

# EUROPEAN HRD CONFERENCE JUNE 10-12, 2020, BUDAPEST

SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICS: THE RESPONSIBILITY  
OF HRD IN THE GLOBAL SOCIETY ●■▶



## STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

**Stream leaders:** Sarah E. Minnis, Siham Lekchiri, Iván Zádori

A volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous external environment is a constant challenge for organisations across sectors (Loon, 2014). Organisations have offered a wide range of strategic responses such as business model innovation in addressing such challenges (Loon & Chik, 2018; Saebi, Lien, & Foss, 2017). But how do firms attain such organisational outcomes to enhance performance? Research in ‘strategic capabilities’ such as absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Volberda, Foss, & Lyles, 2010), dynamic capabilities (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2007) and organisational ambidexterity (Lewin, Massini, & Peeters, 2011; Markides, 2013), have been attributed as key reasons.

However, while these strategic capabilities offer a useful nomenclature that describe sets of disposition, skills and processes that enable organisations to perform, they remain as intermediate explanations (Barney & Felin, 2013; Felin, Foss, & Ployhart, 2015). There are opportunities to further identify instructive practices that are catalytic, enabling and/ or facilitative in the development of such strategic capabilities. Scholars are increasingly calling researchers to undertake research in this trajectory e.g. Foss and Pedersen (2016). Going beyond the macro and meso levels to examine the micro factors are necessary.

Microfoundations are increasingly proffered as the ‘scientific explanation’ of macro management theories e.g. strategic management theory (Felin, Foss, Heimeriks, & Madsen, 2012; Foss & Lindenberg, 2013). A majority of these microfoundations are situated within the broad domain of human resources and their development (Korte & Mercurio, 2017). In short, it is argued that human resource development is the epicentre of most, if not all, strategic capabilities (Garavan, McGuire, & Lee, 2015). However, as argued, paucity remains in demonstrating a more robust link between micro and macro theories.

Consequently, the ‘Strategic Capabilities and HRD’ stream answer the calls for further research to better understand the link between HRD and strategic capabilities. This stream has three aims; i) exploring the application of HRD in macro management theory and studies, ii) using HRD as a lens to examine the application of human capital practices in creating strategic capabilities, and iii) adopting multi-level research at micro, group and/ or meso levels in explicating the role of HRD in developing strategic capabilities.

### Type of submissions

We invite full papers - empirical (e.g. hypotheses testing, case studies) and conceptual papers - that examine a wide ranging following topics and questions such as, but not limited to:

### **HRD in developing Strategic Capabilities:**

- In addition to the strategic capabilities cited, other forms of capabilities are emerging such as co-opetition (with external partner and alliances) and enterprise engagement (Bolger, Schweyer, & Kern, 2015). What other strategic capabilities do HRD help to develop?
- Is organisational learning a strategic capability? What is the role of HRD in developing organisational learning as a strategic capability?

### **HRD as Microfoundations**

- Framing HRD as a microfoundation of strategic capabilities, what are the key HRD-related microfoundation that are crucial in developing individuals in creating strategic capabilities at the organisational-level?
- What are the HRD-related choices that shape and create routines, processes and structures (Dosi, Nelson, & Winter, 2000) that enable firms to develop strategic capabilities?

### **Dynamism of HRD**

- Using the divergent perspectives of human capital as an aggregation, interactional and/or emergent
- phenomena, how do individuals' skills and knowledge, HRD routines and processes for strategic capabilities?
- How do HRD practices drive and support the development of strategic capabilities (e.g. absorptive capacity)? Are different forms and intensity of HRD required to develop distinctive types of strategic capabilities?

### **Multi-level analysis**

- Micro to meso links - how does social aggregation takes place, for example, from individuals' skills to the enterprise level?
- How do individuals and groups develop strategic capabilities and ultimately support organisational outcomes such as business model innovation?

### **Organising HRD for strategic capabilities**

- What is the role of Learning and Development, Organisational Development, Talent Management and other similar units/ structures in creating sustainable
- strategic capabilities?
- How do firms organise and orchestrate its organisational units to enable strategic capabilities to develop?

### **Management and Leadership in HRD**

- How do leadership/ management knowledge, education and/ or development provide the impetus for strategic management, and what is the role of HRD?
- How do firms prioritise its leadership/ management development in parallel with its HRD strategy/ approach?

### **Organisational Types and Forms**

- Which strategic capabilities are more critical for different organisational types and forms?
- How do firms adapt HRD practices in different organisational forms such as in small medium sized or multinational organisations?
- The role of Institutional differences in HRD for Strategic Capabilities
- How do institutional factors shape HRD and therefore the process of building strategic capabilities e.g. Quan, Loon, and Sanderson (2018)?
- How do organisations adapt HRD practices to suit its institutional contexts?

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### **Contact Information**

For more information, please contact Sarah E. Minnis at [sminnis@wcu.edu](mailto:sminnis@wcu.edu)