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Advancing the sustainability agenda through strategic human resource management: Insights and suggestions for future research

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Abstract

How can human resource management (HRM), *as both a scholarly discourse and a corporate strategic function, advance the sustainability agenda?* We endeavor to answer this question by drawing together insights gleamed from the emerging sustainable HRM literature. First, we synthesize various conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives on the topic, including frames of reference from strategic HRM, institutional theory and institutional logics, stakeholder theory, and sustainable careers/life cycle theory. Second, we unpack and contextualize the sustainable HRM literature through the lens of international HRM. Third, we consolidate the extant literature and present an agenda for future research, calling for further exploration of topics that are likely to hit the next high wave of generating new strategic HRM insights and sustainable HRM knowledge.

KEYWORDS
corporate social responsibility, ethics, green HRM, strategic HRM, sustainable HRM

1 | INTRODUCTION

The grand societal challenges of our time—reflected in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all (United Nations, 2022)—have gained increasing attention in the management literature, especially around the design of business models and the configuration of management practices to achieve said goals (George et al., 2016). In an attempt to help address these challenges, human resource management (HRM) scholars have drawn attention to HRM systems, strategies, policies, and practices as a potential means toward the realization of organizations' sustainability objectives (Stahl et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2012). In this body of literature, the call to integrate HRM and sustainability has made some limited advances in the past decade, encouraging the emergence and rapid development of "green HRM" that specifically targets environmental sustainability (Jackson et al., 2011; Ren et al., 2018; Renwick, 2018), with the

debate recently extending to the wider concept of sustainable HRM (Aust et al., 2020; Ehnert, 2009; Kramar, 2014, 2022).

The role of HRM has since been advocated to aid organizations' proactive attempts to address environmental issues and/or wider corporate social responsibility while working hard not to sacrifice profitability (De Stefano et al., 2018). This includes the study of specific, disparate HRM practices, for instance, environmental training (Teixeira et al., 2012) and pay incentives (Merriman & Sen, 2012), as well as bundles of some "best practices" to be deployed in an integrated set of strategically targeted HRM systems (DuBois & Dubois, 2012; Zoogah, 2018). Implicit in these investigations is a strategic assumption that well-designed HRM practices elicit employee ability, motivation, and opportunities that contribute to organizations' strategic objectives, in this case, sustainability (Ren & Jackson, 2020).

However, the difficulty associated with working toward organizational sustainability to enable companies to tackle societal grand

challenges is that it requires transformation from the current market-driven economic model to a new one in redefining the purpose, value, and legitimacy of organizational activities (Pfeffer, 2010). This transformation is essentially a process of institutional work where institutional logics, defined as organizing templates that guide the goals that organizations pursue and the means by which organizations pursue their goals (Reay & Hinings, 2009), are changed, established, and institutionalized (Dahlmann & Grosvold, 2017). To the extent that the conventional strategic HRM paradigm evaluates business effectiveness using financial metrics primarily, it is unclear precisely how HR practitioners can contribute effectively to the sustainability agenda (Brewster et al., 2016; Stahl et al., 2020).

Further, recent environmental disruptions (Kim et al., 2022), such as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war (Cumming, 2022), are exposing the limitations associated with a parochial focus on shareholder value in the traditional strategic HRM paradigm (Collings et al., 2021; Pucik et al., 2023). A vast number of companies worldwide are struggling to cope with the sudden disruptions to public health, economy, and society brought on by these events and are finding themselves paying more attention to issues of employee wellbeing, fulfilling careers, and sustainable development amidst the need to innovate (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Changes have since generated new studies to understand HRM responses to environmental disruptions, thus developing novel conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives on sustainable HRM. Notwithstanding their contributions, sustainable HRM remains a messy field that calls for greater clarity and precision.

In this article, and through the papers published in this special issue more broadly, we advance the sustainable HRM literature by highlighting HRM's change leadership role in transforming organizations toward sustainable development. To achieve this, we have three goals. The first goal is to consolidate and integrate various conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives associated with sustainable HRM, which will advance the theorization of this largely undertheorized field. Key developments in the sustainable HRM literature will also be critically reviewed. The second goal is to identify sustainable issues facing societies and businesses. Here, we substantiate the discussion by adding an international lens. The third goal is to offer recommendations for future research on sustainable HRM with an eye to building a new research agenda.

2 | THE EVOLUTION OF SUSTAINABLE HRM: DEBATE AND AMBIGUITIES

The concept of sustainable HRM as it is used nowadays in academia and industry may appear to be a relatively new one, emerging around the turn of this century (Aust et al., 2020). However, the idea of using HRM systems to achieve sustainability is a long-lasting goal in strategic management, though the meaning of sustainability has gone through a major and, as yet, unclear transformation in the past few decades.

The sustainable competitive advantage of firms was first defined in economic terms by Porter (1985) as a firm's above-industry-average profitability in the long run. The assumption is that improving financial performance can contribute positively to the welfare of society (McKinsey & Company, 2020). The wealth-creation approach to sustainability is similarly advocated by Friedman (1970) who comments that "there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits as long as it stays in the rules of the game."

The purpose of a corporation has since changed vis-à-vis the growing awareness of climate change, biodiversity loss, demographic changes, and resource scarcity, all of which call for a more inclusive, future-oriented growth model of sustainability. In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as meeting our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Thus, for a corporation, making profits is not an end, but rather a means to help it "do something more or better" (Handy, 2002, p. 51). In 2019, the Business Roundtable, an association of America's leading organizations' CEOs, issued a statement, clarifying that the "more" or "better" end is about committing to all stakeholders (Roundtable, 2019). This latest statement on the purpose of a corporation overturns the primacy of maximizing shareholder return by expanding it to value creation for customers, investment in employees, fair treatment of suppliers, and support for the community, as advocated by Freeman (2010), the pioneer of corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory, both considered forerunners of the concept of sustainable HRM.

Thus, there is growing recognition that corporations can be a force for good—increasingly understood in terms of the 17 SDGs of the United Nations—and that engagement in corporate sustainability is not only the right thing to do but also makes good business sense because it helps companies to align their activities with the 2030 agenda and meet the needs of a broad range of stakeholders. This is well exemplified by Paul Polman, the former CEO of Unilever and creator of the "Sustainable Living Plan," Unilever's blueprint for addressing the great ecological and social challenges of our time: "What we firmly believe is that if we focus our company on improving the lives of the world's citizens and come up with genuine sustainable solutions, we are more in synch with consumers and society and ultimately this will result in good shareholder returns" (Confino, 2012).

There is increased recognition that HRM has a potentially vital role to play in addressing these challenges, for example, by creating employee engagement with the firm's sustainability activities, creating performance management and incentive systems aligned with an emphasis on social and environmental sustainability, designing workplace-based practices that help the firm reduce harmful environmental practices, and offering company-sponsored volunteerism and leadership development programs aimed at promoting citizenship and sustainable development (e.g., Cohen et al., 2012; Mirvis, 2012; Voegtlin & Greenwood, 2016).

Advocacy for what we know today as sustainable HRM takes off around the year 2000 when scholars start to call attention to the scarcity of resources, environmental sustainability, and corporate social responsibilities to people, the planet, and prosperity. Sustainable

HRM highlights how the management of human resources can meet the current needs of the company and the community without compromising future needs (Ehnert & Harry, 2012). On this basis, we define sustainable HRM as the present deployment of HR policies and practices with the long-term aim of protecting future resources at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. Although this is an intuitive definition of sustainable HRM, it proves difficult to operationalize inasmuch as what constitutes the needs of the present is subject to different interpretations. Also, predicting future needs is equally difficult, as it requires forecasting the needs, capabilities, technologies, and contextual demands of future generations (Marshall & Toffel, 2005).

To understand the role of HRM in sustainability, several special issues (e.g., Taylor et al., 2012; Westerman et al., 2020) and review papers (e.g., Macke & Genari, 2019) have been published in recent years, which engender new conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives. The HRM field has indeed made significant advances in promoting and applying the label "sustainable" to HRM practices, policies, or systems. Nonetheless, some inconsistent arguments and findings require urgent scholarly attention. For starters, the different theories used to explain sustainable HRM have been espoused in isolation, with no attempt to compare, contrast, and integrate. In addition, the competing interests of different stakeholders have not, as yet, been reconciled into a coherent framework. Thus, what appears as an ostensibly win-win-win situation for organizations, employees, and the external environment (Jackson et al., 2011) is often misleading because gains for one of those stakeholders may correspond to losses for another (Bush, 2020). What is needed is an attempt to reconcile these theories to maximize the likelihood of a win-win-win scenario, while recognizing that this may not always be possible.

3 | THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF SUSTAINABLE HRM

Despite the proliferation of research on sustainable HRM in the last few decades, different definitions and measures have been adopted and a diverse range of topics have been examined (e.g., Kramar, 2022). For instance, studies of green HRM and socially responsible HRM have investigated how HR practices can be/have been used to address environmental concerns. Equally, socially responsible HRM and ethical HRM research have addressed the role of HR practices in improving the social dimension of sustainability, that is, how firms can play a caring role for their workforce with broader societal impacts. These studies overlap and are informed by different theoretical perspectives, such as the resource-based view, stakeholder theory, institutional theory, human capital theory, and social exchange theory. To consolidate various approaches adopted in the available research on sustainability and to provide directions for future research, we summarize the approaches into five theoretical streams of sustainable HRM. Table 1 illustrates how these different

TABLE 1 Key conceptualizations of sustainable HRM, corresponding theories, and research questions

Conceptualizations	Corresponding theories	Core argument	Exemplary research questions	New challenges for sustainable HRM
Sustainable HRM as a type of strategic HRM	Strategic HRM theories	HRM is a means through which organizations achieve their strategic goal (i.e., sustainability)	Does investment in sustainable HRM yield desired outcomes at the organizational and individual levels?	How to reconcile tensions, dilemmas, and paradoxes inherent in the simultaneous consideration of economic, social, and environmental goals?
Sustainable HRM as institutional work	Institutional work	HRM needs to create, maintain or disrupt an institutional setting that facilitates or blocks organizational sustainability	How do actors (organizations or individuals) transform a sustainable HRM system?	How does HRM make long-lasting, effective changes in the transformational process?
Sustainable HRM as a reconciliation between institutional logics	Institutional logics	HRM needs to balance multiple, or sometimes competing, institutional demands on organizational sustainability	Under competing institutional logics, how do organizations configure sustainable HRM systems to achieve organizational multiple goals?	What is the new institutional logic like?
Sustainable HRM as part of stakeholder management	Stakeholder theory	Effective management of multiple stakeholders gives organizations an advantage over competitors	How do different stakeholders residing in the organization's broader institutional context work together to enhance sustainability?	The spatial, temporal, and vertical integration change dimensions related to sustainable HRM
Sustainable HRM as a life-span career construction process	Sustainable career/life-cycle theory	An employee-centric orientation to build human sustainability in various domains/contexts	How do organizations help employees to build a sustainable career across their lifespan?	Ethical and legitimacy issues related to the role of HRM that penetrates employees' personal life

conceptualizations inform types of research questions, core arguments, and theoretical choices.

3.1 | Sustainable HRM as a type of strategic HRM

Conceptualizing sustainable HRM as a type of strategic HRM emphasizes the instrumentality of HRM systems to help organizations achieve desired outcomes, in this case, profitable sustainability. This conceptualization underpins early work on sustainable HRM and arguably remains the dominant one in the literature. Based on this conceptualization, HRM systems can be mobilized to contribute to the simultaneous attainment of performance goals in the triple bottom line (Cohen et al., 2012; Kramar, 2014). To this end, Lu et al. (2023), in a contribution to this special issue, illustrate a serial mediation mechanism, starting with what the authors call sustainable "common good values," a concept developed by Aust et al. (2020), and ending with improved employee performance.

Research using this conceptualization typically draws from the strategic HRM theoretical models to argue that sustainable HRM enhances employee abilities, shapes motivations, and provides opportunities that are needed to support the triple bottom line. Typical research questions relate to whether, how, and when sustainable HRM leads to, for instance, eco-efficiency (e.g., achieving economic and environmental goals), environmental justice (e.g., optimizing social equity and environmental protection), and fair trade (e.g., considering social consequences when conducting economic activities) (Marshall & Toffel, 2005). In this direction, Ren, Jiang, & Tang, 2022 utilize the strategic HRM theoretical perspective to provide the first empirical evidence that green HRM, a domain-specific form of sustainable HRM, contributes to the simultaneous attainment of economic and environmental performance. The idea that we can achieve sustainability without compromising economic performance is the "holy grail" of sustainable HRM. In addition, Baldassari et al. (2023), in this special issue collection, investigate the relationship between leaders' and team members' organizational citizenship behavior for the environment and workplace green advocacy. Their work sheds insights into how organizations can nurture in employees a range of desirable behaviors in the environmental domain.

It is interesting to note that research in this vein often concerns studying the outcomes of sustainable HRM and attempting to understand whether it pays to invest in sustainable practices. Prior work remains largely silent on finding solutions to address tensions and paradoxes that are inevitably embedded in seeking simultaneous performance in economic, social, and environmental domains (Ehnert, 2014; Poon & Law, 2020). Despite being intertwined, the sustainable management of different performance domains has multiple levels of tensions and dilemmas that manifest in various degrees of urgency and severity (e.g., Ehnert, 2014; Poon & Law, 2020). At the organizational level, an emphasis on environmental management or social responsibility may require investments that reduce short-term economic returns or channel slack resources away from areas that align with shareholder goals (Jackson & Seo, 2010). At the individual level, role

ambiguity, conflicts, and overload are common dilemmas employees face in organizations that seek to integrate the three performance goals, but do not provide clear guidance on how to reconcile their incompatibilities (Bush, 2020). Unless these tensions and dilemmas are acknowledged and addressed effectively, treating sustainable HRM as a type of strategic HRM risks allowing for "a unitary orientation that privileges shareholder returns and marketization over a wider plurality of sustainable and socially embedded practices" (Dundon & Rafferty, 2018, p. 384), which ultimately, over the long-term, can run counter to sustainability.

3.2 | Sustainable HRM as institutional work

Conceptualizing sustainable HRM as institutional work emphasizes the transformational nature of sustainability to the purpose of the business and of its HRM. This conceptualization brings HRM's change leadership role to the forefront of the transformation process. It emerges to address the inherent limitations associated with conceptualizing sustainable HRM as a type of strategic management. The latter builds upon the traditional economic market model of organizational performance and therefore can struggle to make a meaningfully inclusive integration of economic, social, and environmental goals. To create a new guiding principle of the purpose of a corporation, Ren and Jackson (2020) introduce the concept of HRM institutional entrepreneurship for sustainability (HIE-Sustain), defined as "the actions taken by HRM professionals acting as individuals or as a group to leverage resources such as their skills, knowledge and social capital as well as the organization's HRM system in order to change organizational norms, rules, routines, and values" to create "a balanced approach to managing social, environmental and economic performance." They argue that HRM has the boundary-spanning capabilities that initiate this fundamental, transformational change through the interaction with a broad array of internal and external stakeholders.

According to Ren and Jackson (2020), the HRM change leadership role is needed to lead institutional work toward articulating, designing, and implementing a new sustainability paradigm. This change leadership role departs from the change agent role that strategic HRM scholars promote. For the latter, HRM has evolved from an administrative role to a business partner role that enables HR professionals to gain a seat at the strategic decision-making table. However, the business partner role is the most difficult one out of a range of HRM roles that have been implemented (Lawler, 2011). Thus, instead of waiting to warm up the seat of the table built upon the market economic model, sustainable HRM should be proactive in "building a new table and inviting a wide array of guests to join a new conversation" (Ren & Jackson, 2020). Key research questions, therefore, concern the actions, resources, and capabilities needed in the transformational process through which organizations seek to redefine themselves.

In this conceptualization, a relevant theoretical lens is institutional work, which maintains the focus of institutional theory on the relationship between institutions and actions and emphasizes the idea that all activities are embedded in institutional structures (Lawrence

et al., 2011). This theoretical lens explicitly describes the internal shifts of the institutional processes as a result of the actions taken by individuals and organizations, known as institutional actors, while concurrently being influenced by the same institutional structures (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Institutional work was built upon two major theoretical foundations: the sociology of practice and the idea of agency in institutional studies. The practice perspective (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977) suggests that the study of institutional work must look into the internal shifts of the actions conducted by the actors aimed at creating and/or disrupting the institutional arrangements. The concept of institutional agency draws insights from institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988), institutional actors' strategic responses to institutional arrangements, and deinstitutionalization (Oliver, 1991), which, in concert, construct the creating-maintaining-disrupting conceptualization of institutional work.

Introducing HIE-Sustain to the field of sustainable HRM (Ren & Jackson, 2020) also facilitates the investigation of the self-initiating, bottom-up aspects of developing sustainable HRM policies and practices. This is an area the dominant institutional theoretical perspectives are relatively weaker to explain. Both institutionalism and neo-institutional theory stress how institutional processes influence organizations, how organizations become institutions, and how frames of meaning guide human action (Aguilera & Grøgaard, 2019; Scott, 2013). In this sense, whether a firm is characterized by a sustainable HRM system should depend on its institutional environment. However, institutional work facilitates the focuses on what individuals and organizations can do, and when and how they do it, to create, maintain, or disrupt the institutions in a way that suits their interests.

3.3 | Sustainable HRM as a reconciliation between institutional logics

Conceptualization of sustainable HRM as institutional work addresses an important, but often ignored, point: organizations and individuals can develop HRM policies and practices proactively to deal with societal demands by creating, maintaining, or disrupting institutional frames. However, the institutional work lens cannot readily address how a newly created or long-existing HRM system has a "sustainable" path trajectory when facing multiple, even competing, institutional pressures. To resolve this puzzle, insights derived from institutional logic theory should be embraced (Aguilera & Grøgaard, 2019).

Institutions guide individuals' and organizations' organizing principles, interests, and preferences (Friedland & Alford, 1991). Embracing this view, Thornton and Ocasio (2008) argue that differentiated institutional logics affect organizations in various contexts, including markets, industries, and organizational forms. Institutional pressures become more complex in the environmental and sustainability domains because the coexistence of multiple institutional logics forces firms to respond to multiple, and even competing, requirements for sustainability (Walls & Hoffman, 2013). For example, Banerjee et al. (2003) divide conflict and competing logics into different categories, namely, public concern (i.e., addressing customers who increasingly demand environmentally-friendly products and services), regulatory forces (e.g., addressing stricter environmental regulations), competitive advantage (e.g., achieving substantial cost advantages), and ecological orientation (e.g., taking responsibility for preserving the environment). More concisely, both market profitability and environmental protection are the typical competing logics that set the dichotomous directions of organizations' attention and objectives when explaining organizations' engagement with environmental issues (Dahlmann & Grosvold, 2017; Ren, Fan, & Tang, 2022).

To deal with these competing logics, firms may take various approaches to develop sustainable HRM, namely, the "best practice," "best fit," and configurational approaches. The "best practice" approach recognizes the universality of the problem and the solution (Pfeffer & Jeffrey, 1998). The challenge here is around identifying the ubiquity and transferability of sustainable institutional logics. The "best fit" approach, derived from contingency meta-theory, proposes that the alignment of HRM practices in bundles in accordance with organizational factors determines HRM contributions (Boxall & Purcell, 2000). In this sense, the extent to which a firm should adopt sustainable HRM depends on its specific external and internal institutional demands or the results of a power struggle between competing institutional logics. Their coexistence reflects power struggles among coalitions of interest groups within and outwith organizations and competition for resource allocation (Greve & Zhang, 2017). Consequently, sustainable HRM may comprise practices that are prescribed by different institutional logics.

Last, but not least, the configurational approach denies the solution advocated by the "best practice" or contingency ("best fit") approach that there is only one best way that a firm can meet external and internal demands. Instead, the configurational approach embraces causal complexity, complementarity, and equifinality thinking (Misangyi et al., 2017). For instance, causal complexity can be reflected in the fact that firms may be guided by both market profit and environmental protection logics, where one or both dominate. To cope with causal complexity, the configurational approach suggests that multiple, but equally effective, solutions can coexist, through which firms can seek to achieve reconciliation between competing logics. The article by Jia et al. (2023), published in this special issue, provides a good example of how a configurational approach that combines institutional configuration factors (i.e., institutional support, institutional quality, and institutional infrastructure) and organizational factors (i.e., strategic leadership and resource slack) can shed light on the way sustainable HRM is configured in firms in China.

While the market–environment dichotomy offers parsimony and clarity, institutional theorists argue that the market and the environment are not mutually exclusive (Besharov & Smith, 2014). Thus, firms can combine or re-combine different sets of sustainable HRM practice bundles to match their institutional logics. For example, Ren, Fan, & Tang, 2022; Ren, Jiang, & Tang, 2022 conceptualize four types of organizational institutional logics, namely, greenie (the dominance of environmental protection), marketer (the supremacy of market profit logic), ambidexter (the coexistence of environment protection and market profit logic), and opportunist (where no single institutional

logic is dominant). Following this conceptualization and empirical test, their study reveals the existence of multiple configurations of institutional logics and sustainable practices (e.g., different combinations of control- or commitment-sustainable HRM practices) that equally result in high environmental performance, market performance, or both.

3.4 | Sustainable HRM as part of stakeholder management

Conceptualizing sustainable HRM as part of stakeholder management emphasizes a pluralist view of the corporation with sustainable development being a central, enduring, and distinctive feature. Rather than seeking solutions to determine the precedence of one stakeholder over another, this conceptualization integrates a wide plurality of stakeholders (Kramar, 2014). Effective management of multiple stakeholders gives an organization an advantage over those competitors that only prioritize a restricted range of stakeholders for several reasons. First, it enables the management of complex and intertwined relationships among different stakeholders, which constitutes a rare, valuable, and hard-to-imitate organizational resource (Barney, 1991). Second, it may promote alignment between espoused and actual sustainability practices. Research shows that a key motivation for people to demonstrate sustainability at work is due to organizations' rationale for sustainability (Tosti-Kharas et al., 2017).

It is worth noting that the top management team plays a pivotal role in an organization's sustainability efforts (e.g., Ren, Fan, & Tang, 2022; Ren, Jiang, & Tang, 2022), and yet it often remains the missing stakeholder in the HRM literature (Boada-Cuerva et al., 2019). In this special issue, the article by Su et al. (2023) contribute to this research lacuna. The authors criticize prior studies overly emphasizing stakeholder antagonism derived from conflicting interests and expectations of stakeholders in pursuit of certain strategies, but ignoring the stakeholder complementarity as highlighting the common grounds of internal and external stakeholders.

As part of the complexities involved in the transformation toward sustainability, it is important to reflect on how to configure well-functioning top management teams to facilitate HRM's strategic changes. In most organizations, the top leader takes final responsibility for firm performance and interacts with the senior leadership team when dealing with complex strategic decisions (Heyden et al., 2017). With the boundary-spanning nature of HRM systems and practices, HR professionals have the capacity and opportunities to interact, negotiate, and coordinate with the top management team so as to foster an environment conducive to a transformation toward sustainability. In this sense, conceptualizing sustainable HRM as part of stakeholder management extends beyond HRM's engagement with frontline employees and line managers, and into the intricacies embedded in the leader-top management dynamics. Such an expansive interaction may serve as a starting point to understand complex resource configurations in explaining and implementing organizational

transformation toward addressing sustainability challenges. It also raises important issues pertaining to leader integrity (Pfeffer, 2016), executive compensation (e.g., Deckop et al., 2006), human resource development (e.g., Pless et al., 2012), corporate governance (e.g., Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015), talent management (e.g., Collings, 2014), and how to develop responsible leaders (e.g., Mirvis, 2012), all of which have distinct HRM implications.

In this conceptualization, one of the key challenges, however, is the neglect of spatial, temporal, and vertical integration of sustainable HRM with related stakeholders (Stahl et al., 2020). In addition, what skill requirements are needed for HRM professionals to undertake effective stakeholder management for sustainability requires further investigation. For instance, in addressing organizations' sustainability challenges, what are some new requirements for HR professionals' skill sets, including personality and ideological imprinting? Other research questions that provide fruitful new avenues include how different stakeholders perceive HRM-related policies toward organizational sustainability, how HRM attribution plays a role in the management of stakeholders, and how HR professionals can inspire others to contribute efforts and resources with a sense of purpose in addressing sustainability.

3.5 | Sustainable HRM as a life-span career construction process

Conceptualizing sustainable HRM as a life-span career construction process acknowledges the scarcity of human resources and emphasizes balancing the work and personal lives of employees through HRM systems. To the extent that career management is an integral part of HRM, the emergence of this conceptualization brings new challenges and confusion to the sustainable HRM field. On the one hand, it shifts the focus from the role of HRM in promoting organizational sustainability to the sustainability of human resources (Mariappanadar, 2012). For instance, Ehnert (2009) comment about reproducing the HR base and considering employee satisfaction, commitment, and well-being. On the other hand, this framework departs from other conceptualizations of sustainable HRM mentioned above by taking an employee-centric approach and emphasizing holistic welfare. A sustainable career is characterized by one's health, happiness, and productivity (de Vos et al., 2020), which are important to human sustainability (Pfeffer, 2010). So far, the main theories used to explain sustainable careers have been conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

A key characteristic of this conceptualization is the departure from a top-down focus on HRM design in terms of functional efficiency. It reorients emphasis on the potential of employees to be proactive throughout their careers and involved in organizational sustainability (DuBois & Dubois, 2012). It also helps organizations to develop the infrastructure needed for a learning organization and positive working relationships, which improve employee satisfaction and productivity. In this light, HRM becomes the "steward" of employees,

committing itself to ensure that they experience vitality and a sense of growth, rather than a sense of being depleted and exploited (Taylor et al., 2012).

To some extent, sustainability compels organizations to rethink their relationship between employees' work lives and personal lives. For instance, the general environmental worldview that employees embrace through schooling and family interactions influences whether they see nature as a limited resource and subject to human interference (Dunlap & Van Liere, 1978). However, it is likely that the pro-environmental behaviors performed in the personal domain do not automatically translate into the workplace (Tang et al., 2023). Also, increased energy costs and living costs in recent years have affected employees' financial well-being, which has implications for their work performance and attitudes (DuBois & Dubois, 2012). In this vein, though not explicitly stated, Usman et al. (2022), in this special issue collection, investigate how HRM practices aimed at enhancing employees' pro-environmental knowledge and skills at work influence pro-environmental behaviors outside the workplace. This article in our collection makes a timely contribution to a broader understanding of the critical, yet largely neglected, value of sustainable HRM. Nonetheless, a range of burgeoning issues remains to be fully addressed, including, for instance, how employee voice will affect sustainable HRM in addressing organizations' sustainability challenges and how the management of sustainable careers may affect employee performance outcomes (i.e., intention to leave, job burnout, subjective well-being, etc.) during the process of achieving organizational sustainability.

3.6 | Integration or disintegration?

These five theoretical conceptualizations of sustainable HRM are not exhaustive of this growing field, nor are they mutually exclusive of each other. For instance, the effective engagement of a wide array of stakeholders requires a mindset change away from the economic-driven objective of shareholders, which aligns with the HRM-sustainability model advocated in the second conceptualization. Also, by considering the interests of the linked members of the firm, the second conceptualization enables sustainable HRM to go beyond an antagonistic relationship between employees and employers (Macke & Genari, 2019), which ultimately paves the way for employees to have a sustainable career in the current organization and beyond.

In sum, consolidating the available perspectives of sustainable HRM helps to clarify the nature, efficacy, process, and scope of sustainable HRM, particularly related to HRM-based change toward organizational sustainability. It opens up new opportunities away from being reactive to challenges brought about by sustainability by initiating new debates in sustainability management, for instance, how green HRM might influence generic, nongreen-specific organizational and employee outcomes (Ren et al., 2018), how to incentivize managers toward the triple bottom line (Merriman & Sen, 2012), and what tensions to solve among stakeholders (Ehnert, 2009). The overlaps

between the five conceptualizations also introduce opportunities for the integration of available theories or the development of new theories to explain the interaction between HRM, top managers, middle-level managers, line managers, employees, and external stakeholders, and to add nuances to the knowledge base of the HRM literature.

4 | AN INTERNATIONAL LENS TO SUSTAINABLE HRM

Like many HRM concepts, sustainable HRM is grounded primarily in Western countries. To achieve sustainability at the global scale through sustainable HRM practices, this concept and its discourse need to be embraced by non-Western countries. Here, a universalist best practice approach to configuring sustainable HRM practices may not be effective (Marchington & Grugulis, 2000). Instead, these practices need to be locally informed to address the local situations through the mobilization of local institutional actors, and their implementation also needs to be culturally sensitive. We elaborate on the interrelated role of institutional actors and societal culture in promoting sustainable HRM from an international lens in this section.

Ren and Jackson (2020) argue cogently in favor of the need for institutional entrepreneurship for HR professionals to implement sustainable HRM. To extend this argument further, the need for institutional entrepreneurship can be applied to other institutional actors within and outside the workplace, such as trade unions and other organizing/representing bodies of the workforce, management, and local governments. The role of these institutional actors is underpinned by not only the formal institutional norms, but also the social norms informally expected of them (though some may argue that social norms are institutional norms). For example, in developing and collectivist societies like China, India, and Sri Lanka, providing free or subsidized canteen meals at the workplace and company transports for commuting to work are common as a manifestation of a paternalist and caring culture. In particular, providing good quality meals (measured by freshness, cleanliness, and nutritional balance) is critical as a company benefit that will directly affect workers' satisfaction and productivity. In these workplaces, workers' committees are often set up to collect employees' opinions and feedback to the management for improvement.

In China, trade unions assume a dual function of productivity and protection roles, although they have been heavily criticized for their inefficacy in protecting workers' rights and interests or redressing employee grievances (Cooke, 2020). In unionized state-owned enterprises, unions have long played the role of organizing employees' skill development through skill training and contests, as well as organizing problem-solving teams consisting of skilled workers to solve production problems. The trade unions have also been involved in collecting employees' suggestions via the company employee suggestions schemes to help resolve workplace problems. Similar examples can be found in India and Sri Lanka, among other collectivist countries, in which trade unions play an active and positive role in developing collaborative workplace relationships, which in turn contribute to the

sustainability of the firm. This resonates with the social partnership approach to industrial relations (IR) promoted in Western countries. Yet, sustainable HRM research has been conducted largely outside the IR context (De Prins et al., 2018). De Prins et al. (2018) have called for revitalizing social dialogue in the workplace. Given that the institutional configuration and role of the trade unions differ across countries, there is much scope for both research and practice to explore how a cooperative IR climate and how trade unions can work with management and the workforce to adopt sustainable HRM practices innovatively to create value and reduce harm for employees while contributing to raising productivity.

Developing an understanding of how sustainable HRM can create value and mitigate harm at the workplace necessitates a bottom-up and inclusive approach that departs from the current elitist talent management orientation in HRM research (Marchington, 2015). Grassroots workers are not just passive recipients of management practices, instead, they can play an active role in contributing to sustainability, if given the opportunity or feel empowered to do so. However, the creativity of grassroots workers has long been neglected (Cooke, 2002). Here, the concept of frugal innovation offers a useful example. Innovation underpins the achievement of all SDGs, not just Goal 9 (promoting resilient infrastructure, sustainable industrialization, and innovation). In particular, frugal innovation can help not only save energy and other material consumptions associated with the operation of the business, but also provide simple and affordable solutions to problems confronting the lives of those in poor communities by using limited resources efficiently (e.g., Brem & Wolfram, 2014; Denoncourt, 2020).

Extant evidence suggests that an inclusive approach is key to the success of frugal innovations (Arnold, 2018). Grassroots workers from poor regions, often with limited formal education, but who have lived through daunting circumstances, may have innovative ideas and experiences which firms can harness in pursuing frugal innovations. These grassroots innovators, and their networks, may be more valuable in providing practical and affordable solutions than the well-educated talented elites. In other words, the solution to "underclass" challenges is often provided by the "underclass," and firms, especially multinational enterprises (MNEs), should adopt a more inclusive approach to empowering local workers from disadvantaged backgrounds and fostering sustainability through frugal innovation. An inclusive and empowering approach to harnessing grassroots workers' innovative ideas needs to be accompanied by HRM practices that reward such workplace behaviors in order to be effective. In developing countries where workers have limited income, financial benefits appear to be more effective than spiritual awards or recognitions alone (Cooke, 2022).

Workplace culture and management practices are underpinned by societal values, and so are the configuration and implementation of sustainable HRM (e.g., Xing & Starik, 2017). Yet, extant research on sustainable HRM has paid limited attention to the role of religions and the values that they convey in sustainable HRM and sustainability more generally. Wahab's (2017) study is one of the exceptions in which the author found that Islamic work values have a significant

relationship with sustainable work behaviors and sustainable energy consumption. While the notion of values largely underpins the sustainable HRM discourse, such as ethics and human rights, the role of societal and religious values and beliefs in shaping people's perceptions of the relationships between human beings and nature, attitudes, and resource consumption behaviors, for example, remains to be more fully understood. These nuances will affect the interpretation and theorization of workplace sustainable behaviors with broader HRM and employment relations implications. As Khan and Ackers (2004) (p. 1348, original emphasis) contend in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) context:

> the employment relationship cannot be conceived of simply in terms of the internal conflicts of (economic) interests between management and labour unions. Although the *value and interests institutionalization* model is also about the role of African cultural values in the management of people in organizations in Africa, it expresses these values in terms of the 'African social system' rather than the 'African thought system.' The latter suggests that elements of 'African culture' can be simply eradicated through indoctrination and management training. In these terms, the 'African social system' is more representative of the values, norms, and social organization that are at the centre of the HRM problem in SSA.

Implementing sustainable HRM in different countries for MNEs requires corporate competence and local knowledge. Scholars question the extent to which MNEs can utilize their global human capital to engage in socially responsible activities (e.g., Miska et al., 2016; Wu & Fan, 2021). Extant research on organizational/management learning in the MNE context has focused primarily on managers between the headquarters and subsidiary levels. For MNEs from emerging economies, headquarters may not have the HR capacity to support their overseas' operations on site due to the lack of experience in dealing with local situations. Managers on site may need to adopt a learning-by-doing and learning-by-failing approach (Pavitt, 1991) to acquire corporate competencies (e.g., knowledge of the local regulations) and work with the local institutional actors and workers. A case in point is the Chinese construction firms operating in African countries. As one of the Chinese managers interviewed in 2021 by one of the authors of this article (Cooke) disclosed regarding their labor practices for the local workers:

> In the beginning, we received a notification every week from the local authority to say that we have violated the labor regulation and needed to go to court and be fined because we were not aware of their regulation or did not understand what the regulation means. It consumed a lot of our resources and energy. Later on, before we opened each new site, we would draw up our labor policy and employment terms and conditions

document and invite the local authority from various government departments and the trade unions to check and comment if what we proposed were all within the local regulation. Then we would ask them to confirm and approve of policy document in writing as lawful. This helped us build relationships with the local authority in different departments and has greatly reduced the number of notifications we received and also even when we received the notifications, the chance of us being found "guilty" has reduced significantly.

In a similar vein, scholars (e.g., Chang et al., 2012; Wu & Fan, 2021) find that seeking knowledge overseas is the key motivator for emerging market multinationals embedding in foreign markets through implementing CSR initiatives. On the one hand, expatriates are largely encouraged to incorporate CSR into their operational activities, especially those expatriates who can transfer headquarters information and corporate culture to host market business practices (Chang et al., 2012). On the other hand, CSR provides expatriates and international managers with platforms to develop cross-cultural competencies (e.g., new skills, knowledge, and adjustment abilities), which are essential in promoting the expansion of emerging multinationals (Shea & Hawn, 2019).

Further, developing sustainable IHRM should focus on how global human capital can engage in socially responsible activities and how global talent can be managed sustainably. In this sense, global talent research has predominantly examined the role of expatriation on their organizational (e.g., economic performance) or their individual (e.g., career development) goals (Chang et al., 2012; Gong, 2003a, 2003b; Harzing, 2001; Sanders & De Cieri, 2021). Overly concentrating on international assignment completion and firm performance without considering expatriates' quality of work life and cross-cultural adaptation often lead to expatriate failure. To sustain expatriation management, Farndale et al. (2014) propose a mutual-benefits perspective, which suggests that MNEs must reconcile both organizational and individual goals to achieve the best interests of both parties. The mutual-benefits perspective is essential to managing sustainable international operations, because a sustainable business should satisfy multiple stakeholders (e.g., firms and their employees), rather than merely maximize shareholders' interests per se (Maley et al., 2020). Also, mutual-beneficial outcomes lead to social legitimacy, which is critical for the public's acceptance of, and support for, an MNE in the host environment. Continuing this line of research, Fan et al. (2022) empirically test the mutual-benefit perspective and develop a sustainable expatriation management system, which emphasizes three dimensions of expatriation practices to achieve both subsidiary economic performance and expatriates' quality of work-life overseas. These practices refer to ability-enhancing practices (e.g., selective recruitment, extensive training), motivation-enhancing practices (e.g., egalitarian codes, internal promotion, and appraisals), and opportunity-enhancing practices (e.g., broader job design, employee participation) (Fan et al., 2022).

In short, the promotion of sustainable HRM requires the collaboration of various institutional actors and their roles are embedded in the societal context in which they operate. HR professionals can work with these institutional actors to co-create conditions for sustainable HRM as well as its substantive content. In the next section, we provide a few avenues for future research by building on what we have discussed so far in this article.

5 | FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Though much progress has been made in understanding whether, or the extent to which, HRM can play a proactive role in the sustainability agenda, scholars have only scratched the surface of this still-emerging area of research, with much empirical and theoretical work needed. To be sure, the contributions included in this special issue have gone some way in tackling lacunae in our knowledge, but several key questions remain unanswered. The aim of this section is to consolidate those related questions into a future research agenda, depicted in Table 2.

First, the scope of what is meant by sustainability needs further clarification. If we are not all on the same page in defining sustainability, reaching a consensus on its antecedents and effects will be difficult, if not impossible. By default, many researchers (and indeed laypeople) view sustainability in terms of human interaction with the biosphere (Johnston et al., 2007), but increasingly scholars recognize that there are three pillars of sustainability: economic sustainability, social sustainability, and the environmental sustainability. The latter conceptualization is fairly well understood, but the former two are somewhat more amorphous concepts. What, for example, exactly "counts" as social sustainability? If we define sustainability to include any contribution to human welfare, then very little of HRM would fall outside this definitional parameter. The same is true of economic, or financial, sustainability. What if an organization is surviving in the long-term, but not thriving? Could it be considered sustainable? In short, some additional ontological work, including perhaps further scale development to measure these elusive constructs, is still needed to pin down the definition.

Second, the concept of sustainable HRM could benefit greatly from the application of the principles of moral philosophy. While theoretical and empirical treatments of this concept are welcome, they should be underpinned by foundational metaphysics of morals (Mansell, 2013). It is widely assumed that HRM "ought to" or "should" promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability for the common good (Aust et al., 2020) because we have an obligation to future generations. As such, "questions related to the effects of [HRM] practices are deeply moral, and indeed cannot be value neutral" (Greenwood & Van Buren, 2017, p. 675), but the ethics of sustainable HRM are largely under-developed from a philosophical point of view (Mariappanadar, 2012). That said, the essence of ethical HRM, which is increasingly viewed as a subcategory of sustainable HRM (Stankeviciute et al., 2020), is closely related to at least the social sustainability dimension of the sustainable HRM argument, but, again,

TABLE 2 Directions for future research on sustainable HRM

Directions for future research	Suggestions
1. Better definition(s) of sustainability	Researchers should: • Better unpack ontological foundations of environmental and social sustainability • Engage in scale development to improve measurement of these constructs and optimized definition and parameters • Conduct qualitative research on these constructs aimed at clarifying their meaning
2. Applications of principles of moral philosophy	Researchers should: • Complement existing theoretical and empirical work on sustainable HRM with the principles of moral philosophy • Go beyond the "how" of sustainable HRM to better understand the "why" • Incorporate the work of key moral philosophers, such as Kant and Aristotle
3. Is sustainability sincere or cynical?	Researchers should: • Seek to classify organizations as sincere or cynical adherents to the sustainability agenda • Investigate the underlying motives for engaging with the sustainability agenda • Employ attribution theory to better understand the sincerity of corporate actors
4. The tenuous link between sustainable HRM and firm performance	Researchers should: • Extend the HR-performance link literature to include sustainable HRM • Assess under what circumstances this relationship is a positive sum or negative sum • Evaluate what types of sustainable HRM practices are more effective than others, and which are most likely to elicit grassroots "green" behaviors
5. Sustainability as a collective action problem	Researchers should: • Seek to solve the "tragedy of the commons" from an HRM perspective • Employ game theory to optimize the "global prisoners' dilemma" underlying sustainability • Investigate new regulatory mechanisms and "best practices" in global governance to reduce free-riding
6. Theoretical, disciplinary, and methodological pluralism	Researchers should: • Leverage alternative theories that have not, as yet, been applied to sustainable HRM • Broaden the disciplinary boundaries to include contributions from, for example, economics, social and environmental accounting, and the humanities • Counterbalance the prevailing quantitative research with a setup of in-depth qualitative studies

most of the studies under this umbrella are empirical, rather than philosophical. Future research might examine not only whether a moral or categorical imperative exists for HR professionals, but also critically assess why HRM might play a moral role in promoting sustainability. Examples of research questions that could be asked in this regard include: how is sustainable HRM driven by an ecological and/or future-society conscience, and to what extent are "right" and "wrong" in this debate socially constructed (Mead, 2015, p. 379)?

Third, to the extent that HRM involves itself in the sustainability agenda, researchers should further investigate whether this involvement is sincere or cynical, that is, the motivation underlying HRM design in promoting sustainable practices. Critics of CSR initiatives have long argued that employers often exploit these initiatives for purposes of false virtue signaling (Banerjee, 2008) and/or to instrumentally build up their "brand" as a socially conscious organization (Tata & Prasad, 2015). From this point of view, their commitment to social and environmental justice is just a cynical form of strategic management. The architects of sustainable HRM could equally be accused of impression management (Highhouse et al., 2009), whereby they are maneuvering or posturing a false commitment to sustainability. On the other hand, not all organizations can be painted with this sardonic brush. It is possible, likely even, that some organizations are genuinely committed to sustainability, as in the case of Sonnentor (Aust et al., 2020), among other socially invested firms. Future research should seek to build a classification typology to identify the underlying motives and effects of implementing sustainable HRM, perhaps using attribution theory (Sanders & Yang, 2016). Also, studies should explore how different motivations for engaging in sustainable HRM (e.g., instrumental vs. values-driven or substantive vs. symbolic) affect employees' responses to sustainable HRM activities. High-proximity stakeholders such as employees have an interest in a firm's sustainable HRM activities and can identify activities that have merely symbolic meaning (i.e., appear to be employee friendly), with resulting negative implications for their commitment and engagement. For example, Schons and Steinmeier (2016) found that employees quickly discern when symbolic actions are not supported by substantive ones ("cheap talk"), leading them to withdraw their support and loyalty. Even companies that use sustainable HRM practices instrumentally to maximize firm financial performance while claiming to be guided by a broader social mission or employee-oriented philosophy face the risk that employees and other stakeholders will detect their "moral decoupling" (Pfeffer, 2016, p. 664) and sanction the company's deceit. By contrast, when employees perceive the underlying motivation for sustainable HRM as genuine and the firm's engagement as substantive, this will likely lead to favorable outcomes such as increased employee commitment, engagement, and satisfaction (Donia et al., 2017; Stahl

et al., 2020). More research is needed to understand the implications of the depth, and the underlying motivation, of a firm's engagement in sustainable HRM for stakeholder engagement generally and employee engagement specifically.

Fourth, unanswered questions remain surrounding the tenuous link between sustainable HRM and firm performance. Some studies suggest that a genuine commitment to sustainability can inversely impact firm performance (Pava & Krausz, 1996) while others show that both variables (sometimes through a mediator) are mutually compatible and have a positive sum (Ren, Fan, & Tang, 2022; Ren, Jiang, & Tang, 2022; Úbeda-García et al., 2021). Among the latter firms, a separate, but equally important, question emerges: what types of sustainable HRM practices are more effective than others, and which are most likely to elicit grassroots "green" behaviors? It is important to bear in mind that not all sustainable HRM practices will necessarily yield the same effect on employees and/or organizations. For example, Davidescu, Roman, Strat, and Mosora's (2019, p. 1) study of regional sustainability, individual expectations, and work motivation in the Romanian context found that "social sustainability has a significant impact on work motivation," but economic and environmental sustainability "have no significant impact on work motivation."

Fifth, our analysis of sustainability through the lens of international HRM shines a light on some important avenues for future researchers to explore. Inasmuch as sustainability—or at least environmental sustainability—is a collective action problem that is ultimately based on the destructive logic of the tragedy of the commons, it would appear that there is no easy global solution to the depletion of exhaustible resources. This so-called "global prisoners' dilemma" (Lempert & Nguyen, 2011) opens up fruitful pathways to game-theoretic future research on sustainable HRM, with a focus on how to encourage cross-national collaboration and cooperation on the sustainability agenda. Without innovative ideas and new regulatory mechanisms couched in the principles of global governance, we will likely continue to see uneven adherence to environmental protection and/or social clauses (van Roozendaal, 2020), wherein some countries make sacrifices in the name of sustainability while others offset those sacrifices by continuing to pollute the environment and exploit the labor force. In short, further research is needed on how to best coordinate sustainability across borders and the role of institutional actors and HRM, particularly in the context of MNEs.

Sixth, we draw this section of the paper to a close with a call for theoretical, disciplinary, and methodological pluralism in future studies of sustainable HRM. The theoretical work that has been synthesized in the present study is illustrated in the five conceptualizations articulated in Table 1, however, a number of alternative theories and insights from non-HRM disciplines could add significant value to our evolving understanding of the concept. For example, it would be interesting to see how theories of social and environmental accounting and reporting (e.g., Gray, 2006; Gray et al., 2009) and green economics (e.g., Cato, 2012) intersect with the sustainability debate. The disciplinary boundaries of sustainable HRM research could also be expanded, for example, to include game-theoretic approaches to cooperation as well as humanities-based approaches that examine the

role of language and discourse in fostering commitment to sustainability. Finally, future studies in this area should embrace a wide array of methodologies beyond the prevailing quantitative modeling of sustainability and its antecedents and effects. In particular, we call for a greater number of qualitative studies of sustainable HRM that explore the meaning of sustainability and build new theories to help us better understand the role that HRM can play in this sphere.

6 | CONCLUSIONS

This special issue makes a timely contribution to consolidating various theoretical perspectives in the available sustainable HRM literature and advancing the theorization of the role of HRM in leading the change toward addressing sustainability challenges. There are five contributions in the collection, which advance debates about sustainable HRM in various aspects. Specifically, Baldassari et al. (2023) offer a nuanced view that leaders' organizational citizenship behavior for the environment is a stronger predictor, compared to leaders' workplace green advocacy, of team members' organizational citizenship behavior for the environment and workplace green advocacy. Potential boundary conditions (e.g., person-supervisor fit, person-group fit) were also considered. Jia et al. (2023) provide a good example of applying a configurational perspective to investigate the determinants of sustainable HRM adoption. Integrating institutional theory, leadership, and resource slack, they developed an institutional configurational model that advances the understanding of the theoretical drivers of sustainable HRM. Su et al. (2023) test how family CEO successors affect post-succession firm performance under conditions of sustainable HRM practices toward employees and top managers, as well as corporate philanthropic activities in the broader community. Their findings suggest that the instrumental value of sustainable HRM not only lies in its direct link with financial performance, but also provides insurance-like protection for firms in difficult times. Lu et al. (2023) argue that sustainable HRM practices are associated with an improved psychological state of resilience, which in turn is associated with higher levels of work engagement and thus employee performance. They provide encouraging evidence that sustainable HRM can lead to better and more sustainable outcomes. Usman et al. (2022) draw from conservation of resources theory to investigate an important yet overlooked role of green training in shaping employee behaviors outside work. They show that green training has positive implications for eco-friendly behaviors in the personal domain and this relationship is stronger among spiritually inclined employees.

Overall, we hope this special issue helps put into perspective the paradigm shifts in assessing business performance models, and further integrate the literature on HRM, institutional theory, and related concepts (e.g., leadership), which have so far remained largely independent. In the meantime, we believe the enriched understanding of the nature, characteristics, and function of sustainable HRM, especially in the international context, has practical implications for organizations to design the desired HRM systems, develop HR professionals with

the right mix of skills for the role, and orchestrate a range of organizational resources in the change process.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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