Human at the Center of the Organization:

Visions, Realities, Challenges

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Preface

The subject of interest in this monograph is human at the center of the organization. This focus reflects changes in how the role of employees in contemporary organizations is perceived, as they face a unique challenge in balancing increasing demands for efficiency and innovation with the equally important need to understand and support employees.

Until recently, discussions in management science focused on whether employees in an organization should be viewed primarily as resources or as capital, and the implications of each perspective for managing them. The resource perspective traditionally viewed employees as costs to be minimized and controlled. However, over time, this view evolved as employees increasingly were recognized as valuable resources whose potential could be optimized for organizational benefit. On the other hand, the capital perspective sees employees as strategic investments that yield returns and add value, enhancing the organization's competitive edge. In this evolving context, concepts such as human resources management and human capital management have emerged, reflecting differing approaches to leveraging employee capabilities to achieve strategic objectives.

Today, however, there is a particular emphasis on the employee as a human being at the center of the organization, signaling a significant paradigm shift. Consequently, terms like people management or talent management are increasingly used, highlighting an individualized and diverse approach to employees. This evolution in terminology is not accidental. It represents a shift from a transactional to a relational approach, where the employee is not just seen as a rational economic agent but as an integral component of a dynamic organizational ecosystem, with their own skills, aspirations, well-being, and emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

In this context, several reasons can be identified for why humans should be at the center of the organization. First, employees are responsible for achieving organizational goals. Second, employees are sources of creativity and innovation. Third, employees serve as ambassadors for the organization's brand. This paradigm shift is not only a response to changes in the environment but also to key trends and phenomena affecting organizational management.

Digitization and automation are changing the nature of work and the competencies required from employees, which in turn affects organizational culture and requires new forms of management. With the transition from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0, there is a growing emphasis on human-centric approaches. Industry 5.0 focuses on collaboration between humans and machines, leveraging advanced technologies to enhance human creativity and well-being within the workplace. At the same time, the growing popularity of remote and hybrid work models, as well as increasing awareness of the importance of well-being and mental health of employees, are becoming increasingly crucial for organizational effectiveness.

Additionally, diversity and inclusion, as well as sustainable development and social responsibility, are increasingly recognized as key factors in attracting and retaining talent. Thus, a new paradigm in people management is emerging, based on the following assumptions:

- The employee is a human being, not just a resource or capital.
- The employee has their own value, dignity, and rights.
- The employee has their own goals, needs, and aspirations.
- The employee is a partner of the organization, not just a subordinate or beneficiary.
- The employee is a co-creator of value in the organization, not just a task performer.
- The employee is an active participant in organizational processes, not just an executor or recipient.
- The employee is a subject of professional and personal development, not just an object of training and performance appraisal.

Positioning humans at the center of the organization represents a trend in people management that responds to changing work and life conditions. It differs from previous trends by emphasizing a more humanistic and holistic approach to employees and building relationships based on dialogue, trust, respect, responsibility, and cooperation. In recent years, phenomena such as the Great Resignation, Quiet Quitting, Career Cushioning, and Loud Quitting have highlighted changes in employee attitudes and behaviors towards work and organizations. These phenomena underscore that placing humans at the center of the organization is no longer just an option but a necessity. In an era where technologies change rapidly and competitiveness is ephemeral, people with their properties become the most enduring and unique asset. Increasing their engagement, satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty translates into better work quality, higher productivity, and greater organizational innovation. In practice, this approach requires leaders and managers to create conditions that ensure the development and well-being of every organization member.

In this context, **the goal of this monograph** is to explore and analyze the paradigm shift in organizational management towards placing humans at the center. It seeks to offer insights into how contemporary organizations can balance the increasing demands for efficiency and innovation with the need to support and understand their employees integral and unique components of a dynamic organizational ecosystem. This includes examining the evolving perspectives of employees as resources or capital, the impact of digitization and automation, the importance of well-being, mental health, diversity, and inclusion, and the role of sustainable development and social responsibility in modern organizations.

To achieve this goal, various selected topics are discussed in the individual chapters. Chapter 1 examines how organizations address labor shortages and retention from a human-centric management perspective. Chapter 2 investigates the workplace factors that affect employee loyalty and performance within human-centric organizations. Chapter 3 explores the mechanisms and challenges of HRM knowledge transfer in multinational companies within a human-centric framework. Chapter 4 traces the evolution of people management practices

in Poland from Stalinist paradigms to modern human-centric management. Chapter 5 discusses how the Polish armed forces are adopting a human-centric management approach to enhance soldier engagement and satisfaction. Chapter 6 looks at strategies for managing knowledge worker turnover in small and medium-sized enterprises through human-centric management practices. Chapter 7 examines how to tailor HRM practices to meet the needs of Generation Z, focusing on mental health and employee development within a human-centric approach. Chapter 8 explores innovative HRM and sustainable leadership practices to embrace Generation Z's unique needs in the IT sector, highlighting the pillars of human-focused management. Chapter 9 presents conceptual E-HRM solutions for enhancing employee focus in human--centric organizations. Chapter 10 discusses the advancement of human-centric management through AI-enhanced recruitment and selection. Chapter 11 explores diverse personal definitions of career success in the Polish labor market within a human-centric management framework. Finally, Chapter 12 navigates generational dynamics in women's career development under a human-centric management approach.

In addressing these topics, this monograph delves into the visions, realities, and challenges of implementing a human-centric approach in contemporary organizations. It provides insights into both the theoretical, empirical, and practical aspects, highlighting the benefits and potential obstacles of this paradigm shift.

This monograph will be particularly useful and interesting for a diverse audience, including scholars, HRM professionals, organizational leaders, policymakers, and consultants. Academics and researchers will find the comprehensive theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence valuable for advancing the study of human-centric management practices. Additionally, it may serve as an inspiration for their own research, providing a foundation for exploring new dimensions and applications of human-centric management. HRM professionals and organizational leaders can gain practical insights into enhancing employee engagement, loyalty, and performance through innovative HRM strategies, as well as learn about the challenges and solutions in adapting to modern workforce dynamics. Policymakers and consultants will benefit from understanding the broader socio-economic impacts of human--centric approaches and how these can inform policy development and organizational consultancy. The book's detailed exploration of topics such as employee well-being, mental health, diversity and inclusion, and the integration of advanced technologies like AI in HRM makes it a crucial resource for anyone involved in shaping the future of work and organizational culture.

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The Comprehensive Overview of the Monograph's Key Findings

The primary focus of this monograph was to place humans at the center of organizational management, reflecting a significant paradigm shift in contemporary organizational practices. **The goal of this monograph was** to explore and analyze this paradigm shift towards human-centric management, offering insights into how organizations can balance the increasing demands for efficiency and innovation with the need to support and understand their employees as integral and unique components of a dynamic organizational ecosystem. This included examining the evolving perspectives of employees as resources or capital, the impact of digitization and automation, the importance of well-being, mental health, diversity, inclusion, and the role of sustainable development and social responsibility in modern organizations.

The insights and findings presented in this monograph collectively affirm that this goal has been achieved. Through theoretical discussions and empirical research across various topics, this work provided a comprehensive understanding of the human-centric approach in organizational management.

The exploration revealed that organizations have increasingly recognized the importance of viewing employees not merely as resources or capital but as integral human beings with unique skills, aspirations, and needs. This paradigm shift was evidenced by the adoption of individualized and diverse approaches to people management, moving from transactional to relational models. Specific topics covered in the monograph include the critical role of employee well-being and mental health, the unique management needs of different generations, and the impact of technological advancements on HR practices. The emphasis on dialogue, trust, respect, responsibility, and cooperation has become central to modern HRM practices, highlighting the necessity of creating supportive environments that foster creativity, innovation, and employee engagement. Additionally, the discussion on diversity and inclusion, and the strategic importance of sustainable development and social responsibility, underscored the multifaceted approach required to effectively manage and support a diverse workforce.

The research also highlighted the significant impact of digitization and automation on the nature of work and the required competencies from employees. With the transition from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0, there has been a growing emphasis on human-centric approaches, focusing on collaboration between humans and machines. This shift aims to leverage advanced technologies to enhance human creativity and well-being within the workplace. For instance, AI-enhanced recruitment and selection processes and E-HRM solutions were explored as methods to support these new management practices. Additionally, the growing popularity of remote and hybrid work models has underscored the need for flexibility and adaptability in management practices, emphasizing the importance of mental health support and employee development programs tailored to these new working conditions.

The monograph's findings emphasized the increasing importance of well-being and mental health in organizational effectiveness. As awareness of these issues has grown, organizations have begun to prioritize creating supportive environments that foster employee engagement,

satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty. This approach has been shown to translate into better work quality, higher productivity, and greater organizational innovation. For example, initiatives such as mental health days, employee assistance programs, and wellness workshops have been implemented to address these needs. Additionally, providing flexible work arrangements and ensuring a healthy work-life balance have proven critical in supporting employee well-being.

Furthermore, the research underscored the crucial roles of diversity and inclusion, sustainable development, and social responsibility in attracting and retaining talent. These factors have become key components of modern HRM strategies, ensuring that organizations remain competitive and socially responsible. Efforts to create inclusive workplaces that value diverse perspectives, such as diversity training programs and inclusive hiring practices, have been highlighted as essential. Moreover, commitment to sustainable development through eco-friendly initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs has been shown to enhance the organization's reputation and appeal to socially conscious employees.

In line with the title of this monograph, the discussions also centered around the visions, realities, and challenges of implementing a human-centric approach in contemporary organizations. The visions explored in this monograph highlighted an ideal organizational environment where employees are valued as integral human beings with unique contributions. This vision encompasses workplaces that foster creativity, innovation, and well-being, leveraging advanced technologies and supportive management practices to enhance both employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

These visions also include a strong emphasis on employee retention, loyalty, and performance, recognizing that a committed and motivated workforce drives organizational success. Additionally, the vision entails the integration of comprehensive mental health and wellness programs, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and sustainable development strategies as critical components. The ideal human-centric organization adapts to the evolving needs of its workforce, ensuring that remote and hybrid work models are effectively managed to maintain productivity and engagement. Innovative HRM practices, such as AI-enhanced recruitment and selection processes, are envisioned to support these goals, along with personalized employee development plans that cater to individual career aspirations and foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

The realities, however, often presents a more complex picture. While many organizations have made strides towards adopting human-centric practices, the monograph revealed that the transition is often gradual and fraught with obstacles. Real-world examples from various chapters illustrated that despite the recognition of the benefits of human-centric management, actual implementation can be inconsistent. Challenges such as integrating new technologies, aligning diverse teams, and maintaining a supportive culture amidst economic pressures were frequently cited. Organizations often struggle with balancing the immediate need for efficiency with the longer-term investments required for developing comprehensive well-being programs. Moreover, maintaining employee engagement and loyalty can be challenging in environments where remote and hybrid work models are becoming the norm. Despite the intent to support diversity and inclusion, many companies face difficulties in achieving genuine inclusivity, often due to entrenched cultural biases and inadequate training. Furthermore, the empirical evidence highlighted discrepancies between organizational intentions and employee perceptions, indicating a gap that

needs to be addressed to realize the full potential of these approaches. Issues such as inconsistent application of HRM policies, lack of continuous support for professional development, and the underutilization of advanced HRM technologies also emerged as significant barriers.

The challenges of implementing a human-centric approach are multifaceted. One significant challenge is the integration of advanced technologies like AI and E-HRM solutions in a way that genuinely supports human-centric goals without compromising the human element. For instance, the adoption of AI in recruitment and selection processes must be carefully managed to avoid depersonalization and to ensure ethical standards are upheld. Leveraging AI to enhance human capabilities while preserving the personal touch crucial for understanding a candidate's fit within the organizational culture is a delicate balance. Additionally, the shift towards remote and hybrid work models has introduced complexities in maintaining employee engagement and cohesion. Organizations must develop strategies to support mental health and well-being remotely, such as through virtual wellness programs and regular check-ins. Ensuring that employees feel connected and valued, even when not physically present, is a significant hurdle. The discussions in the monograph also underscored the ongoing need for robust mental health and well-being programs, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and sustainable development practices, all of which require continuous commitment and adaptation. Creating an inclusive workplace that genuinely values diverse perspectives involves overcoming deep-seated biases and implementing comprehensive diversity training programs. Moreover, sustainable development initiatives must be integrated into the core business strategy to be effective, requiring significant shifts in organizational culture and operations. Furthermore, the challenge of aligning HRM practices with the specific needs of different generational cohorts, such as Generation Z, highlights the necessity for adaptable and personalized HRM strategies. This includes addressing their preferences for flexible work environments, rapid feedback, and meaningful work that aligns with their values. Navigating these generational expectations while ensuring consistency in HRM policies across the board is critical.

In conclusion, the monograph successfully explored and analyzed the paradigm shift in organizational management towards placing humans at the center. The comprehensive examination of theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and practical applications highlighted the benefits and challenges of implementing a human-centric approach. From a social perspective, human--centric management fosters a more inclusive and supportive workplace, improving employee well-being and satisfaction. From a managerial perspective, it enhances organizational culture and employee engagement, leading to higher productivity and innovation. Economically, it reduces turnover costs and improves overall organizational performance. The findings demonstrated that this approach is essential for fostering environments where employees feel valued, supported, and integral to the organizational mission, ultimately leading to sustainable organizational success. This monograph provided a thorough examination of the visions, realities, and challenges of human-centric management, offering a nuanced understanding that while the vision of a fully human-centric organization is compelling, the path to achieving it is complex and requires sustained effort and strategic alignment across all organizational levels.

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