

## Individualized HRM: Analytical Study of the Algerian Public Employment Law and Labor Law

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Received: 22/11/2021; Accepted: 17/05/2022; Published: 01/07/2022

**Summary:** This article aims to introduce the individualization of human resources management, which is a modern approach to raising the organization's performance through human resources management in a personalized manner according to the competency and desires of individuals. However, the problematic lies in the application of this method, which faces many obstacles, including legal ones. In this article, the compatibility of individualization with Algerian law (the Labor Law and the Public Employment Law) has been studied, by addressing and analyzing the most important points that these two share in common and the points in which they differ. The results showed that there is great compatibility between individualization and the Algerian law, which enables the Algerian institution to apply individualization in human resources management.

**Keywords:** Individualized HRM; HRM; Labor Law; Public Employment Law.

**Jel Classification Codes :** M5; M500; J22; J62; J63.

**ملخص:** يهدف هذا المقال إلى التعريف بتفريد إدارة الموارد البشرية، وهو مدخل حديث لرفع أداء المؤسسة من خلال إدارة الموارد البشرية بطريقة مشخصة حسب كفاءة ورغبات الأفراد، غير أن الإشكالية تقع في تطبيق هذا الأسلوب الذي يواجه معيقات كثيرة منها المعوقات القانونية. حيث تمت في هذا المقال دراسة توافق التفريد مع القانون الجزائري (قانون العمل وقانون التوظيف العمومي)، من خلال معالجة أهم النقاط التي يشترك فيها هذين الأخيرين والنقاط التي يختلفان فيها وتحليلها. وأظهرت النتائج أنه يوجد توافق كبير بين التفريد والقانون الجزائري مما يُمكن المؤسسة الجزائرية من تطبيق التفريد في إدارة الموارد البشرية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تفريد إدارة الموارد البشرية، الموارد البشرية، قانون العمل، قانون التوظيف العمومي.

**تصنيف JEL :** M5 ; M500 ؛ J22 ؛ J62 ؛ J63.

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## **I- Introduction :**

Organizations are now moving towards intensive attention to their human capital as the most important asset, in which investment is the most effective way to achieve the goals<sup>1</sup>. Human resources management is responsible for the individuals in the organization as its practices affect and guide the behavior of individuals<sup>2</sup>, and have a positive impact on organizational performance<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it adapts its programs according to its human resources tendencies to gain more talent and keep high performers motivated. This is based on the logic of human resources management individualization, which expresses a personalized approach to management<sup>4</sup>. Its application remains inevitable due to the benefits it provides to both the organization and the individual. However, the application of this type of management faces numerous obstacles, the most important of which is the legal aspect. Therefore, in this research, we will further define and clarify this concept, as well as demonstrate its legal impact.

### **I.1. The beginning of individualization:**

Before introduced to the organization, individualization was defined as a term and an existing sociological concept. The following three researchers (Giddens, 1991), (Beck, 1992), and (Bauman, 2002) studied individualization as a component of contemporary societies - post-1970 societies - and defined it as caring for the individual, his opinions, interests, and orientations as a measure of action.

**I.1.1.(Giddens, 1991)**<sup>5</sup>: According to Giddens, individualization is to break out of social stereotypes through the influence of globalization and industrial civilization. The contemporary individual is considered to have so much knowledge that he makes new decisions about his life that go beyond the societal framework and traditions through his knowledge sources<sup>6</sup>. With the weakness and decline of the tradition system, the formation of an individual's identity has become more flexible and diverse, and one's life has become unstable and unpredictable, but is nonetheless controlled by some remnants of the societal tradition. The identity of the individual in contemporary societies has become more vulnerable to change and restructuring, as each individual seeks to choose his own lifestyle for individualization only, even if it is wrong. Collective experiences and social interaction make the individual hold on to his individuality<sup>7</sup>. This means that individualization is a result of the change in moral standards of societies.

**I.1.2.(Beck & Beck Gernsheim, 2001)**<sup>8</sup>: Believes that individualization, in contemporary societies, is to stay away from the cultural constraints of one's society, customs, and traditions to build his own lifestyle. Individualization is the result of cultural globalization, governing the scientific nature of behaviors and universality<sup>9</sup>. He concludes that every person's quest to have his own unique personality, customs, and traditions has led to the perception of individualization as a risk factor in contemporary societies. According to Beck, individualization frees the individual from the constraints of societal customs and traditions on the one hand, and reintegrates him into various social relationships on the other<sup>10</sup>. He also argues that individualization is a new characteristic related only to contemporary societies. Unlike Giddens, Beck thinks that individualization is built based on collective models.

**I.1.3.(Bauman, 2000)**<sup>11</sup>: By introducing the concept of liquid modernity, he describes contemporary societies as subtle, with transient and easily penetrating values, and these values have become fluid as a result of globalization, which has wiped out the world's geographical and intellectual boundaries, allowing everyone to act completely freely and thus producing individualization<sup>12</sup>. Bauman considered individualization to be the most important characteristic of these societies in which the references and values of one's actions are absent. He confines contemporary to individualization, explaining that everyday behaviors and individual dealings between individuals contribute to the reshaping of the society they share. Furthermore, since societies have become fluid and easy to form, and since individualization is a result of these societies, each continues to change and lacks a single model through which to identify<sup>13</sup>. This makes dealings between individuals difficult and unexpected because what governs them is not the traditions of society but new behaviors adopted by individuals.

**I.1.4.(Hofstede, 1984)**<sup>14</sup>: The Hofstede study is a link between the sociological and organizational approaches to the definition of individualization. For Hofstede, there are communities that are individualized and others that are collective. He examines how the dimensions of national culture affect organizational culture, that is, the qualities of society influence the values of individuals and how they think, which is subsequently reflected in the organizations in which they operate. Thus, according to Hofstede, by dropping this idea on the individualization of human resources

management, a society whose nature is individualistic succeeds in the application of individualized human resources management. The opposite is also true. This was confirmed by the (Dirks, 2016)<sup>15</sup> study in Japan, which showed that Japanese society (as a collective society) did not succeed in the individualization of human resources management.

## **I.2. Development of individualization in organizations:**

**I.2.1. Classical school:** The scientific management<sup>16</sup> in 1911 is perhaps the first appearance of the concept of individualization in the organization. The first principles of individualization are clearly reflected through the way Taylor organized the work. Taylor was the first to talk about the practice of job analysis<sup>17</sup>, but he was limited to describing the job without characterization, and he established the criteria for achieving optimal productivity in each position according to specialized performance conditions. In wages, the worker is rewarded as much as he is productive (piece-rate). From Taylor's idea (scientific management), it can be concluded that the first human resources management practices (job analysis and wages) were individualized because they move away from stereotypes and treat each individual according to the value he gives to the organization but in a highly specialized manner focused solely on productivity.

We find that the study of Maslow<sup>18</sup> concerning needs refined the first features of individualized career practice by asserting that during a career, an individual seeks to satisfy his own needs other than the objectives of the organization, from physiological needs to the need for self-esteem. The individual looks forward to self-fulfillment at work, making that situation a practice towards the individual and the fulfillment of his needs. Enriching the specialized division of work, changing the practice of job analysis and enriching it in accordance with individual skills as Herzberg's suggestion<sup>19</sup> is consistent with the logic of individualization, i.e. starting from the individual to manage the practice and this idea is at the core of strategic management of human resources.

The emergence of strategic human resources management was the result of increased competition between organizations and the shift of organizational thinking to the competitive advantage that ensures the organization's position in the market. This orientation began with Penrose<sup>20</sup> in the competency-based approach. This approach argues that the organization possesses scarce, valuable, irreplaceable and non-replicable resources<sup>21</sup>, the first of which is the human resource. The focus on the human resource has emerged as a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

Strategic management (competency management and talent management) and modern approaches (intergenerational management and employee experience) of human resources management will be addressed. It should be noted that these two approaches are a full application of the individualization logic, in that they have taken an interest in the individual as a unit for designing and implementing human resources management practices and have made it personalized according to the motivation and performance of the individual. Therefore, organizations that follow one of these approaches in their human resource management can be considered to be applying individualization.

## **I.2.2. Strategic management of human resources:**

This approach believes that human resources strategies must be integrated and directly linked to the strategy and objectives of the organization. Human resources management defines strategy as the way organizations manage their human resources in order to achieve their strategic goals by controlling the performance of the human resource<sup>22</sup>. Direct coordination between the corporate strategy and the human resources strategy ensures a clear understanding by individuals of the goals of the organization and their orientation towards achieving it<sup>23</sup>. In this approach, we find competency management and talent management.

**I.2.2.1. Competency management:** The emergence of the competency concept in human resources management has been a pivotal development in job design. The concept of competencies was first introduced by (White, 1959)<sup>24</sup> and was linked to the concept of motivation<sup>25</sup>. Further, it is part of the strategic management of human resources. Competency management is an approach for coordinating the organization strategy and jobs development because it seeks to reduce the gaps between the competencies required to achieve the organization's goals and those already acquired by its human resources. This goes first through the development of individual competencies<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, an individual's competency is an implicit characteristic of his ability to perform superiorly in a particular position, role or situation<sup>27</sup>. The competency management context was designed to focus on individual performance, i.e. what an individual could offer<sup>28</sup>. Organizations began with the individual's capabilities and initiatives in specific professional positions and then

build the terms of the job<sup>29</sup>. This fits into the concept of individualization, where the management of competency has come to recognize the entitlement of the highly performing individual and rearrange human resources management practices to reward and increase the number of such individuals within the organization. Competency management covered all human resources management activities, but attempted to place them within a standard framework expressed in the competency reference, applicable to all to maintain an individual's competency or reach the required one. (LeBoterf, 2016)<sup>30</sup> points to this, where he considers that the shortcoming of competency management is the separation of competency from its holder, and that the market today is looking for the competent individual or what is known as professionalization, which is a way of managing human resources in a personalized way, linking competency management to the individualization of human resources management, since individualization is an evolution of competency.

**I.2.2.2. Talents management:** Talent management is directly linked to the strategic objectives of the organization, as talents are identified and selected based on their ability to lead the organization to reach the excellence<sup>31</sup>. Most commonly known as 'talent war'<sup>32</sup>, where organizations struggle to get the best individuals to do the best. It is an individual-based management method of talent where all human resources management practices are centered on it and started from it, as the talented individual is treated specially compared to other individuals. Organizations are able to create innovative job positions only for one person based on what he is good at, by focusing on career and training practices that must be personalized and flexible in order to ensure his commitment and preservation<sup>33</sup>. Talent management aims to create distinctive practices of human resources management that support talents<sup>34</sup>. The growing interest in the talent war to attract and preserve the best individuals tends to create organizational environment and climate that is fully compatible with what these individuals want in a very specific and individualized way, which is expressed by modern human resources management as it comes next.

### **I.2.3. Approaches of modern HR management**

Approaches of Human resources management are numerous and its applications vary in organizations, but some approaches are still more effective than others, including the demographic approach 'intergenerational management' and the approach derived from marketing science 'employee experience', which will be identified in this section and explained in relation to the individualization.

**I.2.3.1. Intergenerational management:** As the organizational environment of the organization evolves from two to three or four generations coexisting to do the work, the management of generations emerges; a way in which the organization seeks to make individuals of different generations coexist and work together effectively by focusing on what divides them as well as their common points<sup>35</sup>. Until 2020, six generations can be counted: the Traditionals '1928-1945', the baby-boomers '1946-1964', the X generation '1965-1979', the Y generation '1980-199', the Z generation '1995-2009', and finally the Alpha Generation '2010-...'. With different generations in the organization as well as their diversity, they should be managed in a different way, depending on the characteristics of each generation. We find that the older generation (Traditionals, baby-boomers, X generation) has significant experience because they spent more time in the organization, while the younger generation (Z and Y generations) has higher technical and technological competency. As for their motivation to work, the younger generation is concerned with career development, and the older generation is most motivated by job security and higher payment<sup>36</sup>. The most successful intergenerational management strategies are field training, formation and accompaniment, as well as creative activities for commitment promotion such as: flexible job missions, balancing private and professional life, receiving and implementing employees' proposals that would make the job more suitable for them, and relying on compensation schedules to give individuals more flexibility<sup>37</sup>. These strategies are fully compatible with the concept of individualization because they are personalized and focused on treating the individual based on the characteristics of his generation, resulting in higher performance and a healthy work environment.

**I.2.3.2. Employee experience:** The employee experience is what the individual experiences, observes or feels throughout the course of his employment in the organization<sup>38</sup>. It is one of the most recent ways in which human resources are managed in the organization, which is the reverse marketing process. Instead of starting from the customer, the organization proceeds from the employee and places itself in his same context to identify his real needs in accordance with the

principle of “client employee”<sup>39</sup> that is, treating the employee in a personalized manner far from typical i.e. ‘The one size fits all’<sup>40</sup>. The literature focuses on the fact that there is a wide difference between the planned objectives of human resources management, what is actually realized by individuals, and what they experience<sup>41</sup>. This experience should therefore be improved so that all individuals in the organization can achieve the desired objectives through the necessary physical, technological, and cultural environment. The physical environment focuses on the sense of one’s own home, which gives him the energy to make a greater effort. The technological environment aims to enhance the creativity and individual’s innovation. The cultural environment is the employee’s actions and behaviors in the organization, which can create a distinctive employee experience<sup>42</sup>. All these characteristics reflect a personalized and flexible pattern associated with the different characteristics of each individual, which applies to the subject matter of individualization.

### I.3. HRM individualization

**I.3.1. Definition of individualization:** Individualized human resources management states that an individual is the entity on which human resources management practices are structured<sup>43</sup>, expressing the elements of the employment contract (job analysis, wages, career course...) which depends on individual characteristics associated with the employee himself (motivation, talent, individual performance...), making him responsible for his current and future status<sup>44</sup>. This means that not only individual’s competency is taken in consideration in implementing and planning the human resources practices but his desires and how he visualizes his life in the organization also, because the individualization depends on the well-being of the individual at work to achieve the objectives of the organization.

The organization can remove some of the activities from its human resource management map, as Apple does<sup>45</sup>, which does not force its workers to receive training but instead allows them to choose the method, content, and location of training. However, this is linked to a particular goal on which everything is based. Apple is a model of maximum individualization since this organization has completely abandoned training and gave its employees full autonomy in its management. For Apple, this method is very successful and ensures its excellence and individual’s motivation, as it had the greatest market value among technology organizations in 2020<sup>46</sup> with profits of \$67 billion for 2020<sup>47</sup>. Individualization is an atypical, personalized, and individual-oriented method that is not limited by certain (or few) actions in proportion to motivating the worker to perform at the highest performance. Since it’s a flexible personalized method linked to individuals and what they prefer, its practices are linked to what the organization prefers them to be, so these practices don’t have a special standardized framework which every organization should follow.

**I.3.2. Practices of individualized HRM:** Because the essence of individualization is that it is not constrained by any actions or texts that individuals have to apply, it is difficult to describe and define its practices in a single model. However, all practices must contain certain criteria to match the individualistic method of lifelong learning, individual skills, intrinsic motivation, and commitment policies which contain<sup>48</sup>:

- Decentralization and flexibility of work time;
- Decentralization and individualization of wages (reliance on performance-based pay);
- Avoiding all qualification-based recruitment procedures and methods and change them with those based on individual competencies and skills;
- Decentralization and individualization of training, where it becomes more dependent on career development programs;
- decentralized and individualized development of competencies and skills;
- Flexibility in the development of employment contracts and policies;
- Focus on policy diversification in all activities;
- Reviewing the analysis of work in order to increase the autonomy of individuals;
- Eliminating traditional career grading policies such as seniority promotion;

From the above, it can be seen that the practices of individualization are linked to the autonomy of the individual’s work, reliance on his individual competency, and the shift towards the intrinsic management of the individual in the organization. This is, of course, linked to the high performance he must offer.

## II– Methods and Materials:

Although individualization offers a lot to both the organization and the individual, it faces many obstacles in its application, such as the difficulty of implementing it because of its multiple choices, incompetent leadership or the impact on the collective dimension of the organization. In this research, the focus will be on the legal aspect, which may be one of the greatest impediments because an organization can only submit to the law and cannot change it. Moreover, if individualization does not correspond to the law of the State, the organization cannot apply it.

This paper has an analytical purpose, so the used materials are labor law and public employment law. The Labor Law and the Public Employment Law were analyzed in order to determine whether individualization is consistent with the provisions of the latter and whether it can be applied in Algerian public and private organizations. The articles addressing recruitment practices, training, performance evaluation, wages, and career management, these practices were examined and analyzed in terms of their compatibility with the method of individualization, to finally come to the conclusion of whether Algeria's legal aspect is a catalyst or an impediment to the application of individualization in Algerian organizations.

**II.1. Labor Law:** Law No. 90-11 dated April 21, 1990 relating to employment relations, amended and supplemented by Law No. 91-29 of December 21, 1991, amended by Legislative Decree No. 94-03 of April 11, 1994, amended and supplemented by Ordinance No. 96-03 21 dated July 9, 1996, supplemented by Ordinance No. 97-02 dated January 1, 1997, amended and supplemented by Law No. 14-10 of December 30, 2014, and amended by Ordinance No. 15-01 dated July 23, 2015. Articles containing human resources management practices will be analyzed on the basis of incompatibility and compatibility with the concept of individualization.

- A. Employment:** All the articles on employment in the Labor Law (articles 15 to 21) do not refer to the regulation of the internal employment procedures of the organization. This practice can, therefore, be considered applicable in the Algerian organization in line with the application of the individualization method;
- B. Dividing working hours:** Ordinance No. 97-03 specified the duration of work at 40 hours per week or 33,173 hours per month, but stipulated that the employer could act on working hours, which is consistent with the concept of individualization as the Labor Law did not oppose reducing working hours in accordance with management and objectives. As for distance working, no ordinance or article specified the worker's obligation to a specific place of work. It can be said, therefore, that distance working is not contrary to labor law and can be applied as an individualized practice of human resources management or be codified flexibly;
- C. Training:** In article 57 of the Labor Law, employers are obliged to organize training courses to improve the level of workers, and employees are required to join such training courses, but it does not specify the methods to be followed in such formative courses, which is compatible with individualization. Thus, the organization can propose a number of training methods that it deems appropriate to it and its members' competencies. Since the training of workers is legally imposed, this practice cannot be dispensed with, for example, as Apple does. Article 59 provides that competencies may be relied upon to accompany individuals with normal performance, which is compatible with the individualization concept;
- D. Wages:** Articles 80 to 90 of the Labor Law contain wage laws, most of which do not conflict with individualization:
- Pay must be in accordance with the effort made, which is the essence of the individualization of wages, which article 82 explains by checking the form of cost-effective wage (piece wage, quota work, work by obligation, turnover wage);
  - Compensation is determined on the basis of seniority and working hours;
  - Allowances are determined by labor productivity and results, that is, it can be individually as well as team-based, which is consistent with the individualization;
  - Equal pay in the Labor Law is linked to the value provided by an individual in his work, i.e. it is not typical and this is consistent with the individualization.
- E. Career management:** Article 61 stipulates that promotion shall be on the basis of habilitation, within the professional scale order and according to the positions available, as well as the habilitation and entitlement of the worker. Promotion has a collective aspect to

which everyone is typically subject, but habilitation and entitlement (which amounts to competence) fully reflect the individualization of promotion, which depends on the individual's competence and high performance.

**II.2. Public Employment Law:** Ordinance No. 06-03 dated 19 Jumada Al-Thani 1427, 15 July 2006, contains the General Basic Law on Public Job. The articles contained therein on the five human resources management practices mentioned above will also be analyzed to determine whether they are compatible or incompatible with individualization.

- A. **Employment:** From article 74 to article 82, employment is either on the basis of a degree or a test, vocational examination or specialized training, which are considered objective criteria. However, individualization depends more on competency, creativity, and stepping away from the logic of position;
- B. **Dividing working hours:** The fixed working time is 40 hours per week divided into 8 hours on working days. Extra hours cannot exceed 20% of the legal working period unless absolutely necessary. We note that the division of working time in the public labor is very specific, leaving little room for the individualization method that depends on the achievement of objectives, regardless of the time consumed;
- C. **Training:** Articles 104 to 105, the law guarantees the training of individuals in public organizations depending on the manner and levels specified in advance. This is in contrast to the individualization of human resources management, in which the training is highly personalized and flexible;
- D. **Appraisal of performance:** Articles 97 to 103 spoke of performance appraisal. The objective of evaluating performance is consistent with the objective of evaluating performance in the individualization logic, but it is considered incomplete because one of its primary objectives is to improve the performance of the individual, which is not mentioned in article 98 of this Law. The criteria of performance appraisal are comprehensive and broad, but the organization can mold them in line with the logic of individualization;
- E. **Wages:** Wages are addressed in Articles 114 to 126. Wage is related to rank and grade in this law, where it is considered to be very restrictive and accurate in accordance with a salary network corresponding to the categories and degrees through which employees are paid. This is not consistent with individualization, as the basic criterion upon which wage is based is performance. The wage also consists of compensation that is equal for all because it is related to the position rather than to the persons, as well as allowances that are awarded to the individual for his individual and collective return, which is related to performance and performance improvement and are awarded according to the performance appraisal reports. These laws do not differ with individualization, but meet in the same context and purpose. However, they are applied collectively without taking into account high performers. With regard to the variable of seniority on which the raising of wages and salaries of employees depends, it is not consistent with the logic of individualization, since the basic criterion for raising wages in individualization is the competency and performance of the worker;
- F. **Career management:** In the public employment, this practice is characterized by an administrative file containing all the employee's degrees, family status, qualifications and administrative status in the form of a paper, through which his professional career is conducted. These practices are clearly outdated and incompatible with the logic of individualization. Promotion in public employment under articles 106 to 111 depends on the degree, specialized training, vocational examination, seniority, and priority, respectively, which is incompatible with individualization because it remains dependent on the logic of the position. These articles are considered obsolete and inconsistent with developments in human resources management, as promotion in individualization depends on the competency of the individual and the added value he adds to the organization. Article 111 mentions an estimated human resources management policy, which in the management of competencies corresponds to "Employment and Competency Forecast Management". It is a recent and significant practice, but its application in the Algerian organization is slightly different, as it faces some bureaucratic implementation, routine, and rigid laws that are not sufficiently effective. Staff transfer is highly flexible based on the wishes of the individual,

family status, seniority, and professionalism, but the priority remains to take into account the organization's interests. Transfer in individualization depends on the worker's competency, personal and professional development, and the possibility of benefiting from him in different situations, so the transfer is somewhat proportional to the logic of individualization.

### **III- Results and discussion :**

- The Labor Law is flexible and unlimited given the lack of specific laws on the functioning of human resources management practices. It enables organizations subject to it to apply individualized management of human resources;
- The Labor Law allows the application of individualization of human resources management in contrast to the Public Law of Employment;
- Compared to universal laws such as the law of the United States of America and Canada, the phrase "The parties can agree on other than the content of the article" does not exist in Algerian labor law in the few articles where human resources management practices are regulated;
- In the Public Employment Law human resource management practices are precisely defined, limiting the freedom of the organization subject to it to introduce new methods such as individualization;
- Many articles in the Public Employment Law are consistent with the logic of individualization such as performance appraisal criteria, but their proper application in line with individualization still does not exist.

### **IV- Conclusion:**

Individualization in society began in the 1990s and emerged with the evolution of individual life and increased awareness of oneself due to globalization and the global industrial system. Since traditional societies were measured by the group, the individual has developed standards other than those of family and society and has come to be regarded as the unit of measurement. As part of this society, the logic of individualization has also been leaked to organizations where everyone is treated differently from others. A new challenge has emerged for human resources management; since it is concerned with the management of individuals within an organization, it must devise new and personalized means based on individual competencies and differences in the management of their lives within the organization provided that they offer high performance and achieve the organization's objectives. Therefore, the individualization of human resources management becomes the individual's right, considering that he spends more time in the organization than in his personal life.

However, by analyzing the laws governing the management of human resources in the Algerian organization, namely, the Labor Law and the Public Employment Law, some Algerian laws are consistent with individualization and others are not. The flaw in Algerian laws is that they are not flexible concerning the possibility of introducing this concept into Algerian organizations, and there is a strong tendency to collectivity and stereotypes in legislation. The following recommendations are, therefore, included to improve certain points in Algerian law in order to make it more flexible and compatible with academic developments, particularly with regard to the individualization of human resources management.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Clarifying the meaning and connotations of keywords in the articles at the workplace to enable professionals to apply them correctly;
- Updating Labor laws to reflect global academic and technological advancements;
- Including and elaborating certain articles that guarantee the right of individuals to ensure the true reward of effort, non-stereotyping and the promotion of high performance;
- Establishing non-unions bodies to legislate, regulate, and monitor labor-related laws.



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#### How to cite this article by the APA method:

LAOUADI Rim, RIAD Abdelkader (2022), **Individualized HRM: Analytical Study of the Algerian Public Employment Law and Labor Law**, *Entreprise Review*, 11 (01), Algeria: Alger 3 University, PP 215-224.



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