

Employee sustainability and work organisations: A critical review, map and research agenda

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Aims of paper

- Review sustainability literature related to employees
- Take themes identified and search and review literature from industrial relations and labour process traditions
- Map out all literature
- Conclude with a refreshed research agenda on employee sustainability

Defining sustainability

- Rise of concepts and ideas related to “sustainability” over past 20 years
- Recognising the role work organisations play in ecological, social and economic problems
- How work organisations are showing a growing readiness to demonstrate a commitment to making their organisations more sustainable
- Growth of literature on “green”, “sustainable” and “socially responsible” HRM

Defining employee sustainability

- Employees managed in a manner making them able and willing to remain in employment and in the future
- Employers foster rather than exploit their workforces
- Lowered impact on external benefits and healthcare systems
- Approaches apparent in existing literature: built environment, HRM/OH and sustainable working lives

Built environment

- A more natural working environment
- Inspire employees to be more creative
- Improve air quality
- Perceptions of well-being
- Pride in workplace
- Job satisfaction
- Lift mood
- Sense of less pressure

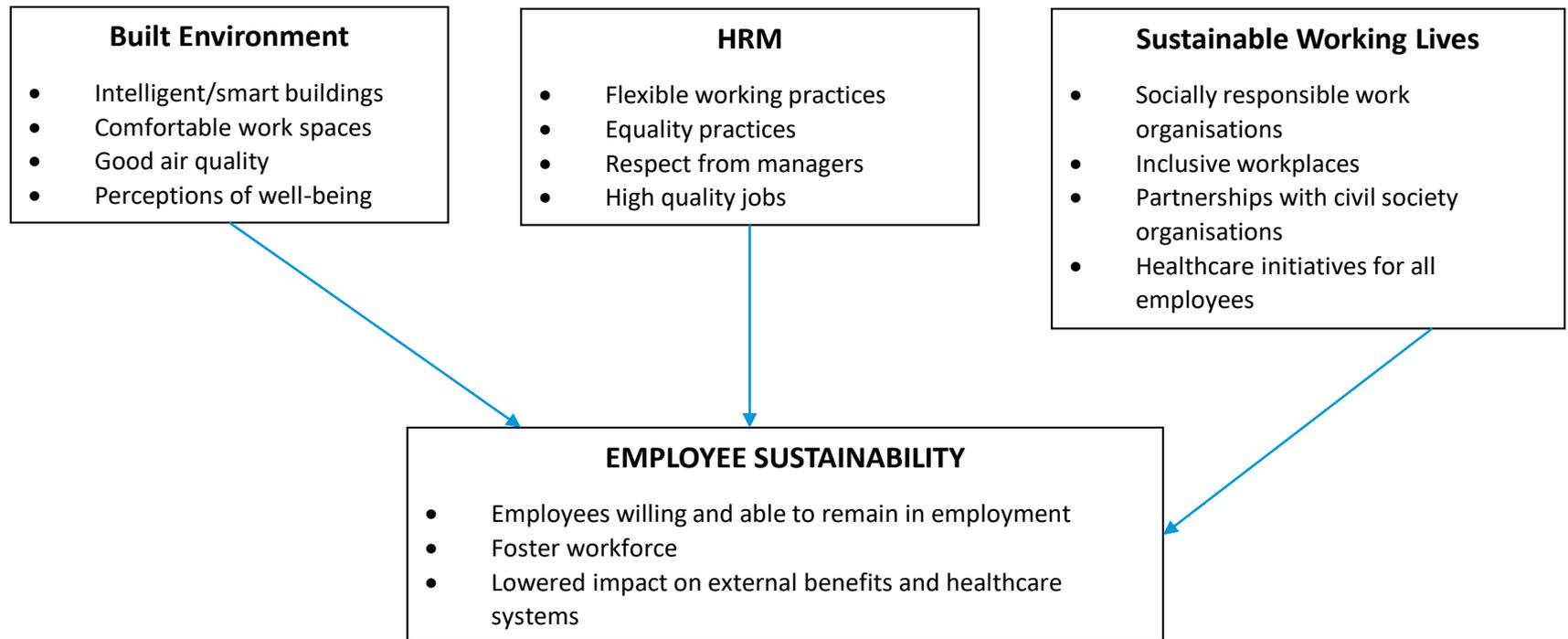
HRM/OH

- Flexible working arrangements (better understanding of employees' lives)
- CSR informed HRM practices
- Equitable treatment/less discrimination
- Respectful line manager relations
- Improved health and safety
- High quality jobs
- Pluralist employment relations

Sustainable working lives

- Informed by CSR and social justice
- Reduce in-work poverty
- Minimisation of disabling and discriminatory practices
- Working with civil society organisations/social partners and government
- Healthcare
- Extending working lives
- Support in entry and re-entry to employment markets
- Job design

Mapping existing literature on employee sustainability



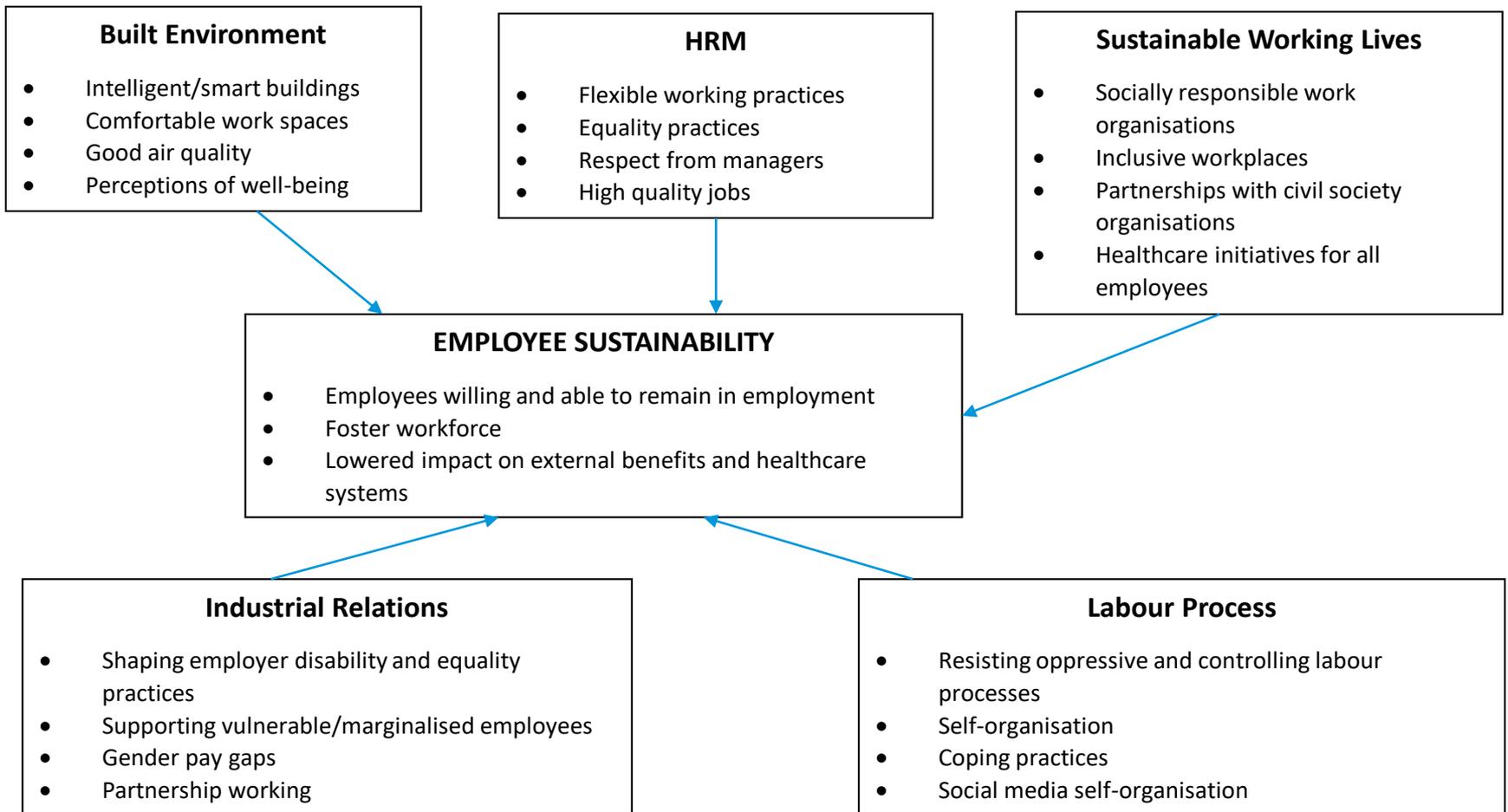
Industrial relations

- Facilitating employment for disabled employees
- Lower gender pay gaps
- Organised marginal groups
- Partnership agreements
- High quality and high paid jobs
- Living Wage
- Protecting pensions
- Equalisation of training opportunities

Labour process

- Self-organised and individual attempts to resist or cope with exploitation/work intensification/tightly controlled labour process
- Deflecting pressure of work, mental distancing, harbouring tactics
- Humour as means to galvanise autonomous shopfloor/team culture
- Foot-dragging
- On-line coping communities/communities of resistance
- Share experiences and information related to jobs
- Counter-hegemonic force/seeds for labour organising

Mapping wider literature on employee sustainability



Key contributions of paper

- Draws on five perspectives, two of which remiss in current literature
- Privilege employee and TU approaches
- Map goes beyond previous articulations
- Conceptual development
- Attempt to unify eclectic and incongruous literature
- Identify wide range of research opportunities

New and updated research agenda

- Wide-open scope for more research on employee sustainability
- Industrialising nations and supply chain organisations
- More efforts away from HRM/OB/OH approaches
- Further conceptual development/unification
- Partnership work on employee sustainability