GERMAN JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Call for Papers

Special Issue

Achieving Sustainable Development Goals through a Common-Good HRM: Context, approach and practice

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This Special Issue invites empirical and conceptual papers that examine and theorize the relationship between the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015) and Human Resource Management (HRM). We welcome perspectives from HRM and cognate fields such as employment relations and organizational psychology in dealing with issues around people management, work and employment. There is growing interest in management literature in exploring how HRM can reframe policies and practices in a more sustainable way and thus contribute to achieving the UN's SDG (c.f. Ghauri and Cooke, 2022), as they contend with the consequences of past organizational actions, most notably global heating. However, there is considerable variation in how organizations operating in different parts of the world are confronting these challenges and how HRM can contribute to achieving SDGs, which remains relatively under-investigated. The special issue seeks to bring together new work in this area.

Due to a lack of progress and continued uncertainty as to how to most effectively address the economic, social and ecological "Grand Challenges" of our time (Doh, Budhwar and Wood, 2021; George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi and Tihanyi, 2016), the UN's "2030 Agenda for sustainable development" consisting of 17 SDGs, has emerged as an important benchmark for both business and HRM (Chams and García-Blandón, 2019). The International Labour Organisation has also developed the notion of 'human-centred' HRM to support the achievement of the SDGs (Cooke, Dickmann and Parry, 2022). This increased interest in sustainability is reflected in management literature highlighting the potential of reframing HRM structures, strategies and practices to enable organisations to meet the goal of sustainability (Ren and Jackson, 2020; Stahl, Brewster, Collings and Hajro, 2020). There are many meanings of the word sustainability, but we take a broad-based view in line with the UN SDGs, as encompassing issues at the individual and organizational level, and the latter's place both within economy and society, and the natural world. In turn, the common good may encompass

both immediate communities, local and global society, but may also encompass other living creatures and our shared natural ecosystem. Due to the urgency of the need to find an effective antidote to an increasingly unstable socio-economic environment, the past few years have been also characterized by the rapid development of a "Sustainable HRM" narrative (Aust, Matthews and Muller-Camen, 2020).

HRM has therefore begun to be viewed from a less-economic, alternative, more sustainable standpoint, and strategic decisions and practices are being increasingly assessed according to added sustainable value and contribution to individual and collective well-being (Pfeffer, 2010; Lopez-Cabrales and Valle-Cabrera, 2020). A number of new models have emerged, each focusing on a different aspect of organizational sustainability, such as Socially Responsible HRM (Shen and Benson, 2016), Green HRM (Renwick, Jabbour, Muller-Camen, Redman and Wilkinson, 2016) and Triple Bottom HRM (Bush, 2020). Although disagreement remains among both academics and practitioners about the most effective way to proceed, and how to bridge a gap in competing stakeholder-shareholder interests, the sustainability debate has initiated a requestioning of the role and purpose of HRM. This has also resulted in a reassessment of the suitability of the underlying (growth and performance-based) pro-market economic ideologies and reductionist HRM models in meeting the SDG targets (Matthews et al., 2018). The reliance of HRM on an individualist, strategic, performance-centric (and ultimately decontextualised) approach has left the discipline isolated and disconnected from wider societal and ecological concerns (Kaufman, 2020), and therefore ineffective in driving forward a challenging sustainable agenda.

There is therefore a need for a heightened awareness within the discipline of HRM that a paradigm change is both urgently needed and achievable within the current institutional contexts. While HRM research recognizes the importance of context in promoting greater stakeholder involvement (Cooke, 2018), so does Sustainable HRM (e.g. Ehnert, 2009). In spite of this, the parameters and conditions required for successful organisational transformation and transition to a sustainable economy in different societal and business settings are still underexplored. We therefore encourage contributions to broaden the current scope of research to expand existing models.

This Special Issue of the *GHRM* aims to spotlight the growing influence of the SDGs on HRM, leadership and employment relations topics especially with regard to the challenge of how to implement change for sustainable development in organisations. We welcome papers that will challenge current mainstream business and HRM models and expect that new research will cover and go beyond issues of the SDG-HRM relationship relating to congruence and diversion, paradox and tensions and the strategic implications for HRM role, leadership and workplace policies and practices (employment relations). For example, by asking demanding questions not just about the emerging "Sustainable HRM" debate and the three main (CSR, Green, Triple-Bottom-line) approaches developed, but which also more critically reflect on the underlying concepts of Sustainability and Common-Good and the resulting broader role of HRM in facilitating societal change as suggested, for example, in the new "Common-Good HRM" model. Finally, we hope to enrich our knowledge of the influence of the SDGs as a benchmark more generally, by discussing the implications for HRM concerning, for example, HR role and purpose, strategic decision making, stakeholder engagement, talent management, workplace participation, employee engagement, and workforce health and well-being. The journal's tradition of theoretical pragmatism allows more space for novel theorizing than is typically associated with endeavours of this nature, and accordingly, we would welcome

work that introduces, applies and extends new theoretical advances from other areas of the social sciences, and, indeed, across the broad domain of business and management studies.

Contributions could focus on one or more of the following questions – but are not limited to these:

- What are the strategic implications of the SDGs for HRM?
- How do the SDGs enable or hinder the ability of HRM to address grand challenges?
- To what extent can HRM policies and practices be redesigned to reduce social inequalities?
- How do the SDGs as a benchmark change the role and purpose of HRM?
- How do HR managers deal with the paradoxical tensions of sustainable change?
- How do employees react to sustainability agendas at the workplace?
- What are the implications for specific HR functions such as employee training, learning and knowledge transfer or performance assessment?
- How can the SDGs be balanced with organizational performance goals?
- What is the role of HRM leadership in the implementation of sustainability agendas?
- What role does support from HR managers play in the acceptance of organisational transition and contribution to the SDGs?
- How can the SDGs contribute to issues of workplace democracy and employee agency?
- Are the concepts of Sustainability and the Common-Good still too theoretically vague?
- What impact do investor agendas have on HRM and sustainability?
- Building and applying new theory to better understand the links between HRM and sustainability.

Submission

To be considered for publication in the Special Issue, full manuscripts (max. 10,000 words including references, tables and figures) must be submitted by November 30th, 2022. The papers will undergo a double-blind review process. The special issue will be published in the second half of 2023. The manuscripts should be written in English and submitted through https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ghrm. The submission guidelines are available at https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/GJH.

Prospective authors are welcome to consult with the guest editors in advance.

The *German Journal of Human Resource Management* (GHRM)

The *GHRM* is an international journal concerned with advancing the study of HRM. It has a strong reputation as a dedicated academic journal open to high-quality research on all aspects of HRM. The journal is available via its publisher SAGE worldwide through https://journals.sagepub.com/home/gjh. It has a high download usage and short production cycles. The *GHRM* is ranked in Category 2 by the British ABS journal list and as 'B' in the Australian ABDC ranking.

Editors of the Special Issue:

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