Guest editorial

Workplace violence, deviant and problematic work behaviors in contemporary workplaces: the role of HRM to build resilience and well-being

In recent years, the role of human resource management (HRM) has come under scrutiny due to the changing nature of the workforce including flexible work, greater diversity and employee attitudes and expectations of work. In these work environments, there are numerous issues around the negative and deviant behaviors of management, supervisors, workers, clients, customers, patients and residents (of say aged care facilities). Many organisations attempt to manage and minimise bad workplace behaviors through hierarchical edicts and social contracts underpinned by HRM policies and practices (Baïada-Hirèche et al., 2011). However, there is growing evidence that unethical, deviant and other problematic behaviors persist despite formal HRM practices that prohibit these types of behaviors (Balmer et al., 2007). Current research is focused on the outcomes and psychological effects of bad workplace behaviors on employees rather than the role of HRM in the effective management and mitigation of such behaviors. Negative workplace behaviors can be witnessed when employees are affected by workplace discrimination due to their age, religious beliefs, race, sex, ethnicity and/or disability (Bentley et al., 2019; Forstenlechner and Al-Waqfi, 2010; Patton, 2019). Unacceptable workplace behaviors manifest when employees are allocated unmanageable workloads (Cleary et al., 2010) and their possible reactions manifest in emotional exhaustion and intention to leave (MacPhee et al., 2017). Some employees report being humiliated, ignored and socially isolated (Rai and Agarwal, 2018). Other workers experience negative, sarcastic, and condescending remarks (Etienne, 2014), which consequently affect their well-being and performance outcomes (Ekici and Beder, 2014).

Stigma or negative stereotyping has been identified as one of the major reasons why people with mental health issues struggle to find and retain employment (Krupa et al., 2009; Schulze and Angermeyer, 2003; Scheid, 2005; Zissi et al., 2007) and often exacerbated by poor employer support and understanding of mental health challenges (Hashim and Saodah, 2014). Workers, such as those with physical and/or intellectual disabilities experience discrimination which impacts on their self-worth and engagement with work related activities (Villanueva-Flores et al., 2017). One of the most violent workplace sectors has been identified as the healthcare and aged care industry where healthcare workers (e.g. nurses and doctors) are regularly exposed to verbal and physical violence (Spector et al., 2014; Joa and Morken, 2012). Physical violence includes being hit, kicked, grabbed, shoved or bitten and verbal violence includes being threatened, yelled at or sworn at (Karaeminogullari et al., 2018). A recent article in Personnel Review identified bullying as impacting negatively on nurses in the healthcare sector and the authors call for practical HRM strategies to address harmful workplace behaviors (De Cieri et al., 2019) such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, physical and verbal violence (Catley et al., 2017; Salin, 2009).

Given the detrimental consequences of workplace violence and deviance in contemporary workplaces, innovative approaches based on well-being-oriented HRM practices (WBHRM) can be implemented to positive impact employee well-being which in turn can affect performance (Cooper et al., 2019; Guest, 2017). Well-being-oriented practices include

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"investing in employees (e.g. training and development), providing engaging work (e.g. job design), positive social and physical environments (e.g. rewards), employee voice (e.g. extensive two-way communication), and organisational support (e.g. participative and supportive management)" (Guest, 2017, p. 30) to improve staff mental health and consequently to make effective service provision. Therefore, the breadth and complexity of the aforementioned challenges, and the associated lack of systematic HRM research, we extend discussion to better understand how both theoretically and empirically organisations can use HRM practices to improve employees' resilience and well-being to manage and mitigate deviant behaviors in the workplace.

Most HRM research on problematic work behaviors, such as violence and deviant behaviors, focus on identifying issues at the workplace. Hence, more research is needed on the role of HRM in the management and mitigation of deviant and problematic behavioral issues across various sectors of the workplace including but not limited to hospitals, education, and public and private services. We argue this is an important research agenda which needs urgent attention. We encourage greater research that is HR centered on the strong and explicit role of HRM in the management and mitigation of problematic work behaviors in contemporary workplaces. We encourage diverse research studies from all countries, industry contexts and occupational groups, as well as various quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. The objective of this special issue is to advance the theoretical, conceptual and empirical base regarding the use, implementation and impact of HRM as we develop a research agenda on such an important and under researched topic.

There is a paucity of literature examining HRM, workplace violence and deviant and problematic work behaviors in contemporary workplaces. This Special Issue of Personnel Review brings together thirteen papers presented under the theme "HRM and deviant and problematic behaviors in contemporary workplaces". The papers add value to understanding the critical importance of managing and mitigating problematic and deviant behaviors at the workplace. We promote WBHRM practices and encourage a future research agenda to embrace various research methodologies and theoretical approaches that may mitigate problematic behaviors at the workplace.

Contributions to this special issue
This special issue is focused on the role of HRM in the effective management and mitigation of deviant and problematic behaviors in the workplace. It presents thirteen papers that provide an overview of workplace violence, deviant and problematic behaviors, and well-being-oriented HRM practices and future research agenda. Collectively, the papers offer insights about how to manage such a behaviors in contemporary workplaces through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The first paper entitled "Perceived organizational injustice and counterproductive work behaviours: mediated by organizational identification, moderated by discretionary human resource practices" by De Clercq, Kundi, Sardar, and Shahid demonstrates a negative relationship between employees perceptions of organisational justice and counterproductive work behaviors mediated by organisational identification. This study draws data from 327 full-time employees over three time-lagged waves in different industry sectors in Pakistan. They empirically demonstrate that unfair organizational treatment may negatively impact on individual sense of identification with their employer, leading to counterproductive work behaviors as a way to express their frustrations and conserve their self-esteem resources. Moreover, the presence of discretionary HR practices that promote professional development and employee growth may buffer the negative effects of unfair organizational treatment on organisational identification, diminishing counterproductive work behaviors. The second paper entitled "Thwarted psychological needs: the negative impact of customer mistreatment

on service employees and the moderating role of empowerment HRM practices" by Chen, Kang, Wang, and Zhou illuminates how customer mistreatment causes detrimental effects on employees performance and well-being, which can occur via two psychological needs: the need for autonomy and the need for competence. Data were collected from two samples of 321 and 149 employees from telemarketing and property agencies respectively in China. The findings demonstrate that empowerment of HRM practices including service training, employee participation, and information sharing may compensate the reduced satisfaction of needs as result of customer mistreatment.

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The third paper entitled "A new, established approach to managing misbehavior: system justification theory" by Thomas and Harris provides a novel and promising approach to manage workplace misbehavior. The authors highlight how the use of SJT may contribute to change the perception of hazing as a tradition and stop justifications for existing patterns of workplace misbehavior. This may influence the change of organisational culture (the primary driver of harassment) and consequently addresses intransigent problems such as workplace misbehavior. The fourth paper entitled "The role of human resource professionals (HRPs) in managing workplace bullying: perspectives from HRPs and employee representatives in Australia" by Djurkovic, McCormack, Hoel, and Salin makes a contribution to our understanding of the role of HRPs and ERs by creating and promoting a positive organisational culture and engaging employees in the design and development of anti-bullying policies. Using a qualitative approach of 12 HRPs and five ERs from a wide range of industries, the authors suggest clarity in policies to effectively combat bullying; consistency between policies and behaviors, particularly from managers; and involvement of employees in the development of policies to create a sense of ownership that can increase employees' feelings of belongingness and being valued by the organisation.

The fifth paper entitled "Managing bullying in the workplace: a model of servant leadership, employee resilience and proactive personality" by Ahmad, Islam, Sohal, Cox, and Kaleem demonstrates that servant leadership helps in discouraging workplace bullying in the presence of employee resilience as mediator and proactive personality as moderator of this process. By employing 408 employees working in the service and manufacturing sector in Pakistan, this study illuminates the importance of developing servant leadership as a protective factor in the work environment for building employees psychological resources such as employee resilience to combat workplace bullying. The sixth paper entitled "Abrasive leaders who changed: learning from their experience" by Tucker and Williams utilises Kegan's constructive-development theory (CDT) and Mezirow's transformative learning theory (TL) to provide a lens to better understand leaders' personal development to decrease destructive behaviors. The paper is based on an exploratory case study of three organisational leaders in the USA, which provides evidence on how leaders move away from their use of abrasive behavior. The authors show that the utilisation of CDT and TL provides a roadmap of adult learning and development in which leaders can improve their behavior, emotional competency and improved management strategies by experiencing organisational support. Such support includes supervisor intervention, ongoing feedback and encouragement from an internal network and external specialised professionals.

The seventh paper entitled "Violence at work in the ambulance service: the role of HRM and other systems" by Kellner, Townsend, Wilkinson and Loudoun examines how HRM responds to and manages violence against paramedics in their work lives. Using a qualitative case study approach of 72 Australian paramedics, the authors suggest a holistic and contextualised perspective of HRM to improve understandings of problems and potential responses to violence against paramedics and similar occupational groups. This involves federal and state level systems (e.g. information, advertising campaigns, increased fines and prison terms); industry level systems (e.g. unions, representative bodies); external organisations (e.g. tertiary institutions, police, psychologists); formal HRM systems

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(e.g. peer support, training, debriefing). In addition, the authors offer deeper understandings of situational risk factors of violence against paramedics in their work environment. This includes drug and alcohol abuse, community (including domestic) violence, psychological illness, limitations of police support, and physical hazards (e.g. confined space). The eighth paper entitled "Shaping emotional contagion in healthcare: the role of human resource practices and work harassment" by Xerri, Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, and Cully aims to unpack the impact of Human Resources Practices (HRPs) and work harassment in negotiating positive emotional contagion within the HRM-well-being-performance continuum. Drawing upon a survey of 240 healthcare professionals working in the US health system, the authors found a link between HRPs and positive emotional contagion. When employees perceive high HRP, they feel good about their work and workplace, and consequently this provides a foundation of positive emotions (e.g. emotional contagion). Further, the study found evidence that the HRPs, work harassment and emotional contagion are antecedents of employee well-being. Also, when employees perceive HRPs as positive, this increases their well-being and facilitates innovative behavior.

The ninth paper entitled "Supportive organizational climate: a moderated mediation model of workplace bullying and employee well-being" by Hayat and Afshari shows that workplace bullying impacts negatively on employees well-being. By collecting data from hotel employees ($N = 360$), the authors found that perceived organisational support moderates the negative consequences of workplace bullying on employees' well-being and burnout. They highlight how organisational support may enhance employee resource repositories in managing workplace bullying. The tenth paper entitled "Cyberloafing in public sector of developing countries: job embeddedness as a context" by Mazidi, Rahimnia, Mortazavi, and Lagzian presents a positive relationship between job embeddedness and cyberloafing (organisational deviance). Data was collected from University employees in Iran ($N = 500$). The authors highlight how important is to improve employee satisfaction/engagement to decrease the negativity of job embeddedness in adverse work environments (e.g. abusive supervision, work-related stress). This may include a more balanced workload, flexible work schedules, job autonomy and organisational support.

The eleventh paper entitled "Subtle workplace discrimination inhibiting workers with intellectual disability from thriving at the workplace" by Cavanagh, Meacham, Pariona-Cabrera, and Bartram postulates that human resources management (HRM) should be designing and implementing interventions to better support workers with intellectual disabilities (WWID). By using a qualitative case study approach, comprising 91 participants (made up of managers, supervisors, WWID and colleagues), the authors emphasise the role of HRM polices and practices, as well as supportive managers who build the self-confidence and self-worth of WWID to support them to thrive at the workplace. By providing WWID with supportive work-related opportunities there is a greater chance of managing and even mitigating incidents of discrimination against these workers. The twelfth paper entitled "The joint impact of servant leadership and team-based HRM practices on team expediency: the mediating role of team reflexivity" by Ren, Wang, and Collins explores the joint consequences of servant leadership and team based HRM practices on team reflexivity and team expediency. Analysing a quantitative data set from employees and their team leaders ($N = 109$ teams) from Chinese organisations, the authors provide evidence that a synergistic fit between servant leadership and team-based HRM practices (e.g. team training, team feedback) contributes to mitigating team deviant/expedient behaviors (e.g. teams engaged in behaviors that violate organisational norms). The thirteenth paper entitled "Workplace cyber abuse: challenges and implications for management" by D'Souza, Forsyth, and Blackwood identified four key challenges for the management of cyber abuse; these include multiple and gendered patterns of cyber abuse, cyber abuse across organisational boundaries, non-reporting and under-reporting, and ineffective (or lack of) organisational interventions.

By employing a pragmatic research paradigm that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative panel data in New Zealand, the authors suggest adopting a preventative approach to workplace cyber abuse. This may involve focused policies, guidelines and resources, along with clear boundaries and the implementation of organisational protection measures. Therefore, these measures play a critical role to manage and mitigate workplace cyber abuse.

The papers of this special issue make important contributions to understanding the importance of managing and mitigating problematic and deviant behaviors (e.g. workplace violence, harassment, bullying, customer mistreatment, counterproductive work behaviors, cyber abuse and cyberloafing) and any negative effects on employees. This can be done through the implementation of HRM practices and systems, team-based HRM practices (team training, team feedback), the role of HR professionals and employee representatives, servant leadership, and organisational support.

Future research agenda on the role of HRM in managing and mitigating workplace violence and deviant behaviours

Problematic work behaviours, including workplace violence and deviant behaviors, are a worldwide phenomenon across different occupations and industries that have intensified in recent years (Phillips, 2016; Pich *et al.*, 2017; Ramacciati *et al.*, 2018). Contemporary research has found that violence and deviant behaviours are critical issues for organisations because of their negative consequences on employees. In Canada, the number of claims linked to violence against healthcare workers from 2006 to 2016 increased at a rate of 60% which is three times the rate for police officers and correctional officers (Canadian Federation of Nurses Union, 2017). During 2016 healthcare workers missed 25,300 days of work due to workplace violence injuries (Canadian Federation of Nurses Union, 2017). In Australia, more than 70% of 366,000 nurses working in aged care facilities (aged care nurses) reported at least one experience of workplace violence during the previous 12 months, including physical and verbal violence from residents, relatives and visitors (Gabrovec and Eržen, 2016; O'Keeffe *et al.*, 2015). Workplace violence leads to significant negative effects on workplace performance (Hassankhani and Soheili, 2017; Lanctôt and Guay, 2014) and negatively influences long-term psychological and physical health for workers (Safe Work Australia, 2017). A key problem is that healthcare workers are regularly exposed to violent outbursts, and this impacts on their quality of care and intention to leave their jobs and even their careers (Spector *et al.*, 2014). Despite growing academic interest in the healthcare sector, there are major research gaps in research issues, contexts and methodological approaches. In this section, we present a number of research avenues, which are by no means exhaustive, for future studies of HRM in the healthcare and aged care sector.

The development of anti-violence HRM practices scale

As discussed earlier, violence at work is a global problem and has been increasing at an alarming rate (Phillips, 2016; Reddy *et al.*, 2019). Research demonstrates that exposure to violence and deviant behaviours have a negative impact on employees and organisations. Nurses who are exposed to violence report mental and physical problems, loss of interest in work and disrupted quality of patient care (Hassankhani and Soheili, 2017). Workplace violence is also associated with work-related stress, and such stress is linked to anxiety and depression (Magnavita, 2013) and low levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Rodwell *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, organisations across different sectors need to focus on prevention and respond to violence and deviant behaviors and eliminate the detrimental consequences on employees, stakeholders, organisations and risks of legal action (Kelly and Mullen, 2006). Despite a growing body of research on workplace violence and

negative consequences, important research gaps remain in terms of the development of an anti-violence HRM practices measure that may include managing violent incidents, anti-violence training, and environment security (Calvard and Sang, 2017; Fox and Cowan, 2015; Pariona-Cabrera *et al.*, 2021). We suggest there is an urgent need to develop an anti-violence HRM practices measure that may contribute to the identification, formulation and evaluation of the effectiveness of organisational changes (Marks and Yardley, 2004). By developing an anti-violence HRM practices measure, advancement in workplace violence and HRM literature may be achieved. A measure can be used to provide evidence of the effectiveness of intervention programs across different organisations. Research should be undertaken on the assessment of HRM practices at the organisational level. Therefore, by developing and implementing an anti-violence HRM practices measure, incidents of violence and deviant behaviors can be managed and mitigated, generating positive outcomes which may lead to job satisfaction and job engagement.

Barriers to implementing HRM practices

There is considerable scope to advance our understandings about the barriers associated with HRM practices. In line with Pariona-Cabrera *et al.* (2021), we need greater cross-disciplinary research to help identify and overcome barriers to implementing specific HRM practices, such as WBHRM practices, to manage and mitigate deviant and problematic behaviours in contemporary workplaces. An important part of this research would be to identify a competition of priorities whilst implementing WBHRM practices (Guest and de Lange, 2020). For example, hospital consultants prioritise patient care over staff well-being and in this scenario, it is critical to be aware that the HRM function is focused on the advisory role. HR staff may develop policies and practices, but line managers need to implement them daily. If HRM staff develop a sophisticated performance management system, line managers need to appropriately carry out the performance appraisal. Otherwise, the quality of appraisal may be negatively impacted by inadequate feedback on staff performance and erroneous data on job assignments. Therefore, HRM professionals need to influence HRM practices and ensure they are treated seriously and given sufficient priority in the face of competing work-related priorities (Guest and de Lange, 2020). This is important to break down barriers and we suggest scholars carry out applied research around barriers to implementing HRM practices in different healthcare settings such as private, public healthcare and aged care facilities. We also promote research from a variety of academic traditions and include psychology industrial relations.

The role of leadership in the management of the damaging effects of negative workplace behaviors

There have been notable advances in understanding the role of leadership in managing negative behaviours at the workplace. However, much remains to be understood, particularly in terms of how leader emotional support contributes to the management and mitigation of the effects of workplace violence and deviant behaviours across different organisations. Leader emotional support can serve as an important job resource that helps employees address negative work-related behaviours (Ragins, 2007). When employees experience high quality relationships with their supervisors, effective emotional support can facilitate the preservation of valued resources (Luthans, 2002) which can support coping skills under stressful circumstances. That is, by demonstrating emotional understandings of their feelings, workers can overcome job stress through the adjustment and regulation of their negative emotional reactions (Bergin and Jimmieson, 2020). In short, a disconnection of negative emotions and a connection of positive emotions (Barling and Frone, 2017) can facilitate managing negative emotions arising from workplace violence and deviance. In this

way, leader emotional support can be beneficial in alleviating the detrimental consequences of adverse work events. Therefore, we advocate further research on the role of leader emotional support that attempts to address harmful workplace behaviours.

A changing work environment: challenges and burden
Workplaces are constantly changing and the role of increased pressure to perform in a recent COVID 19 environment impacts employees' mental health such as a fear of job loss (Bakioğlu *et al.*, 2020; Buheji and Buhaid, 2020). In such a climate, we call on greater research to examine how HRM-related research has a role to play in helping employees cope with negative emotions resulting from a changing work environment where employees are under pressure. Such research would benefit from a multilevel analytics approach supported by comprehensive forms of examination that include different stakeholders including managers, employees, and clients/customers/patients/residents. Moreover, we suggest more research related to changing forms of negative behaviours at the workplace related to flexible and remote work. Today, telework arrangements are very common and bring new forms of negative deviant behaviours such as workplace cyber deviance. This is an important area to focus on given that employees are constantly facing this type of scenario. In addition, unpacking the process of how WBHRM practices contribute to the management of negative work situations, that impact employees' mental health, requires more complex and robust research designs, both qualitative and quantitative. Different research approaches may contribute to building a more comprehensive picture of how HRM can impact positively on employees' mental health, including experimental research designs with organisational change interventions and longitudinal research designs that assess the impact of well-being-oriented HRM on employees, patients/clients/customers outcomes and organisations (e.g. aged care facilities). Hence, we need more research that examines the link between well-being-oriented HRM, employees attitudes and behaviours. We also encourage greater research on the role of employee resilience in mitigating the effects of negative work events. Employee resilience enhances proactive factors to manage work stress by transforming challenging work demands as opportunities for growth, which can positively impact on employee well-being.

Different perspectives of workplace violence and deviance: perpetrators and victims
Workplace violence and deviance is a major concern across various sectors and workplaces (Phillips, 2016; Pich *et al.*, 2017; Ramacciati *et al.*, 2018). According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics (2018), the incidence rate (per 10,000 full-time workers) of workplace violence to healthcare workers between 2011 and 2018 increased from 6.4 to 10.4. Despite this high incidence of violence against workers employed in healthcare organisations (Acquadro Maran *et al.*, 2018) the bulk of contemporary studies on workplace violence and deviance are more focused from the victims perspectives (mostly employees). However, greater research is needed from the perspective of perpetrators of such negative behaviors including other work colleagues, family members and visitors. For example, according to the recent Royal Commission into aged care around 40% of residents experienced emotional abuse and physical abuse inflicted by staff during 2018–2019 (Royal Commission, 2020). Therefore, we encourage further research from perpetrators, as their views remain under-researched.

Whistleblowing practices and consequences
We argue that greater research into whistleblowing practices is needed to have a more nuanced understanding of how to manage and mitigate bad behaviors at the workplace.

This may be a way to decrease misconduct and mismanagement behaviours at work (Miceli *et al.*, 2009). Whistleblowers are exposed to retaliation at work which can negatively impact their well-being (e.g. stress), physical problems (e.g. sleep problems), and impaired social functioning (e.g. withdrawal from family) (Bjørkelo *et al.*, 2010). In this scenario, the provision of clear examples of unwanted workplace behaviours as well as ongoing feedback to the parties involved can be useful to have non-judgemental whistleblowing at the workplace (Miceli *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, by promoting a culture of communication, whistleblowing practices may increase and hinder retaliation against whistleblowers (Skivenes and Trygstad, 2010). We suggest scholars undertake research on how to deal with devastating effects such as depression, stress and anxiety that employees may experience after whistleblowing practices. We also call for greater research on the use of whistleblowing practices that contribute to the management of workplace violence and deviance from a combination of multidisciplinary perspectives such as human resource management, industrial regulations and industrial relations. We also need multilevel analyses of stakeholders associated with deviant behaviours at various levels, such as individual, organisational and national levels.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we argue that further research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the role of HRM, specifically how well-being-oriented HRM practices contribute to the management of deviant and problematic behaviours. We also encourage greater research on the role of employees in mitigating the negative effects of violence. To date there have been few attempts to fill the research gap with reference to the use of HRM strategies to address harmful workplace behaviours.

We have stimulated discussion through this special issue and presented papers that promote further research on the implementation of HRM practices across different industries and organisations at a time when incidences of negative workplace behaviours continue to grow worldwide.

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