

# HRM practices that boost the successful integration of migrants

## **Abstract:**

Building on strategic HRM literature and the concept of well-being-oriented HRM, we analyze how firms can contribute to the successful integration of international migrants into the workplace. We identify HRM practices and sets of HRM practices that collectively form what we call a migrant-supporting HRM system. Based on data from self-initiated international migrants in Germany, we analyze the associations between this HRM system and cross-cultural adjustment, affective commitment and job performance. Our findings confirm the predictive validity and relevance of our migrant-supporting HRM system. Moreover, our results point to three salient sets of HRM practices, namely the provision of engaging work, organizational support and a positive organizational environment. Within these sets, we identify best practices that contribute most to the successful integration of international migrants.

**Keywords:** *Migrants, HRM system, well-being, cross-cultural adjustment, commitment, job performance, structural equation modeling*

## INTRODUCTION

The considerable increase in international migration over the last few years has created new intercultural realities which require organizations to integrate international migrants (IM) into the labor force (Richter et al., 2020). The successful integration is crucial for the IM, the organizations (e.g., more committed employees) and societies (e.g., less brain-wastage). Despite the importance of this topic, we face considerable research gaps regarding the antecedents of the successful integration of IM into the workplace (e.g., Hajro et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020; Shirmohammadi et al., 2019). In particular, very little research has been done on the role of organizations in promoting positive integration outcomes (Lee et al., 2020), with the result that several researchers have called for a greater focus on the role of human resource management (HRM) (e.g. Guo & Al Ariss, 2015, Tharenou & Kulik, 2020).

We respond to this research call and analyze the role of HRM practices to improve the integration and leverage the potential of IM. Our study has four key features. First, we draw attention to self-initiated IM who moved to a (typically more) developed country with the intention to remain there for an indefinite period of time, who initiated their own mobility (e.g. for personal, economic and political reasons), and who secured their own employment without specific organizational support (Andresen et al., 2014; Hajro et al., 2019). Therewith, we include refugees or displaced persons and do not distinguish between high and low-skilled migrants since the question of integration success pertains to all of these groups. Thus, we contribute to the literature by testing the applicability of management theories to a wider range of globally mobile workers.

Second, we focus on cross-cultural adjustment, affective commitment and job performance as facets of integration success (see the integration success dimensions in Hajro et al., 2019). In this manner, we contribute to the literature by analyzing two well-being-related facets:

cross-cultural adjustment, being of specific relevance to the IM and society and, affective commitment, being of specific relevance to the IM and the organization. Finally, we contribute to the literature by considering job performance, which is of utmost relevance to organizations.

Third, we provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of HRM in the integration success of IM. Up to the present, only a few studies have been conducted that address the role of HRM in the integration of IM into the workplace (Hajro et al., 2019; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020). These studies moreover tended to focus on selected HRM practices (for notable exceptions see, e.g., Chowhan et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019). However, research on strategic HRM indicates that different HRM practices do not function in isolation. Accordingly, strategic HRM research focuses on the analysis of bundles of HRM practices which are called HRM systems (Jackson et al., 2014). We adopt this perspective and make use of a bundle of well-being-oriented HRM practices that was recently proposed by Guest (2017) as an alternative approach to the predominant, performance-oriented perspective to HRM. The general idea is that firms can use different subsets of HRM practices (i.e., investing in employees, providing engaging work, creating a positive social and physical environment, voice and organizational support) to foster employee well-being. Given the lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework for migration management through organizations, we argue that Guest's framework can be applied to better understand the integration success of IM. In particular, by customizing the concept of well-being-oriented HRM practices to the migrant context, we can hypothesize and test the effects of HRM practices that collectively form what we call a *migrant-supporting HRM system*.

Fourth, our analyses are based on a sample of almost 400 IM interviewed during 2019 in Germany. Previous studies on international migration showed a preference for qualitative work and the existing quantitative research usually used pre-existing data, for example from national immigrant surveys (Shirmohammadi et al., 2019). Thus, our study also contributes to the literature by using a unique dataset which contains information on multiple HRM practices, which also allows us to identify the key determinants of integration success.

## THEORY, HYPOTHESES AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

### HRM systems and the concept of well-being-oriented HRM

Strategic HRM research focuses on the analysis of bundles of HRM practices or HRM systems (Jackson et al., 2014), such as high-performance work systems or high-commitment HRM systems, which are supposed to increase employee and firm performance. Criticizing that the dominant approaches used in HRM system research largely neglect employee well-being Guest (2017) proposed an alternative approach that prioritizes HRM practices designed to enhance employee well-being.

Based on an extensive literature review, in particular Warr's (1987) vitamin model, the job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and studies on the quality of working life (Walton, 1974), Guest (2017) identified five sets of well-being-oriented HRM practices. The first set, *investing in employees*, aims to enhance employee capabilities, for instance through training and development, mentoring and career support. The second set, *engaging work*, focuses on job design and includes motivational job characteristics such as autonomy, work variety and the provision of feedback. The third set, *positive social and physical environment*, includes HRM practices aimed at prioritizing employee safety, avoiding workplace violence (e.g., harassment, bullying) and discrimination, promoting equal opportunities, ensuring fair rewards, and providing employment security. The fourth set, *voice*, includes extensive two-way communication, the existence of representative participation mechanisms (e.g., work councils or committees representing employees) and opportunities to express individual opinions. The fifth set, *organizational support*, includes participative and supportive management, as well as practices that facilitate employee involvement and flexible working arrangements.

We argue that his framework provides a valuable conceptual basis to understand the organizational antecedences of integration success of IM. Integration success in the workplace

domain include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work engagement, social integration and job performance (Hajro et al., 2019) which also the key outcomes in Guest's framework. Since his framework provides a holistic understanding of the organizational antecedents of employee well-being (which is supposed to have direct and indirect effects on performance), it can help to understand the influence of HRM practices on the integration success of IM.

## **Hypotheses**

### *Well-being-oriented HRM and cross-cultural adjustment.*

Researchers from an international management perspective often refer to *cross-cultural adjustment* to understand integration success (e.g., Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). It is defined as the degree of comfort that an employee has with different aspects of a new host country. It comprises the comfort achieved (1) by adjusting to the new environment in terms of housing conditions, healthcare, transportation, etc. (general adjustment), (2) when interacting with nationals (interaction adjustment), and (3) in adapting to new work roles, values, expectations and standards (work adjustment) (Black et al., 1991).

Well-being-oriented HRM practices can contribute to each of these aspects. Arguably, the closest link between well-being-oriented HRM and cross-cultural adjustment is work adjustment. In order to understand new work roles, values, expectations and standards, organizations need to *invest in employees*. Following Guest (2017), this includes practices like an orientation program for newcomers, training and development, and mentoring. These practices are crucial for IM to adjust to new work norms and to the associated demands of practice (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010). Furthermore, the provision of *engaging work* in terms of autonomy and challenge can increase the motivation of IM to integrate (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). In addition, information provision and feedback should help IM understand their work assignments and should support their work adjustment.

In terms of general adjustment, previous research has shown that the lack of host-country language skills and cross-cultural differences are major obstacles to integration success (Guo & Al Ariss, 2015; Zikic, 2015) and that their motivation to overcome these obstacles is stronger if migrants feel supported by their organization (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). This specifically applies to IM who strongly frame their migration in terms of loss (e.g., fleeing because of war); for them, organizational support compensates for the loss of their jobs in their home country (Cerdin et al., 2014). By *investing* in IM – in particular by providing training to increase their knowledge of socially-valued norms, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as of the local language – organizations show that they value the IM. This should increase the motivation of IM to integrate and thus their general adjustment (Ravasi et al., 2015). The same applies to *organizational support* practices like non-work-related support (e.g., assistance with legal matters, paperwork or family support) or flexible and family-friendly work arrangements that consider the needs of employees from different nationalities (see Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

Finally, well-being-oriented HRM practices can also increase interaction adjustment. Here, a *positive social and physical environment* is essential. Equal opportunities and diversity management, as well as zero tolerance for bullying and harassment will increase the quality of social interactions and provide information on the social cues and norms that shape behavior (Hajro et al., 2019). Furthermore, through required and optional social interaction, for example by working in teams and attending social events organized by the company, IM can connect to host nationals and become familiar with social conventions, which will assist their interaction adjustment (Zikic, 2015). This can also be supported by *investing in employees* through mentoring activities (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010).

Based on the aforesaid arguments, we contend that well-being-oriented HRM practices support the cross-cultural adjustment of IM and therefore qualify as migrant-supporting HRM practices:

*Hypothesis 1: Well-being-oriented HRM practices qualify as migrant-supporting HRM practices, as they will positively influence the cross-cultural adjustment of IM.*

*Well-being-oriented HRM and affective commitment.*

Affective commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is a key measure of IM well-being since it reflects a positive evaluation of the working conditions and the degree of embeddedness in the host country organization (Chen & Shaffer, 2017). In addition, affective commitment is the strongest predictor of workplace attitudes and behavior in comparison to other forms of commitment (continuance and normative commitment) (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Well-being-oriented HRM practices contribute to an affective commitment in multiple ways. A first positive IM affect to an organization can be created during recruitment and selection. Several studies have shown that migrants often experience discrimination during recruitment and selection (Shirmohammadi et al., 2019). Recruitment and selection processes that favor cultural diversity (e.g., anonymous application documents, acceptance of foreign qualifications) contribute to an initial positive impression which lays the foundation for a positive feeling toward the organization. These are nurtured by further *investments in employees*, through an orientation program, training and development, and mentoring.

*Providing engaging work* is fundamental to positive attitudes towards the workplace (Guest, 2017) and meaningful work is a key determinant of organizational commitment (Allan et al., 2019). IM often suffer from underemployment and work in jobs that have a lower professional and occupational status than warranted by their home country qualification or position, which leads to frustration and disappointment (e.g., Alberti et al., 2013; Syed, 2008; Zikic & Richardson, 2016). Organizations can prevent this by offering autonomy and challenging jobs, by providing sufficient information and feedback, and by ensuring that IM can make optimal use of their skills and abilities (Guest, 2017).

Another cornerstone of affective commitment is a *positive social and physical environment*. IM often experience social inequality and exclusion (Al Ariss et al., 2013). An inclusive climate that values differences and does not tolerate discrimination (Shore et al., 2011) shows IM that they are welcome (Guo et al., 2020; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020). Furthermore, after entering an organization, IM need to develop relationships with organizational insiders to be accommodative and to adapt (Black et al., 1991). Required and optional social interaction can support this acceptance and inclusivity and thereby increase their attachment to the organization.

Mechanisms of *voice* refer to extensive two-way communication, employee surveys or collective representation that provide employees the opportunity to influence the organizational context and decisions made therein. This, in turn, can assist the IM to accept, believe in, and identify with organizational goals (Farndale et al., 2011; Guest, 2017). This is particularly relevant for those IM who specifically lack language proficiency and feel less comfortable when speaking up (Guo et al., 2020). If IM feel that their views and opinions are heard and appreciated, they will respond with a high level of commitment to the organization.

Finally, *organizational support* is considered as an essential source of psychological attachment to an organization. Exchange theory suggests that “employees interpret organizational actions [...] as indicative of the personified organization’s commitment to them, [...] [and] reciprocate their perceptions accordingly in their own commitment to the organization” (Whitener, 2001: 516). Arguably, a participative and supportive management that shows concern for individual needs is crucial in this respect (Guo et al., 2020). Additional organizational support practices like developmental performance management, flexible and family-friendly work arrangements, and non-work-related support (e.g., assistance with legal matters) also demonstrate the organization’s commitments to IM, who then are most likely to respond in a positive manner to the organization.



In sum, the aforesaid arguments point out that well-being-oriented HRM practices can foster the affective commitment of IM and therefore qualify as migrant-supporting HRM practices:

*Hypothesis 2: Well-being-oriented HRM practices qualify as migrant-supporting HRM practices, as they will positively influence the affective commitment of IM.*

*Migrant-supporting HRM and job performance.*

Guest (2017) suggests that well-being-oriented HRM practices will have a positive effect on performance as a result of their positive effects on employee well-being. Following this line of reasoning, we propose that migrant-supporting HRM practices will have a positive influence on the performance of IM, which is mediated by cross-cultural adjustment and affective commitment.

The role of *cross-cultural adjustment* on performance has been extensively analyzed in expatriation literature (e.g., Shay & Baack, 2006; Lee & Sukoco, 2010). The general assumption is that maladjustment to the host country will result in psychological and behavioral withdrawal, which in turn causes poor performance (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998). Carmeli et al. (2007) contend that “members who fit in within their organizational system enjoy productive shared resources with others that [...] enable them to perform their job more successfully” (Carmeli et al., 2007: 978-979). This relationship has been confirmed by several studies (Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al., 2005). Building on this literature, we assume that cross-cultural adjustment will have positive effects on the performance of IM: well-adjusted migrants will experience less psychological stress and will have more available personal resources (e.g., in form of time, emotional attachment), which facilitate behaviors that contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

*Affective commitment* is a significant predictor of performance (e.g., Harrison et al., 2006; Jaramillo et al., 2005). This positive link is explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964):

employees who are committed to their organizations are motivated to maintain positive social exchanges with their organization and respond with favorable behaviors, such as performance. This assumption should also hold in the context of IM. IM who are psychologically attached to their organizations will reciprocate and exhibit positive behaviors, that is high levels of job performance.

Given the assumed positive influence of migrant-supporting HRM practices on cross-cultural adjustment (Hypotheses 1) and on affective commitment (Hypotheses 2), and the assumed positive influence of cross-cultural adjustment and affective commitment on job performance, we propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between migrant-supporting HRM practices and job performance of IM is mediated by their cross-cultural adjustment.*

*Hypothesis 4: The positive relationship between migrant-supporting HRM practices and job performance of IM is mediated by their affective commitment.*

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample and data collection**

We drew on a sample of IM in Germany. Germany provides a good study context as current OECD statistics indicate that it is (after the US) the country with the highest absolute number of permanent migrant inflows and the largest share of the population that is foreign born. In Germany, migrants make up 12% of the labor force (OECD, 2018).

We interviewed the IM in 2019 via an online survey. Respondents were contacted using two procedures. First, to target refugees, we contacted national institutions that offer services to refugees and migrants (e.g., language, training or employment services) and asked them to

distribute the survey link on their networks. Second, we used a professional agency's online panels to target a broader group of migrants. The contacts qualified for the survey if: (1) they were not born in Germany, (2) had self-initiated the relocation to Germany (i.e., were not sent by an organization), (3) and worked as an employee for pay. This produced 480 individuals who matched the prerequisites and completed the survey. A thorough data-cleansing procedure, involving the evaluation of answer patterns (e.g., straightlining) or implausible values, led to a final sample of N=394.

The average age of our respondents is 37 years, and the sample comprises well-educated migrants (39% with a university degree) with a slight overrepresentation of females (56%). The majority has been living in Germany for more than eight years; however, 25% have been living in Germany for less than five years (i.e., arrived after what is referred to as the 'refugee crisis'). Although not their country of birth, 50% have German citizenship. The most representative countries of birth are Russia (16%), Kazakhstan (8%), Poland (7%), Turkey (7%), Syria (7%), Romania (5%) and Italy (5%). Therewith, the data provide a good reflection of Germany's migrant and refugee population (e.g., Flüchtlinge, 2020).

## **Measures**

We developed a master questionnaire in English, based on measures drawn from the literature. The questionnaire was translated into Turkish, Farsi, Arab, Spanish, Polish and German by professional translators or academics proficient in both languages. To ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence, the translations were subjected to a back-translation into English.

We measured *cross-cultural adjustment* by using a reduced set of items from Black and Stephens (1991). Respondents were asked how unadjusted or adjusted they are to specific aspects on a scale from 1 = very unadjusted to 7 = very adjusted. We used four items to measure general adjustment (e.g. "Living conditions in general"); two items to measure interaction ad-

justment (e.g., “Socializing with German nationals”); and two items to measure work adjustment (e.g., “Specific job responsibilities”). We generated a factor score for each adjustment facet, followed by a formative measurement of the construct cross-cultural adjustment using the factor scores as items.

We measured *affective commitment* as a reflective construct by using a 5-point agreement scale on a reduced set of items from Meyer et al. (1993) that we selected along content. An example item is: “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization”.

We measured *job performance* in terms of in-role behavior and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) using a reduced set of eleven items from Williams and Anderson (1991). Respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale from 1 = never to 5 = always, how frequently they engage in certain behaviors. We used four items to measure in-role behavior (e.g., “I adequately complete assigned duties”); three items to measure OCB that benefits the organization (e.g., “I give advance notice when I am unable to come to work”); and four items to measure OCB that benefits specific individuals (e.g., “I help others who have been absent”). We generated a factor score for each facet of job performance, followed by a formative measurement of the construct job performance using these three factor scores as items.

To operationalize the different sets of migrant-supporting HMR practices, we developed items based on the definitions in Guest (2017) and partially customized them to the international migration context (see Table 1 for an overview). In line with prior research and suggestions generated by HRM systems research (Hauff, 2019), the items formatively operationalize the five HRM practice sets which, in the later modeling, are further bundled into a second-order construct representing the overall migrant-supporting HRM system.

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Insert Table 1 about here  
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We (initially) included eight *control variables* for which researchers, in the past, assumed and demonstrated relevance for adjustment, commitment and performance (e.g., Bhaskar-

Shrinivas et al., 2005; Cooper et al., 2019; Fontinha et al., 2018): age, gender, education, hours worked per normal week, organizational tenure, branch size, time spent in the host country, and language proficiency.

### **Research approach and analysis technique**

To test our hypotheses, we made use of the analytical approach depicted in Figure 1. First, following Nielsen and Raswant (2018), we estimated a model involving the full set of control variables outlined above. From this model we excluded (four) controls that did not exert a significant influence on any of the constructs of integration success (yielding our final control Model 1). Thereafter, we added the associations between the dependent constructs and the HRM practices to the control model (Model 2).

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Insert Figure 1 about here  
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We made use of partial-least-squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) employing the SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle et al., 2015). We used the following settings in all steps of the analysis: path weighting scheme, 300 iterations, stop-criterion 0.0000001, and replaced missing values by the mean value. We determined the significance by applying the bootstrapping procedure with the following settings: 5,000 subsamples, as many observations per subsample as in the original sample, and the no sign change option.

## RESULTS

### Measurement models

Our results confirm sufficient reliability and validity of our affective commitment construct (average variance extracted = 0.589, composite reliability = 0.850, discriminant validity along the heterotrait-monotrait criterion). To measure job performance and adjustment, we performed factor analyses on the reflective individual items of their sub-facets and tested their reliability. All factors show an acceptable share of extracted variance and reliability with the exception of OCB on the organizational level. Its Cronbach's alpha is clearly below the desired threshold (Cronbach's alpha = 0.486), but is comparable to what is found in the literature (e.g., Williams & Anderson, 1991). Hence, we decided to keep the facet in the analysis. These factor scores are used as items that formatively measure job performance and adjustment.

To support the theoretical evaluation of our formative measurement models (job performance, cross-cultural adjustment, and HRM practices sets) we refer to the indicator weights and their significance (Table 2). For job performance and adjustment, all weights are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). For the sets of HRM practices, some indicators have insignificant weights. However, when evaluating the loadings of the formative indicators and their significance levels in a second step, and for the sake of the theoretical completeness of the different sets (e.g., Hair et al., 2014), we did not eliminate any indicators.

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Insert Table 2 about here  
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We summarized the formatively measured HRM practices sets to a migrant-supporting HRM system. For this purpose, we used a repeated-indicators approach. That is, each HRM practice represents a formative indicator to measure the HRM practice sets, which combined

are formatively measuring the migrant-supporting HRM system. When at a later stage discussing the path coefficients and their significance, we further assess the second-order construct's quality.

### **Structural model**

Table 3 shows the results for the migration-supporting HRM system model (Model 2). Overall, this model explains 27% of the variance in cross-cultural adjustment, 46% of the variance in affective commitment, and 28% of the variance in job performance. The model demonstrates predictive relevance for the three dependent constructs with  $Q^2$  values clearly above 0. Referring to the Variance Inflation Factor (*VIF*), we can confirm that none of the *VIFs* indicated a problem of multicollinearity.

Our migrant-supporting HRM system construct is positively and significantly associated with cross-cultural adjustment ( $\beta = 0.327$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This confirms Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, it is positively and significantly associated with affective commitment ( $\beta = 0.679$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This confirms Hypothesis 2.

We find that both cross-cultural adjustment ( $\beta = 0.392$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and affective commitment ( $\beta = 0.227$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) demonstrate a positive and significant association with job performance. In addition, the migrant-supporting HRM system demonstrates a significant, positive total effect on job performance (total effect = 0.283;  $p < 0.05$ ; Table 4). To test the mediating effect of our migrant-supporting HRM system, we estimated an additional model involving a direct association between the HRM system and job performance. This demonstrates no significant direct association between the HRM system and job performance ( $\beta = -0.058$ ,  $p = 0.541$ ). Hence, our results indicate that there is a full mediation between the HRM system and job performance via cross-cultural adjustment and affective commitment, and confirm Hypotheses 3 and 4.

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For the migrant-supporting HRM system, we find that three sets are significantly associated with the HRM system and, accordingly, that they demonstrate significant positive total effects on cross-cultural adjustment, affective commitment, and job performance (Table 4). We find significant positive associations between cross-cultural adjustment and the provision of engaging work (total effect = 0.153;  $p < 0.05$ ), organizational support (total effect = 0.135;  $p < 0.05$ ), and a positive environment (total effect = 0.081;  $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, we find significant positive associations between affective commitment and the provision of engaging work (total effect = 0.319;  $p < 0.05$ ), organizational support (total effect = 0.281;  $p < 0.05$ ), and a positive environment (total effect = 0.168;  $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, we find significant positive associations between job performance and the provision of engaging work (total effect = 0.132;  $p < 0.05$ ), organizational support (total effect = 0.117;  $p < 0.05$ ), and a positive environment (total effect = 0.070;  $p < 0.05$ ). In contrast, investing in employees and voice do not show relevant associations with our outcomes.

Within the significantly associated sets of HRM practices (engaging work, organizational support, positive environment), we identify the most relevant HRM practices along their weights and their significance. Within the set for the provision of engaging work, significant HRM practices are adequate skill use ( $w = 0.473$ ), challenge and diversity in the job ( $w = 0.440$ ), information provision ( $w = 0.198$ ) and own decision making ( $w = 0.125$ ). Within the set of organizational support, five HRM practices have a significant weight: supervisors respect personal needs ( $w = 0.356$ ), a fair promotion process ( $w = 0.332$ ), the consideration of the off-work situations ( $w = 0.233$ ), career development ( $w = 0.266$ ), and assistance with legal matters ( $w =$



0.131). Among the items measuring a positive environment, three HRM practices have a significant weight: fair pay ( $w = 0.225$ ), the organization of social events ( $w = 0.190$ ), and the maintenance of a diversity-friendly work environment ( $w = 0.175$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### Implications to theory and research

Our research shows that HRM plays a significant role in supporting the successful integration of IM. By testing the migrant-supporting HRM practices, sets and the related system, we demonstrate that our model satisfactorily explains variance in well-being and performance related outcomes. Indeed, our findings justify past calls to pay more attention to organizational activities (Guo & Al Ariss, 2015; Lee et al., 2020; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020) since we find that employers play a crucial role in fostering or hindering the integration of IM. While previous research focused on problems such as discrimination, underemployment and poor career outcomes (Crowley-Henry et al., 2018; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020), our study adopts a more positivistic view of IM and confirms that HRM practices and a migrant-supporting HRM system increase integration success. Thereby, our research complements the research on the individual and societal levels as it demonstrates that firms have the potential to positively impact on individual (e.g., affective commitment), organizational (e.g., performance), and societal outcomes (e.g., cross-cultural adjustment).

By integrating a broad range of migrant-supporting HRM practices we identify key sets of HRM practices and core practices that contribute most to the integration success of IM. Because strategic HRM aims to provide a holistic understanding, it always involves multiple HRM activities. We determine the association between single and sets of HRM practices while controlling for other practices and sets (see also Hauff, 2019). In doing so, we show that not all HRM practices and sets are equally important. Indeed, three sets demonstrate more relevance, namely the provision of engaging work, organizational support and the provision of a positive

organizational environment. Within these sets it is possible to identify the most important HRM practices.

In terms of engaging work, it is particularly important that firms ensure adequate skill use, provide jobs with sufficient challenges and diversity, and inform employees about the developments within the organization. Previous research has pointed out that IM often suffer from underqualification and poor working conditions (e.g., Alberti et al., 2013; Syed, 2008; Zikic & Richardson, 2016). Our findings confirm that these aspects are crucial for successful integration: if IM are able to use their skills and qualifications and are allowed to have interesting workplaces and stimulating jobs, they will be motivated to adjust to the new culture, to attach to the organization and to perform well.

The most important HRM practices in the sets of organizational support and positive environment relate to three overarching topics, namely the consideration of individual needs (supervisors respect personal needs, consideration of the off-work situation), fairness (fair promotion process, fair pay), and social relationships (social events, a diversity-friendly work environment). The literature acknowledges these topics on an individual basis, but our research shows that there is a demand for an integrated approach that considers these aspects collectively and that does not terminate in highlighting single aspects like individual differences of IM or the importance of justice and an inclusive climate.

By contrast, our study also shows that certain HRM practices and sets do not demonstrate significant associations in the overarching model. Some of these results are rather surprising. In particular, previous research often emphasized the importance of recruitment and selection (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010), cross-cultural training and language courses (Ravasi et al., 2015), induction and mentoring (Hajro et al., 2019; Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010), and communication (Tharenou & Kulik, 2020). These assumptions are not supported since we did not find significant associations between our outcome variables and HRM practices related to in-

vestments in employees and voice. A possible explanation is that these HRM practices are neither salient nor crucial for IM. For example, IM may not know if the recruitment and selection processes actually favor cultural diversity or they may not realize the benefits of an orientation program that is usually of a very short duration. Similarly, IM may not deem language courses or cross-cultural training to be the employer's responsibility since they had already received training prior to being employed.

A further contribution refers to the relationships between the different aspects of integration success. Building on the Guest's (2017) initial conceptualization and the related research on the relationships between HRM, well-being and performance (e.g., Van De Voorde et al., 2012), we demonstrate that the migrant-supporting HRM system has a significant influence on job performance, which is mediated by cross-cultural adjustment and affective commitment. We thereby show that different facets of integration success are interrelated, and we are the first to shed light on specific mediation mechanisms.

### **Implications to managerial practice**

Our study provides HRM managers who face the challenge to integrate IM into their organization with a set of relevant practices that is able to improve the well-being of their workforce and to leverage their potential for the organization.

Our findings indicate that managers are well advised to keep on prioritizing the *provision of engaging work*, which has a long tradition in HRM research, when it comes to positively influencing well-being and performance-related outcomes. In the migrant context, we find that the most relevant practices of this facet are the 'adequate use of skills and abilities' and an 'adequate level of challenge and diversity', followed by being 'informed about the organization and the business'.

Managers should additionally focus on the development of HRM practices that offer *organizational support* to migrant workers. Among these practices, the following are relevant: a

supervisor who ‘is thoughtful of the personal needs of employees’, a ‘fair promotion process’, the ‘consideration of employees’ off-work situations when making schedules’, and ‘plans for future career development’.

Finally, managers are well advised to consider practices that contribute to a *positive work environment*. More specifically, this relates to ‘fair pay regardless of nationality’, but also to the organization of ‘social events to improve social interaction’ and to the ‘maintaining of a diversity-friendly environment’.

### **Limitations and future research**

Our study is not without limitations – some of which offer potential for future research. A first limitation is that we did not implement a longitudinal design. We opted for a cross-sectional design that is consistent with theoretical considerations regarding the effects of HRM on employee well-being and performance (Guest, 2017; Van De Voorde et al., 2012), but has less abilities to test cause-effect relations. Future studies should analyze how the proposed relationships evolve over time. A second limitation is related to the self-reported nature of our measurements. Individuals are the most appropriate source of information for subjective constructs like cross-cultural adjustment and affective commitment, whereas in-role behavior and OCB are widely accepted measures of job performance. Nonetheless, it is preferable to contrast the well-being-related answers of our respondents to the evaluation of their supervisors. Third, we did not distinguish between different IM groups. Some authors argue that different groups (e.g., the juxtaposition of refugees vs. voluntary migrants or high vs. low-skilled migrants) follow different logics (e.g., Tharenou & Kulik, 2020). However, from an organizational perspective, IM pose various challenges irrespective of whether they, for example, were forced to leave their home country or left voluntarily, and it is unlikely that organizations will only focus on one of

these groups. Fourth, while we propose a set of measurement items to operationalize the analytical framework developed by Guest (2017), which demonstrated acceptable first predictive validity and relevance, there is room to further develop and test the proposed measurements.

Besides the above avenues for future research, there are additional research opportunities. First, integrated research on the role of HRM along with individual level factors (e.g., cross-cultural competencies, personality) can highlight differences in the perception and effectiveness of HRM practices. Furthermore, a multi-actor perspective that involves company representatives or supervisors, national institutions, and migration intermediaries is promising and seems necessary to fully understand how best to achieve the integration of IM. Finally, researchers are invited to further contextualize the migrant-supporting HRM system and to test the validity and relevance of practices in different contexts. Recent reviews in the field (e.g., Shirmohammadi et al., 2019) provide first anchor points of potential contextual factors (e.g., host country, national-level factors) that can be combined with the HRM perspective.

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**Table 1. HRM practices that foster the integration of IM**

<b>Well-being-oriented HRM practices based on Guest (2017)</b>	<b>Measures In my organization...</b>
<b>Investing in employees</b>	
Recruitment and selection	... recruiting and selection processes favor cultural diversity (e.g., in job postings, anonymous application documents, acceptance and consideration of foreign qualifications).
Induction/integration	... an orientation program for newcomers is offered to learn about the company.
Training and development	... all new employees with an international background receive cross-cultural training. ... all new employees with an international background receive specific training adapted to their needs (e.g., language course).
Mentoring and career support	... mentoring is used to support the integration of employees with an international background.
<b>Providing engaging work</b>	
Jobs designed to provide autonomy and challenge	... I am allowed to make a lot of job decisions on my own. ... my job involves an adequate level of challenge and diversity to keep my work interesting.
Information provision and feedback	... I am kept informed about business issues and about how well my organization is doing. ... I am given meaningful feedback regarding my performance at least once a year.
Skill utilization	... it is ensured that I can make adequate use of my skills and abilities.
<b>Positive environment</b>	
Equal opportunities/diversity management	... a diversity-friendly work environment is maintained.
Zero tolerance for bullying and harassment	... it is made clear that cultural differences must be respected.
Required and optional social interaction	... it is standard to work in teams composed of people with different nationalities. ... social events are regularly organized (e.g., staff excursions and parties) to improve social interaction between all employees.
Fair collective rewards/high basic pay	... fair pay for all employees regardless of their nationality is provided.
Employment security/employability	... job security is almost guaranteed to all employees regardless of their nationality.
<b>Voice</b>	
Extensive two-way communication	... it is ensured that the opinions and input of employees from different cultural backgrounds are heard.
Employee surveys	... periodical employee surveys giving voice to all employees are conducted.
Collective representation	... there is a works council or a similar committee that represents employee's interests regardless of their nationality.
<b>Organizational support</b>	
Participative/ supportive management	... my direct supervisor behaves in a manner which is thoughtful of my personal needs. ... my direct supervisor sees that the interests of employees are given due consideration.
Developmental performance management	... there are plans for my future career development. ... the promotion process is fair for all employees.
Flexible and family-friendly work arrangements	... the work schedule is adapted to the needs of workers of different nationality (e.g., consideration of religious holidays). ... employee off-work situations (family, school, etc.) are considered when making work schedules.
Non-work-related support	... assistance with legal matters and paperwork is offered. ... family support (e.g., in choosing schools, language courses for family members) is offered.

**Table 2. Formative measurement models**

Construct & indicators	Weights <sup>a</sup>	p-value	95% Conf. interv. weights
Job performance			
In-role behavior	<b>0.463</b>	0.000	[0.214; 0.703]
OCB – organization	<b>0.318</b>	0.016	[0.080; 0.588]
OCB – individual	<b>0.490</b>	0.000	[0.247; 0.725]
Cross-cultural adjustment			
General adjustment	<b>0.289</b>	0.018	[0.038; 0.517]
Interaction adjustment	<b>0.349</b>	0.004	[0.114; 0.592]
Work adjustment	<b>0.464</b>	0.000	[0.255; 0.676]
Investing in employees			
Recruit/select	<b>0.508</b>	0.000	[0.280; 0.704]
Orientation program	<b>0.433</b>	0.000	[0.217; 0.627]
Cross-cultural training	-0.011	0.974	[-0.253; 0.247]
Specific training	-0.225	0.064	[-0.466; 0.016]
Mentoring	<b>0.472</b>	0.000	[0.262; 0.707]
Providing engaging work			
Own decision making	<b>0.125</b>	0.041	[0.014; 0.253]
Challenge and diversity	<b>0.440</b>	0.000	[0.291; 0.567]
Information provision	<b>0.198</b>	0.003	[0.061; 0.327]
Feedback provision	0.134	0.086	[-0.015; 0.270]
Skill use	<b>0.473</b>	0.000	[0.330; 0.643]
Positive environment			
Diversity-friendly work environment	<b>0.175</b>	0.011	[0.044; 0.312]
Respect for cultural differences	0.089	0.197	[-0.052; 0.22]
Diversified teamwork	0.049	0.435	[-0.07; 0.173]
Social events	<b>0.190</b>	0.004	[0.063; 0.323]
Fair pay	<b>0.225</b>	0.002	[0.089; 0.376]
Job security	0.098	0.115	[-0.021; 0.224]
Voice			
Two-way communication	<b>0.774</b>	0.000	[0.646; 0.889]
Employee surveys	<b>0.389</b>	0.000	[0.207; 0.546]
Collective representation	0.083	0.345	[-0.082; 0.253]
Organizational support			
Supervisor respects needs	<b>0.356</b>	0.000	[0.192; 0.529]
Supervisor considers interests	0.168	0.083	[-0.024; 0.355]
Career development	<b>0.226</b>	0.001	[0.104; 0.365]
Fair promotion process	<b>0.322</b>	0.000	[0.180; 0.470]
Work schedule	-0.0045	0.487	[-0.170; 0.078]
Off-work situations	<b>0.233</b>	0.000	[0.110; 0.356]
Assistance with legal matters	<b>0.131</b>	0.041	[0.002; 0.258]
Family support	-0.063	0.258	[-0.176; 0.046]

Note: <sup>a</sup> Significant weights in bold referring to the 95% BCa-confidence intervals.

**Table 3. Results for Model 2**

Construct	HRM system			Cross-cultural adjustment			Affective commitment			Job performance		
	Path $\beta^a$	p-value	95% Conf. interv.	Path $\beta^a$	p-value	95% Conf. interv.	Path $\beta^a$	p-value	95% Conf. interv.	Path $\beta^a$	p-value	95% Conf. interv.
Gender				0.067	0.139	[-0.022; 0.154]	-0.026	0.446	[-0.099; 0.047]	<b>0.159</b>	0.000	[0.074; 0.245]
Education				<b>0.123</b>	0.007	[0.032; 0.212]	<b>-0.087</b>	0.008	[-0.147; -0.021]	-0.044	0.398	[-0.149; 0.057]
Time spent in country				<b>0.157</b>	0.007	[0.043; 0.271]	0.013	0.770	[-0.065; 0.099]	-0.097	0.093	[-0.202; 0.022]
Language proficiency				<b>0.245</b>	0.000	[0.141; 0.351]	-0.019	0.658	[-0.090; 0.065]	0.029	0.649	[-0.095; 0.150]
Cross-cultural adjustment										<b>0.392</b>	0.000	[0.229; 0.507]
Affective commitment										<b>0.227</b>	0.000	[0.107; 0.351]
Migrant-supporting HRM system				<b>0.327</b>	0.000	[0.196; 0.410]	<b>0.679</b>	0.000	[0.583; 0.723]			
Investing in empl. Provi. engag. work	-0.049	0.570	[-0.231; 0.104]									
Positive environment	<b>0.469</b>	0.000	[0.309; 0.647]									
Voice	<b>0.247</b>	0.006	[0.065; 0.413]									
Organiz. Support	0.039	0.658	[-0.119; 0.225]									
	<b>0.414</b>	0.000	[0.202; 0.617]									
$R^2$		0.984			0.265			0.462			0.280	
$R^2$ adjusted		0.984			0.255			0.455			0.269	
$Q^2$		0.282			0.205			0.255			0.158	

Note: <sup>a</sup> Significant coefficients in bold referring to the 95% BCa-confidence intervals.

**Table 4. Total effects**

Construct	Cross-cultural adjustment			Affective commitment			Job performance		
	Total effect <sup>a</sup>	p-value	95% Conf. interv.	Total effect <sup>a</sup>	p-value	95% Conf. interv.	Total effect <sup>a</sup>	p-value	95% Conf. interv.
HRM system	<b>0.327</b>	0.000	[0.182; 0.414]	<b>0.679</b>	(0.000)	[0.589; 0.722]	<b>0.282</b>	0.000	[0.188; 0.343]
Investing in empl.	-0.016	0.603	[-0.084; 0.037]	-0.033	(0.583)	[-0.158; 0.073]	-0.014	0.594	[-0.069; 0.031]
Provi. engag. work	<b>0.153</b>	0.000	[0.078; 0.237]	<b>0.319</b>	(0.000)	[0.193; 0.439]	<b>0.132</b>	0.000	[0.074; 0.199]
Positive environment	<b>0.081</b>	0.029	[0.015; 0.155]	<b>0.168</b>	(0.007)	[0.038; 0.282]	<b>0.070</b>	0.019	[0.013; 0.130]
Voice	0.013	0.674	[-0.044; 0.076]	0.026	(0.663)	[-0.085; 0.156]	0.011	0.671	[-0.037; 0.063]
Organiz. support	<b>0.135</b>	0.001	[0.060; 0.219]	<b>0.281</b>	(0.000)	[0.124; 0.413]	<b>0.117</b>	0.000	[0.051; 0.180]

Note: <sup>a</sup> Significant effects in bold referring to the 95% BCa-confidence intervals.

Figure 1. Conceptual model

