

## Special Issue Call for Papers

# New Organizational Forms, Business Model Innovation, and Human Resource Management

**Submission deadline: 15 October 2022**

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### Background:

Successful pioneers who embraced new business models, such as Grab and Airbnb, have transformed today's business landscape (Gerwe and Silva, 2020). As defined by Teece (2010, p. 179), a business model is how an entity articulates "the logic, the data and other evidence that support a value proposition for the customer and a viable structure of revenues and costs" for the entity delivering that value. Zott and Amit (2007) classify two generic types of business model design. One is a novelty-centred business model that aims to create new markets or innovate transactions in an existing market. The other is an efficiency-centred business model with a focus on transaction cost reduction. Along this line of research, recent work in business model research contributes to new knowledge that advances various domains of management and organizational research. For instance, it challenges the available international business theories built upon the assumption of tangible resource flow and physical barriers and offers fresh insights into how business model design can bypass national boundaries, create new market opportunities worldwide and integrate global value chains (cf. Nambisan, Zahra, and Luo, 2019). Similarly, it broadens the scope of strategic

management research by demonstrating how multiple business design elements (e.g., asset-lightness, modularity, and transferability) can interact to create market value (cf. Jiang *et al.*, 2021).

With the emerging recognition of new business models in shaping the nature and structure of the business context, scholars are now advocating business model innovation to bolster the sustained performance of organizations (e.g., Zott and Amit, 2007). Unfortunately, such advancements, largely originated from business strategy research, do not highlight and at times even purposefully ignore the role of human resources (HR) in new business model design and operation. This omission is unfortunate because, from a theoretical point of view, the fields of human resource management (HRM) and innovation largely remain as two disciplinary silos despite ongoing calls for integration (e.g., Amarakoon *et al.*, 2016; Shipton *et al.*, 2016). From a practical point of view, it is through mobilizing employees' knowledge, skills and motivation via a range of HRM policies and practices that enact innovative business models for value creation and delivery (Bornay-Barrachina *et al.*, 2012; Scarbrough, Robertson and Swan, 2015).

In this Special Issue, we advocate a more integrated understanding of HRM and new business models and assert that human resources play a critical role in the development of new business models and innovations. For novelty-centred business models, there has been a long discussion among HR researchers on how managing human resources improves employee creativity (e.g., Zhou and George, 2001) and business innovation performance (e.g., Shipton *et al.*, 2006; Wang and Shyu, 2009). Also, in relation to efficiency-centred business models, Jiang and colleagues (2021) suggest that sharing economy firms with light assets (e.g., employing a smaller number of employees) incur much less cost and lower resource requirements, which thus lead to higher performance. In other words, managing assets more efficiently, including human assets, can be a critical factor of transaction cost reduction.

Acknowledging the “human” elements involved in new organizational forms and explicating the relation between HRM and business model innovation also help management and organizational research to capture niche players. Specifically, along with technological development in big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, new business model design increasingly relies on algorithms (Zott and Amit, 2010). Algorithms and the associated rulemaking have dramatically changed the HR landscape (Cheng and Hackett, 2021). One type of labour-related business

model—the gig economy—heavily relies on unique algorithms to precisely match job providers with clients on a job-by-job basis. For example, labour-based sharing economy firms (i.e., Uber, TaskRabbit, Ola) built an on-demand platform (or software), which enables individuals to freelance their skills and expertise on the one hand (Jiang *et al.*, 2021), but also allow these firms to simultaneously analyse HRM practices and outcomes on the other (Cheng and Hackett, 2021). There is no doubt that these HRM algorithms can benefit businesses in multiple aspects, such as offering a dynamic and flexible workforce, access to a wider range of talent, and productivity increases, especially for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, criticism also arises towards using algorithms to manage HR. For instance, Walsh (2019) warns that once gig workers rely on platforms or their associated algorithms to complete assigned jobs, they would have already lost all work-related benefits, such as promotion, development, and wider career planning. What is more, each algorithm upgrade can make these gig workers even more unequal in the virtualized and boundaryless workplace.

In the future of work and intelligence, the emergence of new organizational forms poses new challenges and opportunities to business model design, innovation, and HRM. Regarding industry-specific characteristics, some industries are easily replaced by AI due to the repetitive nature of the work, such as banking, insurance, and production line, while other industries are more nuanced involving human emotion, such as counselling and psychological therapy, etc. The question is how to design new organizational forms and HRM systems where human action and algorithms interact and co-evolve effectively, efficiently, and sustainably. Against the background of COVID-19, social distancing measures and homeworking necessitate new ways of organizing human action, business activities, and HRM. Furthermore, the future of work is dependent on improved international talent management. It hinges on the rational choices and decision-making of humans at the point at which AI and the individual employee interact. The key question is how to program the algorithm such that it can make reasonable, fair, just, and transparent decisions that may enable or constrain the paradigm shift for talent management.

## **Aims and Scope**

This special issue serves three purposes. First, we call for our scholarly community to contribute new insight into the intertwined relations between new business models, innovation, and HRM. Second, we invite scholars to advance our knowledge on the role of HR in engaging with new business models, including, but not limited to, newly emerging digital firms. Third, we expect a set of contributions that enrich our limited understanding of the impact of HRM algorithms on new organizational forms and their performance consequences at the firm, team, and employee levels.

## **Topics of Interest**

In this regard, this special issue aims to bring together theoretical and empirical advancements in relation to algorithm development, new business models, innovation, and the future of HRM. We seek both theoretical and empirical papers, as well as literature reviews and meta-analyses, including interdisciplinary and intersectoral research that may address the following list of potential research questions across our major themes, among others:

### *Theme 1: Engaging HR in New Business Models*

- How do human resources or HRM functions contribute to the design and/or implementation of new business models?
- What are the boundary conditions when HRM engages in new business model design and implementation?
- What experiences or comparisons worldwide can we leverage to improve our understanding of how HR might engage in new business models?
- What can entrepreneurs, business leaders, and firm managers do in terms of managing the interaction between employees and new business models?
- Why and how can new talent management practices and policies emerge in new business models?

### *Theme 2: Managing HR within New Business Models*

- Compared with traditional business models, how do firms cope with new challenges in managing employees of new business models?

- Is the shared workforce a strategic approach to managing human resources in organizations? Why and how can this approach succeed or fail?
- How do firms redefine the HRM function in a new business model? What are potential new threats in contrast to managing traditional business operations? How do firms leap forward by using new ways of managing employees?
- How do employees or teams attribute HRM-related policies and practices in the context of e-businesses or i-businesses? How do employees or teams attribute digitalized HRM in new business models (e.g., selection, training, motivation, remuneration, and performance appraisal)? What are the performance consequences of the HRM attribution process in the context of new business models?
- How can we cultivate talent in emerging organizational forms and new business models?

*Theme 3: Algorithms and HRM*

- What new theoretical perspectives can be introduced to explain the interaction between algorithms and HRM functions (e.g., screening, selection, training, retention, and strategic reward)?
- How do we unpack the “glass boxes” between HRM algorithms and firm performance consequences?
- To what extent do HRM algorithms affect employee performance outcomes (i.e., intention to leave, job burnout, job satisfaction, subjective well-being) during the process of being managed by these algorithmic rules?
- How does employee voice or the code of ethical conduct affect the application of HRM algorithms in a workplace?
- What types of talent do we need for the future of work and intelligence? A high-skilled workforce or low-skilled one, or both? And why?

**Special Issue Workshop:**

To facilitate revisions of selected papers, the authors of several submitted papers to this special issue will be invited to a special issue paper development workshop (PDW), which will be held in Jun 2023 either online or at one of the locations of the international conference (To be advised). One author per paper, which will be under

revision and resubmission, will be invited to make a presentation at the PDW. There is no fee for attending this PDW. Guest editors and the *BJM* editorial board members will give the presenters constructive comments on developing their papers under R&R. Participation in the PDW is not obligatory and can be done remotely in the event of continued COVID19 travel restrictions. The presentation does not guarantee the acceptance of the presenters' papers.

### **Submission Process and Deadlines**

- Submission: 15 October 2022
- Authors should ensure they adhere to the journal author guidelines which are available at: [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1467-8551/homepage/ForAuthors.html](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1467-8551/homepage/ForAuthors.html). Submissions should be uploaded to the *BJM* ScholarOne Manuscripts site at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bjm>. Authors should select 'special issue paper' as the paper type, ensure they answer 'yes' to the question 'Is this submission for a special issue?' and enter the title of the special issue in the box provided.
- Papers will be reviewed according to *BJM* double-blind review process, and the Special Issue is likely to be published in early 2024.
- We welcome informal enquiries relating to the Special Issue, proposed topics, and potential fit with the Special Issue objectives. Please direct any questions on the Special Issue to one of the Guest Editors: Dr Di Fan ([dfan@swin.edu.au](mailto:dfan@swin.edu.au)); Dr Yipeng Liu ([yipeng.liu@henley.ac.uk](mailto:yipeng.liu@henley.ac.uk)); Dr Vikas Kumar ([vikas.kumar@sydney.edu.au](mailto:vikas.kumar@sydney.edu.au)); Dr Andrew Timming ([andrew.timming@rmit.edu.au](mailto:andrew.timming@rmit.edu.au)), and Dr Heidi Neck ([hneck@babson.edu](mailto:hneck@babson.edu)).

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