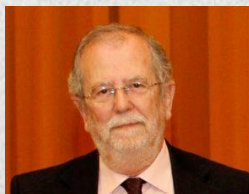




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Human Resources Management (hereon HRM) has become a consolidated field of research in a short time. The reason is a wide range of theoretical frameworks have been used over the last decades to study individual behaviours and problematic situations raised in organisations.

Today, human resources are more than ever regarded as the cornerstone of many companies, and are treated as such. On the new economic scene, a company's competitive advantage lies in its workers' collective talent, rather than in its real-estate assets, technologies or means of production. Organisational competitiveness factors are largely linked to human resources, their abilities, skills or competences. Interest in human resources management has thus grown. It is people who ultimately make the difference, because the quality of the employees, their enthusiasm and work satisfaction, their experience and feeling of fair treatment affect company productivity, customer service, reputation and survival.

Human behaviour is, however, highly complex and its management engenders great uncertainties. Many studies currently seek to understand, with the utmost accuracy, the connection between different HRM approaches and companies' functioning. Nevertheless, HRM is still far from achieving general deterministic formulations enabling to predict the impacts of specific management policies.

As a result, the function of human resources has undergone significant transformations in recent years. These changes are linked not only to the name and content but also to the role and position of human resources in a company.

In the twenty-first century in which we are living, the context in which companies operate has been profoundly transformed. The 2008 international economic crisis affected HRM particularly severely and brought about radical changes.

Technological shifts have led to many uncertainties concerning the future of work, raising issues such as: what situation are HR departments in today? What new roles are expected of them or assigned to them? What new challenges must they face?

THE WORKS THAT COMPOSE THE BOOK:

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT THE CROSSROADS: CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

attempt to shed light on these issues. They offer in-depth analyses of a range of current issues, that address present and future HRM concerns.

CHAPTERS INCLUDED IN THIS BOOK.

The entire evolution of HRM roles has led HR research to focus on concretely helping companies and contributing to conflict resolutions. Thus, a greater contextualisation of research studies is sought. Analyses of human resources practices must be linked to specific situations, such as innovation, knowledge management or economic crises. Current trends seek to understand both the contribution that human resources MAKE to these specific situations and the possible impact of these situations on HR.

A change of research focus is currently taking place in the field. Today, studies are expected to be more closely linked to business reality and delve more deeply into it. The trend has gone from examining

whether HRM produces effects in companies, to seeking to understand why and how HRM has an impact on companies. We believe the most significant changes consist in:

- Analysing new dependent variables (the dependent variable has traditionally been performance), notably: creativity, innovation, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), organisational abilities or change management, among others;
- Incorporating mediating and moderating variables, such as organisational culture or employee characteristics;
- Using integrative (multilevel) and multidisciplinary models;
- Emphasising dynamic aspects.

Current research is also beginning to consider the socio-economic context and the company's characteristics, addressing issues such as:

- Economic crisis: analysing the impact of the crisis on human resources and studying how HRM can help to overcome the crisis.
- Gender and work-family reconciliation: studying the effects of women's incorporation in the labour market and finding solutions to the problems it generates.
- Diversity: locally, but especially in multinationals.
- Age: consequences of population ageing.
- Social and ethical responsibility: searching for a balance between companies' social responsibility criteria and the need to remain competitive.
- New technologies: examining how virtual teams are managed among other aspects.

- Institutional focus: legal aspects regarding the direction adopted by human resources practices.
- Studies focused on emerging countries, more innovative sectors, SMEs, etc.

For all the reasons above, this book presents a series of seven research studies that, in our view, shed light on new HRM contributions. They address aspects such as: the future of work; new variables to explain employee wellbeing; fresh structures to create more agile organisations; the challenges and impact of part-time jobs; or the managing of various paradoxes based on a sustainable HRM perspective.

The studies included in this book were regarded as the best papers (i.e. they were the most highly rated by our reviewers) presented at the 11th International Workshop on Human Resources Management, held on 25 and 26 October 2018 in Seville, Spain. The Workshop was organised by the Business Administration Departments of two Spanish Universities – the Pablo de Olavide University (Seville), and the University of Cadiz. The aim was to cover new key topics and research paths that would be attractive to any scholar working in the HRM field.

This biannual Workshop has given participants the opportunity to discuss major HRM issues ever since 1997, the year of its first edition. A number of renowned international HRM researchers from USA and European Universities were invited as keynote speakers. They have become an asset at each edition<sup>1</sup>.

In the latest edition, held in Seville in 2018, Professors Jacqueline Coyle-Shapiro from London School of Economics and Pawan Budhwar, from the Aston Business School (UK) were the guest speakers. The participants included 75 professors and other university researchers from a range of Spanish and European Universities (e.g.,

Ghent, Tilburg, Twente, Saxion and Amsterdam VU, among many others).

The second chapter, by Milan R. Wolffgramm, Stephan Corporaal and Maarten J. van Riemsdijk, PhD, discusses how the introduction of new technology, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and big data, will have an impact on tech sector work and the role of HR professionals. Based on semi-structured interviews with CEOs and HR directors from Dutch (high-)tech organisations, it was found that, within five to ten years, tech workers will be exposed to uncommonly high levels of complexity, uncertainty, connectivity, and interdisciplinary teamwork. Based on these future prospects, it has become clear that tech workers require new skills and smarter ways of working. This raises the need for HR professionals who understand the impact of state-of-the-art technology on tech workers' jobs and who are able to stimulate tech workers' continuous development.

Beltran-Martin, Bou-Llusar and Salvador-Gomez, in the third chapter, analyse the link between High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and two types of outcomes, related to: (a) employees' wellbeing (affective commitment, AC), and (b) their efficacy, based on their task performance (TP) and contextual performance (CP) in a specific sample of Spanish firm R&D departments. Results showed that the communicative effectiveness of HR practices depends on the nature of employee-supervisor relationships. When these relationships are weak, HR practices are more useful to shape employees' perception of organisational support, and consequently their commitment. Nonetheless, when companies cannot implement HPWS (e.g. small companies), leaders may have a key role in promoting employee well-being.

Supervisors and firms should be aware of the relevance of these relationships and invest in training supervisors to improve the quality of the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationships between them and their subordinates in cases where HPWS cannot be effectively implemented.

In a fourth chapter, Houldsworth, McBain and Brewster cover another question of current interest to HRM academics and practitioners: is gender a predictor of career success? The authors followed a sample of 616 alumni of the world's third largest MBA, also one of the UK's oldest programmes. The MBA is ranked among the top 50 programmes worldwide and has traditionally focused on experienced managers. Their results showed that women reported greater levels of career capital development regarding the knowing-why and knowing-how aspects of career capital. In terms of subjective career outcomes, women reported greater levels of career satisfaction and self-efficacy; the results of the objective career outcomes (promotions and levels of work) showed no significant differences.

Chapter five presents a proposal from Nijssen, Farndale and Paauwe on how to develop agile organisations based on what the authors call a "chaordic" structure. Specifically, their study addresses how agile organisations combine bureaucratic and post bureaucratic elements in their organisational structure. Agile organisations are defined as organisations that have been able to survive in a dynamic ecosystem over a substantial period of time. The authors conducted case studies by selecting organisations that have survived and are still surviving in highly dynamic sectors. These sectors were selected based on a high level of unpredictable and continuous change affecting the organisations.

Another important topic of concern for HRM departments today is studied by O'Sullivan, Cross and Lavelle in Chapter

six: the emergence and effects of part-time jobs not only in young women but also in older women. The authors examined: (i) secondary labour market employment among older female part-time workers based on a proxy indicator designed to incorporate private sector work and low wages; and (ii) employment benefits offered to this cohort compared to other worker cohorts examined in this study. The key findings suggest that these jobs were in the labour market's secondary sector, characterised among other aspects by private sector employment and low wages. In addition, compared to the other cohorts under study, this worker cohort was less likely to be offered key employment benefits. To conclude this chapter, a job's characteristics, rather than a person's characteristics, primarily dictate the terms and conditions of employment.

Chapter seven examines the micro-processes and routines of middle managers as they attempt to share an understanding of strategic change events. Kieran, MacMahon and MacCurtain identify nine characteristics of a highly impactful form of shared sensemaking, shown to lead to a number of positive organisational outcomes. These include: sensegiving back to the leadership and onward to peers and teams, successful enactment of strategic change, positive perceptions of change outcomes and organisational climate, and employee well-being.

Finally, in Chapter eight, Bucker, Pascale and El Aghdas make use of a paradox lens to investigate how flexible HRM practices are perceived by employees in two organisations and how they fit into the three organising paradoxes in sustainable HRM, reflecting the economic, political, and socio-cultural contexts of two Dutch organizations. They identify three organising paradoxes reflecting the complexities of the Dutch economic, political and socio-cultural contexts: the

'(inverted) flexibility/commitment paradox'; the 'self-management/(human-resource) management paradox'; and the 'sustainability/effectiveness and efficiency paradox'. The authors then describe the role of management and HRM in addressing the three paradoxes and whether they are able to involve management, HRM and employees in the process. The paradox lens leads us to search critically for current paradoxes and their tensions, analysing employees' perceptions on these tensions, and finally supporting management in developing an active approach, discussing paradox tensions with all stakeholders (management, HRM and employees).

All in all, these studies provide an accurate picture of today's relevant HRM issues, by bringing together different approaches and levels of analysis that are undoubtedly mutually enriching.

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<sup>i</sup> Previous Workshops have featured guest speakers from the USA, such as: Professors Michael Hitt (Texas A&M University), Randall Schuler and Susan Jackson (Rutgers University), Angelo DeNisi (Tulane University), David Lepak (Rutgers University), Anne Tsui (Arizona State University), John E. Delery (University of Arkansas) and Luis Gomez-Mejía (Texas A&M University) and Herman Aguinis, from Indiana University. Past guest speakers from Europe include: Professors Michael Poole (Cardiff Business School), Paul Sparrow (University of Sheffield), Patrick Gunnigle (University of Limerick), Jaap Paauwe (Tilburg University), Paul Boselie (Utrecht University & Tilburg University, The Netherlands); Wolfgang Mayrhofer (Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria) and Riccard Peccei from Kings College (London).