Sustainability in Europe: A Case of Cognitive HRD in SPRING Countries. SPRING (Spain, Portugal, Romania, Italy, Norway, and Germany)

Nadir Ali

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study is to investigate the sustainability & social welfare aspects in Europe with special reference to the proposed SPRING countries. This research will also evaluate the Cognitive HRD contribution towards sustainability. This research has proposed five models to achieve the purpose of the research. The first model as cognitive HRD visions cover the factors that can enhance social welfare in the sampled countries. The second model named as Cognitive HRD development. This model elaborates micro & macro level of contribution in SPRING countries with special reference to social welfare. The third model is named as corporate concern framework that is about the sustainable corporate visions. The fourth model is related to country competency framework that elaborates the sustainable competency of SPRING countries. The fifth model is pertinent to the proposed branding strategies for SPRING countries. Further, all the models will be compared in order to check the standing of different countries. This Case paper relates to sustainability strategies in order to combat employee crisis, social welfare, sustainability and cognitive HRD development. The paper will put the views & reviews on the required approach to be utilized in SPRING countries. The SPRING stands for Spain, Portugal, Romania, Italy, Norway and Germany. The main focus will remain on the proposed five models towards sustainability issues in SPRING countries.

Keywords: Cognitive HRD, Employee Crises, SPRING Countries, Social Welfare.

I. INTRODUCTION

The paper explores HRD visions of all SPRING countries towards employment, social welfare, quality of projects implemented & in progress, critical analysis on corporate trends & education development, acute collaboration among SPRING countries and general coordination with other EU members. The evaluation ended up in generating one ideal model for SPRING nations that can present solutions to crisis & provide suggestions to achieve visions that can make SPRING a real progressing country. The purpose of selecting six countries as mentioned in SPRING acronym is the interest of the author and newly developed visions in EU. The countries are put in sequence as SPRING that can be defined in easiest way and a quick reference for the academicians, policy makers, consultants, students and governmental officials in Europe. The organizations are evaluated on the basis of CSR and Corporate Accountability parameters. Some countries have poor response to political, cultural, social, technological, economic, educational, social mobility and many other crises. The role of HRD and its compatibility to such issues was explored, discussed and justified in this case study. The case explained and justified sustainability opportunities & issues through proposed models.

A. Proposed Model #1: Cognitive HRD Visions

In order to maintain sustainability, SPRING countries need to show more focus on the role of HRD where social workforce should be increased. Corporations need to help employees in work balance life and finally put more guidance on humanitarian issues. The cognitive HRD in this connection is much needed as done already in Germany & Spain. Above areas are considered as good approach as HRD response to such roles for sustainability in the historical approach and include HRD response to such concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of HRD</th>
<th>SPRING visions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social welfare &amp; combating crises,</td>
<td>Cognitive HRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping employees in work,</td>
<td>visions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance in Humanitarian Orientations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Proposed Model #2: Sustainability & Analysis of Cognitive HRD

CHRD covered the overall structure that is based on the communication, transportation and facilities to trade. The second one will elaborate the business that is based on the local and global aspects.
The third one is related to the collaboration among people and coordination with outside entities, while the fourth one is about the technological choices & developments. Social Welfare & Employee crisis showed details on employment trends, work balance, quality of life and how the countries are heading towards addressing such issues. The last important dynamic in this model is HRD that will elaborate the development initiatives by the country. This will also cover the role of countries’ vision on HRD with special reference to training, education and intellectual capital development in particular. The CHRD SPRING model is specially applied on all countries and present the suggestions to help the policy makers to improve the concerns well before 2030. The development is always possible if plan can be executed as planned. This means that country’s development is always dependent on an exposure of people. This thing can be addressed & corrected by soft development program. Cognitive HRD at its micro level can contribute if planned well as training or coaching according to the defined company visions. Usually, the developed countries have been developed on the success of corporations. Corporations are developed if countrymen have a required exposure to run corporations. If not, then this can be lapsed in the hands of expats and will dependant on them. This can only be controlled through educational reforms that will bring a solution to intellectual capital development. This cognitive HRD (micro level) is a process of putting the country into a right direction that can compete with competitors, develop corporations, improve education system and build intellectual capital. Countries can apply cognitive HRD that improves everything but requires a system execution. HRD can help in development, but cognitive HRD is like an active application to bring systematic development. The most developed criteria of advanced countries are the reasons of cognitive HRD at micro and macro levels. Cognitive HRD (micro) is not actionable if Cognitive HRD (macro level) does not go along with same pace. The things can be easy if proper infrastructure is already in-line. Cognitive HRD (macro level) is a concept of building infrastructure, develop collaboration programs and adopt compatible technology that can create a facilitative platform for business trends, interaction trends and positive diplomatic relations. HRD visions towards social welfare is pertinent to society. HRD visions towards social trends are based on the quality of life in all areas. This is main concerns for all countries. Employment is an important aspect to focus on. All other developments can be much better if employment factor has properly been taken care. This section evaluated on the social welfare of human being in the country. Most of the development can be systematic if employment issues are abated. The concept of HRD towards social welfare is an initiative of service for people in all areas specially jobs, facilities and state care. This is possible where other two factors cognitive HRD (micro & macro levels) are improving good. If all things are achieved as scripted here, then social welfare graph will be improved. Education reform, equipping people and training them with required sources are the paramount parameters of social welfare. Cognitive HRD (micro & macro) and HRD towards social welfare are the identified reforms for the development of countries in training, employment and structure. All SPRING countries do have good system to apply proposed Cognitive HRD model but still a systematic approach is required to address even smaller issues. Some countries have a proper HRD implementation. All SPSRING countries are evaluated to adopt whole model to achieve all positive things.

C. Proposed Model #3: Corporate Concern Framework

This refers to the development side of the country. The development is related to capacity building in the country. In order to evaluate the cognitive approaches in SPRING countries, the qualitative research was carried out around the sampled countries. Based on the literature survey and author’s experience, following cognitive approach was developed to support the purpose of the research. The cognitive approach is one, two and three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>HR-HRM</th>
<th>HC-HCD</th>
<th>IC-ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Capital development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Corporate management</td>
<td>Corporate development</td>
<td>Corporate intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cognizance of any development is based on the development of human resources. Human resources development is possible when companies and countries possibly plan well. In this point here, human resource development is related to the capacity building of people that can lead country towards human capital. The will of any development in any sort is based on right and timely planning. The cognitive concern of company or country is based on the flow of HR dimension towards HR development dimensions. This is pertinent towards intellectual capital development. This is possible through achieving some sequential steps as mentioned in the proposed model number 3. Human resource is good but can be better if managed properly. HR brings HRM that helps countries to utilize people in right manner. The similar way, the HC-human capital is possible when there is a government will to HC and HC development in relevant areas. The model shows that HR is a vision that can turn to capital if managed properly. This will evaluate the dimensions of HR development as required by many countries.
The management and development of such dimension is possible when a country can provide facilitative platform in form of companies, corporations and entrepreneurial support. This will help in corporate management that will later turn to corporate development and finally will give corporate intelligence in the company.

D. Proposed Model #4: Cognitive Collaboration Framework

This is related towards a collaborative side that can create collaborative environment with other countries.

1) Innovation, education, human capital, collaboration and infrastructure

The collaboration in any form can get things possible. If one person needs a support from another person, then collaboration is possible and then that can bring some good results. If any company needs any compatible support from another company, both companies can achieve their business purposes. And if any country needs any support as absolute advantage, the things can be good for both countries. The companies and countries can bring innovation in collaboration and coordination. Some countries or states can support any other state or country and a get proper infrastructure for business and other trade related purposes.

E. Proposed Model #5: Country Competency Framework

This is related to the competency level of the country in varied important domains. The country wanted to check how it is better than others in society and country set up.

### TABLE IV: COUNTRY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Education, Health &amp; Employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>Business/Infrastructure &amp; collaboration</td>
<td>Corporate Governance (Good system &amp; support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Innovation/AI/Processes</td>
<td>Organizational development (Business opportunities &amp; potentiality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Human/Financial/Technological</td>
<td>Corporate sustainability (Technology development)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an important phase that covered many aspects of development and support in the country and company. Most of the developed societies always focus on society development and workforce. This is only possible when the countries can have a better government set up. The right governance can get such platform to help societies otherwise things may take long to develop as per societal standards. Society development and good governance can help in technological support that can create in better pool of talented people that will contribute to country competency enhancement in modern times. This way, the country will grow possibly high and at faster pace.

F. Proposed Model #6: Branding Strategies for SPRING

The SPRING countries have done appropriate branding of human capital and its promotion on many aspects. All the SPRING countries mentioned here have improved the good governance in national and international organizations. The countries are now focused on the branding of cognitive HRD activities. The countries have now played a significant role in the image of whole Europe. This proposed fifth model is pertinent to the branding strategies with special reference to impact on other European countries. The rest of the European countries can adopt the branding aspects in the similar lines as SPRING countries have done since the recent few years.

### II. PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is intended to be a Case based approach that conducted survey on available literature review and some structured & unstructured interviews from social scientists, members of social organizations and members of human capital commissions of the sampled (SPRING) countries. The random and unstructured research focus was intentional to get some input on the topic. The rest is already maintained as exploring the cognitive HRD, sustainability & other developments in SPRING countries. The important aspect of this research is based on author’s priori interest of proposing Cognitive HRD models and then application on the sampled (SPRING) countries. The author traveled to all SPRING countries in order to evaluate and familiarize the cultural & HR related contexts. He set them in-line with cognitive development based on social sustainability aspects. The purpose of this particular study is to find best practice followed by SPRING countries and update students of HR and International Business classes. The case study approach is a deliberate step as it is highly utilized for international HRD students. This case study approach has adopted multipurpose case methodology based on case history, library reviews and analysis of SPRING countries. Following case research questions are generated for the purpose of discussion & guidelines for readers. The questions are organized as per the purpose of the case study where readers can evaluate, understand and generate discussion from this case study.

### III. KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is SPRING countries’ agenda on sustainable social welfare?
- What is the level of sustainable social welfare & development?
- How to systematize the social welfare in modern times?
- Which SPRING country has significance achievement in sustainable social welfare?
- What is Cognitive HRD reform for sustainability?
- How can CHRD contribute to social welfare?
- What is SPRING response to Cognitive HRD?
- Which SPRING country has significance achievement in implementation of CHRD?
- What is SPRING’s standing to other European countries?
- Does SPRING lag behind in social welfare than other European countries?
- Can SPRING lead in social welfare than other European countries?
- Which SPRING country can achieve better than other European countries?
IV. EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION

This research can be beneficial for policy makers, businessmen, people in SPRING countries, people in other European Countries and largely for business students around the world. The research is believed to be of its first kind that proposed SPRING concept and proposed models of Cognitive HRD that are pertinent to sustainable social welfare reforms. This research work mainly contributes to the development of SPRING countries especially in sustainability aspects. The case study research will also help students & faculty to evaluate different countries based on cognitive HRD domains.

V. ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

Europe is very competitive and most of the countries do possess potential, but some unforeseen crises may disturb any time especially financial crunches in the world after every ten years. This time Europe is focused on HRD visions to achieve and be proactive to face the unprecedented slumps in financial and business markets. Some of the literature updates on such things as mentioned here. As per TTUC report, Across Europe, an overwhelming majority of young people is, from one day to the next, being forced to accept jobs that only partially guarantee their rights and offer very little security, i.e., precarious jobs. "In the past, when people started work with a company at the beginning of their careers they usually stayed there for the rest of their working lives," remarks Benoît Constant.

Now-a-days, young people are dealt the cruel hand of an uncertain future. They are no longer able to envision their future and neither do they envision their role in society (ITUC, 2010, p. 7).

Thiébaut Weber, president of the ETUC Youth Committee nonetheless cautions that this solidarity must be put into action and must not be limited to statements made during trade union congresses:

> During the crisis, we have often seen the principle of solidarity extolled at international level, only to be quickly shut away in national drawers when it comes to countries defending 'their' jobs. Yet solidarity is the best way to fight the rise in protectionism and the law of the jungle (ITUC, 2010, p. 13).

Investing in HRD (Human Resource Development) can be the source of ICD (Intellectual Capital Development) that brings an ideal situation for country development. Developed societies and developing nations are solely dependent on HRD. Some countries have adopted the reforms to implement HRD, but few are still struggling as they do not comprehend the real cadence of HRD. Countries are required to understand the importance of Cognitive approaches as proposed in the research. This case research has identified a cognitive HRD that can help in social welfare, social transformation, identifying new reforms and combating crisis related to employment, development, education, exposure and intellectual capital development. Spain, Italy & Germany have taken an intellectual step of HRD directions and are still open to adopt Cognitive HRD to equip their people to attain required knowledge. Usually, developments can easily be done if people have required exposure of what is being done in the world. Portugal and Romania who are also doing fair by identifying by arranging summits to see beneficial opportunities to combat crises. Portugal and Romania need to learn from many things especially Cognitive HRD options. Every SPRING country has a competitive advantage but required to speed up with the help of Cognitive HRD. Spain & Germany are much better in Cognitive HRD (macro level) that are based on international business, collaboration & connection with other countries especially with technology. Portugal & Italy also have good infrastructure but need an organized agenda to be connected with others. Portugal, Italy & Norway have broad connection through tourism industry. Romania & Norway have adopted recent improvement in social welfare & HRD education. Romania requires more communication with the world. This will bring Romania to the collaboration in education and business. All SPRING countries are now focused legal improvements, competency, corporate structures, infrastructure, business activities & intellectual capital. This way, countries can develop better. As said by Hall & Soskice that Together with ownership structure, legal systems and its related corporate law, the development and structure of capital, product and labor markets, and political and economic institutions define the myriad of varieties of capitalisms that, ultimately, characterize corporate governance systems (Hall & Soskice, 2001). One country can impact another country in development. Countries can grow when they cooperate with each other focus on business related areas. The SPRING agenda as HR management & development are required to be competitive in 2020 & beyond. The link between HR management & development of intellectual capital is based on the close cooperation with rest of the institutions and likewise countries. As rightly said by Rizov & Croucher (2009), finding a fit between the respective institutional environment and the groups of HRM practices is important for contributing to business performance.

VI. SPRING’S FUTURE STRATEGIES

SPRINGS’s future is clear and organized as per the proposed guidelines in all models mentioned in this case study. All countries should focus on sustainable social activities that can be covered through investing time, money and motivation for human development. The human development in Germany is visible for their plans in previous years and years to come. Portugal needs to be more aggressive in achieving such development that have been picking up better pace these days. Romania’s plans are good but implementation at high level is required. Italy is the productive in plans and achieved plans to some extend but need to be achieved all of them. Norway has been ranked good but still need to explore further in the development domains. The future of SPRING in 2020 and beyond is based on the business that need to be at high pace, human development that should be a prime requisite and certain collaboration with each other in today’s fast paced time. The collaboration, commitment, innovation can bring SPRING countries a good standing in rest of the Europe. Some countries with higher level of development like Germany & Span can benefit and cooperate with other SPRING countries.
in order to achieve the required developments as proposed in all the models of this case study.

As per research evaluation on most of the European countries, the paper focused that SPRING countries have commonality in moving forward on the roles of HRD, cognitive HRD, collaboration, competency & branding. This way, SPRING countries are on the right track to build competency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPRING</th>
<th>Proposed phases</th>
<th>SPRING’s plan</th>
<th>SPRING’s need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Role of HRD</td>
<td>Cognitive HRD</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Cognitive HRD</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Social welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>SPRING</td>
<td>SPRING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>SPRING</td>
<td>SPRING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Branding</td>
<td>SPRING</td>
<td>SPRING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td>SPRING</td>
<td>SPRING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Germany & Spain have developed competency while Italy & Norway are working more on collaboration. Portugal & Romania are geared up to invest in HRD and development relationship to develop more among the SPRING countries.

At present, all SPRING countries are on the direction that are mentioned and proposed models. If all the countries are pacing up as proposed in model, then the countries can get hold on developing competency, collaboration & human development. Later, SPRING countries can build a sustainable platform for society. This showed that SPRING countries need to maintain the pace with the proposed phases that will ensure competency and finally prevail the sustainability for society.

VII. CONCLUSION

The research concluded that proposed models on the proposed countries (SPRING) are the guidelines that can ensure competency and sustainability. All countries in the list of SPRING are performing good but still need to be more proactive in order to have more competency in the region. This case research has identified that SPRING countries can be productive more even before if compiled to the models. Following and adopting proposed models will get SPRING countries competitive and a better sustainable center in the region.

ACRONYMS

SPRING‡: Spain, Portugal, Romania, Italy, Norway, Germany
HRD: Human Resource Development
ICD: Intellectual Capital Development
CHRD: Cognitive HRD

REFERENCES


Dr. Nadir Ali is a Programme Leader (MA-HRM) & Senior Lecturer (Management, HRM & Leadership) at De Montfort University, Dubai. He has an MBA, MS, PhD and a Post Doctorate (OD & HRD) from North Carolina A&T State University, USA. He is also Certified HR Professional, Certified Management & Business Educator and a Fellow of CIPD (UK). He has worked as an Associate Professor, Head of the Business & Director of the Case Study Center at reputable Universities in UAE. He is a certified Case writing trainer and has participated in Case workshops at Harvard Business School, Ivy Business School, The Case Centre, UK, The Blackboard Academy and Arizona State University, USA. He has represented Universities in the top global forums as Keynote Speaker, Faculty trainer, Session Chair & Conference Presenter at USA, UK, Canada, Brazil, Poland, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Germany, France, Slovenia, Turkey, Austria, Serbia, Romania, Greece, Japan and many other countries. He has written various corporate/teaching case studies in the areas of Management, HRD, OD and Leadership. He has also conducted many FDPs (Faculty Development Programs) for business schools around the world. He is an academic member of AOM, SHRM, The Case Centre, Ivey, NACRA and The Case Association, USA.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2023.8.3.1801

Vol 8 | Issue 3 | June 2023

‡ Author proposed the SPRING acronym for the purpose of research. This is the idea and copy right of the author. SPRING stands for Spain, Portugal, Romania, Italy, Norway and Germany.