Human Resource Management Journal

Special Issue CALL FOR PAPERS

HR/People Analytics and Human Resource Management

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With the rise of big data, digital technologies and the growing application of data science techniques (such as machine learning) to the HR field (Angrave, Charlwood, Kirkpatrick, Lawrence and Stuart, 2016; Edwards, 2019), the need for a specific HR specialism of People/HR Analytics has received increased attention (Kryscynski, et al, 2017; Minbaeva, 2017a). Such attention is not necessarily new (see Huselid and Becker, 2005; Lawler, Levenson and Boudreau, 2004), however, the last few years have witnessed considerable growth in interest in the area; including a number of recent books that discuss how social science analytic approaches can be applied to people/HR related data (e.g. Edwards and Edwards, 2016; Guenole, Ferrar and Feinzig, 2017).

Some authors have pointed out that despite the growth in interest in people/HR analytics, there are very few academic articles published on this subject (Marler and Boudreau, 2017). A recent flurry of papers on the topic have increased this academic narrative (e.g. Minbaeva, 2017a and 2017b; Kryscynski, et al., 2017); yet some (Van der Laken, 2018) have suggested that the HR academic community is resistant to publish applied people analytics articles as they may lack the theoretical focus generally expected with academic journals. Despite such arguments, if one restricts a search of people analytics articles to more specific narrowly focused people related questions (rather than broader "HR analytics"), example empirical studies can be identified where researchers have explored HR related data with research that can be considered as core people analytics projects. Importantly these draw on and provide theoretical insight.

Here we define a people analytics project as: a) a research project with a focus on answering an HR or people related business question within one or more organisation, and b) using data collected or stored in the organization relating to its employees. As examples of people analytics projects (that are not included in Marler and Boudreau's 2017) review, we point to Bidwell's (2011) piece that looked at the differential outcomes (e.g. turnover and performance ratings) of internal compared to external hires in a

financial services company. Also, Levenson, Van der Stede and Cohen, (2006) who explored the relationship between managerial competencies and performance and Madariaga, Oller, and Martori (2018) who explored (using discrete choice and survival analyses) the relationship between socioeconomic characteristics and turnover in a retailing company. Another notable example includes Ployhart, Weekley and Ramsey (2009) who explored relationships between unit level service climate and unit effectiveness.

Nonetheless, published HR analytics studies to date have covered only a narrow range of analysis possibilities. Studies tend to use variables within typical HRIS systems, apply classical statistical methods, and focus on explanation. Yet HR analytics also encompasses 'big data' sources characterized by volume and velocity, applies machine-learning methods emphasizing prediction, and includes interventions and evaluations. From this broader perspective, there is certainly much to be explored by academic HR analytics researchers. Importantly, the use of alternative approaches need not preclude the possibility of compelling theoretical contributions. Indeed, in other fields, researchers have even argued that use of big data tools and techniques may, in the end, lead to greater theoretical insight (Yarkoni and Westfall, 2017).

We invite papers that can help showcase novel, interesting and informative HR/people analytic projects; projects that that help answer HR related business questions. These projects will tend to be utilizing and analyzing existing people related data, ideally be using new analytic techniques to help answer HR related business questions.

Example research include:

- The application of machine learning to people related data
- The use of analytic techniques to help validate or evaluate the introduction of new HR initiatives
- Showing how combining different types and sources or data with an organization can help create new insights
- Using new analytic techniques to explore the business outcomes of alternative policy choices
- New and novel ways to analyze complex/rich stored qualitative information to help answer new HR related business questions
- Using new ways to analyze people related data that has been collected over many longitudinal waves
- New ways to use social network analyses on people related data within organizations
- The application of novel methodologies or research designs that allow us to understand the full potential of people analytics

In summary, the papers published in this special issue will contribute to our understanding of how new people analytics projects can provide new insights for both theory and practice.

Full papers should be submitted between 1 – 31 December 2019 at https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hrmj, indicating "People Analytics Projects" as the Special Issue. Please note that papers may not be submitted until 1 December 2019 and HRMJ will not be able to consider late submissions. The Special Issue will be published in 2021.

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Enquiries related to the online submission process should be directed to: HRMJ.journal@wiley.com.

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