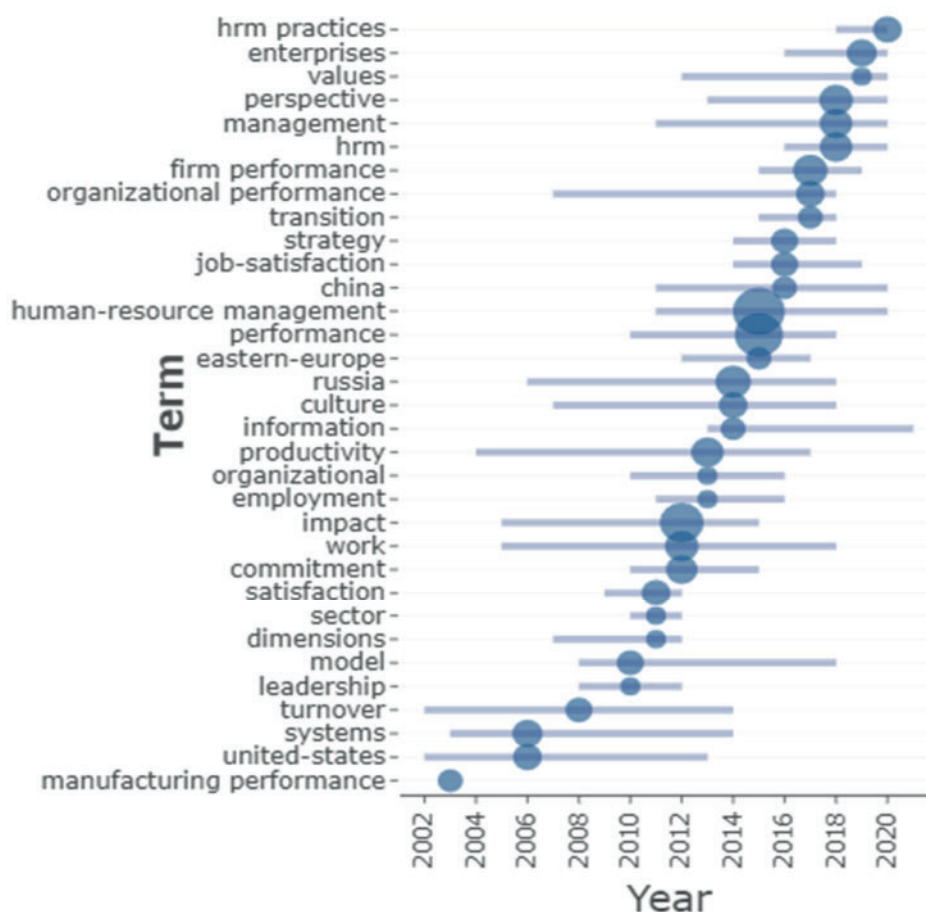


Figure 7 – Trendy topics for two decades

Note – complied by the authors based on VosViewer

**Limitations.** This study has limitations. Sole reliance on Web of Science for data collection may have led to exclusions. Bibliometric analysis using databases like Web of Science may not capture the entire development of HRM in post-Soviet countries. Most articles on HRM in this region are published in non-international journals not indexed by databases like Web of Science. Local scholars and institutions often publish in local journals, limiting their inclusion in the analysis.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study provides the first bibliometric analysis of HRM research in Post-Soviet countries, with a focus on the Republic of Kazakhstan. The most cited document was «MNC knowledge transfer, subsidiary absorptive capacity, and HRM» by Minbaeva et al. [15], while Bjorkman was the most cited author. The Journal of International Business Studies was the most cited source, and the Stockholm School of Econom-

ics was the most cited organization. The number of publications on HRM in post-Soviet countries has increased, including contributions from Kazakhstani authors such as Minbaeva. However, most articles in this field, especially in Kazakhstan, are published in local journals and are not indexed by international platforms. There is a gap in HRM research compared to other disciplines. The lack of statistics on HRM in Kazakhstan needs attention from relevant authorities. While advanced HRM methods are being introduced in Kazakhstan, there is a need to address the shortage of publications in this area, especially in recent years.

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## ПОСТКЕҢЕСТІК ЕЛДЕРДЕГІ АДАМ РЕСУРСТАРЫН БАСҚАРУ: БИБЛИОМЕТРИЯЛЫҚ ТАЛДАУ

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### АНДАТПА

*Зерттеудің мақсаты* посткеңестік елдердегі адам ресурстарын басқару (HRM) зерттеулерінің мәртебесін анықтау үшін библиометриялық талдау жүргізу болып табылады, сонымен бірге зерттеу тенденциялары мен болашақ бағыттарды зерттейді.

*Әдіснама.* Біз библиометриялық деректерді зерттеу үшін библиометриялық талдауды қолдандық. Web of Science академиялық дерекқоры тандалды, өйткені ол талдау үшін тандалған зерттеулердің осы салаға қатысты болуын қамтамасыз етеді. Библиометриялық талдау үшін барлығы 133 мақала тандалды. Библиометриялық желілерді құру және визуализациялау үшін Vosviewer бағдарламалық құралы пайдаланылды. Жалпы, бұл әдістер зерттелетін саладағы зерттеулердің жай-күйінің толық және сенімді көрінісін береді.

*Зерттеудің бірегейлігі / құндылығы.* Бұл зерттеу посткеңестік елдердің зерттеулеріндегі алғашқы адам ресурстарын басқару бағытындағы библиометриялық талдау болып табылады. Ол посткеңестік елдердегі АРБ зерттеулерін біріктіру және ең көп сілтеме жасалған авторларды, мақалаларды, журналдарды, және ұйымдарды анықтау арқылы зерттеудің ағымдағы жағдайын ашу арқылы әдебиетке үлес қосады. Библиометриялық талдау нәтижелері посткеңестік елдердегі персоналды басқару саласындағы зерттеулердің болашақ бағыттарын да анықтайды.

*Зерттеу нәтижелері.* Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, ең көп қолданылатын кілт сөздер Адам ресурстарын басқару, Ресей, персоналды басқару тәжірибесі, компанияның тиімділігі болды. Bjorkman et al. (2007) ең көп келтірілген автор, ал Minbayeva et al. (2003), Andreeva & Kianto (2012), Bjorkman et al. (2007) посткеңестік елдердегі АРБ туралы ең көп келтірілген құжаттар болды. Библиометриялық талдау нәтижесі негізінде болашақта зерттеуді адам ресурстарын басқаруға, өнімділікке, капитализмге, модельге және өтпелі экономикаға бағыттауға болатындығын анықтады. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу халықаралық компаниялар мен білімді басқарудағы персоналды басқару тәжірибесін зерттеу тенденциясын анықтады. Егер HRM саласындағы зерттеулер Қазақстанда посткеңестік елдерден 2010 жылдың басында қарқынды жүргізілсе, онда қырғыз кәсіпорындарында персоналды басқару практикасы бойынша зерттеулер 2018 жылдан бастап белсенді түрде қарқын ала бастады.

*Түйін сөздер:* персоналды басқару, адам ресурстарын басқару, посткеңестік елдер, Қазақстан, Қырғызстан, библиометриялық талдау, сөз тіркестерін талдау, ғылыми картаға түсіру.

## УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ЧЕЛОВЕЧЕСКИМИ РЕСУРСАМИ В ПОСТСОВЕТСКИХ СТРАНАХ: БИБЛИОМЕТРИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ

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### АННОТАЦИЯ

*Целью данного исследования* является проведение библиометрического анализа, чтобы выявить статус исследований в области управления человеческими ресурсами (HRM) в постсоветских странах, одновременно изучая тенденции исследований и будущие направления.

*Методология.* Мы использовали библиометрический анализ для изучения библиометрические данные. Была выбрана академическая база данных Web of Science, поскольку она гарантирует, что исследования, отобранные для анализа, имеют актуальность для данной области. Всего для библиометрического анализа было отобрано 133 статьи. Для построения и визуализации библиометрических сетей использовался программный инструмент VOSviewer. В целом, эти методы дают исчерпывающую и достоверную картину состояния исследований в изучаемой области.

*Оригинальность/ценность исследования.* Данное исследование является первым библиометрическим анализом HRM в исследованиях постсоветских стран. Он вносит свой вклад в литературу, объединяя исследования по УЧР в постсоветских странах и раскрывая текущее положение исследования путем определения наиболее цитируемых авторов, статей, журналов, и организаций. Результаты библиометрического анализа также выявляет будущие направления исследований в области управления персоналом в постсоветских странах.

*Результаты исследования.* Результаты показали, что наиболее часто используемыми ключевыми словами были Управление человеческими ресурсами, Россия, практика управления персоналом, эффективность работы фирмы. Bjorkman et al. (2007) были наиболее цитируемыми авторами, а Minbayeva et al. (2003), Andreeva & Kianto (2012), Bjorkman et al. (2007) были наиболее цитируемыми документами по УЧР в постсоветских странах. Исследование также выявило, что основное внимание уделяется управлению человеческими ресурсами, производительности, капитализму, модели и переходной экономике. Кроме того, исследование выявило тенденцию к изучению практики управления персоналом в MNC и управления знаниями. Если исследования в области HRM усердно проводились в Казахстане из постсоветских стран в начале 2010 года, то исследования по практике управления персоналом на кыргызских предприятиях активно начали набирать обороты с 2018 года.

*Ключевые слова:* Управление персоналом, постсоветские страны, Казахстан, Кыргызстан, библиометрический анализ, анализ сочетаний слов, научное картографирование.

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