

Looking Back to Look Forward: Disruption, Innovation and Future Trends in International Human Resource Management

Guest Editors:

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Background

In the international business (IB) field, Buckley et al. (2017) urged researchers to stay informed about important global phenomena by focusing on 'big questions' and 'grand challenges', encouraging a strong interdisciplinary approach. To answer this call, this special issue on international human resource management (IHRM), a field that lies precisely at the intersection of IB and human resource management, is designed to assemble articles that reflect on 'big questions' from the past decade to address current and future 'grand challenges'.

Looking back, when we compare popular IHRM research questions over the last decade with those of today, we can see that certain priorities have shifted dramatically while others remain steadfastly important. As identified in the 2011 *Society for Human Resource Management's* workplace forecast, some of the most popular trends during the early 2010s included demographic changes in the workforce, the importance of emerging markets (e.g., India, China, and Brazil), the need for cross-cultural competency, and increasing global competition for talent (Schramm et al., 2011). Echoing the aforementioned practitioner trends, we also saw the release of well-cited articles covering similar topics. For example, Festing and Schäfer (2014) highlighted the role of moderating generational effects in talent management on psychological contracts and subsequent attitudes and behaviors of employees. Thite et al. (2012) studied the global HRM strategies and practices of multinational corporations from emerging economies. Brannen and Peterson (2009) identified management interventions to promote cross-cultural integration in cross-border mergers and acquisitions. Moreover, multiple reviews and frameworks for studying global talent management emerged (e.g., Tarique and Schuler, 2010; Schuler et al., 2011).

Looking forward, countries globally have experienced 'grand challenges' as environmental uncertainty has increased (Farndale et al., 2019a), along with the rising pace of disruptive technologies such as big data (Bughin et al., 2010) and workforce automation (Frey and Osborne, 2017). Combined, there are issues of skill polarization whereby there is a lack of workers for high-skill jobs and a lack of jobs for low-skill workers in many countries globally (Dobbs et al., 2012). Additionally, multinationals continue to struggle with securing the highly sought-after global talent (Farndale et al., 2019b), frequently turning to self-initiated expatriates

that seem to face even more challenges in building local social ties than assigned expatriates (Kubovcikova and Van Bakel, 2021).

Most recently, as a consequence of these ‘grand challenges’, new topics have emerged in the IB and IHRM literatures. For example, the nature of the business environment in terms of its receptiveness to international managers has been researched through the lens of informal networks (guanxi, yongo, wasta, etc.). The role that local informal institutions and existing informal networks play in influencing the effectiveness of expatriates, independent of being assigned or self-initiated, is currently evolving (Guo et al., 2018; Horak and Yang, 2016). Moreover, aspects of gender inclusion and diversity management is a developing branch of informal network research placed at the intersection of IB and IHRM studies (Alsarhan et al., 2021; Georgiadou and Syed, 2021).

Today, the ‘grand challenge’ facing HRM is about helping both employees cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and businesses navigate the increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment (Caligiuri et al., 2020; Horak et al., 2019). The importance of these endeavors is well-captured by John M. Bremen, the managing director of human capital and benefits at Willis Towers Watson (as quoted in Harbert, 2021):

“The week that trillions of dollars of market value came out of the global economy because people could not work and consume and live normally—that really ended any debate over the value of HR to the enterprise. HR’s seat at the table was solidified permanently.”

This reaffirmation of HR’s importance has coincided with socioeconomic trends such as the Great Resignation (Cohen, 2021) and deglobalization (Farndale et al., 2021; Witt, 2019). At the same time, demographic change (Cascio, 2019), diversity management (Kirton, 2020), sustainability management (Stahl et al., 2020; Hameed et al., 2020), and virtual work (Caligiuri et al., 2020) have become more important than ever. For example, the role and organization of virtual work and working together in international virtual teams, has been regarded crucial for coordinating international business activities during COVID-19 and it is expected to remain relevant in a global post-COVID-19 business environment (Tavoletti et al., 2022).

Altogether, these global ‘grand challenges’ fall under what Ghauri et al. (2021) consider to be ‘the new realities’. Accordingly, this special issue is designed to answer the call for research on these new realities based on a historical reflection over the last decade. In doing so, we can together deliver key insights into the extant IB and IHRM research agenda while stimulating future interest to advance the fields.

Key Themes and Research Questions for the Special Issue

To help lay the groundwork for future IHRM research, this special issue seeks submissions that address the challenges of the past decade as well as projecting how these might stimulate understanding for future IHRM research. We invite papers that expand theory and empirical evidence on the following and related research questions:

- Is deglobalization a ‘thing’ in international HRM either now or in the future?
- What has the last decade taught us about ethics and corporate social responsibility in the globalization of work?
- What responses are we observing in IHRM to ongoing crises, uncertainty, and risk in many countries globally?
- What roles do digitalization and technological disruption play in IHRM?

- How have national institutional and/or cultural environments pertaining to HRM changed over the last decade and how might they continue to evolve?
- How has the study of HRM in emerging markets advanced from the early research in these markets a decade ago?
- How are multinational corporations approaching strategic IHRM in an increasingly uncertain global environment?
- How has the turbulence of the last decade affected expatriate management and global careers and what does this mean for the future?
- What might IHRM look like in a post-pandemic world?
- Has the volatility of the last decade helped or hindered our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in different national settings?
- Is global talent management a thing of the past as nations become more inward-looking and virtual work more the norm?
- What roles has global leadership played in guiding the IHRM landscape over the last decade and what might these roles look like for the future?
- What is IHRM's role concerning Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investment?
- Has increased environmental uncertainty promoted or reduced the organizational focus on high-performance work systems in different national settings?
- What has the last decade taught us about the aging population and generational challenges in different national settings?

Deadline, Submission Process and Workshop

The submission deadline is 1 October 2022. Manuscripts can be submitted through the IBR online submission system (<https://www.editorialmanager.com/ibr>) from 1 September until 1 October 2022 only. They should follow the IBR guidelines: <https://www.elsevier.com/journals/international-business-review/0969-5931/guide-for-authors>. All submissions will go through double-blind review.

Any queries regarding the special issue can be directed to the guest editors: Elaine Farndale (euf3@psu.edu), Sven Horak (horaks@stjohns.edu), Rakoon Piyanontalee (rbp5475@psu.edu), or Maja Vidović (maja.vidovic@croatia.rit.edu).

To help authors develop and improve their papers, the editors will organize a manuscript development workshop during the 5th *Global Conference on International Human Resource Management*, which will be held on 19-21 May 2022. Further details are available here: <https://ler.la.psu.edu/cihrs/IHRMconference>. We aim to publish this special issue in 2024.

About the Guest Editors

Elaine Farndale (Ph.D.) is Professor of Human Resource Management and Director of the School of Labor and Employment Relations, Pennsylvania State University (USA), where she is also Founder and Director of the Center for International Human Resource Studies. Elaine's research focuses primarily on international human resource management, strategic HRM, and HRM and performance. She has published widely from her international collaborations in both the practitioner and top-ranked academic press, and has served as an elected member of the Academy of Management HR Division Executive Committee, Co-Editor for Routledge's Global HRM Series, Co-Editor-in-Chief for Human Resource Management Journal, and Associate

Editor for Human Resource Management and International Journal of Human Resource Management. Elaine completed her Ph.D. at Cranfield School of Management (UK) and worked previously as an HR specialist for several years.

Sven Horak (Ph.D.) is an Associate Professor of Management and Director of the Global Management Program (MSc) at The Peter J. Tobin College of Business at St. John's University in New York City. Sven works in the broad field of global management and organization, specializing in informal networking, leadership, and ethics. He held numerous visiting positions at institutions such as The University of Tokyo, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, Korea University, and the Pennsylvania State University, among others. He has been leading and participating in consulting and research projects for the European Commission and other public and private institutions. Sven holds a Ph.D. from the Mercator School of Management of the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany, where he has been a post-doctoral fellow at the Graduate School 1613 on Risk and East Asia funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Rakoon Piyanontalee (Ph.D.) is an assistant research professor with the Center for International Human Resource Studies in the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the Pennsylvania State University (USA). His research examines the impact of HRM practices on teams, units, and organizational outcomes. In particular, Rakoon's dissertation examined the relationship between bonus pay and voluntary turnover and how this relationship depends on the time period of observation. Rakoon has presented his works in and served as a reviewer for conferences such as the Academy of Management Annual Meeting and the Annual People & Organizations Conference at Wharton. Before joining Penn State, Rakoon received his Ph.D. in Management from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He also worked in HR recruitment and organizational development in Bangkok, Thailand.

Maja Vidović (Ph.D.) is a Senior Lecturer at RIT Croatia and an Adjunct Lecturer at The Pennsylvania State University, USA. She previously held positions as a Postdoctoral Scholar, and later as an Assistant Teaching Professor, both with the Center for International Human Resource Studies in the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the Pennsylvania State University (USA). Her research and teaching are focused on the area of Human Resource Management in general, and International HRM specifically. Maja obtained her B.Sc., M.Sc., and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business, with all three degrees focusing on HRM. Maja has been a member of organizing committees for several scientific conferences, both in Croatia as well as in the US, and is the author of a dozen book chapters and many scientific papers.

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