Call for Papers

Virtual Work in a Global World:
Consequences and Perspectives for HRM

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Emerging trends and global disruptions, such as digitalization (Benitez et al., 2023), the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in HRM and the world of work (Budhwar et al., 2022; Malik et al., 2023a), and the COVID-19 pandemic (Caligiuri et al., 2020) have fundamentally changed how we approach and organize work (Kaiser et al., 2022). Organizations around the world now rely less on face-to-face exchanges between employees and more on virtual forms of collaboration, subsumed under terms such as "remote," "hybrid", and "technology-enabled" work (Gibson et al., 2021; Selmer et al., 2022; Benitez et al., 2023) or "telework/commuting", "working from home", and "smart" work (Schaefer et al., 2023). In this mode of work, different entities (e.g., individuals, teams, and organizations) collaborate on a common task within or across countries by solely leveraging technology-mediated communication (Nurmi & Hinds, 2016; Raghuram et al., 2019), including the use of a range of AI-enabled technology-mediated knowledge sharing platforms (Malik et al., 2023b). Virtual collaboration may take different forms, such as virtual teams (Blay et al., 2024), freelancing, gig work (Lehdonvirta et al., 2019), and offshoring arrangements (Leonardi & Bailey, 2008) to conduct virtual work for standard and non-standard modes of employment.

However, there are multiple boundaries to which these entities are subject when working virtually. First, virtual work occurs in different *contexts*. The macroenvironment can have differential implications for virtual work (Taras et al., 2019; Taras et al., 2024). The country environment (e.g., institutions, laws and regulations, cultural context, and economic conditions; Lehdonvita et al., 2019; Qui & Dauth, 2021), the digital environment (e.g., platforms and infrastructure; Cummings et al., 2009), and the global environment (e.g., migration and crises; Sanul, 2022) act as exogenous factors affecting virtual work. Furthermore, virtual work may be exposed to polycontextual environments (Tsui et al., 2017), resulting in multiple contextual factors affecting entities simultaneously. This creates new situations for HRM in terms of recruitment and job design (including workplace and employment contracts).

Second, emerging *digital technologies* (e.g., AI and virtual reality; Recker et al., 2021; Budhwar et al., 2022; Prikshat et al., 2023) are changing the nature of virtual work around the world (Benitez et al., 2023). Additionally, virtuality is also evidenced in the diverse nature of HR and workforce ecosystems that organizations have started to employ for sourcing talent (Snell et al., 2023). Given the disparities in the speed and scale of digitalization across or within countries (Srinivasan & Eden, 2021), these technologies can pose challenges to workers or organizations by increasing risks related to bias, misuse, misinformation, insensitivity, privacy, ethical dilemmas, security (Budhwar et al., 2023), and well-being (Wendsche et al., 2021). HRM should consider the legal and ethical challenges when working with new digital technologies used and applied by different global entities. In this way, there is a new need to find appropriate HR strategies to support employees with these technologies, also considering the diversity of the workforce (in terms of age or culture) and fostering their inclusion.

Third, *people* play a key role in virtual work in a global world (Gilch & Sieweke, 2020). Research has found various characteristics such as competencies and personal characteristics (Davaei et al., 2022) or digital technical skills (Benitez et al., 2018; Tavcar et al., 2005) relevant to virtual work among individuals and teams. However, the increasing use of virtual work requires additional knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). Given the rapid advancements in technology, the role of emerging KSAs such as digital technical intelligence (Makarius & Larson, 2017) or resilience (Davies et al., 2019) is becoming increasingly important. This warrants further exploration to improve our understanding of the need for new HRM development approaches that train entities involved in virtual work in global contexts.

In this Special Issue we aim to advance knowledge about navigating virtual work globally to improve individual, team, and organizational experiences and performances. Cross-contextual comparisons (e.g., cross-country comparisons) or examinations of virtual work within specific contexts (within specific organizations, within specific industries, or single country studies among others) are all welcome. Contributions could address the following or similar questions – but are not limited to these:

- How does virtual work challenge HRM practices in a global context?
- How does the macroenvironment affect different facets of working virtually?
- Are there differences between countries or specific characteristics within countries in the way how entities (individuals, teams, and organizations) perform virtual work?

- How do new and emerging technologies affect the way virtual work is performed? Are there differences or similarities in a global world?
- Which HR strategies can be implemented to support employees in maintaining well-being and work-life balance while working virtually across or within global boundaries?
- How do organizations or individuals worldwide face or adapt to virtual work?
- Are there any dark sides to virtual work? Do perceptions differ across organizations, countries, or individuals?
- How can or must leadership change or adapt to accommodate virtual forms of work? Are there differences or specific aspects related to global contexts and how can HRM support the development of virtual leadership knowledge/skills/abilities?
- What HRM initiatives can be introduced to promote inclusivity and reduce biases in virtual work in a global context?
- How does virtual work affect recruiting, retention, and development of employees in a global context?
- How does virtual work alter traditional performance management practices, and what new metrics or approaches are necessary to evaluate performance effectively in a virtual setting that operates in a global context?
- What are the legal and ethical challenges associated with managing a virtual workforce across multiple jurisdictions? How can HRM ensure compliance with local labor laws and data protection regulations while managing a global virtual workforce?

These are *exemplars but not exhaustive research questions* to be addressed in the special issue. Any submission that helps advance current knowledge on virtual work in a global world, as defined above, is suitable for this Special Issue. Besides a range of research topics, we welcome submissions with diverse theoretical lenses across disciplines, a variety of research types (e.g., theory, methods, empirical studies, etc.), and the use of different research methods (e.g., qualitative, archival, survey, experiments, computational modeling, etc.).

Submission

To be considered for publication in the Special Issue, full manuscripts (max. 8,000 words excluding references, tables and figures) must be submitted between 1 May 2025 and 31 October 2025. The papers will undergo a double-blind review process on a rolling basis. Once accepted, papers will be published online-in-print. The final publication in print is anticipated for spring 2027. The manuscripts should be written in English and submitted through https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ghrm. Prospective authors are welcome to consult with the guest editors in advance.

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