SPECIAL ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS

Relevant, rigorous and reflective knowledge creation in HRM through scholar-stakeholder collaborative research

Submission Deadline Extended: 1 May-31-May

Guest Editors

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Important studies and commentaries in the HRM field have emphasized the need to increase the relevance of HRM research while maintaining high standards of academic rigor (e.g., Beer, 2019; Fleetwood and Hesketh, 2010; Harley, 2015; Huzzard and Björkman, 2012). Current research is indeed mostly performed and consumed by academics, and is sometimes driven by disciplinary concerns at the expense of both theoretical depth and practical relevance (e.g., Deadrick and Gibson, 2007, 2009; Yeung, 2011; DeNisi et al., 2014; Markoulli et al, 2017).

To increase both theoretical and practical contributions, several studies have invoked the use of scholar-practitioner collaborations (Amabile et al., 2001; Bartunek, 2007; Bartunek and Rynes, 2014; MacLean et al., 2002; Starkey et al., 2009) to inform the design of research objectives, the collection of data and/or the development of theoretical and practical contributions.

Academic-practitioner collaborations have taken different forms, including Mode 2 research (Gibbons et al., 1994), Engaged Scholarship (Van der Ven, 2007), and Design Science (Van Aken, 2005). Furthermore, they have informed different research methodologies - such as action research (Zhang et al., 2015) or intervention research (Radaelli et al., 2014). These diverse interpretations and methods share the same emphasis in that academic-practitioner collaborations, with appropriate rules and practices of mutual engagement, may allow (i) practitioners to inform scholars with relevant topics, problems and solutions; and (ii) academics to inform practitioners with a richer conceptual understanding and broader methodological arsenal.

Nevertheless, examples of empirical papers based on academic-practitioner collaborations remain scarce – especially in the HRM field. Most studies have remained either conceptual, to justify why collaborative methodologies are important (e.g., Beer, 2019; Harley, 2015); or methodological, to explain how such research methodologies can be best implemented (e.g., Guerci et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2015). The HRM field needs more empirical examples that show how academic-practitioner collaborations generate theoretical and practical contributions (Pasmore and Friedlander, 1982; Lindgren et al., 2004; Malhotra et al., 2019; Radaelli et al., 2015). As long as this debate remains conceptual or methodological, the uptake and prevalence of collaborative research methodologies will remain limited – which is ultimately a lost opportunity for the HRM field.

Expected contributions

Our special issue calls for *empirical studies* that have employed a collaborative research methodology in the HRM field. Our intention is to provide visibility to empirical applications of academic-practitioner collaborations that contribute to HRM theory and practice in original ways. By doing so, we hope to be a catalyst to discussions that will contribute to solving important practical problems related to managing people and the employment relationship. We invite contributions that:

- Describe a structured collaboration between scholars and practitioners in the design, collection and/or analysis of the research;
- Provide evidence of how the collaboration adds value to data collection, data analysis, theoretical development, and/or practical impact;
- Articulate the tactics and criteria used to preserve and evaluate the scientific rigor of the collaborative study;
- Provide a significant theoretical contribution in the field of HRM. Our special issue will not privilege a specific HRM topic or theory. However, to demonstrate the added value of collaborative research methodologies, the special issue will privilege submissions that develop a new contribution to HRM theory, rather than the application of well-known and already documented theories and models in new empirical contexts;
- Provide evidence of the practical impact of the study in the context of application.

Submission process

This special issue will implement an innovative submission and review process. HRMJ normally requires authors to submit a full manuscript (focused on theoretical contributions to the field and detailing the methodological approach adopted) along with brief practitioner notes (focused on how the study contributes to practice). The special issue requires three separate submissions:

Firstly, the authors are expected to **submit a full manuscript**, focused on the theoretical contribution to HRM research. This traditional output needs to follow the editorial guidelines of the *Human Resource Management Journal*.

Secondly, the authors are expected to **submit a short "practitioner account"**, which will be downloadable as online material associated with the paper. The authors are invited to provide a practical account of the relevance of the study from the perspective (or direct words) of the practitioners involved in the collaboration. The practitioner note needs to provide evidence of the practical relevance of the research. This cannot be longer than 500 words.

Thirdly, the authors are expected to **submit a "methodological note"**, which will be downloadable as online material associated with the paper. With the methodological note, we ask you to help the HRM community by providing tools and insights that could help future scholars to design and implement collaborative research methodologies with greater clarity and precision (Guerci et al., 2019). The methodological note might include templates for protocols, agreements, consent forms, participant information sheets; templates for data collection and analysis; and/or reviews of the collaborative research process, with noted strengths and weaknesses. There is no restriction on the word count.

Reviewing process

The full manuscript, the practitioner account and the methodological note need to be submitted together, and will all be reviewed. Each submission will be double-blind reviewed by at least two academic experts in the field and one HRM practitioner/stakeholder. This will allow evaluation of the scientific rigor, theoretical novelty, and practical relevance of the contribution – as well as the accessibility of the communication to non-academics. The reviewing process will

be based on relevance, rigor, and reflective collaborative research (Pasmore et al., 2008). Examples of key questions that will drive the reviewing process are: (i) Does the study describe why collaboration (scholarly-practitioner) is required or necessary or desirable? (ii) To what extent are the collaboration methods (both research and action) driven by the organization's needs and scholarly criteria? (iii) To what extent is the research design directed to meet the organization's needs as well as those of academic rigor? (iv) To what extent are the derived findings practically relevant and have the potential to add value by developing current practices already in use? (v) To what extent does the manuscript capture the collaborative process? (vi) To what extent does the manuscript capture the collaborative outcomes (both intended and unintended)?

Full papers should be submitted at https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hrmj. Please note that papers may be submitted **1 May– 31-May** and HRMJ will not be able to consider late submissions. The Special Issue will likely be published in **2022**.

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

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