

THE FACILITATING ROLE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN IMMIGRATION LAWS AND INTERNATIONAL HRM PRACTICES: REGULATORY FOCUS AS A MEDIATOR AND MODERATOR

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Abstract

The paper, based on the situation of growing global talent competition and growing more complicated migration policy, examines how legislation of immigration and organizational regulatory emphasis influence international human resource management (IHRM) practices among multinational enterprises (MNEs). The given conceptual model is based on the Regulatory Focus Theory and institutional theory according to which the immigration law restrictiveness will have an effect on the IHRM practices in global staffing, mobility policy, talent integration and compliance management, and the linkage to which is regulated and mediated by the regulatory focus orientation of the organizations (promotion vs. prevention). Also, there is the theorization of digital transformation of HR and mobility system, which is a situational moderator that increases the capacity of the firms to adjust to regulatory restrictions. The proposed study has levels of key propositions: (1): increased restrictiveness of immigration laws has a negative relationship with proactive IHRM practices; (2): the level of digital transformation will mitigate the adverse impacts of restrictive immigration laws on IHRM practices; (3): the level of promotion orientation will amplify the beneficial effects of the digital transformation on IHRM practices; (4): the positive impacts of digital transformation will be greater in the promotion-oriented organizations. This model narrows on scholarship because it is based on a combination of legal/institutional factors with inner motivational orientation and technology capability in the worldwide HRM field. In practice, it can be said to provide HR leaders with a diagnostic framework in navigating talent mobility based on unpredictable immigration regimes by balancing regulatory scanning, digital capability and strategic HR orientation. The study will provide actionable information about the how MNEs can maintain the high-skill talent access, workforce diversity, and innovation performance in overcoming the regulatory barriers by empirically testing this model in various jurisdictions and sectors. It is assumed that the findings will help fill the gap between research on migration policy and strategic HRM.

Keywords: Immigration laws, international human resource management, regulatory focus, global mobility, multinational enterprises, digital transformation, talent management, institutional pressures, global staffing, compliance management

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It is a world of high globalization and the challenge of international labor mobility has become necessary in order to maintain competitiveness and innovativeness among multinational enterprises (MNEs). Immigration legislation and the regulatory systems are increasingly influencing the capacity of firms to hire and mobilize competent talent international borders. These structures define who has access to, is allowed to work, and live in a host country, and in

turn has direct implication in the international human resource management (IHRM) policies and practices (Servais, 2019). The immigration regulations do not just establish the required visa, select according to skills, and sponsorship levels, but also add complexity in the processes and compliance fees to the choices of firms (Boucher and Wright, 2023).

The immigration policy is a moving policy that is responsive to both economic and political changes. As new researches have demonstrated, alterations to the regulations governing immigration in a country can influence the global talent distribution and the MNEs innovation abilities. As an example, geographic dispersion of research and development (R&D) activities and lower performance in innovation in multinational corporations has been associated with restrictive immigration regimes (Zilinskaite, 2025). Accordingly, discriminatory hiring policies based upon immigration status have also been identified to affect employment chances and wellbeing of migrants workers, indirectly affecting the workforce makeup and the overall management effectiveness (Lee et al., 2024).

Regarding IHRM, the immigration law influences all phases of global talent management recruitment, selection, onboarding, training, performance appraisal, compensations and retention (Ozbilgin et al., 2018). HR specialists have to guarantee that they adhere to visa and work-permit regulations, cross-border mobility, and integration of expatriate and migrant workers (Turati & Levai, 2025). Strategic and operational compliance therefore becomes a priority. The increased intricacy of immigration systems has seen organizations implement proactive responses to HRM measures including global mobility systems, employer-of-record, and online monitoring of visa enforcement (Jones, 2023).

These changes suggest the importance of investigating the connection between immigration legislation, regulatory orientation, and HRM reactions in international organizations. Immigration policies cause external limitations and uncertainty, and organizational regulatory emphasis either between promotion-oriented (promoting growth and opportunity) and prevention-oriented (promoting compliance and risk avoidance) is a factor that affects how firms react to these external limitations (Boucher and Wright, 2023). The interaction between immigration laws and regulation focus to influence the IHRM practices is hence essential in explaining variations in the availability of talent, workforce diversity, and firm performance.

The global mobility of labor in the modern globalization age has taken the practice of competitive advantage in multinational enterprises (MNEs) as a basic component in its maintenance. Host and home countries have immigration regulations, which are critical in defining the ability of organizations to recruit, implement and retain talent in the global world (Servais, 2019). These legislations constitute a fundamental institutional structure regulating the citizenry of crossborder employment, the circumstances and duration of employment. Consequently, they have a strong impact on the policies and practices of international human resource management (IHRM), which determines the supply and use of human capital in global companies (Ozbilgin et al., 2018).

The nature of immigration policies is transitional being influenced by the socio-political priorities, labour market requirements and national security issues. The latest trends in the world show that a large number of progressive economies restrict the policies of immigration because of the increased nationalism, worker protectionism, and geopolitical ambiguities (Zilinskaite, 2025). These restrictive environments have real life implications of global business operations. As an example, evidence can indicate that, larger visa regimes make MNEs to decentralize their innovation and R&D processes to other places where human mobility is not as limited (Nayak, 2025). Such a change does not only influence the distribution of talent on a global scale but also undermines the potential to collaborate in global teams and networks of sharing knowledge (Lee et al., 2024).

Immigration law has got more role in IHRM besides recruitment and mobility. It affects labour diversity, cross cultural integration and organizational learning. According to Boucher and Wright (2023), any immigration system that grants employers too much discretion will perpetuate inequality in talent choice and reduce the inclusiveness of workforce models. Progressive immigration policies, in contrast, which are more focused on portability of skills and on international recognition of credentials, are more likely to promote diversity and innovation in the multinational context (Guzi et al., 2023). Therefore, immigration structures are obstacles and facilitators of the global HR role, respectively, based on their design and operation.

The strategic significance of the alignment of HR practices with the regulatory settings is highlighted more by IHRM scholars (Cooke et al., 2023). Organizations working in different jurisdictions have to deal with different legal standards about visas, tax and employment in the contracts with workers, in most cases dealing with expatriates, the third-country worker, and the hybrid virtual workforce. This complexity requires a HR strategy that is sensitive to regulation but which is less rigid and more flexible. It is not only the efficiency of the work of the organization that depends on the possibility of its HR systems to adjust to regulatory difficulties but also the reputation of the employer in the global market (Turati and Levai, 2025).

The psychological aspect of regulatory compliance is also emphasized by recent studies involving the Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT) which represents the distinction between promotion-based (innovation and opportunity-seeking) and prevention-based (compliance and risk avoidance) organizational mentality (Higgins, 2022). When considering the context of immigration, promotion-oriented organizations tend to approach tactical approaches to creative talent like remote cross-border work, employer-of-record point of view to avoid mobility limitations (Jones, 2023). Conversely, prevention-based organizations put a high value on the strict compliance with immigration regulations,

which can cause the decline of mobility around the globe and slow the movement of talents (Boucher and Wright, 2023). This intersection of legal limits and organizational regulatory concern is a new area of research in the field of IHRM.

Moreover, HR processes computerization introduces a line of additional complexity in terms of controlling immigration compliance. Artificial intelligence, blockchain verification, and digital identity management are all becoming technologies utilized to follow up on the status of the visa, global assignments, and automating the documents (Sakib et al., 2025). These tools are effective in increasing efficiency as well as reducing legal and reputational risks. However, they also present ethical and privacy issues, particularly in the areas where data protection legislations are stringent (Hajro et al., 2024).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today global talent mobility is also part of the organizational competitiveness that is still impeded by restrictive immigration policies and uneven regulatory frameworks that brings the practice of international human resource management (IHRM) to question effectiveness (Zilinskaite, 2025). Following the rising dependence on foreign talents, host states have resorted to strict immigration policies that have seen the adoption of stricter visa quotas, compliance cost rises, and unforeseeable changes in policies, which are disrupting talent acquisition and retention strategies (Turati and Levai, 2025). This changing of legal complexities especially poses issues to multinational enterprises (MNEs) that rely on the smoothing of knowledge and skills activities across the borders (Hajro et al., 2024).

Nowadays, we see that restrictive immigration measures are causing a worldwide talent crunch, particularly in skilled labour markets such as the human sciences, healthcare, and finance (Cooke et al., 2023). According to the OECD (2024), over 60 percent of multinational companies attribute immigration restrictions to being a key impediment to international recruiting and creating. Consequently, there is a growing trend in organizations where implementation of projects is delayed and the cost involved in implementation is elevated due to legal compliance and management of expatriates (Nayak, 2025). Additionally, immigration policies tend to be not consistent with the realities of digital and hybrid work set-ups, and remote foreign jobs practices are not regulated by the law, but rather exist in a legal gray (Sakib et al., 2025).

Simultaneously, the immigration legislation has a significant impact on diversity and inclusion at the workplace. Boucher and Wright (2023) caution that employer led migration mechanisms may reinforce inequality and bias, with companies emphasizing the need to hire based on region or demographic background as a way of reducing the administrative expenses. These dynamics do not only limit the diversity of international teams but also global organizational learning and innovation potential (Guzi et al., 2023). Besides, psychological stress caused by unpredictable visa statuses and chances of relocation have negative impacts on the expatriates adapting, their performance, and retention (Lee et al., 2024).

The other burning problem is concerning the regulatory focus orientation of the organization in coping with the complex immigration environment. Regulatory Focus Theory also argues that firms and managers are not similar with regard to motivational orientation: promotion-oriented organizations pursue growth and opportunity by flexibly interpreting regulations, whereas prevention-oriented organizations focus more on compliance and looking to avoid risks (Higgins, 2022). But not much is understood regarding the interaction between regulatory focus and external immigration legislation to create a change on HR decision-making and strategic agility in global situations (Jones, 2023). Such a gap constrained the knowledge on the impacts of internal organizational orientations on adaptive HRM actions in the presence of different extents of immigration restraint (Cooke et al., 2023).

Further complicating the matter is the fact that the HRM has started to be digitalized, and novel technologies include AI-based visa processing, digital identity validation and remote employment processing systems to handle employees working across borders (Sakib et al., 2025). Though effective, these technologies also increase compliance, privacy, and ethical concerns according to various national laws, especially those with strict data protection policies, such as the EU's GDPR (Hajro et al., 2024). The intersection of technological innovation, legal compliance and strategic HRM are therefore is an under researched and urgent area of research.

Collectively, these problems suggest that there is a pressing gap in the literature: although recent studies have explored the effects or role of the immigration legislation on global mobility, limited ones have studied the meditating or moderating role of organizational regulatory focus on this interdependence in the context of IHRM (Zilinskaite, 2025). This interaction is important to understand why certain global enterprises are fit to operate in a hostile atmosphere of immigration whereas other organizations incur stagnation of talent and strategic paralysis. Hence, the research aims at examining the mutual impact of immigration regulations and emphasis on regulatory focus on the IHRM practice and organizational performance in global businesses.

Research Gap

Although the strategic role of international talent mobility is becoming increasingly recognized, there is a weak understanding of how immigration regulations can interact with the organizational regulatory focus to influence the international human resource management practice in global organizations (Cooke et al., 2023; Hajro et al., 2024).

Previous research on global HRM has focused mainly on the macro-level effects of the immigration policy on the labor market (Guzi et al., 2023) or on the micro-level lives of expatriates and skilled migrants (Lee et al., 2024). Nonetheless, we have not focused much on the moderating role of the internal organizational motivations, i.e. the promotion- and prevention-focused orientations in mediating HR decision-making within the different immigration constraints (Higgins, 2022; Jones, 2023).

The literature on IHRM has also mostly modeled the problem of immigration as a by-stander issue without internalizing them in HR strategic planning that considers psychological and regulatory aspects of organizational management (Nayak, 2025). Additionally, the latest research focuses on a policy or legal lenses, and it does not take into account how these laws are interpreted and implemented in practice by HR managers during the development of cross-border staffing, compliance, and digital workforce policies (Turati and Levai, 2025). As a result, no empirical descriptions exist on how various regulatory focus orientations are facilitating or limiting adaptive HR practices in restrictive environments linked to immigration (Zilinskaite, 2025).

The other gap of crucial relevance is the overlap of digital transformation, immigration control, and HRM approach. Whereas other studies reveal that more employers are using AI and virtual technologies to operate expatriates and remote workers (Sakib et al., 2025), limited literature examined the interactions of technological adoption and immigration law adherence and motivation systems within organization. It is such a gap that can be of significance in the post-pandemic times, when hybrid and remote international labor and employment arrangements have eroded the boundaries between nations and labor markets (Hajro et al., 2024).

Additionally, even though cross-country comparisons have been made on the stringency of immigration and labor mobility (OECD, 2024), the strategic adaptation mechanisms that MNEs adopt to strike equilibrium between compliance, innovation, and inclusion are not well-understood. There is a considerable gap in terms of theoretical and empirical research since no effort has been made to create a comprehensive and integrative model to connect immigration laws, regulatory focus, and IHRM practices. To fill this gap is necessary in order to assist global organizations to develop stronger, more compliant, and opportunistic HR strategies in changing global mobility regimes.

Research Objectives

According to the research gap above, the objectives of the research in this study will be the following:

To explore how the national immigration laws affect international human resource management (IHRM) practices.

To investigate the mediating or modulating effect of organizational regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention orientation).

To understand the effects of tools of digital transformation (AI, analytics, digital onboarding) on the relationship between immigration regulation and global HRM effectiveness.

To derive and present an imaginative model with integration of laws on immigration, regulatory orientation, and IHRM practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International trends in immigration and movement.

The immigration policy has become a strategic lever in the governments and international companies in the past decade. As an example, Mas'adi (2024) reports on the struggles of countries around the world having to grapple with the so-called dilemma of whether to open talent flows or stress security or domestic-labour protection demands. How do modern immigration regimes, he asks, react? He finds a number of countries adopt discriminatory, skills-based immigration policies, at the same time closing other points of entry, is a response to expanding complexity and uncertainty of national immigration control.

This volatility in policy has very strong implications of a firm level of staffing and mobility around the world. According to the latest review, Hajro, Brewster and Stahl (2022) state that multinational enterprises (MNEs) are now struggling with a dual problem of balancing mobility of talents simultaneously with adjusting to new migration regimes: "The global migration affects international business... human resource management, entry modes, and market strategies. (Hajro et al., 2022, p. 1)

The HRM reacts to movement and regulatory restrictions internationally.

In the academic literature in the field of IHRM, it is becoming apparent that companies need to devise people management practices that remain sensitive and responsive to external regulatory pressures. As an example, recent research by Edwards (2022) proposes that the institutional and contextual impacts on HR practices beyond the border should be more taken into account in IHRM research. According to him, unique organizational cultures have an influence on HR practice and work attitudes in the global context (Edwards, 2022, p. 2).

This institutional conformity becomes very vital where global mobility is concerned. As an example, the assimilation of highly skilled migrants into the organization is investigated by Grosskopf, Barmeyer, and Landes (2024): the authors discover that in addition to macro-policy factors, organizational mechanisms social worlds, cultural

identification, peer learning, all the conditions are favorable to be successful (Grosskopf et al., 2024). Therefore, the role of HRM practice like onboarding, mentoring, cross-cultural support and transfer of knowledge becomes essential considering the mobility limitations and the composition of migrants.

Another line of research also submits to the significance of digital HR and mobility technology as an aiding factor in facilitating compliant mobility. Although it is still in its early stages of development, the preliminary research shows that HR functions develop more and more digital tools to organize visa portfolios, teleworking across the world, and tracking global assignments. Nonetheless, it comes with the risk of new compliance, privacy, and organizational design (see Hajro et al., 2022).

The organizational behavior and focus on regulatory orientation in global HRM.

These are the psychological and strategic focus of organizations in their approach to regulation, risk and opportunity, which become a moderating prism. Based on the Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT), researchers distinguish between promotion and prevention-oriented companies (innovation, growth, opportunity-seeking and compliance, risk-avoidance). In a summary, Higgins (2022) states that a firm possessing a high promotion orientation will have a higher likelihood to pursue exploration strategies whereas prevention orientation has relationships with vigilant and defensive strategies.

Silbiger et al. (2021) observed that in the framework of its role, Silbiger, Barnes, Berger, and Renwick (2021) discovered that promotion-oriented expatriate managers conformed better to the cultural distance compared to prevention-oriented ones, which indicates that orientation has a significant influence on the adjustment process and its outcome following a cross-border assignment (Silbiger et al., 2021). This was on the individual level, but it offers a solid theoretical foundation on how RFT can be applied at the organizational level HRM.

Recent Bomelburg (2023) research addresses the regulatory climate of firms on the interaction of formal policies and informal climate with regulatory focus to affect ambidexterity and innovation. He believes that a promotion climate promotes exploration and a prevention climate can dry it up unless there are robust formal organizations (Bomelburg, 2023). Although not directly related to immigration or mobility, this study gives an indication of the significance of internal orientation in regulating the regulation constraint management.

Correlating the immigration policy, regulatory orientation and IHRM practice.

Combining these streams, the literature shows that there are certain important linkages. To begin with, immigration regulations and legislative systems serve as institutional barriers to the free movement of talent, staffing arrangements, and IHRM system framework (Mas'adi, 2024; Nayak, 2025). Second, HRM is a response of the firms through adopting alternative staffing methods, local talent pools, virtual mobility, increased integration programs that can adapt to these external pressures but are also influenced by these external pressures (Edwards, 2022; Grosskopf et al., 2024). Third, the regulatory orientation of organization (promotion vs. prevention) also affects the manner in which the organization in question understands and reacts to the immigration restrictions: promotion-oriented firms can see the restrictions as a possibility to innovate in the field of mobility, and prevention-oriented firms can think of the constraints as a means to be compliant and reduce risk.

To take an example, where an MNE has its visa quotas came down on, a promotion-focused HR team can quickly invest on remote global teams or on talent centers in their home country; where a prevention-focused counterpart may halt hiring, limit assignments, or not mobilize until the legal situation is clarified. Direct empirical studies of regulatory focus and its association with immigration-HRM responses is still scarce; however, the theoretical background and the neighboring empirical evidence (Silbiger et al., 2021; Bomelburg, 2023) indicate that this is one of the promising directions of IHRM research.

Lastly, digital and technological capabilities are coming in as facilitating mediators in this system. Companies that have enhanced digital HRM systems, universal mobility analytics are in a position to overcome regulations, oversee transnational relocations and roll out alternative staffing frameworks promptly. This capacity combines with the outside factors of immigration restrictions as well as inner influence to mold HR practices and outcome. This digital-mobility interface, identified by the literature, is an under-researched sociocultural problem that is becoming increasingly important (Hajro et al., 2022).

Gaps and directions for research

Several clear gaps emerge. Despite the established macro effect of the laws on the performance of the firms (e.g., innovation) with regard to immigration (Nayak, 2025), the problems of how various organizational orientations can moderate the response of firms to the laws as part of HRM area have been less researched. Equally, although HRM studies does emphasize the institutional context (Edwards, 2022), not many studies directly put institutional law, regulatory concentration in organizations, HRM strategy, and findings in unlimited study.

Besides, the implications of digital HR and mobility technologies as moderators of the immigration HRM relation are under-researched. As the business model continues to evolve to remote, hybrid and contingent global talent, the capacity to capitalize on digital mobility devices is one of the primary distinguishing factors--yet, there is still limited empirical support (Hajro et al., 2022).

Last but not least, a significant part of available literature deals with high-skill movements or lower-skilled migrant labor independently (e.g., Zilinskaite et al., 2025). More integrative research is required on with skill-levels, and in other regions and regulatory settings, particularly emerging-market MNEs.

Theorized Conceptual Model and Hypothesized Relationships.

Conceptual Model Overview

The suggested conceptual research demonstrates that immigration laws affect the practices of international human resource management (IHRM) in global organizations and how the Organization regulatory focus as a motivational and strategic orientation mediates or moderates such relationship. Moreover, digital transformation is put as a situational factor accelerating or reducing the impact of immigration laws on HRM results due to the increased compliance capacity, agility, and coordination.

The model is based on the assumption that organizations react to external legal environments differently in terms of their internal motivational orientation, which is either promotion- (opportunity-seeking, innovative) or prevention-based (risk-averse, compliance-oriented) approaches (Higgins, 2022). Stereotypes Immigration laws are viewed as external institutional forces limiting or influencing practices of global talents acquisition, mobility, and diversity management (Hajro et al., 2024; Turati and Levai, 2025).

The model has four constructs conceptually:

Immigration Laws (IL) - indicating the extent of restrictiveness, complexity, and uncertainty in the immigration policies of a host country to talent mobility.

Regulatory Focus (RF) - the reflective orientation of organizational as promotion-oriented (innovation and growth seeking) or prevention-oriented (risk control and compliance).

International HRM Practices (IHRMP) - Things like talent management, expatriation, global staffing, compliance systems as well as diversity programs.

Digital Transformation (DT) - will be the degree of digital HR usage (AI, analytics, e-visa systems, virtual onboarding, etc.) as a facilitating contextual factor.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT) argues that people and companies find their way to pursuing goals in two different orientations, promotion focus (focused on growth and achievement) and prevention focus (focused on safety and the necessity to comply with obligations) (Higgins, 2022). In the context of IHRM, this theory is useful in defining the process by which organizations understand and react to the immigration laws. Legal limitations can be viewed as one of the challenges by promotion-focused firms that will independently explore the possibilities of alternative staffing, models of remote work, or a digital visa (Zilinskaite, 2025). Prevention-driven organizations, in contrast, focus more on compliance, which is usually translated into risk-averse talent management and slower response to global employee demand (Jones, 2023).

The model is also based on the Institutional Theory of Global HRM, which highlights that the impact of external regulatory factors (such as the immigration law) reminds or influences the organizational policies in both coercive and normative ways (Guzi et al., 2023). Combined with RFT, the framework is capable of a multi-layer account of how legal institutions and internal motivational states together will define HRM adaptability.

Hypothesized Relationships.

H1: Immigration laws: Immigration laws impact internationally on the management of human resources (IHRM) in global organizations significantly.

H2: Organizational regulatory focus mediates the relationship that exists between immigration laws and IHRM practices.

H3: The regulatory focus moderates the effect of immigration laws on IHRM practices, so that organizations with promotion orientation will be less adversely affected by restrictive immigration policy than those with prevention orientations.

H4: Digital transformation has a positive moderating effect on the correlation between immigration legislature and IHRM practices, by increasing the efficiency of compliance, monitoring of workforce mobility and integration of virtual workforce.

H5: The greater the level of digital change, the stronger the positive impact of a promotion-oriented regulatory orientation on the effectiveness of IHRM since the previously mentioned innovative HR solutions will allow reducing legal and administrative obstacles.

This model can be illustrated as under:

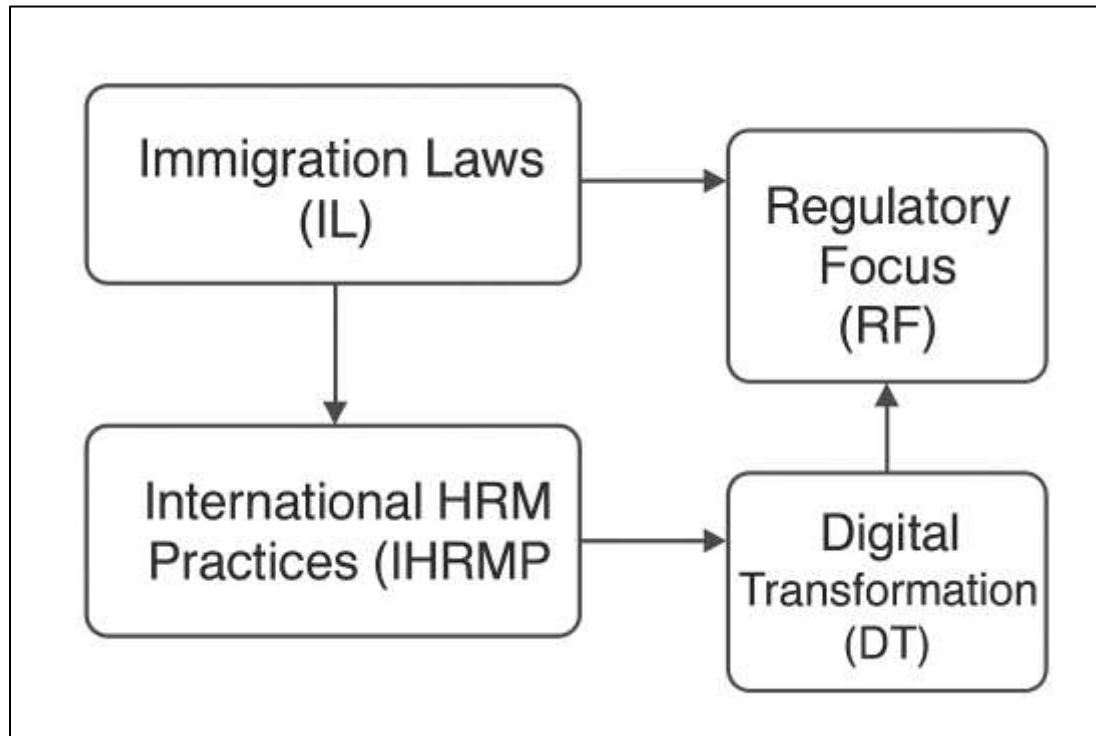
The best practices in international HRM (IHRMP)

Immigration Laws (IL) serve as the independent variable.

Regulatory Focus (RF) is a mediator and moderator.

Digital Transformation (DT) is a facilitator increasing adaptive capacity.

The dependent outcome variable is International HRM Practices (IHRMP).



The theoretical framework suggests that as much as immigration legislation places coercive institutional strain on organizations it will be the level of institutional pressure, in relation to internal motivational orientations (regulatory focus), as well as the degree of digital HR transformation.

Potential Theoretical and Practical Implications.

The model suggested by the author brings something new to the theoretical framework of the research by applying the Regulatory Focus Theory in the sphere of the IHRM and institution to explain the behavior in terms of organizational differences in the strategy of working with global talent under the conditions of limitation of immigration flows. In practice, it offers a diagnostic framework within the multinational organizations that the legal compliance, digital capability, and strategic HR agility in the light of maintaining competitiveness under the changes in the global mobility policies (Nayak, 2025; Turati and Levai, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research paper brings to attention the fact that immigration policies and regulatory frameworks represent an important institutional process in determining the capability of global organizations in managing international human resources. As noted by academics, restrictive or volatile immigration regimes not only are barriers to the free movement of skilled labor, but also add to the cost of HR compliance, limit global talent management practices. Indicatively, it has been observed that employers under uncertainty in an environment where immigration systems are not predictable, so dulls the investment in global talent (Society for Human Resource Management [SHRM], 2023). Moreover, the global staffing decisions under employment-sponsorship are placing the employer at the middle of dependencies and strategic risks (Guthrie and Colleagues, 2024). Simultaneously, this paper underlines that the moderating role of such organizational orientation like promotion-versus-prevention regulatory focus is critical. A promotion-oriented organization will also more often perceive immigration restrictions as strategic opportunities (remote talent, unexploited mobility in a digital form) and not only as compliance liabilities.

To conclude, the overlapping of the external regulation of immigration and internal regulatory focus influences the global HRM practices and eventually influences the organizational outcomes, including talent availability, innovation and diversity. The acknowledgement of such dual vantage (law/regulation + motivation/orientation) provides better explanatory power than a focus on regulation.

Recommendations

Practically, global HR leaders and MNEs are supposed to take into account the following:

Strategic regulation scanning and scenario planning: HR units need to keep real-time track of immigration statutory shifts, visa allocations, and processing-time indicators so that planning of deploying talents could be effected in advance instead of responding to delays or inconveniences.

Create two channels of talent sourcing: Firms should no longer just focus on the traditional methods of expatriation and sponsored employment, but instead they ought to invest in developing local talent, remote/ virtual assignment

patterns, and employing employer-of-record plans. The alternative means permit less reliance on limiting visa policies and enhance responsiveness.

Review of organizational regulatory focus and HR mobility strategy Organizational regulatory focus should be promoted through innovative mobility models (digital work-from-anywhere, global talent hubs) and prevention-oriented organizational regulation through cancelling regulatory risk by adopting better compliance systems and documentation processes. The appreciation of the orientation facilitates the adjustment of HR practices.

Use digital immigration compliance and mobility tracking: Digital investments in immigrant populations (analytics and dashboards) are needed to support firms in managing the global assignee workforce, other visa/permit status in-home forecasts, renewal forecasting, and mobility insights into HR systems. This enhances transparency and minimizes risk amongst administration.

Encourage diversity and inclusion in global mobility strategies: Acknowledging that there is a risk that immigration systems inadvertently constrain the pool of candidates or favor some nationalities, the HR should introduce inclusive hiring and credential-recognition activities and mentorship of international recruits, thereby eradicating equity disparities and increasing organizational learning.

Future Research Directions

Considering the identified gaps, the future research problem should be as follows:

Regulatory-focus moderation: Although the theory proposes that promotional guidance vs. prevention orientation is the moderator of how organisations react to immigration regulation, a limited body of research has empirically validated the same in the context of IHRM. These moderation effects should be validated through longitudinal survey and cross country survey.

Moderators or mediators of digital mobility: The study needs to include how digital HRM resources (e.g., analytics of global mobility, infrastructure supporting remote work) can mediate or moderate the connection between immigration regulation and HRM outcomes. E.g.: do the companies with developed digital mobility capabilities experience a smaller regulatory hold-up?

Compared cross-national research involving regulative regimes: Research comparing firms in different regulatory regimes (i.e. permissive vs. restrictive) may generate information as to the interaction between regulatory context and firm level strategies and orientations.

Sector- and skill-level analysis Future research should investigate whether the impacts vary in terms of sector (technology, healthcare, and manufacturing) or in terms of skill-level of the international assignee (high-skill vs. medium/low skill). This will sharpen knowledge on the times that immigration regulation is constrained.

Additional mobility outcomes: innovation, knowledge movement, inclusion: Although mobility is the focus of most studies, the connection between immigration regulation and HRM practices to macro-level organizational performance, including innovation, the diversity of ideas, global talent retention, and cross-cultural knowledge transfer, should also be examined.

Qualitative research of HR decision making within regulatory constraint: In-depth case studies can provide understanding of how immigration policy can be examples to determine how HR managers interpret and model decisions, how internal orientation influences decisions and how unanticipated regulatory shocks can actually be practiced.

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