

Re-grounding Engagement for the Common Good: A Conceptual Integration of Personal Engagement and Common-Good HRM

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Abstract

As organisations confront socio-ecological challenges, human resource management (HRM) is under pressure to move beyond performance-centred assumptions and engage more explicitly with questions of societal value and human flourishing. Engagement remains one of the most influential constructs in HRM scholarship and practice, despite longstanding concerns that dominant formulations are conceptually blurred, overly instrumental, and insufficiently attentive to employees as socially embedded human beings. This paper addresses that tension by examining the compatibility of engagement with the emerging framework of common-good HRM (CGHRM). Drawing on a conceptual review of the engagement and CGHRM literatures, the paper argues that mainstream approaches, particularly work engagement, sit uneasily with CGHRM's normative commitments to human dignity, solidarity, sustainability and subsidiarity. In response, the paper reconsiders the concept of personal engagement as a more suitable foundation for engagement research within a common-good perspective. Unlike decontextualised and performance-driven engagement constructs, personal engagement conceptualises engagement as the cognitive, emotional and physical expression of the self in role performance, shaped by conditions of psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability. I argue that this perspective better captures the relational, contextual and ethical dimensions required for a common-good orientation to HRM. The paper makes three contributions. First, it offers a critical reading of dominant engagement scholarship as misaligned with emerging human-centred approaches to HRM. Second, it extends CGHRM by identifying engagement as a concept requiring normative reconceptualisation. Third, it repositions personal engagement as a theoretically relevant basis for rethinking HRM's purpose in relation to both individual and collective flourishing.

Keywords: personal engagement, common good HRM, human flourishing, normative reorientation

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