

## **SPECIAL ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS**

### **Research methodologies that offer insights**

#### **Guest Editors**

Professor Mark NK Saunders, University of Birmingham

Professor Keith Townsend, Griffith University

Dr Margarita Nyfoudi, University of Birmingham

Dr Paula O’Kane, University of Otago

#### **Objective and overview**

The objective of this special issue is to offer new insights regarding the application, utility, and outcomes of specific methods for providing impactful insights to Human Resource Management scholars and practitioners.

We envisage the special issue will provide a forum for constructive debate regarding methodological questions of importance to HRM academics and practitioners. Within this scope, we welcome considerations of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, including the rapid move to online and big data methodologies such as organisational text mining (Kobayashi et al., 2018). We anticipate and encourage critiques of methodological orthodoxies that not only move topical debates forward, but also offer practical solutions or alternatives, including the adaption of methods from other disciplines (Lê, & Schmid, 2022).

A crucial component of all accepted papers and research notes will be the utility to HR research *and* HR practice in methodological terms. To this end, they should be able to demonstrate a contribution to the theoretical and empirical understanding and application of methods or methodology, which goes beyond providing interesting examples of HRM research in practice or interesting examples of unusual methodologies for scholars that may have limited practitioner applicability (see for example, Ramirez and Islam, 2022).

HRM research has recently undergone major methodological developments. The increasing use of online data collection, crowdsourcing platforms, and big data has been expedited by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent and often prolonged lockdowns (Aguinis et al., 2021; Goodman & Wright, 2022). This pattern has been further reinforced by the increasing availability of associated data analytic technologies. Parallel to these developments, HRM research is at crossroads in relation to the use of a plethora of research methods, with the *Human Resource Management Journal* leading the way towards a more inclusive and holistic engagement with both quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Saunders and Townsend, 2016; Farndale et al., 2020). Yet, a potential mismatch between the levels/type of theorising and the ways data are collected, analysed, and reported risks the emergence of research fallacies also limits the extent to which a study may produce novel and relevant insights. In the face of these changes, it is now time to take stock of the methods and methodologies available to HRM scholars and practitioners and assess how they may provide insights and practice recommendations that are not only relevant for both HR practitioners and scholars, but also impactful for the end users, the employees.

To this end, this special edition invites methodological papers and research notes focussing on the use and/or application of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method choices within HRM research. Papers might also consider methodological issues associated with research in HRM, such as undertaking and measuring impactful research, engaged and co-designed research, access and ethics, researcher reflexivity, de-colonisation, and alternate methods of dissemination of findings for example story writing.

All submissions must offer novel and clear insights for HRM scholars and practitioners. A case in point would be the use of a particular method, how it can be translated into real practical benefits, and for whom. Submissions are expected to offer an explicit articulation of robust methods in HRM research which support theorising and also provide practical insights. Furthermore, our special issue will contribute practically to the effective selection and application of new forms of data collection, use, and analysis for HRM research. We anticipate that articles from this special issue will become highly cited in years to come.

### **Potential contributions**

The following offer illustrative themes and associated potential foci that we aim to address in this special issue. Authors are encouraged to submit papers or research notes with wider perspectives, providing the submission meets the objectives and falls within the overview of this special issue. Potential authors are invited to contact any of the editors of the special issue to discuss their ideas.

#### *Advancing method*

- Critically reviewing the utility of different forms of literature review including the ‘gold standard’ of systematic review.
- Applying new, novel, and relevant methods used in other fields to HRM research.
- Advancing the utility and application of a specific new or novel data analytic method (e.g., necessary condition analysis) to HRM research.
- Critically evaluating recent developments of criteriology in qualitative HRM research.
- Exploring thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke 2022; Gioia et al., 2012) within qualitative HRM research.
- Considering the role of ‘saturation’ and how to reach it.
- Unpacking notions of robustness within diary studies.
- Critiquing innovative applications of mixed methods research to HRM.
- Analysing the impact of COVID-19 on research methods in HRM.

#### *Advancing Impact*

- Moving the HRM researcher-practitioner nexus beyond engaged scholarship.
- Decolonising HRM research methods.
- Unpacking the role of, and insights offered by, systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses for HRM practice.
- Evaluating the impact of HRM research.

#### *Advancing Digital and online HRM Research*

- Understanding robustness when using social media for HRM research.
- Advancing understanding of AI and data analytics.

- Reviewing contemporary developments and recommendations for the use of online data collection techniques (e.g., online diary studies, crowdsourcing platforms, online experiments).
- Considering issues of ethics and consent with digital HR data.
- Automating qualitative analysis for large qualitative data sets (topic modelling etc.).

#### *Future*

- Proposing key issues for the future of HRM research methods.

### **Submission process**

Full papers or research notes should be submitted between 1<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at <https://wiley.atyponrex.com/journal/HRMJ>. Please select the ‘Special Issue Article’ as the article type on submission. On the Additional Information page during submission, select ‘Yes, this is for a Special Issue’ and select “Research methodologies that offer insights” from the dropdown list. Please note that papers may not be submitted until 1 February 2024 and HRMJ will not be able to consider late submissions.

Enquiries related to the call for papers should be directed to Mark NK Saunders (m.n.k.saunders@bham.ac.uk), Keith Townsend (k.townsend@griffith.edu.au), Margarita Nyfoudi (m.nyfoudi@bham.ac.uk) or Paula O’Kane (paula.okane@otago.ac.nz).

Enquiries related to the online submission process should be directed to:  
[HRMJ.journal@wiley.com](mailto:HRMJ.journal@wiley.com).

### **References**

- Aguinis, H., Villamor, I., & Ramani, R. S. (2021). MTurk research: Review and recommendations. *Journal of Management*, 47(4), 823-837.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022) *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*, London: Sage.
- Farndale, E., McDonnell, A., Scholarios, D., & Wilkinson, A. (2020). The psychologisation conversation: An introduction. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 30(1), 32-33.
- Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G., & Hamilton, A.L. (2012) Seeking qualitative rigour in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology, *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15-31.
- Godard, J. (2020). Psychologisation revisited. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 30(1), 84-85.
- Goodman, J. K., & Wright, S. (2022). MTurk and Online Panel Research: The Impact of COVID-19, Bots, TikTok, and other Contemporary Developments. In: C., Lamberton, D., Rucker, & S.S., Spiller (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Consumer Psychology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4065958>

- Kobayashi, V. B., Mol, S. T., Berkers, H. A., Kismihók, G., & Den Hartog, D. N. (2018). Text mining in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 21(3), 733-765.
- Lê, J. K., & Schmid, T. (2022). The practice of innovating research methods. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(2), 308-336.
- Saunders, M. N. K., and Townsend, K., (2016) Reporting and Justifying the Number of Interview Participants in Organization and Workplace Research', *British Journal of Management*, 27(4), 836-852.
- Ramirez, M. F., & Islam, G. (2022). "Important for you to be there": Employee activism and the dialectics of researcher–practitioner collaborations. *Human Resource Management Journal*. Early View: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12474>
- Troth, A. C., & Guest, D. E. (2020). The case for psychology in human resource management research. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 30(1), 34-48.