



EMERALD HANDBOOKS

THE EMERALD HANDBOOK OF WORK, WORKPLACES AND DISRUPTIVE ISSUES IN HRM

EDITED BY

PETER **HOLLAND**
TIMOTHY **BARTRAM**
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**The Emerald Handbook of Work,
Workplaces and Disruptive Issues in
HRM**

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2022

Editorial matter and selection © 2022 Peter Holland, Timothy Bartram, Thomas Garavan and Kirsteen Grant.

Individual chapters © 2022 The authors.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80071-780-0 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80071-779-4 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80071-781-7 (Epub)



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Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.



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Foreword

A bend in the road is not the end of the road... Unless you fail to make the turn.

–Helen Keller, in *The Story of My Life*, 1903

Like Helen Keller, the editors of *The Emerald Handbook of Work, Workplaces, and Disruptive Issues in HRM* know we are at a bend in the road, and the wise response now is to make the turn. The many types of change and disruption chronicled in this volume are the stuff of everyday life all around the world. As such, they shape the experience of working for employees everywhere. To successfully address the challenges associated with disruptive change will require the full attention and commitment of human resource scholars and students, managers and executives, labour leaders and policy makers. The chapters in this volume signal the need for meaningful change in the way work is designed as well as the objectives to be achieved by human resource management (HRM) and development practices.

This timely collection of chapters by scholars from a variety of countries and diverse perspectives brings to the fore a variety of new challenges to be addressed by organisations in the 21st century – challenges that require new approaches to thinking about, studying and managing employees. In a refreshing departure from the familiar framing of HRM, the volume editors broke away from the familiar approach of organising chapters according to functional activities (e.g. recruitment, staffing, training, compensation, etc.) and instead focus on the many significant disruptions affecting where work is done, how work is done, who is doing the work and even why people work. Rather than looking back to survey knowledge accumulated in years past, this volume asks readers to consider the future. Simply stated, the objectives of the editors are promoting ‘innovative, practical, and forward thinking’ with the hope that the ideas presented will ‘act as a catalyst to encourage discussion and debate’.

Some types of change affecting modern workplaces are evolving slowly and somewhat predictably, but other changes were unforeseen, abrupt and therefore disruptive. Among the many types of disruptions addressed in this volume are demographic changes, globalisation, climate change, digital technology, artificial intelligence and global pandemics. By delving deeply into the implications of such disruptive developments, the editors encourage readers to fundamentally rethink

how scholars and practitioners imagine the nature of work and employment in modern organisations.

Taken together, the various chapters reflect the complex, multi-level system within which human resource scholars and practitioners operate. Through close examination of how our embedding system has quickly evolved in unprecedented ways, this volume pushes readers to also consider the potential systemic effects of human resource practices. The approach broadens the range of possible consequences associated with HRM and development activities and encourages us to claim and acknowledge greater responsibility for the positive and negative consequences of such activities for employees, employers, communities and the natural environment.

As the editors rightly conclude in their closing chapter, the disruptions discussed in this volume mean one thing for certain: ‘how we do our work, our notion of what constitutes the workplace, and the role of HRM has changed forever’. The disruptions discussed in this volume mean that advances will be made by new lines of scholarship and ongoing practical experimentation in how work is organised, thereby reinvigorating HRM and development and, ideally, attracting new talent to carry the field forward.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the foresight of Niall Kennedy in supporting this handbook and giving us the opportunity to develop this great project. We are also extremely grateful to our chapter authors for their contributions and insights.

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Introduction: Work, Workplaces and Human Resource Management in a Disruptive World

*Peter Holland, Timothy Bartram, Thomas Garavan
and Kirsteen Grant*

This Handbook is premised on the idea that Human Resource Management (HRM) increasingly operates within a context characterised by dynamism, complexity and disruption (Bartram and Cooke, 2021; Claus, 2019). For example, a recent White Paper by the World Economic Forum (2019) ‘HR4.0: Shaping People Strategies in the Fourth Industrial Revolution’ pointed to its impacts in blurring the lines between people and technology and resulting in a fusion of the physical, digital and biological worlds. Inevitably, this revolution has important implications for work, workplaces and HRM practices, and it provides the impetus and motivation to produce this Handbook and take a critical look at what these changes mean for people, work, employment and the types of HRM approaches and practices that fit this new dynamic context. While reports such as those produced by the World Economic Forum are useful, they do not engage with the complexities of these changes and implications for HRM scholars and practitioners. It is these issues that we consider in the three distinct sections of this Handbook. The Handbook seeks to be innovative, practical and forward thinking in conceptualising and theorising HRM in rapidly changing and uncertain local and global environments. We hope the Handbook will act as a catalyst to encourage discussion and debate on the topics we explore in the chapters that follow. In this introduction, we first provide a brief overview of the key forces leading to disruption. We then summarise the chapters and the main themes included in each one.

Dimensions of Work, Workplaces and HRM Disruption

Disruption can be viewed within the lens of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which highlights demographic changes, technology and globalisation as key drivers of disruption (Li et al., 2021; Poloz, 2021). To provide a backdrop to the chapters included in this Handbook, we provide a brief overview of four drivers of disruption.

Demographic Change

It is generally accepted that the population pyramids of the world are changing at a dramatic rate with a major upward trend in longevity (World Bank, 2017). Demographic change is viewed as a major megatrend which has important consequences for HRM, how work is viewed and the nature and design of workplaces. Gratton and Scott (2016), for example, have suggested that the three-stage view of life that prevailed in the twentieth century is no longer viable or relevant. In addition to major changes in longevity, additional demographic factors are also in play. For example, there is very compelling evidence of major change in the multi-cultural composition of the workplace. Grubb (2017), in an important book on the clash of the generations, highlighted these employees and workers increasingly expect diversity, inclusion, belonging and support, and that a fundamental component of talent attraction will be the capacity of employers to provide a meaningful workplace and provide employees with the scope to be authentic. Increasingly, four different generations of employees are working together side by side, bringing additional complexities for HRM. The other compelling and pressing demographic issue concerns gender inequality with major and persistent inequality evident across the world (Kulik, 2021) with many commentators suggesting that the gap has widened as result of COVID-19 (Jenkins, 2020). These demographic features present major opportunities, as well as challenges for organisations in managing the workforce arising from the interaction of age, gender, ethnicity, language and migration status amongst other variables.

Globalisation, Climate Change and Use of Energy

Globalisation is one of the most pervasive issues highlighted in the context of work (Gouzoulis, 2021). This has given rise to major tensions between proponents of globalisation and those who propose de-globalisation (Williamson, 2021). Globalisation is blamed for a variety of world problems including inequality, unemployment, forced migration and underemployment (Bartram and Cooke, 2021). Claus (2019) has proposed that a variety of disruptive factors including the rise in populism, the increased number of autocratic regimes and the threat of terrorism have replaced notions of a unified global way of dealing with issues. Coupled with the issue of globalisation, the world faces major challenges arising from climate change with international bodies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2021) highlighting the burning platform that is the need to implement mitigation measures to halt the progress of climate change (Villo et al., 2020). The emergence of the low carbon energy revolution is calling for a new ecosystem that considers and integrates economic development with social progress and climate issues (KPMG, 2020). These changes will have major implications for HRM and its contribution to business performance in the context of business restructuring, green and sustainable HRM, and environmental awareness (Paulet et al., 2021).

Technology, Digital Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Debates around technology and in particular cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), deep learning global network platforms, and robotics and machine learning are pervasive within the HRM literature and a key component of Industry 4.0 (Holland et al., 2021). AI is fast becoming a key part of how organisations operate, and the evidence indicates that it has the capacity to outperform humans in many areas. Therefore, organisations are increasingly replacing the work undertaken by humans and making use of algorithms, robots and computers (Bartram and Cooke, 2021; Hinssen, 2017). Some researchers have gone so far as to propose that a significant amount of the work performed by humans can be displaced by technology where it does not involve creativity, empathy, and lateral and cross-domain thinking and planning. It is generally agreed that these activities are not well suited to technology (Lee, 2017). Others highlight the phenomenon of the hollowing out of jobs, whereby jobs become concentrated at the very low and high skills levels with very little in the middle (Duggan et al., 2020; Gratton and Scott, 2016). One consequence of technology is the emergence of the gig economy characterised by short contracts and significant job insecurity.

Global Pandemics

Prognosticators and academics are forecasting that global pandemics will increasingly feature on the horizon (Stefan et al., 2021). Their impact will likely be exacerbated due to the intensity of globalisation and the high levels of inter-connectivity that characterises the world in which we now operate (Del Angel et al., 2021; Van Damme et al., 2020). One of the interesting features of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it brought technology to the centre of things. For example, it enabled remote working and working from home to occur on a worldwide scale (Kossek et al., 2021). Many commentators expect that remote working will become part of the new normal post COVID-19 (Leroy et al., 2021). Most commentators agree that the world was not prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic and that preparedness for these events will be an important aspect of the global agenda going forward.

The Structure of the Handbook

Given the fundamental changes that we have outlined above and the challenges that they present for HRM, we believe it is timely to take a fresh look at the terrain of HRM and engage in debates about what these disruptive forces mean for different HRM, practices and issues. Our central argument is that these disruptive influences call for a fundamental rethink in the way HR scholars and organisations think about work, workplaces, employment and HRM practices.

To bring a sense of coherence to the issues that we present, we have divided the Handbook into three sections: HRM Practices; Human Resource Development (HRD) Practices and Emerging Debates and Issues in HRM and HRD. We are fortunate to have some of the leading scholars in HRM, HRD and related fields share their perspectives and engage in debates concerning how HRM and HRD will evolve to address these disruption challenges.

Part 1: Human Resource Management Contexts and Practices

Part 1 of the Handbook contains 12 chapters that address HRM in different contexts and the application of HRM practices to address important organisational priorities. In Chapter 1, *HRM in Emerging Economies*, Frank Horwitz and Fang Lee Cooke address HRM in emerging markets with a specific focus on Asian and African contexts. They utilise institutional, cross-cultural and contingency perspectives to address technological disruption and its impact on employment standards and HRM. In Chapter 2 *Employee Relations, Unionisation and the Future of HRM*, Melanie Simms focuses on the changing nature of capitalism and its implications for workers and organisations. She argues that despite the assumption that de-collectivisation of employment is beneficial to employers, this is not the case in some areas of HRM with significant downsides for employers, workers and society. In Chapter 3 *Technology in HR Functions: Core Systems, Emerging Trends and Algorithmic Management*, Stefan Jooss, James Duggan and Emma Parry argue that while technology continues to shape how we work and manage our workforce, the human resource (HR) function often lags other business functions when it comes to the implementation of technologies. This chapter explores the core HR systems that underpin many HR practices and processes, emerging trends around the use of advanced technology and the role of algorithmic management in elevating and shifting some of the functionality in HR. In Chapter 4 *HRM and Multinational Corporations*, Prita Dasgupta, Ronan Carbery and Anthony McDonnell review HRM in the very important organisational context of MNCs and outline some of the important debates about differentiating global, international and comparative HRM. They review the organisation of the HRM function in MNCs and focus on how these organisations implement HRM practices. Specific emphasis is given to debates around the transfer of HRM practices across subsidiaries. In Chapter 5 *HRM in Small and Medium Enterprises*, Brian Harney and Ciara Nolan review the literature on the significance of HRM in SMEs and argue that this context is generally neglected despite its significant socioeconomic impact. The chapter gives significant attention to the key determinants of HRM in SMEs and the need to disaggregate SMEs as a category in addition to exploring the impacts of digitisation on the development and implementation of HRM in these organisations.

In the next set of chapters in this section, the focus shifts to considering how and why HRM contributes to several important organisational goals. In Chapter 6 *Human Resource Management, Innovative Work Behaviour, Incremental and Radical Innovation: Inspirational Vision or Aspirational Rhetoric*, Cliodhna MacKenzie, Alma McCarthy, Michael Morley and Thomas Garavan review the

literature and findings on the contribution of HRM to incremental and radical innovation including the innovative behaviours of employees. They highlight the mixed findings and underscore the imperative of innovation as key to future business competitiveness. In Chapter 7 *HRM, Leadership, and Knowledge Management: Never the Twain Shall Meet*, Thomas Garavan, Kirsteen Grant, Colette Darcy, Fergal O'Brien and Nicholas Clarke argue that there is an urgent need to integrate HRM research with research on leadership and knowledge management because by focusing on HRM without at least one of the other organisational processes does HRM a disservice. All three areas of investigation have their strengths and weaknesses, however each one has taken significant strides and made progress in developing a knowledge base on how to effectively manage people in organisations to achieve competitive advantage. In Chapter 8 *Sustainable HRM and Organisational Sustainability*, Andrew Bratton and Renee Paulet address HRM in the context climate change and the global pandemic and propose that HRM needs to reposition itself to better contribute to a sustainable workplace. The chapter then outlines how sustainable HRM practices can be applied in organisations, and they outline important dimensions of this sustainable approach including the issue of employee voice. In Chapter 9 *HRM and Inclusive Workplaces*, Jared Haar, Maree Roche and Azka Ghafoor make the case for the role of HRM in achieving more inclusive workplaces. They give specific emphasis to how HRM can better equip organisations to manage the needs of a global and diverse workforce with focus given to different approaches to managing differences through diversity management and inclusion. In Chapter 10 *The Potential for HRM to Innovate to Support Employees with Disability and Mental Health Challenges*, Jillian Cavanagh, Ying Wang, Hannah Meacham, Louise Byrne and Timothy Bartram shift focus to consider the role of HRM in the context of managing disability including those with lived experiences of mental health. The chapter reviews the issues around inclusion of workers with disabilities and the criticality of HRM in addressing mental health issues. In Chapter 11 *A Balanced Approach to Wellbeing at Work*, Safa Riaz and Keith Townsend give prominence to the issue of wellbeing at work and the role that HRM can play in this context. They review the literature on how HRM has evolved to address employee wellbeing issues, the role of specific HRM policies and practices in this context, and the gaps in research that need to be addressed to better balance the literature. The final chapter in Part 1, Chapter 12 *Sustainable HR Careers in an Era of Disruption: A Provocation*, Claire Gubbins and Thomas Garavan engage with the impact on disruptions on the careers of HR professionals and practitioners. They argue that HR professionals may not know how to deal with these disruptions and that HR research on disruptions is insufficient to help them, leading to HR careers that are unsustainable.

Part 2: Human Resource Development Processes and Practices

Part 2 of the Handbook contains eight chapters that address HRD processes and practices. In Chapter 13, *Critical HRD: Challenges and Prospects*, Ciaran McFadden and Laura Bierema call for HRD to take a more critical approach to

better understanding the role of HRD processes and practices in contemporary organisations. In Chapter 14 *Leveraging Technology to Design and Deliver HRD*, Elizabeth Bennett engages with the concept of virtual HRD and argues for its place in the context where technology in organisations will be more integrated, learning-focused and knowledge ecology-oriented as constructed virtual environments rather than one-off digital tools. In Chapter 15 *HRD, Professions and Precarious Workers*, Valerie Anderson focuses on the emergence of precarious work and corporate professionalism as features of the modern organisation. The chapter engages with the extent to which HRD theory and practice is a good fit with this context. In Chapter 16 *Wicked Leadership Development for Wicked Problems*, Brian Howieson and Kirsteen Grant engage with the role of leadership in the context of a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) world and debate the development and training issues that arise from this context. The chapter debates dominant leadership paradigms and proposes a sociological perspective and the importance of wicked leadership development. In Chapter 17 *Developing an International Workforce*, Hussain Alhedji, Britta Heidl and Christine Cross address the development issues that arise in the context of an international workforce. They discuss the challenges in developing an international talent pool and evaluate different issues and approaches that organisations can use to achieve this important development task. In Chapter 18 *Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programmes: A Lifespan Development Perspective*, Thomas Garavan, Fergal O'Brien, Clare Power, Gerri Matthews-Smith and Joan Buckley evaluate the contribution of entrepreneurship education and training programmes to the development of entrepreneurs in different educational settings. The authors emphasise the need to think about development through a lifespan lens and develop entrepreneurs across the lifespan. In Chapter 19 *Human Resource Development, Careers and Employability in an Era of Disruption*, Siti Raba'ah Hamzah, Siti Nur Syuhada Musa, Roziyah Mohd Rasdi and Nordahlia Umar Baki explore the challenges that rise for HRD from new conceptualisations of career and the need to develop employability in the context of global workforce. They explore and evaluate the different ways in which HRD interventions can help. In Chapter 20 *Implicit Bias Training is Dead, Long Live Implicit Bias Training: The Evolving Role of Human Resource Development in Combatting Implicit Bias within Organisations*, Ciaran McFadden evaluates the effectiveness of implicit bias training in a disruptive context and highlights the need to rebrand and reinvent it to fit the new world of work. The chapter engages with several theoretical and practical implications of this shift in emphasis.

Part 3: Emerging Issues for HRM and HRD

Part 3 of the Handbook contains 11 chapters that address significant emerging issues that have major implications for HRM and HRD practice. In Chapter 21 *Global HRM in a Post-COVID World*, Chris Brewster and Washika Haak-Saheem take a big picture perspective and argue that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many of the environmental changes taking place in

the external environment of organisations. They highlight the relevance of these factors for managing an international workforce and explore and evaluate several changes such as remote working and the role of international workers. In Chapter 22 *The Ethics of HRM: An Impossible Position*, Justine Ferrer, Wahed Wahe-duzzaman and Peter Holland explore another pressing issue that is concerned with the ethics of HRM. They specifically engage with the notion of ethical decision-making and explore its relevance in the context of both a strategic and sustainable HRM approach. In Chapter 23 *Crisis, Risk and HRM*, Cliodhna MacKenzie explores the critical challenges facing HRM and its future as a legitimate and credible partner and guardian to the business and its multi-stakeholder community, and the ramifications for HRM and HR professionals. The chapter casts a cold eye on the role of HRM in risk management and risk mitigation strategies and the ramifications for HR and considers whether the HR profession needs to adopt a more risk-based and governance-focused strategy moving forward. In Chapter 24 *Work Time, Place and Space in the 'New Normal'*, Daniel Wheatley explores the issues of work, time and space in the content of boarder technological and societal change. He engages with the concept of the 'new normal' and highlights how a variety of work, time and space issues will play out and their implications for HRM.

Three chapters in this section then bring technology to the fore and discuss its implications for HRM. In Chapter 25 *HRM and the Rise of Social Media*, Debora Jeske and Ken Shultz explore the role of social media in HRM and its place in e-HRM. The chapter identifies how social media plays an important role in HRM practices such as recruitment and selection, employee voice and corporate communication. It also reflects on the downsides of social media in the context of cybervetting. In Chapter 26 *Electronic Monitoring and Surveillance: The Balance between Insights and Intrusion*, Tse Leng Tham and Peter Holland evaluate the emergence of electronic monitoring and surveillance and highlight its place within the 'new normal'. This chapter gives particular attention to major issues within electronic monitoring including intrusion, data safety and how to balance insight with intrusion. In Chapter 27 *Employee Voice and Silence in the Digital Era*, Nadia Kougiannou and Peter Holland bring into focus the issues of employee voice and silence in the digital era. They give particular emphasis to exploring to the ways in which technology is impacting work communications voice use and silence. In Chapter 28 *When Employees Speak-Up: HRM Aspects of Whistleblowing*, Megan Van Portfliet, Muhammad Irfan and Kate Kenny consider the negative implications that emerge when whistleblowing goes badly, both from whistleblower and organisational perspectives. They discuss the intersection of HRM and whistleblowing and provide recommendations for how HRM can ensure that disclosures are encouraged and handled effectively, for both the whistleblower and organisation.

Three chapters then focus on the dark side of organisations and highlight the implications of several dark behaviours for HRM practices. In Chapter 29 *The Corrosive Workplace: The HRM Challenge*, Hannah Meacham, Peter Holland and Patricia Pariona-Cabrera interrogate the concept of the corrosive workplace, the emergence of workplace toxicity and the extent to which HRM facilitates or

inhibits these behaviours. The chapter gives prominence to the notion of the organisations as a ‘dark satanic mill’ and outlines a productive role for HRM on counteracting such work environments. In Chapter 30 *Emerging Forms of Discrimination in the Workplace: The Rise of Neo-discrimination*, Andrew Timming explores emerging forms of employment discrimination and in particular the concept of neo-discrimination. The chapter gives particular attention to the implications of discrimination for equality, diversity and inclusion research. Finally, in Chapter 31, *The Dark Triad, and The Significant Role of HRM*, Peter Holland and Lara Thynne investigate and evaluate the dark triad concept and provide insights into its dimensions. They then consider the role of HRM in this context and outline suggestions concerning how HRM practices may reduce the occurrence of dark triad dimensions in organisations.

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