

Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics 21  
Series Editors: Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin · Hakan Danis

Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin  
Hakan Danis  
Ender Demir  
Adam Zaremba *Editors*

# Eurasian Business and Economics Perspectives

Proceedings of the 34th Eurasia  
Business and Economics Society  
Conference



 Springer

# **Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics**

Volume 21

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Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin, Faculty of Political Sciences, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Istanbul, Turkey

Hakan Danis, MUFG Union Bank, San Francisco, CA, USA

Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics is the official book series of the Eurasia Business and Economics Society ([www.ebesweb.org](http://www.ebesweb.org)). Each issue of the series includes selected papers from the EBES conferences. The EBES conferences, which are being held three times a year, have been intellectual hub for academic discussion in economics, finance, and business fields and provide network opportunities for participants to make long lasting academic cooperation. Each conference features around 250 research articles presented and attended by almost 500 researchers from more than 60 countries around the World. Theoretical and empirical papers in the series cover diverse areas of business, economics, and finance from many different countries, providing a valuable opportunity to researchers, professionals, and students to catch up with the most recent studies in a diverse set of fields across many countries and regions.

\* \* \*

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Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin • Hakan Danis •  
Ender Demir • Adam Zaremba  
Editors

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Economics Society Conference

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*Editors*

Mehmet Huseyin Bilgin  
Istanbul Medeniyet University  
Fatih, Istanbul, Turkey

Hakan Danis  
MUFG Union Bank  
San Francisco, CA, USA

Ender Demir   
Department of Business Administration  
School of Social Sciences, Reykjavik  
University  
Reykjavik, Iceland

Adam Zaremba  
Montpellier Business School  
Montpellier, France

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# Preface

This is the 21st issue of the Springer's series **Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics**, which is the official book series of the Eurasia Business and Economics Society (EBES, [www.ebesweb.org](http://www.ebesweb.org)). This issue includes selected papers presented at the 34th EBES Conference that was held on January 6–8, 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the conference presentation mode has been switched to “online/virtual presentation only.”

We are honored to have received top-tier papers from distinguished scholars from all over the world. We regret that we were unable to accept more papers. In the conference, 148 papers were presented and 296 colleagues from 40 countries attended the online conference. **Kevin Lang**, Editor-in-Chief, of *Journal of Labor Economics*, **Narjess Boubakri**, Editor of *Finance Research Letters*, **Keun Lee**, Editor of *Research Policy*, **Wolfgang Kürsten**, Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Review of Managerial Science*, and **Christos Kollias**, Editor of *Defence and Peace Economics*, joined the “Editor’s Panel Session” on “How to publish in WoS journals.” Moreover, **Douglas Cumming** from Florida Atlantic University, USA delivered his “Keynote Address” entitled “*Death, Destruction, and Manipulation*” under the moderation of **Jonathan Batten** from *RMIT University*, Australia.

In addition to publication opportunities in EBES journals (*Eurasian Business Review* and *Eurasian Economic Review*, which are also published by Springer), conference participants were given the opportunity to submit their full papers for this issue. Theoretical and empirical papers in the series cover diverse areas of business, economics, and finance from many different countries, providing a valuable opportunity to researchers, professionals, and students to catch up with the most recent studies in a diverse set of fields across many countries and regions.

The aim of the EBES conferences is to bring together scientists from business, finance, and economics fields, attract original research papers, and provide them with publication opportunities. Each issue of *the Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics* covers a wide variety of topics from business and economics and provides empirical results from many different countries and regions that are less investigated in the existing literature. All accepted papers for the issue went through

a peer review process and benefited from the comments made during the conference as well. The current issue is entitled Eurasian Business and Economics Perspectives and covers fields such as human resources management, management, marketing, accounting/audit, and regional studies.

Although the papers in this issue may provide empirical results for a specific county or regions, we believe that the readers would have an opportunity to catch up with the most recent studies in a diverse set of fields across many countries and regions and empirical support for the existing literature. In addition, the findings from these papers could be valid for similar economies or regions.

On behalf of the series editors, volume editors, and EBES officers, I would like to thank all the presenters, participants, board members, and keynote speakers, and we are looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming EBES conferences.

Best regards,

Istanbul, Turkey

Ender Demir

# Eurasia Business and Economics Society (EBES)

*EBES* is a scholarly association for scholars involved in the practice and study of economics, finance, and business worldwide. EBES was founded in 2008 with the purpose of not only promoting academic research in the field of business and economics but also encouraging the intellectual development of scholars. In spite of the term “Eurasia,” the scope should be understood in its broadest terms as having a global emphasis.

EBES aims to bring worldwide researchers and professionals together through organizing conferences and publishing academic journals and increase economics, finance, and business knowledge through academic discussions. Any scholar or professional interested in economics, finance, and business is welcome to attend EBES conferences. Since our first conference in 2009, around 13,749 colleagues from 99 countries have joined our conferences and 7729 academic papers have been presented. **EBES has reached 2587 members from 87 countries.**

Since 2011, EBES has been publishing two journals. One of those journals, *Eurasian Business Review—EABR*, is in the fields of industrial organization, innovation, and management science, and the other one, *Eurasian Economic Review—EAER*, is in the fields of applied macroeconomics and finance. Both journals are published quarterly by *Springer* and indexed in *Scopus*. In addition, EAER is indexed in the *Emerging Sources Citation Index (Clarivate Analytics)*, and EABR is indexed in the *Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)* with an Impact Factor of **3.5** as of 2020.

Furthermore, since 2014 Springer has started to publish a new conference proceedings series (**Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics**) which includes selected papers from the EBES conferences. The series has been indexed by **SCOPUS**. In addition, the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th (Vol. 2), 21st, 24th, and 25th EBES Conference Proceedings have already been accepted for inclusion in the *Conference Proceedings Citation Index—Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH)*. Other conference proceedings are in progress.



We look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming conferences. We very much welcome your comments and suggestions in order to improve our future events. Our success is only possible with your valuable feedback and support!

With my very best wishes,

Klaus F. Zimmermann  
President

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# Contents

<b>Part I Eurasian Business Perspectives: Human Resources Management</b>	
<b>The Effect of HR Practices on the Fulfillment of a Psychological Contract in the Context of the Polish Organizational Culture . . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
Anna Rogozińska-Pawełczyk	
<b>A Seat at the Table: Exploring 4.0 Leadership Attributes Using a Thematic Approach . . . . .</b>	<b>21</b>
Salina Daud and Wan Noordiana Wan Hanafi	
<b>Are Co-Working Spaces Communitarian and Open? Organizational Values from the Dynamic Perspective . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>
Zehra Oruç and Onur Ünlü	
<b>Part II Eurasian Business Perspectives: Industrial Organization</b>	
<b>Sources of Finance and In-House R&amp;D: A Study of Electronic Firms in India . . . . .</b>	<b>57</b>
Richa Shukla	
<b>Empirical Evidence on how Smart Connected Products' Capability Maturity Impacts Players' Portfolio Strategy: A Case Study on Siemens . . . . .</b>	<b>79</b>
Diana Cozmiuc and Ioan Petrișor	
<b>Transition Toward a Low-Carbon Economy: The Contribution of Italian Listed Utilities . . . . .</b>	<b>99</b>
Luisa Bosetti	
<b>Part III Eurasian Business Perspectives: Management</b>	
<b>Business Ecosystem: More Than a New Name for Supply Chain? . . . . .</b>	<b>121</b>
Vanessa Felch, Eric Sucky, and Leonie Schwartz	

**What Affects the Strategy Type of the Biggest Russian Corporations? . . .** 147  
Dmitri Pletnev and Ekaterina Nikolaeva

**Data Envelopment Analysis on Relative Efficiency Assessment and Improvement: Evidence from Chinese Bank Branches . . . . .** 159  
Meifen Chu, Guangyuan Zhou, and Wenfeng Wu

**Sustainability of the Hungarian Social Cooperatives . . . . .** 179  
Sándor Bozsik, Katalin Lipták, Judit Szemán, and Zoltán Musinszki

**ICT as an Employee Engagement Driver: Evidence from Russian Firms . . . . .** 201  
Dmitri Pletnev and Elena Kozlova

**Analysis of the Textile Supply Chain from a Circularity Perspective: A Case Study . . . . .** 213  
Sara Alonso-Muñoz, Rocío González-Sánchez, Cristina Siligardi, and Fernando E. García-Muñia

**Government Relations Management: A Specific Form of Interaction Between Business and State in the Republic of Moldova . . . . .** 235  
Cociug Victoria and Afteni Laura

**Part IV Eurasian Business Perspectives: Marketing**

**Digital Marketing Adoption Framework for Small Businesses in Egypt: A Grounded Theory Approach . . . . .** 251  
Ghadir Fareed and Passent Tantawi

**Islamic Advertising Revisited: Implications of Islamic Principles in Advertising . . . . .** 269  
Nurzahidah Haji Jaapar, Anis Husna Abdul Halim, Sharifah Fadylawaty Syed Abdullah, Mohd Faiz Mohamed Yusof, and Mohd Dani Muhamad

**Part V Eurasian Economic Perspectives: Accounting/Audit**

**Analysis of Nonfinancial Reporting and Integrated Reporting Application: The Case of State-Owned Companies in Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia—Some Initial Evidence . . . . .** 285  
Nives Botica Redmayne, Vesna Vašiček, and Josip Čičak

**Position and Strategy of Constituents in the IFRS 16 Project on Lease with Special Attention to Large Audit Firms’ Comment Letters . . . . .** 299  
Lucía Mellado and Laura Parte

**The Effect of Performance Accountability Reporting on Public Trust for NPOS in Qatar** . . . . . 323  
Yaseen Al-Janadi and Rashid Murad

**Part VI Eurasian Economic Perspectives: Political Economy**

**The Economic Policy Uncertainty Spillovers of the UK on its top Trading Partners** . . . . . 339  
Thi Ngoc Lan Dinh

**A Contribution to General Equilibrium Theory** . . . . . 361  
Truong Hong Trinh

**Part VII Eurasian Economic Perspectives: Regional Studies**

**Soft Skills Acquisition for the Knowledge Economy: A Research Strategy for Policy Evolution in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Intermediate and Emergent Economies** . . . . . 379  
Nasrullah K. Khilji and Stephen A. Roberts

**Discovering an Entrepreneurial Intention among Youngsters** . . . . . 399  
Hasliza Hassan, Muhammad Sabbir Rahman, and Abu Bakar Sade

**Slovakia’s Year in the COVID-19 Pandemic** . . . . . 419  
Zuzana Stolična and Loretta Pinke

# Contributors

**Sharifah Fadylawaty Syed Abdullah** Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam, Malaysia

**Yaseen Al-Janadi** Department of Accounting and Information Systems, College of Business and Economics, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

**Sara Alonso-Muñoz** Department of Business Administration (ADO), Applied Economics II and Fundamentals of Economic Analysis, Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid, Spain

**Luisa Bosetti** Department of Economics and Management, University of Brescia, Brescia, Italy

**Sándor Bozsik** Institute of Accounting and Finance, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary

**Meifen Chu** Faculty of Economics, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan

**Josip Čičak** Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia

**Diana Cozmiuc** West University Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania

**Salina Daud** College of Business Management and Accounting, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Muadzam Shah, Malaysia

**Thi Ngoc Lan Dinh** Economics, Finance and Entrepreneurship Department, Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham, UK

**Ghadir Fareed** School of Business, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK

**Vanessa Felch** Chair of Operations Management and Logistics, University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany

**Fernando E. García-Muiña** Department of Business Administration (ADO), Applied Economics II and Fundaments of Economic Analysis, Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid, Spain

**Rocío González-Sánchez** Department of Business Administration (ADO), Applied Economics II and Fundaments of Economic Analysis, Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid, Spain

**Anis Husna Abdul Halim** Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam, Malaysia

**Wan Noordiana Wan Hanafi** College of Business Management and Accounting, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Muadzam Shah, Malaysia

**Hasliza Hassan** Faculty of Management, Multimedia University, Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia

**Nurzahidah Haji Jaapar** Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam, Malaysia

**Nasrullah K. Khilji** School of Computing and Engineering, University of West London, London, UK

**Elena Kozlova** Department of Economics of Industries and Markets, Chelyabinsk State University, Chelyabinsk, Russia

**Afteni Laura** Doctoral Schools Consortium of State University of Moldova, Economic and Demographic Sciences, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

**Katalin Lipták** Institute of World and Regional Economics, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary

**Lucía Mellado** Departamento Economía de la Empresa y Contabilidad, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid, Spain

**Mohd Dani Muhamad** Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam, Malaysia

**Rashid Murad** Department of Accounting and Information Systems, College of Business and Economics, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

**Zoltán Musinszki** Institute of Accounting and Finance, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary

**Ekaterina Nikolaeva** Department of Economics of Industries and Markets, Chelyabinsk State University, Chelyabinsk, Russia

**Zehra Oruç** Bahçeşehir University, Bursa, Turkey

**Laura Parte** Departamento Economía de la Empresa y Contabilidad, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid, Spain

**Ioan Petrișor** West University Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania

**Loretta Pinke** Department of Economy and Finance, Faculty of Management, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

**Dmitri Pletnev** Department of Economics of Industries and Markets, Chelyabinsk State University, Chelyabinsk, Russia

**Muhammad Sabbir Rahman** Department of Marketing and International Business, North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Nives Botica Redmayne** School of Accountancy, Massey Business School, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

**Stephen A. Roberts** TKN Research Network, Reading, UK

**Anna Rogozińska-Pawelczyk** Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Łódź, Łódź, Poland

**Abu Bakar Sade** Putra Business School, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

**Leonie Schwartz** Chair of Operations Management and Logistics, University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany

**Richa Shukla** Department of Economics & Finance, Birla Institute of Technology and Science [BITS Pilani], K. K. Birla Goa Campus, Sancoale Goa, India

**Cristina Siligardi** Department of Engineering Enzo Ferrari, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy

**Zuzana Stoličná** Department of Economy and Finance, Faculty of Management, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

**Eric Sucky** Chair of Operations Management and Logistics, University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany

**Judit Szemán** Institute of Accounting and Finance, University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary

**Passent Tantawi** Cardiff Metropolitan University Programs, Graduate School of Business, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Alexandria, Egypt

**Truong Hong Trinh** The University of Danang—University of Economics, Danang, Vietnam



**Onur Ünlü** Department of Business Administration, Yalova University, Yalova, Turkey

**Vesna Vašiček** Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

**Cociug Victoria** Department of Finance, The Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

**Wenfeng Wu** Antai College of Economics and Management, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China

**Mohd Faiz Mohamed Yusof** Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Shah Alam, Malaysia

**Guangyuan Zhou** Antai College of Economics and Management, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China

**Part I**  
**Eurasian Business Perspectives: Human**  
**Resources Management**

# The Effect of HR Practices on the Fulfillment of a Psychological Contract in the Context of the Polish Organizational Culture



Anna Rogozińska-Pawelczyk 

**Abstract** The article identifies and analyzes Polish organizations' HR practices that have the strongest effect on the development of employees' expectations relating to psychological contracts. The data were collected using semi-structured individual in-depth interviews (IDI) during a qualitative survey of 56 employees representing medium and large firms. The IDI transcripts were thoroughly analyzed to capture the details of respondents' opinions on how they felt about the fulfillment of their psychological contracts, as well as specific examples illustrating their relations with employers in cases when the obligations they had toward each other were met or unmet. The survey questions also aimed to determine which HRM practices have the strongest effect on the perception of psychological contracts as being fulfilled. The analysis of respondents' subjective narrations indicated five key HR practices that may influence employees' expectations regarding the fulfillment of their psychological contracts. Five culturally meaningful HR practices were identified, focusing on organizational climate, employees' identification with the organization, fair pay, professional development, and work–life balance. The article is a contribution to the literature on psychological contract formation in organizations. Its empirical part was designed to advance the understanding of the process in the environment of Polish companies.

**Keywords** Micro-Based Behavioral Economics · Organizational Behavior · HR Practices · Fulfillment of Psychological Contract · Polish Organizational Culture

## 1 Introduction

Domestic and international companies would certainly agree that employees are the main source of market advantages (Pocztowski, 2008; Anbuoli et al., 2016). Therefore, the use of human resource management policies and practices allowing

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A. Rogozińska-Pawelczyk (✉)  
Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Łódź, Łódź, Poland  
e-mail: [anna.rogozinska@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:anna.rogozinska@uni.lodz.pl)

companies to make the best use of the potential of their employees is of utmost importance (Anbuoli et al., 2016).

Many organizations go international to benefit from their presence in global markets. However, for the benefits of international operations to be achievable, companies must address local differences in HRM and ensure cross-border transfers of knowledge and technology (Alvesson, 2013). Understanding the nature of organizational, social, economic, and cultural factors is necessary for managers to be able to make full use of the available resources and opportunities (Eskiler et al., 2016). One of the main challenges faced by managers in transnational organizations is to make sure that their HRM is effective in different cultural contexts. The cultural context of organizations is important because it is used by employees as a framework to interpret employers' promises, especially that many aspects of employment contracts taking account of the employees' culture are tacit rather than explicitly written down. Such unwritten or informal aspects of the arrangements between an employee and an employer constitute a so-called psychological contract understood as the employee's perception and interpretation of employer's messages and promises. The content of a psychological contract is determined by the parties' subjective judgments and expectations and goes far beyond the formal requirements imposed by the Labor Code, collective agreements, or managerial or employment contracts. As a result, both parties interpret it in their own way. Moreover, the tacitness of psychological contracts sometimes causes problems with achieving their objectives. Because of all these sensitivities, all HRM activities (starting with employee recruitment and ending with the termination of employment relationships) concerning the management of psychological contracts should have a regulatory rather than reactive character.

According to Cassar and Briner (2009), psychological contracts should be studied with regard to various cultural, national, and organizational contexts, because then it is possible: (1) to understand how a psychological contract emerges; (2) to interpret the contract and the employer–employee relations arising from it; (3) to deepen, develop, and generalize this construct. This article was prepared using the approach recommended by Cassar and Briner (2009). It is one of the few works examining HR practices to assess their influence on the employees' perception of the fulfillment of their psychological contracts from the perspective of the Polish organizational culture.

In the last decade, only a few organizational researchers have conducted research into psychological contract in European Central-Eastern context (e.g., Cassar & Briner, 2009; Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2020; Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2021). There were two objectives behind these studies: (1) to generalize the concept of psychological contract among different contexts and (2) to identify the uniqueness within the context that may influence employees' perceptions, feeling, and reactions to psychological contract fulfillment or breach.

This research makes two contributions to the psychological contract literature. Firstly, the research identified and investigated the culturally relevant elements of HR practices that significantly affect the employee psychological contract in the Polish organizational culture context. Secondly, this is among the first Polish studies

to investigate employees' perceptions, feelings, and resultant outcomes of perceived psychological contract fulfillment among employees of Polish organizations, therefore, extending the psychological contract literature by applying the concept and construct of psychological contract fulfillment in European Central-Eastern context.

This article is organized into few sequential parts. Theoretical part is an overview of the cultural context of Poland, where the research is conducted, and reviews the literature on the impact of cultural context on HR practices and employee psychological contract. After that, the research design and methodology used in the empirical study is discussed. The next section presents the findings of the qualitative research. The culturally significant HR practices and their effect on employees' performance are analyzed. Each element is defined and illustrated with the help of narratives. The next section summarizes the qualitative results and findings of the study and the context that frames the background of the present research. The last section discusses the contributions of this research to understanding of employees' psychological contract in the Polish context and the consequences of fulfillment of psychological contract.

The analysis of respondents' subjective narrations indicated five key HR practices that may influence employees' expectations regarding the fulfillment of their psychological contracts. These are culturally similar HR practices focused on organizational climate, identification with the organization, pay fairness, professional development, and work-life balance. The findings will help the top management by shedding light on the way they can better manage their workforce in the Polish organizational culture.

## **2 HR Practices and the Fulfillment of a Psychological Contract in the Polish Organizational Culture**

The cultural context of an organization has a major effect on HRM effectiveness because it is usually the product of historical, social, and political circumstances unique to the company's country of operation (Tanure & Duarte, 2005). In order to better explain its role, the Polish organizational culture will be analyzed using Hofstede's pyramid (Hofstede et al., 2010), a structure combining a high power distance ratio and a strong aversion to uncertainty. Other characteristics of the Polish organizational culture include a relatively high masculinity factor, an average level of individualism, and a short-term orientation.

Polish companies are characterized by a considerable power distance. The consequences of this are the presence of patriarchal relationships between employers and employees, "spontaneous" management, and the management's relative reluctance to delegate tasks. The distance between the supervisors (owners) and the employees is accompanied by very strong solidarity among the latter against managers. Individualism is not highly valued, in contrast with family connections (nepotism) and informal "peer support groups." Employees have a strong need for

acceptance from their colleagues, solidarity, and harmony within their group, but they perceive it as a manifestation of individualism in relations with their superiors rather than “a collectivist inclination.”

As regards the masculinity factor, it is important to note that men still have privileged socio-economic status compared with women (there are more men in employment, they have better paying and more prestigious jobs, and are promoted more frequently; women continue to be discriminated on the ground on morals). At the same time, Polish men seem to display some “feminine attributes” in the way they think and behave—they appreciate interpersonal relations more than rivalry and shun people trying to dominate others.

Uncertainty aversion among Polish men and women manifests itself as a strong need for occupational stability, security, predictability, and transparency of procedures. This attitude results in the establishment of rigid and tight rules, most of which are then disobeyed. A short-term orientation is a tendency of employees to consider the workplace relations in terms of immediate rewards and to attach greater weight to immediate, spectacular successes than to step-by-step efforts allowing them to advance up the organizational hierarchy.

According to Moszkowicz (2000), Polish organizations differ in workplace culture. The aggressive, dynamic, and unsteady private sector is culturally distant from the general government sector, which frequently lacks effectiveness and is structurally ossified, but offers stable and secure employment. Generally, however, cultural changes related to the “replacement of generations” stimulated by the need to respond to the challenges of free market capitalism cause the Polish organizational culture to evolve and it will take a long time before it takes final shape (Moszkowicz, 2000).

According to the literature, culture can and does have a modulating effect on HR practices (Pocztowski, 2019) and employees’ perceptions of whether or not their psychological contracts are being honored (Schalk & Soeters, 2008). For instance, the economic liberalization processes initiated in Poland in the 1990s led to major changes in the structure of ownership followed by the introduction of HR practices in the existing and new companies that significantly redefined management styles. The knowledge of the organizational culture is necessary for organizations to select HR practices best suited to their goals and to assess whether the culture will support their personnel policies; should it not, the knowledge of it can prompt them whether and what actions they need to take to align it with the new concept of HRM.

An organizational culture is reported to influence the way employees take in and process information (Kickul et al., 2004), as well as their experiences and personal traits that they bring into psychological contracts. Consequently, an organizational culture may have an effect on what they expect from the employer and how they perceive their obligations under a psychological contract (Kickul et al., 2004). Rousseau and Schalk (2000) have identified two cultural factors that may have the strongest impact on the character of a psychological contract:

- *society negotiations*: the degree to which a given culture allows employees to freely enter into different relations of exchange, which may be associated with

customs, rules and laws, the employees' social status (Rousseau & Schalk, 2000), and their occupational and family roles determined by their gender (Kickul et al., 2004).

- *silent cultural assumptions*: the degree to which promises are considered binding in a given culture. Traditional (rigid) cultures tend to view a promise as a contract that must be honored; in flexible cultures, however, a promise is frequently interpreted as a party's commitment to making an effort to fulfill it (rather than a guarantee of its outcome) (Rousseau & Schalk, 2000). Whether a promise is perceived as binding or tentative certainly influences employees' perception of how and whether their contracts are being fulfilled. In the more rigid organizational cultures employees expect employers to fully deliver on their obligations, whereas in the more flexible ones employees' expectations are quite modest in that respect (Rousseau & Schalk, 2000).

### 3 Research Method

#### 3.1 Procedure

A qualitative research method was selected for this study as the most appropriate to advance the understanding of the role of a psychological contract in Polish organizations. Qualitative methods are recommended by Morrison and Robinson (1997). The authors point out that in-depth interviews (IDI) and focused group interviews (FGI) help identify factors that can influence employees' judgements on whether or not their psychological contracts are being fulfilled.

The data analyzed in the study were collected during a survey of employees representing firms based in all parts of Poland. The firms were randomly selected using criteria such as size, industry, ownership, and the presence of a personnel department implying that the organization uses HR practices.

The qualitative method employed involved the use of semi-structured individual in-depth interviews (IDI). The respondents were 56 employees who represented medium-sized and large-sized companies. The interviews were designed to gather respondents' detailed opinions and information about their experiences regarding the fulfillment of their psychological contracts, as well as concrete examples of their relations with employers in situations when their mutual obligations were fulfilled or broken.

The IDI transcripts were subsequently analyzed to capture individual employees' expectations, experiences, and reactions to realizing that their psychological contracts were met or not met. In particular, the analysis aimed: (1) to determine and examine HR practices that the respondents considered meaningful in the Polish organizational culture, and which had a major effect on the shape of psychological contracts, (2) to identify respondents' feelings in reaction to the fulfillment of their psychological contracts, (3) to analyze respondents' feelings in reaction to employers breaking their promises relating to the psychological contracts.

**Table 1** Characteristics of firms and respondents participating in the survey ( $N = 56$ )

Criterion	Specification	Employees
Company sector	Manufacture	12.4%
	Banks, financial institutions, insurance	14.1%
	Education	13.7%
	Trade	4.1%
	Other services	8.9%
	Healthcare	0.0%
	Others: Outsourcing, local government	11.1%
	Innovative industries: Business services sector	35.7%
Company size	Small—To 50 employees	16.7%
	Medium—From 50 to 250 employees	50.0%
	Large—More than 250 employees	33.3%
Type of company	State-owned	17.8%
	Private	82.2%
Sex	Female	67.8%
	Male	32.2%
Age	To 30 years	27.8%
	31–39 years	38.9%
	40–49 years	16.7%
	50–55 years	5.6%
	> 55 years	11.0%
Education	Secondary	34.2%
	Higher	65.8%
Years of service with the company	≤ 5 years	38.9%
	>5 years	61.1%

Source: Compiled by the author

### 3.2 Sample

Employees participating in the survey represented firms that were randomly selected using a set of predefined criteria.<sup>1</sup> The characteristics of firms and respondents are compiled in Table 1.

### 3.3 Measures

IDI questionnaires had a structured component which was to ensure greater reliability of the survey's outcomes, and a component with an open-ended question

<sup>1</sup>Firms were selected based on their region, employment from 50 to 250 employees or over (smaller employment excluded organizations from the survey), industry, and ownership.



allowing respondents to freely express their opinions, conforming to the requirement of theoretical accuracy. Each interview started with questions about the respondent's age, education, and the number of years with the company. They were followed by probing questions, which were asked to assess how the realities of the Polish organizational culture related to psychological contracts ("What made you take a job with this company?", "What do you expect from your company?"). The next set of questions aimed to establish the degree to which HR practices in the respondent's organization supported the fulfillment of psychological contracts (e.g., "Do you think your employer meets your expectations?").

The questionnaires concluded with an open-ended question about the respondent's opinion on how their employer complied with their commitments and promises. The IDI recordings were transcribed making sure that the respondents' anonymity was not breached. The transcripts were then analyzed thematically according to the procedure described by Braun and Clarke (2006), which allows the collected data to be organized and described in a comprehensive manner, and to extract themes or patterns that appropriately characterize the phenomenon under consideration (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis of the transcripts was repeated over and over again until the main themes contained in respondents' answers were identified. In the first step, all transcripts were carefully read and respondents' answers to each question were written down as separate items. Next, similar items were divided into groups, and these were combined into categories. Lastly, categories were compared for similarity to capture themes. The procedure revealed several major themes concerning different aspects of the organizational culture influencing employees' expectations toward their employers.

The themes were analyzed using a narrative method. The method made it possible to identify and study culturally meaningful HR practices stimulating the emergence of workplace expectations among Polish employees and influencing their perception of their fulfillment, as well as employees' reactions to the fulfillment of psychological contracts.

The results of the qualitative analysis were validated for accuracy by two independent, competent referees, who assessed the IDI transcripts, identified themes and interview descriptions, finding no significant differences between them. The correspondence between the codes and the themes was almost 91%. The inference procedure was based on an appropriate categorization key, which allowed a comprehensive view on the problem under consideration.

The analysis of the IDI contents revealed five HR practices that are significant for employees in the Polish organizational culture. The following interpretations of the survey data are additionally illustrated by citations from respondents' answers, and explanations referring to appropriate theoretical frameworks are provided.

## 4 Key HR Practices in the Polish Organizational Culture: An Analysis of Research Results

### 4.1 *Fostering a Supportive Workplace Climate*

The importance of a workplace climate is especially emphasized in studies investigating the area of organizational practices. According to research, a workplace climate has an effect on working styles in organizations (Niculita, 2015), work safety (Tsai, 2014), employee creativity and innovativeness (Audretsch et al., 2018), employee entrepreneurship, as well as on training delivery and participation (Lubrańska, 2014). The quality of a workplace climate is closely associated with involvement and commitment to the organization, and its components (such as leadership, requirements, and conformism) determine the level of satisfaction with work and well-being (Von Treuer et al., 2014) of the employees. The workplace culture in Polish organizations is moderately individualistic, with employees exhibiting preference for peace and predictability. Most of them would like a supportive climate, clear rules of functioning in the workplace, motivation by rewarding, and challenging and responsible tasks, but also emotional and practical support from colleagues and the supervisor, who should be a person of respect. The employees' desire to work in supportive workplaces is well illustrated by the following citations:

I do enjoy working here; and I try to help the girls who are new here to somehow repay my debt [of gratitude]—because I was nicely received and everybody was very helpful to me from the start.

A friendly atmosphere at work is more important for me than money. I'd rather earn less and stay with a company where I feel comfortable, and where others will assist me in need. I've turned down several attractive job offers just because of the good climate in this company.

Thirty six ( $n = 36$ ) out of the 56 respondents indicated that a supportive climate was a factor they would seriously consider in deciding whether or not to leave their current organization. Ten of them ( $n = 10$ ) remarked that they had left their previous job because of the workplace climate that made them feel uncomfortable and conflicted with their expectations.

Polish employees also expect caring leadership as an element of a supportive workplace climate. The respondents emphasized its role making a stay-or-quit decision. How caring leadership contributes to employees' satisfaction and motivation to work is well illustrated by the following citation:

The superior should have the qualities of a leader. They may not let others walk all over them. Obviously, they need to show understanding to employees. When an employee comes in to talk about a problem he or she has, the superior should listen to the employee, put on their shoes and understand them. They also must be able to listen and talk with employees.

The next citation gives a clear picture of the kind of a workplace climate that most Polish employees would like to have in the workplace.

I regard my job with the company as a long-term commitment, so even if I wanted to get another one, if someone came over to me and said I would be paid four times more, I would want to finish my current tasks first. If it were to take six months, I would work for the six months to do them to my best standard. I would not leave from one day to the next. Even if I submitted a notice of resignation, I would tell the new employer that I would be available in four months because one should not burn the bridges behind them; I'd like my relations with the company to be as they are now (. . .). The climate in the company, the relations in the department are really good and motivate us to stay with the company.

The same respondent also mentioned that in the past, he (and some of his colleagues) had been offered better pay and benefits, which made him consider a change of the employer. But he could not decide to leave because of the atmosphere at work and friendly relations with colleagues and the manager. The general observation from the above is that a supportive workplace climate is very important for employees in the Polish organizational culture. Employees value a harmonious, friendly atmosphere at work, which in many cases may outweigh lower pay.

#### ***4.2 Strengthening Employees' Identification with the Organization***

Empirical evidence points to work team relations, workplace atmosphere, effective communication, cooperation, a respected superior, and individual professional development paths as factors significantly contributing to the formation of ties between employees and the organization (Fatima et al., 2020). Because of the strong masculinization of the Polish organizational culture, employee's identification with the organization is largely determined by the opportunities that come with one's workplace status and by the company's image (Sung et al., 2020). This observation is supported by similar opinions expressed by 34 of the respondents ( $n = 34$ ). One of those who had the shortest length of service remarked:

I work here because no other private company in this country compares with this one. Most business majors graduates in this country dream of working here.

(. . .) I know that I could get better job offers from other companies, but the reputation of this one causes that I don't want to leave it yet.

Employees' ties with their organization are also strengthened by the awareness that their families, friends, and acquaintances view their jobs as very prestigious.

My job is highly valued by my family. They see that I'm appreciated at work and that professional development opportunities are big for me.

Although Polish employees strongly identify with their organizations, three of the respondents ( $n = 3$ ) stated that the public image of their employers was a burden for them and that it somehow made them less satisfied and less proud of being good employees. The following opinions were expressed by employees from the general government sector:

Most of my colleagues identify with this institution . . . . It is not easy, though, because, frankly speaking, its image . . . outside is not good . . . . This institution frequently meets with considerable reluctance on the part of the public. I experience it very often myself.

In a masculine culture people are more inclined to demonstrate their individual achievements. This survey has showed that employees in firms with the Polish organizational culture are not different in that respect. Ten of the respondents ( $n = 10$ ) stated that their identification with the company motivated them to work harder to distinguish themselves and, thus, to secure their employment. This attitude is well illustrated by the following citation:

I joined [this firm] because I felt it was a unique opportunity for me to work for a company like this one. For an IT graduate, a job with this company is a dream come true ( . . . ) and a promise of a great career.

Another respondent mentioned that during the first six months of his employment he had been given the opportunity to take part in his company's meeting with the NASA scientists. The post on the event received much publicity among the media, which boosted his reputation as a software professional.

### **4.3 Fair Pay**

Pay fairness is investigated in management studies in a broader framework of organizational fairness (Petersen, 2014). The latter is assessed with respect to a variety of factors, including the remuneration system, the division of benefits and perquisites, employee development and promotion opportunities, procedures and criteria for awarding bonuses, and promoting or discharging employees, etc.

As a result of the Polish organizational culture having developed in a moderately well-off region, it is marked by strong aversion to uncertainty and the employees' appreciation of the stability of remuneration and benefits. Fairness of pay must be considered in relation to its levels. It is especially important in the less-well-to do regions of Poland and for low-earners. Employees functioning in the Polish organizational culture place high value on stable and well-paying jobs. Eighteen of the survey participants ( $n = 18$ ) stated that pay was very important for them and another sixteen ( $n = 16$ ) pointed to high salaries as one of the reasons why they were satisfied with their employers.

The level of pay is one of the main factors why I work for this company.

The answers of twenty respondents ( $n = 20$ ) implied that interpersonal relations were important for assessing a pay system as fair. In their opinion, the supervisors play a key role regarding the form and content of communication about rewards.

A good word can be very effective; for instance, you handled the case well, you did the job well. On more than one occasion, the boss also rewarded me financially.

The last factor that the respondents related to the fairness of pay was the ratio between pay and the amount of time spent at work. One of the respondents mentioned that having to spend most of the day at work (and frequently stay late after hours), he had little time left for his family. He added, however, that its members understood the situation, because his salary compensated for the time they could not be together. He also observed:

(...) when you're a manager, the demands of the job cause that it is very difficult to work the number of hours planned. Working only between the designated hours can be a hindrance to achieving one's goals, I'm fully aware of it. If not for the financial incentives I receive now, I wouldn't be willing to sacrifice so many hours [to work].

#### 4.4 Professional Development of Employees

An effective and just employee development system can help organizations to remain competitive by promoting high-skilled employees to strategic positions (Kooij et al., 2014). The availability of precise catalog of promotion and development opportunities makes it possible for employees to structure their aspirations and has a significant motivating effect on them.

Because the Polish organizational culture is an element of masculine society, it still pays a lot attention to power and status. Hence, professional development is considered very important by employees and the public and recognized as a symbol of success, self-realization, and a source of satisfaction with work. Several of the respondents' commented on professional development as follows:

For me, professional development is simply an ongoing opportunity to be trained, to improve my competencies. I basically do it every day. I use training provided by the training department and learn on my own to upgrade my competencies so that I can do my work to the best standard possible; besides, I also share knowledge with my subordinates.

Promotion always comes with two aspects: greater responsibility ... with slightly greater splendor attached to it, and money—a pay rise. But responsibility comes first; for me at least, this has always been the right hierarchy.

Twenty-seven respondents ( $n = 27$ ) pointed to the importance of new and diverse tasks and frequent challenges significantly contribute to employee development. The most interesting of their answers are the following:

The job I do now can help me in the future. I have the opportunity to learn many new things. [They] can help me get a better position with another company.

As for me—I was given tasks that I had to cope with and I did. After a time, they created a special position for me.

The answers show that for employees operating in the Polish organizational culture professional development is a challenge that offers new opportunities, duties, and responsibility.

## 4.5 *Work–Life Balance*

The individualistic orientation of the Polish organizational culture and growing workplace demands require employees to spend more and more time (and effort) at work at the cost of their personal lives. Because of the current labor market situation employers can extend working time without provoking much protest from employees, who fear of losing their jobs. The study by Walentek (2019) established that employees in many Polish organizations were more and more tired, having to reconcile family roles and regular workplace duties with frequent overtimes.

An OECD survey ranked Poles fourth in the EU and twelfth in the world for the number of hours they spend working—1766 a year in 2020 (OECD, 2021). Among the EU Member States, Poles are third among the longest average working week (Eurostat, 2019). Almost three-thirds of the economically active population in Poland work more than 40 hours per week, with almost 13% working more than 50 hours (Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Poland, 2019). It is important to note here that work intensity and requirements are much higher today than they were a decade ago (Walentek, 2019).

Although working life relations predominate, the number and quality of relations within family life is also significant. Most workplace commitments arising from interpersonal relations are made within the groups of collaborating workers. Therefore, Polish employees expect their employers to offer them flexible working time, teleworking, job-sharing, part-time working hours, facilities for parents (e.g., a nursery or a kindergarten in the company premises, events for families, family insurance, extra days off work, etc.), and special work–life balance training courses under the company HR policy. Twenty-five of the surveyed employees ( $n = 25$ ) wanted their organizations to allow them some flexibility in performing their duties. The scale of the overwork problem and the importance of the foregoing measures for employees can be deduced from the following citations:

(...) our tasks are poorly planned, I feel I have to work “like crazy” or stay after hours.

They make me complete tasks very fast, instantly, but they don’t care what time I’ll be back home

(...) the key to improving the [workplace] atmosphere is better organization of working time, recruiting more people in the new year (...), more flexible working times, e.g., an option of taking a day off without notice, flexible work start and end times, or flexible weekly working time.

The survey participants indicated that the overwhelming majority of employees affected by workload peaks and troughs felt that they worked too hard, because they could waste no time if they wanted to complete all tasks by the end of the workday.

Nonetheless, work is recognized by Poles as one of the cardinal values in life (Czapiński & Panek, 2015). Some survey participants ( $n = 15$ ) argued that working hard was necessary to be successful and that work gave sense to life.

I guess this can’t be changed . . . . It’s simply because of my character . . . . my desire to make things as best as possible.