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# Human resource management after COVID-19. Future research directions and practical insights

## Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi po COVID-19. Przyszłe kierunki badań i praktyczne implikacje

### ABSTRACT

The article aims to provide an overview of the current understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on (Human Resources Management) HRM, thus revealing the management challenges and future directions of research in this field. For this purpose, a systematic literature review (SLR) was used. The results show that the practical recommendations relate to employees, work, productivity, various types of support and communication.

Future research on HRM after COVID-19 should focus on digitizing work; redesigning the work and content structure to be more remote, flexible and agile; health and safety issues will shape all HR practices; growing role of innovative HR strategies; there will be flexible rules for managing recruitment, retention and remuneration of employees; re-training and transformation of competency requirements, positive leadership; changing performance of management procedures; the growing role of individual and organizational learning.

### STRESZCZENIE

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu dokonanie przeglądu aktualnej wiedzy na temat wpływu COVID-19 na zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi (ZZL) ukazując tym samym wyzwania menedżerskie i przyszłe kierunki badań w tej dziedzinie. W tym celu zastosowano systematyczny przegląd literatury (SLR). Wyniki pokazują, że praktyczne rekomendacje dotyczą pracowników, pracy, wydajności, różnych rodzajów wsparcia i komunikacji.

Przyszłe badania w zakresie ZZL po COVID-19 powinny się koncentrować na digitalizacji pracy oraz przeprojektowaniu struktury pracy na bardziej zdalną, elastyczną i zwinną. Ponadto stwierdzono, że kwestie zdrowia i bezpieczeństwa będą kształtać wszystkie praktyki ZZL; będzie rosła rola innowacyjnych strategii dotyczących ZL; pojawią się elastyczne zasady zarządzania rekrutacją, zatrzymywaniem i wynagradzaniem pracowników; istotne będą przekwalifikowanie i przekształcenie wymagań kompetencyjnych oraz pozytywne przywództwo. Nastąpi zmiana procedur zarządzania wydajnością, ponadto wrośnie rola uczenia się indywidualnego i organizacyjnego.

**Keywords:** human resources management, COVID-19, future research, systematic literature review (SLR).

**Słowa kluczowe:** zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi (ZZL), przyszłe kierunki badań, systematyczny przegląd literatury.

### INTRODUCTION

By 2019 there were many forecasts concerning the “future and challenges of the human resources management (HRM)”. According to “white” literature (e.g. Dickmann, 2017; Przytuła, 2018; Williams, 2016) and “grey” sources

of knowledge (e.g. Bersin et al., 2015; Brookfield GRS, 2016; HAYS, 2016; Manpower Group Solutions, 2018; PwC People and Organizations, 2017), the most important challenges are: a shortage of employees on the labor market, manage-

ment of employees of different generations; mobile working, diversity and inclusion, skills gap, employee mobility and the role of technology in management. Therefore future trends were predicted, but even the predictions from 2019 will not be fulfilled anymore and are outdated after this sudden, unexpected global pandemic (Przytuła et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 outbreak has fundamentally changed the scope of future managerial approaches to human resources and required rapid adjustment by the HR function into the “unknown unknowns” (Biron et al., 2021; Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). According to Kulik (2022), ‘next to normal’ acknowledges that life is dynamic, and whatever ‘normal’ looked like at the start of 2020, it may be different in 2021 and beyond. The next normal could be the best normal we’ve seen yet. But making it a reality is likely to require some re-imagining of the HR practices (Kulik, 2022) and revision of the future trends, rethinking of new opportunities and advantages, re-skilling, and re-training of the competencies and talents (Przytuła et al., 2020).

However according to Adikaram et al. (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic is unparalleled to all the prior financial crises, economic turmoils, and social changes (migration crisis) as well as former health crises (SARS, EBOLA outbreak) in its severity, spread, extent, and nature. On the one hand, it is a global crisis affecting many countries worldwide (unlike other health crises). On the other, it had affected many industries at varying levels. Hence, it is indisputable that COVID-19 had created far more challenges for human resource management (HRM) in all branches, sectors, and fields. Similarly, Carnevale (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020) noticed that with the recent outbreak of COVID-19, organizations face a grand challenge of unparalleled proportions; one that forces them to dive into and directly manage unprecedented territory as they alter their workforce in technical, physical and socio-psychological ways not seen before.

Given these changes, the new and most updated look on the challenges, future directions of research in HRM, and practical implications for HR practitioners are most welcome. Azizi et al. (2021), called for further studies to know more about the challenges of human resources during COVID-19, and “deep thinking” in predicting new approaches to manage human resources properly. Also, Zhong et al. (2021) pointed out that future research should rely on more diverse literature sources and analytical methods to conduct a more systematic and comprehensive analysis of the relationship between COVID-19 and HR practices.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is twofold: (1) to review the current knowledge of the impact of COVID-19 on HRM, thus revealing managerial challenges and future directions of research in this field; and (2) to present practical implications and recommendations for HR professionals. To achieve

these objectives, a systematic literature review (SLR) has been conducted.

The systematic approach is well suited to the analysis of principal trends in the literature (Tranfield et al., 2003; Yuriev et al., 2018). Also according to Booth et al. (2012) SLR is one of the fourteen types of review that can help to analyze what is known in the current studies and what are the recommendations for practice. According to Rousseau, ‘systematic’ means comprehensive accumulation, transparent analysis, and reflective interpretation of all empirical studies about a specific question (Rousseau et al., 2008). SLR is chosen among others to develop a model or framework or to make recommendations for future research (Okoli, 2015). Booth et al. (2012) added to this list also: to place each work in the context of how it contributes to an understanding of the subject under review, to identify new ways to interpret and shed light on gaps in previous research, and to signpost the way forward for further research.

According to Czakon et al. (2019), the literature review is usually used as a tool for identifying knowledge gaps, and advanced applications allow to identify the most common and the most desirable directions for further research. The purpose of identifying future insights and practical hints is also observed by other researchers. SLR identifies and categorizes various recommendations provided by scholars to managers for overcoming barriers to green behaviors. Considering that practitioners usually do not spend much time reviewing academic literature and given that the frequency of systematic reviews in management is growing (Tranfield et al., 2003), a summary of such advice might become increasingly useful (Yuriev et al., 2018).

The majority of reviewed papers were published in 2020 following the spread of COVID-19, thus, tackling the challenges and opportunities of this new situation. The reviews varied in terms of purpose, research context and countries where they were conducted; between respondents, and the business sector. However, some similarities were found in the frame of future directions and practical recommendations for HR professionals. Thus, following the SLR procedure for such issues in the revised publications were the point of interest: 1) practical implications and recommendations for HR professionals; 2) future directions for HRM after COVID-19.

## 2. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (SLR) METHOD

The selection process of publications was conducted in steps as recommended by the PRISMA protocol (Sigahi et al., 2021) in the form of a table (Klimas et al., 2020).

The further sections follow from Table 1 and they explained in detail each stage of the systematic literature review procedure.

## AD.1. IDENTIFYING THE PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In the first stage of the analysis, the purpose of this systematic literature review was defined as 1) What are the practical implications and recommendations for HR professionals? 2) What are the future implications for HRM after COVID 19?

## AD.2. RETRIEVING A SAMPLE OF POTENTIALLY RELEVANT LITERATURE

2a) In the next stage the search criteria was set up to retrieve existing literature related to COVID-19 and human resource management from the Scopus and WoS and Google Scholar databases using keywords related to COVID-19 (OR pandemic) and human resource management. The keywords screening in databases was set to include titles, abstracts, and keywords to retrieve all relevant publications from 2020 to 2021.

2b) Then the following inclusion criteria were taken into consideration.

Firstly, it was assumed that publications in Open Access with the Early Access option will be analyzed as this is a new topic and due to long publication cycles in some prestigious journals, it will be recommended to use the already published articles in the electronic version. Secondly, publications were sought from all possible subject areas. Such a broad approach was chosen because HRM is not limited to the subject area of business and management, and in the field of human resource management in a pandemic situation, many approaches and practices have been reformulated in both business and public administration, health care, engineering, IT sector, etc. Therefore, due to the future direction and valuable practice tips, such an interdisciplinary approach at this stage is justified. Thirdly, the database includes reviewed articles (articles, review articles), but also other "document types" with a different level of rigor in terms of differences in the system of accepting texts and the role of the review process (Czakon et al., 2019): book chapter, conference paper, and even notes. Due to the publication cycle, many of them have not yet the status of "published" but, for example, "article in press", but they have gained public resonance in the form of conference speeches or research reports. Therefore, the elimination of other types of documents from the search string, apart from articles, could lead to incomplete recognition of the research topic, which is new, emerging, and dynamic. Fourthly, only publications in English are

Table 1. Stages and eligibility criteria of SLR

| 1. Identifying the purpose and research question   |  |
|--|--|
| Purpose:<br>1) to review the current knowledge of the impact of COVID-19 on HRM, thus revealing practical implications and recommendations for HR practitioners;<br>2) to present future directions of research in this field  | Research questions:<br>1) What are the practical implications and recommendations for HR professionals?<br>2) What are the future implications for HRM after COVID-19? |
| 2. Retrieving a sample of potentially relevant literature  |  |
| White literature: Scopus, WoS  | Grey literature: Google Scholar, reports   |
| 2a) Key words: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("COVID-19") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("human resource management") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("pandemic" AND "human resource management"))  |  |
| 2b) Inclusion criteria:<br>- topic: "COVID-19" AND "human resource management"<br>- Open Access with Early Access<br>- all Subject area<br>- Document type: Articles, Review articles, Book chapters, Conference proceedings, Notes (including in press articles)<br>Language: English<br>Year: 2020–2022  | Exclusion criteria:<br>- NO full text, NO main body  |
| Selection <i>a priori</i>  |  |
| Source of publications: Scopus   | 102  |
| Source of publications: Web of Science   | 74   |
| Source of publications: Google Scholar & business/institutional reports  | 21   |
| Baseline sample  | 197  |
| 3. Initial review selecting the pertinent literature   |  |
| Selection criteria <i>a posteriori</i>   |  |
| - Publication fulfilling the criteria: "COVID-19" AND "human resource management" in Title, Abstract, and Keywords<br>- Publications regarding the purpose of the research, focusing on "challenges", "future directions", "recommendations", "foresight", and "practical implications" for HRM  |  |
| Exclusion criteria <i>a posteriori</i>   |  |
| - articles in which COVID-19 AND HRM practices were not the core topic;<br>- articles focused on minimizing the spread of COVID-19 that do not result in human resources management practices<br>- articles focused on public policies or initiatives that have no clear impact on HR practices and subfunctions;<br>- articles analyzing specific procedures without mentioning the impact on human resource management subfunctions: |  |
| Selection <i>a posteriori</i>  |  |
| Useless articles (duplicates in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar)  | -33  |
| Useless-out of the scope of the topic  | -44  |
| Synthesis sample   | 120  |
| 4. Bibliographic analyses of the literature  |  |
| 5. Synthesizing the literature   |  |
| 6. Reporting the results   |  |

Source: Based on (Sigahi et al., 2021; Klimas et al., 2020)

included. The author is aware of this limitation, which means that valuable works written in national languages and relating to national contexts are certainly excluded. However, due to the chosen goal, which is to identify future research directions, changes, and challenges in HRM, it was decided to choose works that were subject to international selection and function in the international scientific circuit.

At this preliminary stage, it was a broad scope of the search that is why the only exclusion criteria were: no full text, no main body. This stage of selection (*a priori*) we search for all available documents on scientific and non-scientific bases. The Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases were selected, taking into account scientific publications on a global scale, recognized publishers, and enabling advanced search and creation of bibliometric summaries. A mixed approach combining scientific literature (white and grey) was used to create the literature database.

White literature are articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals (Hensel, 2020). According to Booth et al. (2012), grey literature is defined as information produced on all levels of government, academics, business, and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing i.e., where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body. This literature is referred to as the grey or fugitive literature owing to the fact it is sometimes difficult to identify and obtain. The rationale for searching grey literature is to minimize publication bias (Booth et al., 2012). Similarly, Ridley (2012) and Okoli (2015) noticed that grey literature has become increasingly accessible, mainly through the Internet: this literature includes non-peer-reviewed sources such as reports, theses and dissertations, conference literature, popular media, monographs, work-in-progress reports, specialist literature, and primary data sources.

But Richards (2011) for instance expanded the SLR of employees' internet activities by including press reports to account for important trends in the subject field, which may otherwise not have been apparent owing to the long lead times involved in the publication of scholarly outputs. Rojon et al. (2021) in addition to academic sources included also reports, policy documents, magazine articles or blogs, as well as informal channels of information. Grey literature allows the inclusion of the latest publications, of a less scientific nature, but shows a fragment of the studied reality (Czakon et al., 2019). In grey literature, there are three categories: first-tier grey literature (books, chapters, government reports, think tank reports); second-tier grey literature (press releases, video files, presentations, NGOs publications, Wikipedia); third-tier grey literature (blogs, emails, tweets, letters, memos, notes (Hensel, 2020).

Using two scientific databases Scopus and WOS and grey literature, i.e., 21 publications, which included publications from Google Scholar (8) as well as industry reports, commercial reports, institutional reports, and expert opinions, a database of 197 publications were created. Then 33 works marked as useless being duplicates in WOS and Scopus were excluded and 44 papers evaluated as not worthy of reading or screening in full as they do not refer to research aim or questions, were also excluded. So, the baseline sample that consisted of white and grey literature was: 120 (see Appendix 1).

#### AD. 3. INITIAL REVIEW SELECTING THE PERTINENT LITERATURE

This stage is related to the implementation of the selection criteria; the selection of which, like the selection of *a priori* selection criteria, is of significant importance for the quality of the review results, their reliability, credibility, and the generalization of the results (Klimas et al., 2020). At this stage, the primary selection criteria, such as title, abstract, and keywords, were scanned. The eligibility criteria are:

- Publication fulfilling the criteria: “COVID-19” AND “human resource management” in Title, Abstract, and Keywords.
- Publications regarding the purpose of the research, focusing on “challenges”, “future directions”, “recommendations”, “foresight”, and “practical implications” for HRM.

In the eligibility step, the following exclusion criteria were applied:

- articles in which COVID-19 and HRM practices were not the core topic;
- articles focused on minimizing the spread of COVID-19 that do not result in human resources management practices;
- articles focused on public policies or initiatives that have no clear impact on HR practices and subfunctions;
- articles analyzing specific procedures without mentioning the impact on human resource management subfunctions.

Useless articles were excluded due to not being embedded in the core topic, for example, “using gamification by teachers in Iraqi schools” or “sanitation services at healthcare facilities in Palestine”, “waste generated by healthcare facilities”, “medical laboratories and biomedical research facilities” “facilities for centralized isolation and quarantine in Wuhan”, “the role of radiology in fighting with COVID-19”. As a result of *a posteriori* selection, the synthesis sample was obtained, including all the works relevant to the purpose of the study, which consisted of 120 publications.

#### AD. 4. BIBLIOGRAPHIC ANALYSES OF THE LITERATURE

The dynamic increase of publications on “HRM and COVID-19” is visible both in Scopus and in WoS and its increase is almost 50% (in Scopus in 2020 there were 37 articles and in 2021 there were 67) (Figure 1).

The broad scope of document source was understandable due to the novelty of the subject and because HR and personnel issues during the pandemic were not only the point of interest in the Business Management area, although these subjects are dominating both in Scopus as in WoS followed by Medicine, Psychology, Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences areas (Figure 2, Figure 3).

The respondents in the reviewed research represented various fields as they were nurses, female academic teachers, managers, healthcare workers, students, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) employers, agricultural workers, tourism and hospitality, remote workers, teleworkers, and nursing managers.

Although the research findings and respondents in merged databases (Scopus, WoS, and Google Scholar) came from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, India, UK, Indonesia, Serbia, Poland, Portugal, China, Slovakia, Switzerland, Germany, USA, Korea, Czech, Italy, South Africa, Vietnam, Lithuania, Netherlands, majority of articles were published by Chinese authors, followed by the British and American ones (Figure 4).

In bibliographic analysis, it is important to show the impact of a “pool of publications” or a separate one on the others, and how it resonates in the scientific world so the overall citations of 102 publications in Scopus after a year are 404 (Figure 5).

The most influential was the work of Carnevale & Hatak (2020) *Employee adjustment and well-being in the era of COVID-19: Implications for human resource management* which grabs 90 citations already.

#### Documents by year

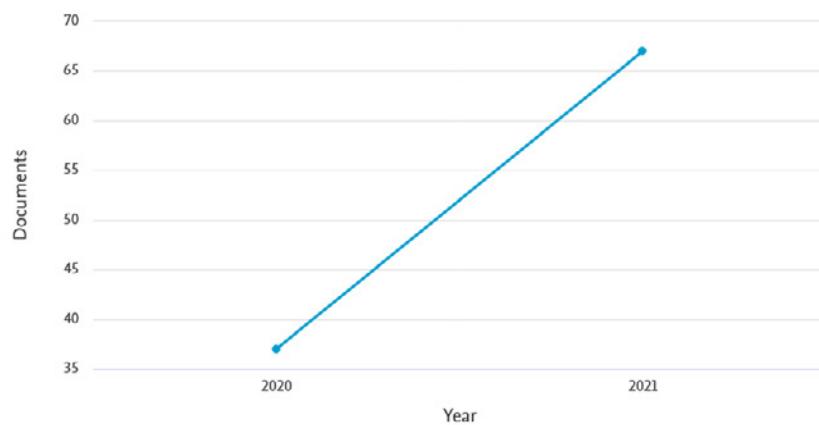


Figure 1. Number of articles in Scopus

Source: Scopus

#### Documents by subject area

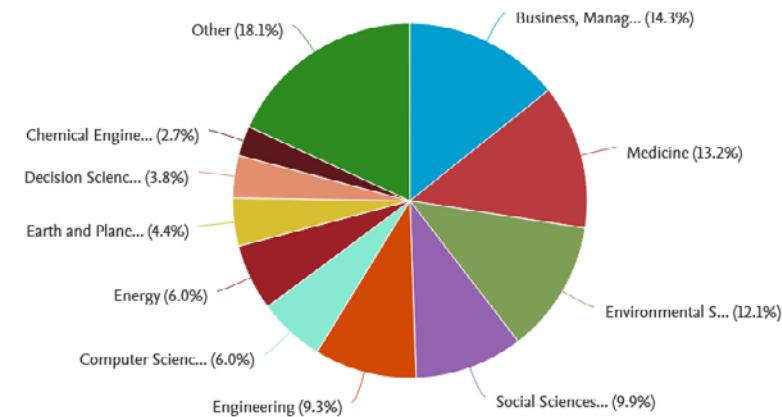


Figure 2. Articles in Scopus by subject area

Source: Scopus



Figure 3. Articles in WoS by subject area

Source: Scopus

#### Documents by country or territory

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

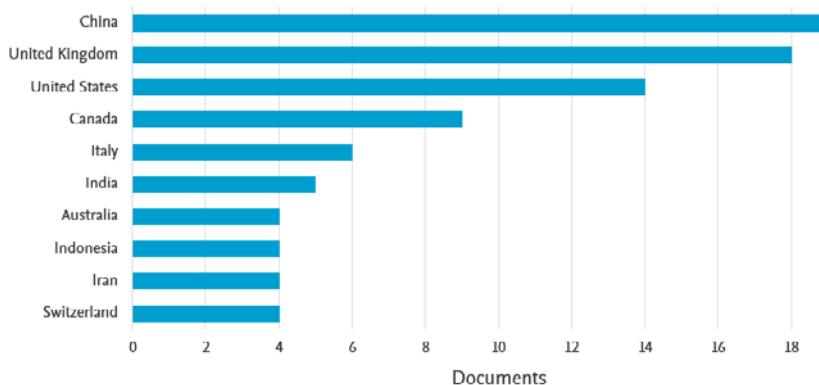


Figure 4. Number of articles in Scopus by authors' affiliation

Source: Scopus

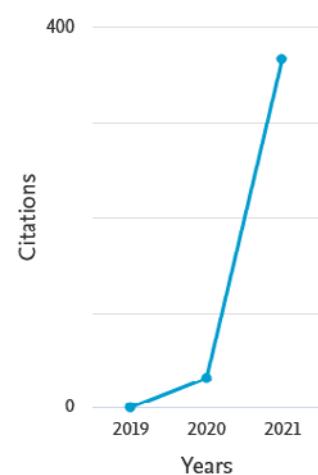


Figure 5. Citation report from Scopus

Source: Scopus

## AD.5. SYNTHESIZING THE LITERATURE

This stage is to provide a means of drawing insight from studies and addressing issues pertinent to management research. Synthesizing existing studies are seen as enhancing the generalizability of qualitative research (Tranfield et al., 2003). All selected publications from Scopus, WoS, and Google Scholar were entered into separate excel sheets for data encoding and checked by the author. Twelve variables were targeted at the level of general information about articles: title, author(s), year, source title, abstract and keywords, nationality of respondents, sample size, country of investigation, and respondents' occupations. Due to the purpose of this paper, additionally from each publication 'future implication' and 'practical recommendations' were extracted and pasted into Excel. This information was collected to identify the primary trends in the literature on COVID-19 implications on HRM in all 120 documents.

The first and the most general outline of the topic is shown by keywords and was pictured in Figure 6.

The most frequent keywords were: management, COVID, human, work, health, employee, and performance. Based on these keywords we can also see the main trends (Figure 7), which were the visualization that represents the frequencies of terms across documents in a corpus of words. Each series in the graph is colored according to the word it represents, at the top of the graph a legend displays which words are associated with which colors.

The Keywords in Context (Table 2) shows each occurrence of a keyword with a bit of surrounding text.

It can be useful for studying more closely how terms are used in different contexts. Left means contextual words to the left of the keyword. For example, the word “COVID” in analyzing 897 keywords was used concerning employee loyalty, HRM, job satisfaction, crisis management, job quality, firm performance, green HRM, lockdown, and digitalization.



Figure 6. The most frequent keywords from 'white literature Voyant-tools.org  
Source: SCOPUS

Indeed, the SLR revealed that the pandemic impacted each process/subfunction of human resource management. Collings et al. (2021) noticed that COVID-19 highlights the importance of considering the differential impact of strategic HRM across different employee groups in terms of how and where they work. Also, the pandemic has elevated the consideration of employees and customers as critical stakeholders. Caligiuri et al. (2020) provide insights on how to solve pandemic-related challenges specifically looking at selection, training and employee support, and health and safety. Butterick & Charlwood (2021) stated that more employers demand new skills and abilities from their employees to cope with the changing business environment (in connection with the process of globalization, or deglobalization, intensifying competition, and the outbreak of the pandemic). Carnevale and Hatak (2020) noticed that COVID-19 had profound so-

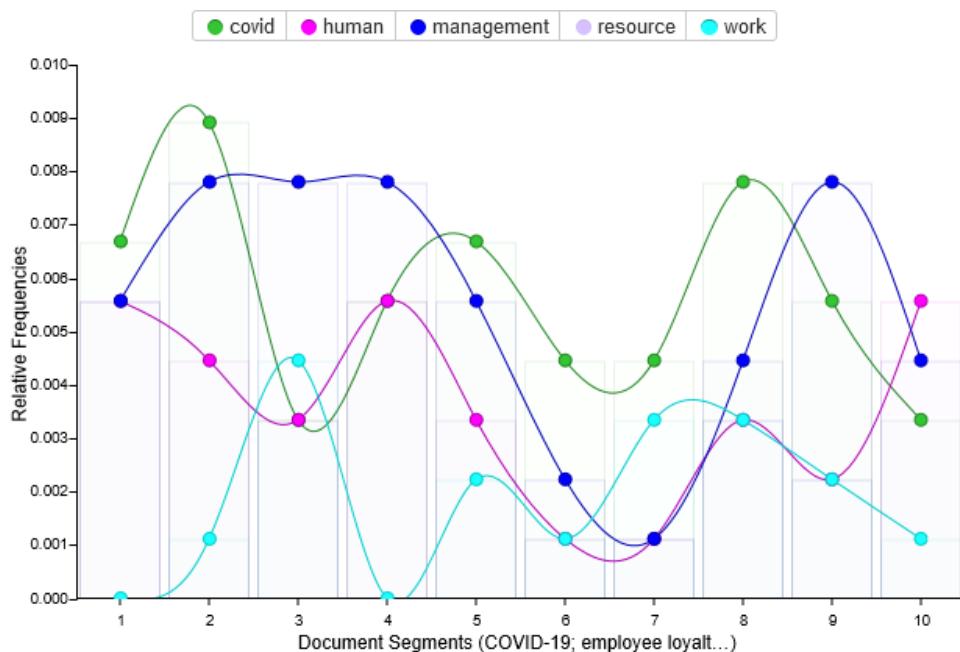


Figure 7. Subject trends in Voyant-tools.org

Source: Scopus

Table 2. Context of term „COVID”

|   | Left  | Term | Right  |
|---|-------|------|--|
| employee loyalty; human resource management; job sati...        | covid |      | -19; employee loyalty; human resource management; job...     |
| human resource professionals; job quality, employees, pe...     | covid |      | -19; crises; crisis management; human resource manag...      |
| industry; Green HRM; Green supply chain; Lockdown; A...         | covid |      | -19; Firm performance; Food industry; Green HRM; Gree...     |
| virus; Digitalization; Personnel; Recruiting; Strategy; Surg... | covid |      | -19, adverse consequences; Human resource manageme...        |
| Surgery; adaptive personality, adaptive performance, COV...     | covid |      | -19, self-efficacy, motivation; COVID-19; human resource ... |
| in HR; Organizational structure; Skunk works; Best practi...    | covid |      | -19; human resource management; mental health; Disrup...     |
| works; Best practices; Corporate sustainability; COVID-1...     | covid |      | -19 pandemic; Crisis management; Covid-19; Crisis man...     |
| Crisis management; Engineering education; Policy devel...       | covid |      | -19; Crisis management; Engineering education; Policy d...   |

Source: Scopus

cio-psychological, physical, and technical implications for employees as they attempt to adjust to their drastically altered work environments. There were many actions and decisions, random and strategic, HR professionals had to make and enforce, such as ensuring employee safety and health, implementing new work arrangements, upholding employee morale and engagement, and handling retrenchments and layoffs (Adikaram et al., 2021). Others highlighted the importance to increase engagement and the sense of belonging among employees, mainly in the remote workforce during this period and beyond (Przytuła et al., 2020). Employees' performance is a function of their abilities, motivation, and opportunity to contribute. Many factors affect employees' abilities and their motivation to produce effectively.

These might include compensations, benefits, health, safety, and working conditions (Aldoghan et al., 2021).

#### AD. 6. REPORTING THE RESULTS

In this final report the answers to the following research questions were presented:

- 1) What are the practical implications and recommendations for HR professionals?
- 2) What are the future directions for HRM after COVID 19?

All publications (articles and grey literature) were put in Nvivo-12 Pro. There were two Nodes: 1) "practical implications" with 137 references and "future of the HRM" with 95 references. In each paper, all relevant parts of text related to these two nodes were extracted. The most frequent words



Figure 9. The most frequent words in node: “practical implications for HRM”  
Source: Scopus

in this part of the text belonged: work, management, COVID, employees, performance, and learning (Figure 9).

## Practical implications for HRM

Table 3 presents the most frequent words in Node 1-practical implications for HRM. When putting this most frequent word into Voyant-tools each of them might be presented within the context of the surrounding text, this will help to draw and understand “theme” or “sub-theme”. I used inductive classification rather than an a priori coding system to reveal the thematic issues.

Table 3. Context of each keyword

| Word          | Context  |
|---------------|--|
| employees     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pay, compensation, performance, well-being, motivation, work-life balance, flexibility, participation, development</li> </ul> |
| work          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- life balance, design, positive, remote, changes, engagement</li> </ul>  |
| performance   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- monitor, indicators, virtual life, appraisal, outcomes</li> </ul>   |
| support       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- innovative, employees, healthcare, team, staff, personal, workers, growth,</li> </ul>   |
| communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- online, continuous, innovative, digital, remote, skills, channels, technology, open, trustful</li> </ul>                      |

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Source: Voyant-tools.org

For example, in the body of text extracted to Nvivo-12 Pro as “*practical implications for HRM*” the word “support” is connected with such terms as: “innovative support”, “support employees” and “healthcare support”.

Based on this, five major themes arise from the text as recommendations and practical hints for HR (Table 4).

## “Future directions of the HRM after COVID-19”

Table 5 shows the most frequent words in Node 2 - future directions of HRM with the surrounding context in which they were used.

Table 5. Context of each keyword

| Word        | Context  |
|-------------|--|
| work        | - conditions, safety, induction, demand, performance, life balance, diversity, engagement, support, remotely   |
| management  | - crisis, strategic, risk, changes, evaluation, technology, knowledge, flexible  |
| employees   | - adjusting, work conditions, feelings, loneliness, social, customers, communities, well-being, social connectivity, help, work engagement, and retention. |
| performance | - during the pandemic, in changing environment, outcomes, evaluation, measures, contextual, leadership   |
| learning    | - work balance, based on experience, channels, remotely  |

Source: Voyant-tools.org

Below (Table 6) there is an example of Context for the word "employees" in the extracted text:

Table 6. Example of context for “employee” in Voyant-tools.org

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| employees | with the needed job resources           |
| employees | to recover faster from traumatic        |
| employees | ' well-being they will rely             |
| employees | , customers, and communities along with |
| employees | have been managed in response           |
| employees | ' ability to thrive Future research     |
| employees | ' feelings of loneliness and social     |
| employees | to drastically altered work conditions  |

Source: Voyant-tools.org

Five major future trends have been identified for HRM concerning work, management, employee, performance, and learning (Table 7).

Table 4. Themes and subthemes appeared from text analysis

| Theme         | Subthemes  | Example of recommendations   |
|---------------|--|--|
| Employees     | Developing soft and hard competencies                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taking care of digital competencies and new training formats</li> <li>• train staff in digital security</li> <li>• analyze employees' risk competences</li> <li>• provide training to increase workforce skills in technological, time management, communication, safety, and stress management skills</li> <li>• make active, fast, guiding decisions,</li> <li>• a leader should fulfill the role of commander</li> <li>• provide training in IT-related skills</li> <li>• ensure such skills as resilience and collaboration, leadership and social influence, stress tolerance, and adaptability</li> <li>• encourage the workforce to reskill and engage in continuous learning</li> </ul> |
|               | Ensuring emotional well-being, health, and safety issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prioritize the emotional well being</li> <li>• provide a sense of belonging, respect, empowerment, support for personal growth, flexibility</li> <li>• fostering the motivation of employees is critical</li> <li>• educate employees about the benefits of vaccination and facilitating it</li> <li>• organize training programs enhancing employees' adaptive behaviors</li> <li>• address employees' physiological and safety needs</li> <li>• empower intuitive, adaptive, and visionary leadership</li> </ul>  |
| Work          | Flexibility and agility                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create better working conditions and flexibility</li> <li>• use flexible and situational management principles to recruit, arrange, and retain a workforce</li> <li>• identify risk factors to implement proper prevention measures</li> <li>• improve remote work</li> <li>• implement agile project management</li> <li>• offer to employees flexibility in scheduling, programs for coping with stress, and greater clarity about the organization's financial situation</li> <li>• build mobility website</li> </ul>  |
|               | Positive and integrative place of work                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a positive work-life balance to increase motivation</li> <li>• introduce, utilize and adopt investment in skills development and lifelong learning</li> <li>• build an integrative approach for work safety, health, and well-being</li> <li>• collaborate with the IT department to build a smooth virtual workplace,</li> <li>• provide a culture of adaptivity</li> <li>• respect international labor standards, and fundamental rights at work</li> </ul>  |
| Performance   | new performance management and appraisal system          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduce novel methods to evaluate remote work</li> <li>• improve employee performance with the provision of compensation and benefits, health&amp;safety, and better working conditions</li> <li>• focus on workforce deployment and performance through enhanced supervision, incentives, job design, training</li> <li>• provide new salary management regulations</li> <li>• manage collective and individual performance</li> <li>• monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of HR policies; ensure adequate resources, provide training courses for employees; maintain the health and welfare, of managers</li> </ul>   |
| Support       | IT support   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliver a broad spectrum of digital and blended learning tools</li> <li>• introduce socially sustainable e-learning</li> </ul>  |
|               | Trust and a good relationship                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build trust with employees,</li> <li>• reduce their level of stress and anxiety, reduce their loneliness and strengthen their ties in the workplace</li> <li>• improve employees' affective commitment to the organization</li> <li>• create a more inclusive atmosphere that increases the self-esteem of individuals and values their participation</li> <li>• build a learning environment that develops a creative, elaborate, secure, friendly platform</li> <li>• be warm and friendly</li> <li>• sponsor social events for employees</li> </ul>  |
|               | Healthcare support                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on psychological virtual counseling (webinars, tutorials) to cope with stress</li> <li>• ensure support for workers who lost their jobs and livelihoods due to pandemic</li> <li>• hire internal incident managers or a panel of external experts who may support the health of the workforce</li> </ul>  |
| Communication |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continuous communication using innovative ways,</li> <li>• build an interactive organizational culture with strong, open consistent communication</li> <li>• provide trust and transparency, pulse survey, feedback channels consultation, and communication are critical</li> <li>• promote social dialog</li> <li>• keep regular contact and strong link with employees</li> </ul>  |

Source: Own elaboration

Table 7. Themes and subthemes appeared from text analysis

| Theme       | Subtheme                                      |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| Work        | Digital place of work                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>digital and intelligence HRM-increase use of technology, teleworking, remote work in recruitment, selection, training, onboarding, communication</li> <li>elimination of many existing jobs due to faster digitalization and creation of many new jobs (cyber security experts, data analysts, app developers)</li> <li>eroding employees 'sense of an organizational "we"</li> </ul>  |
|             | Work structure                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>redesigning the organizational structure towards more flexible work arrangements</li> <li>more flexible and multiskilled global workforce will appear (virtual assignments)</li> <li>new commuting paradigm in expatriate assignments</li> <li>reduction in the workforce (less hiring and less turnover, retrench, downsize, restructure)</li> <li>increasing demand for online services</li> <li>new workplace policies and procedures</li> <li>social distancing become the new normal, entrenching and reinforcing fear, mistrust</li> </ul> |
|             | Health and safety                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>health and safety are priorities</li> </ul>  |
| Management  | Managerial models/ approaches                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>innovative HR strategies</li> <li>managing exits</li> <li>focus on change management and risk management</li> <li>more concern over management of spaces</li> <li>more flexible and situational management principles to recruit, retain and compensate employees will appear</li> <li>focus on diversity and inclusion when attracting and retaining talents</li> </ul>   |
|             | Relationship and communication with employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>building a trust relationship-trust is the currency</li> <li>constant internal communication</li> <li>positive leadership</li> </ul>   |
| Employees   | New competencies will be needed               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new skills and abilities required: the blend of technical skills and human strengths reflecting on the value of health, well-being, family, adaptive personality, ability to thrive, digital literacy, risk-management competencies</li> <li>reskilling</li> <li>more engagement and commitment in virtual social activities</li> <li>coping with feelings of loneliness, social exclusion, emotional exhaustion, risk aversion</li> <li>focusing on employees' social connectivity</li> </ul>   |
| Performance | Measures                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adaptative performance is expected</li> <li>new measures for evaluation and performance</li> <li>need for measurement of performance-oriented learning</li> </ul>  |
| Learning    |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the increasing role of e-learning blended learning and flipped learning</li> <li>focusing on self-directed learning</li> <li>learning based on employee experience work-learning balance</li> </ul>  |

Source: Own elaboration

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

All the strategies and plans that were made even one year before the pandemic, have to be revised, changed, and reshaped. For several months various organizations have tested some solutions which might serve now as a benchmark for others and as a point of reference in restructuring their HR policies.

In this paper, the first research question was about practical implications and recommendations for HR professionals. Analyzing the publications, the authors pointed to the very detailed and straightforward issues, practical hints, and suggestions concerning employees, work, performance, support, and communication which might be useful for HR practitioners. They are the following:

- Develop soft and hard competencies of your employees
- Ensure the emotional well-being, health, and safety of your employees

- Organize work in a more flexible and agile way
- Organize a positive and integrative place of work
- Introduce new performance management and appraisal system
- Managerial support is needed in the IT field, employee relationships, and healthcare issues

The second research question concerns future trends for HRM after COVID-19. These issues extracted from the reviewed publications are more general and are focused on work issues, management directions, employees, performance, and learning. The most important future challenges and directions for human resource management will be:

- Digitalization of work
- Redesigning of work structure and content into more remote, flexible, and agile

- Health and safety issues will be of great concern and shape all HR practices (recruitment, selection, onboarding, motivating, compensating, appraisal)
- The increasing role of innovative HR strategies including managing exits, change management, risk management, management of spaces
- More flexible and situational management principles to recruit, retain and compensate employees will appear
- Building trusting relationships and inclusive culture
- Reskilling and reshaping the competency requirements by combining technical skills (IT and digital literacy) and soft abilities (adaptive personality, coping with stress and emotional exhaustion)
- Positive leadership ensures holistic well-being, physical wellness, and cognitive and emotional health and promotes open dialogue
- Changing measures and procedures of performance management toward a more adaptive performance
- The increasing role of individual and organizational learning in all HR fields and of various forms (e-learning, blended learning, flipped learning, self-directed learning, learning based on employee experience work-learning balance).

This literature review opens up opportunities for future research focusing on each detailed trend pointed out in the review. Regarding the limitations of this study, there is an inability to assess the quality of studies included in the analysis from 'grey literature'. Although this broad view and business focus are welcome, the more rigorous method should be considered in future research.

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