

HRM 4.0 for Human-Centered Organizations

Guest Editors

Barbara Imperatori

Rita Bissola

Federico Butera

Domenico Bodega

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan

Digitization is a disruptive innovation that opens up new business and social opportunities, while at the same time it challenges traditional job design. These challenges require that both people and organization change. Workers should develop new competencies and capabilities, from technological expertise and data analysis capabilities to essential social and emotional skills as well as creative skills (Colbert et al., 2016). This requires organizations to redesign their structures and processes (Kane et al., 2016).

In many ways, we may think these developments as positive ones.

Industry 4.0 is changing the relationship between workers and machines. What employees used to do is increasingly being done by machines: more and more humdrum and 'dull' activities will be performed by machines, while human tasks will be characterized by growing autonomy and empowerment at decreasing costs (Holland & Bardoel, 2016).

The 4.0 revolution is also changing the time and space of work: smart working, agile working, new virtual production are only few examples of a new way of design work enabling a better work and life balance for a wider group of employees, as well as, a more efficient way of designing work, assigning clear goals and giving real-time feedback that sustain continuous development and motivation (Sonnentag et al., 2008).

On the other hand, both research and practice suggest some potential downsides.

Detractors of the 4.0 revolution prophesy that smart machines will replace human work, and that this will happen not only for routine activities, causing an unprecedented job loss and more precarious work arrangements. There are in fact evidence that the possibilities of automation will include cognitive tasks too, thus leading to the worrying question of whether the number of new jobs will be as large as the ones replaced by robots and what will be the jobs where humans will excel. This will in any case force organizations to redefine and continuously change the architecture of their management practices. Machines are influencing the quality of social interaction toward isolation and segregation (Turkle, 2011), causing difficulties to separate work and non-work domain, stress, and burnout (Butts et al., 2015) and negatively impacting on individual creativity and critical thinking (Jackson et al., 2001).

This challenging scenario represents a tremendous chance for the HRM domain. It provides stimuli to develop a positive social change and to develop and adopt new digital systems and innovative organization solutions. HRM professionals can help business leaders and employees shift to the 4.0 mind-set, digital ways of managing, organizing, and leading change. To face this opportunity, HRM 4.0 needs to collaborate with IT, spread an agile mind-set to perform projects, adopt design thinking, and use integrated analytics. It represents a new world for HRM, potentially opening up new career opportunities and transforming the impact that HRM has on people, business and society at large (Strohmeier & Parry, 2014; Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016).

In order to seize these opportunities, the HRM department needs to focus on non-routine, evidence-based, science-inspired, creative, and value-added tasks.

Rigorous conceptual and empirical research that are relevant to organizational settings is called for. Contributions submitted may include, but are not restricted to, the following **topics**:

Humans and work design in the 4.0 era

Organization 4.0, flexible workplace, agile and smart working

Work, creativity, and technology

Design thinking and co-design

Virtual and augmented reality, collaboration, cooperation and team

Ethics and industry 4.0

Emotions, wellbeing and health in industry 4.0

Research methodologies and methods for understanding work and organization 4.0

Humans and HRM in the 4.0 era

Conceptualization of electronic and digital HRM and their relationships with Strategic HRM

Changes in HRM requirements and competences for HRM 4.0

Applications of the Internet of Things and cloud-based approaches to HRM

Big Data and people analytics

HRM 4.0 and international business

Sustainability and HRM 4.0

Social media, social learning and HRM

HRM 4.0, work engagement and individual performance

Submission and review process

- **Extended deadline** for full paper submission (in English): **February 28, 2019**.
- Manuscript should be **8,000 words** (maximum) in length, including abstract, tables, figures and references
- Original manuscript can be uploaded through the journal website (<http://ojs.francoangeli.it/ojs/index.php/so/about/submissions>)
- Submitted manuscript will go through the standard peer review process of the journal.

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