Orchestrating the e-HRM Symphony

Tanya Bondarouk
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“What symphonies have in common across 300 years is that they are about 'becoming' – taking the listener on a journey which is like attending a play in several acts, or reading a book in several chapters: all different, but contributing to a harmony.”

- Stephen Johnson, “Bruckner Remembered”
E-HRM research in Twente

since 2004

- 100 Journal publications
- >80 Master theses
- 11 Books
- 12 Special issues in international journals
Setting the e-HRM stage

HRM and IT can play a beautiful symphony that encourages employees and organizations to perform better, but it may also crash the best hopes of organizations if how to orchestrate HRM and IT is poorly understood.
Believable or biased?

70%

Of companies from the global survey have been using electronic HRM (KPMG, 2016).

50%

Of organizations use at least one form of social media for HRM (2016).

1,5 mln


2,6

Jobs are created as a response to every job that is destroyed by Internet (Frey & Osborne, 2015, survey – 4,800 firms).

16%

Higher revenue per employee

35%

Higher profit per employee

1,5 mln

Robots around the world in 2014 (PwC, 2014)

25 mln

Robots are anticipated by 2025 (McKensey, 2015)

Organizations operating globally with above-average technology adoption outperform those without.
What e-HRM could really mean?
What is *e-* in e-HRM?

1. Technology has both a physical and a procedural dimension (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008).

2. Information technology is a physical entity (hardware, software and communication network infrastructure) that is separate from
   - individuals but at the same time the “physical” technology is nothing without individuals using it in organizational tasks (Marler & Parry, 2015);
   - an organization but at the same time incorporates organizational processes (HR activities) (Marler & Fisher, 2013).
E-HRM defined

“An umbrella term covering all possible integration mechanisms and contents between HRM and Information Technologies aiming at creating value within and across organizations for targeted employees and management” (Bondarouk and Ruël, 2009, p. 507).

“An integration of the IT and HRM fields of scholarly inquiry that focuses on all HRM content shared via IT, with the intention of making HRM processes distinctive and consistent, more efficient, and higher in quality, and which create long-term opportunities within and across organisations for targeted users” (Ruël and Bondarouk, 2018, p. 340).
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“An integration of the IT and HRM that focuses on all HRM content shared via IT, with the intention of making HRM processes distinctive and consistent, more efficient, and higher in quality, and which create long-term opportunities within and across organisations for targeted users” (Ruël and Bondarouk, 2018, p. 340)
E-HRM territory-2
Anticipated strategic benefits of e-HRM

- Cost-efficiency within HRM processes
- The generation of HR metrics to support decision-making
- The automation of routine HR tasks
- The branding of organizations
- Empowerment of managers
- Transforming HR professionals to strategic partners
Anticipated strategic benefits of e-HRM

Cost-efficiency within HRM processes

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The branding of organizations

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Transforming HR professionals to strategic partners
Two streams in the e-HRM research: TOPe model

Bondarouk, Furtmueller, Parry (2017)

- e-HRM Adoption
  - usage and acceptance

- Technology factors
- Organizational factors
- People factors
- Environmental factors

- e-HRM Consequences
  - success of e-HRM

299 articles under review (1970s-2010s).
115 benefits from e-HRM.
168 factors have been found empirically to be responsible for the e-HRM adoption.
95 factors for - the e-HRM consequences.
A decrease in the relevance of ‘Technology Factors’ for successful e-HRM implementation
Does the e-HRM usage matter?

Technology or HRM?

Dissonance – a combination of notes that sound harsh or unpleasant to most people (Oxford Dictionary)
We examined the relationship between e-HRM and HRM service quality and argued that the key drivers of HRM service quality are the strengths of HRM and of e-HRM (Bondarouk, Harms, Lepak, 2016)
Our findings mean a simple thing: we cannot start orchestrating e-HRM unless we have all HRM instruments in the right place and well-tuned.

(Bondarouk, Harms, Lepak, 2016)
e-HRM, HR function, and cost efficiency?
HR administrators remained focused on their traditional tasks. New job functions were introduced to guide the e-HRM implementation. Line managers and support personnel became involved in HRM activities. Investments were required to improve IT skills of HR professionals. HR specialists did not see their work as less administrative.

The e-HRM symphony
An example: Recruitment and selection  
(inspired by LinkedIn, 2018)

Old model 1:20

Resume

Traditional phone screen

Traditional in-person interviews

Hire

New model 1:100/150

Social Media profile

Soft skills assessment
  AND/OR
  Video interview
  AND/OR
  Webcam pre-recorded interview
  AND/OR
  Job tryout (in group, shorter duration)

Traditional in-person interviews
  AND
  Case-based interviews
  AND/OR
  Virtual reality assessment
  AND/OR
  Job tryout (individual, longer duration)

Hire
Areas where *digital* will impact recruitment, or – the e-HRM paradox

(No author or date specified)

- **Story-telling / selling the role**
- **Negotiations**
- **Understanding candidates’ needs**
- **Community building**
- **Differentiated candidate experience**

- **Estimating interpersonal skills**
- **Detecting diversity indicators**
- **Gauging culture add**
- **Gaining strategic talent insights**

- **Setting pre-screen criteria**
- **Recruitment marketing**

- **Pre-screening assessment**
- **Candidate propensity ranking**
- **Candidate matching**
- **Interview scheduling**
- **Resume collection**
- **Candidate sourcing**

Digitalisation potential

Human Touch value

Low

High

High
MORE EMPLOYEES WANT TO MANAGE THEIR HRM-RELATED QUESTIONS VIA SMARTPHONE

“Appification” of HRM?

41%
Datafication of HRM: New corporate superpower

Top uses for HRM data

- Forecast hiring demands: 29%
- Talent metrics: 31%
- Assess talent supply and demand: 38%
- Forecast of candidate success: 39%
- Workforce planning: 41%
- Build better offers: 50%
- Evaluate skills gaps: 50%
- Increase retention: 56%
Not contextualized data...

- Data quality is poor: 42%
- Not sure where to get it: 20%
- Too expensive: 18%
- Not sure how to use it: 14%
- Other: 6%

Data quality is poor is the most common reason for not having contextualized data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Possible contextual variables (dimensions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporal-spatial</td>
<td>Historical, Geographical, Time, Personal space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Technical, Economic, Political, Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Behaviours and artefacts, Values, Assumptions and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Cognitive, Affective, Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical</td>
<td>Aesthetic, Moral, Spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Verbal, Facial expression, Gestures, Body language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Shapiro et al. (2007, p.132)
After 15 years of the e-HRM research, I argue

1. We do not need more proof that technologies, once well-designed and aligned with HRM strategies, will create added values
2. Start with the HRM content and strategy before making HR digital
3. Do not go for e-HRM for cost efficiency reasons, consider customized value for your organisation
4. The more digital HRM becomes, the more you need to invest in its Human Touch
5. Digital is not always the answer to HRM questions
6. Do not standardize all HR processes
7. Interdisciplinary skills and abilities are at the center of modern e-HRM
“The very fact that improvised music is, by definition, made up on the spot means that it can be continually monitored and adapted to the circumstances of the moment...”
- Chris Dobrian (1991)
Thank you and enjoy your conference!

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