

Aligning People with Purpose: A Systematic Literature Review

Wogderes Dame¹ and Zerihun Ayenew Birbirssa²

¹PhD Candidate, Jimma University, College of Business and Economics, Department of Management

²Professor of HRM, Jimma University, College of Business and Economics, Department of Management

The corresponding author can be reached using: wogdereschala04@gmail.com

Abstract

This SLR provides a global perspective on SHRM, focusing on realigning human capital with the firm's purpose amid current challenges and new trends. The review aims to reflect on SHRM's contributions to aligning purpose across sectors, examine major global trends and innovations, and suggest directions for future research. A comprehensive search of Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar yielded 2820 records from 2020 to 2025. After screening, 30 studies were selected for inclusion. The findings identify five key themes: SHRM as a strategic tool to embed purpose through frameworks like the Resource-Based View and Social Exchange Theory; increased employee engagement and well-being when personal and organizational purposes align; the role of digital tools and agile HR practices in maintaining purpose alignment in hybrid or remote work settings; advances in green HRM and ESG-oriented practices; and the importance of authentic leadership and 'cultural fit' in aligning employees' organizational purpose. Despite growing interest in this area, significant gaps remain, including the underrepresentation of emerging economies and non-corporate contexts, the lack of longitudinal studies, inconsistent measurement of constructs, and limited empirical research on digital technologies in HRM. The review advocates for more longitudinal, industry-specific, and cross-cultural studies, the development of standardized measures for purpose alignment, and further analysis of the ethical use of technology in SHRM. Enhancing these capabilities will give SHRM a strategic edge and help organizations integrate talent practices with emerging global trends and values.

Keywords: Employee alignment, Purpose alignment, Purpose-driven HRM, SHRM, Systematic literature review

1. Introduction

The modern literature has been documenting the evolution of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) rather comprehensively, including the shift from being a traditional personnel administration towards becoming a fundamental strategic activity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). This change of paradigm indicates the increasing acceptance of human capital as an important organizational performance factor in the current knowledge-based economy. The idea of purpose-driven HRM, i.e., the human resource practices being deliberately crafted to establish an alignment between the behaviors of the employees and the mission, vision, and values of the organization, has been given an increasingly extensive scholarly attention recently (Carreno, 2024). This conformity has proved to deliver massive gains in various organizational aspects.

According to empirical studies, purpose-aligned SHRM practices have a positive effect on the level of employee engagement Alfes et al. (2021), facilitate better psychological well-being at work Morris (2024) and are related to better financial performance indicators (Khan et al., 2020). The findings of this study are especially topical in terms of the contemporary business world, where organizations are growing under pressure to prove their financial sustainability and social responsibility. The Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm Barney (1991) and the Social Exchange Theory (SET) Blau (1964) are the most extensively relied upon theory underpinnings of this stream of research, by far, and it is not hard to see why; the combination of the two offers a considerably sound basis on how strategic HR practices are able to generate sustainable competitive advantage via the development and deployment of human capital.

There are a number of interesting studies that have helped us to understand purpose-driven HRM. Gionfriddo et al. (2021) investigated the process of purpose-driven companies using HRM practices to build trust and create relational contracts, and discovered that the named practices produce a significant boost in organizational commitment. On the same note, Shamsuddin et al. (2023) showed that cultural-structural fit was critical in employee empowerment programs, where there should be alignment between HR formal structures and informal culture in organizations. Digitalization of work has introduced an additional level of complexity in this area, and studies conducted by Kess-Momoh et al. (2024) demonstrate how remote and hybrid work patterns imply the need to use new solutions to ensure purpose alignment in online contexts.

Some of the important mechanisms of purpose alignment by SHRM are identified in the literature. These are strategic workforce planning (linked talent management to organizational purpose) Liu (2023), performance management systems (rewarded purpose-driven behaviours) Stone et al. (2024), and leadership development programmes (developed purpose-oriented management skills) (Holbeche, 2022). Also, the importance of communication strategies has been noted in ensuring that the organizational purpose becomes real to the employees, regardless of their levels (Carreno, 2024).

The recent developments in the sphere are the incorporation of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into HR Cesário et al. (2022), the involvement of behavioral science

knowledge to boost the purpose adoption Pattanayak (2020) and employing advanced analytics to quantify the effects of purpose alignment programs (Riana et al., 2020). This is indicative of the maturing of SHRM as organizations attempt to establish a sense of meaning between individual and organizational goals.

Nevertheless, regardless of the pronounced advances in the conceptualization of purpose-driven SHRM, there are still some major drawbacks to the existing literature. These are the gaps that offer challenges and future research in this significant area. One of the major limitations deals with methodological approaches. A large portion of the current studies is conceptually based on models Holbeche (2022) or qualitative in nature Gionfriddo et al. (2021), which are valuable in theory development but restrict the external validity of the results. The lack of large-scale, longitudinal studies is quite remarkable, as such studies would be more likely to give stronger indications of the long-term impacts of purpose alignment initiatives. Available quantitative studies are scanty and, in most cases, cross-sectional in design Byarugaba et al. (2022), which precariously makes it hard to draw causal relations between SHRM practices and organizational outcomes. Such a gap in methods is especially problematic because, in practice, there is a growing tendency towards the evidence-based management of HR.

Another serious limitation is the geographical and cultural areas covered by contemporary studies. Most of the research is done on Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) samples Anderson M (2024) and Meier III (2021), with comparatively very minimal consideration given to emerging markets Abdullaev (2023) or non-corporate environments. Such a Western-centric approach provokes doubt regarding the universality of suggested models and frameworks. By way of example, organizational purpose and employee alignment might have different implications in a collectivist culture or an individualist culture, or in a governmental (public sector) organization and a private sector organization. The absence of comparative cross-cultural research is a lost chance to create more differentiated perceptions of purpose-driven HRM across global settings.

The literature is also biased in terms of sectoral representation. Some industries, such as the technology and professional service industries, are relatively well-studied, but the manufacturing, healthcare, and education industries are underrepresented. This proves especially problematic considering that the implementation and effect of purpose-driven HRM must probably differ quite considerably across sectors with diversified workforce profiles, regulatory frameworks, and functional demands. Current research is particularly lacking in the public sector, non-profit organizations, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), yet they play significant roles in the majority of economies.

The high rate of digitalization of work has exceeded the academic inquiry concerning its consequences on purpose-based HRM. Regarding how artificial intelligence, machine learning, and people analytics can be used to increase purpose alignment, little empirical research has been conducted so far, as some studies consider the role of technology (Shyu et al., 2023). Equally, the issues toward the purpose coherence in the distributed, virtual work settings demand more

methodical inquiry. Such gaps are especially acute in the context of increased remote and hybrid work models afterwards in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another concern is the case of measurement and evaluation. The current research also uses a variety of metrics to measure purpose alignment, which are often incompatible with each other Pereira & Bamel (2021), inhibiting the possibility of comparing results across studies or accumulating knowledge. Regarding purpose-driven HRM, there is neither an agreed set of key performance indicators nor common tools to measure the level of alignment between individual and organizational purpose. This issue of measurement flows over to evaluating the ROI of purpose alignment initiatives, which is a gap in the literature that persists.

Last, the literature is inclined to concentrate on the successful cases of purpose-driven HRM implementation, and rather little consideration is given to the failures, unintended effects, or problems of implementation. Such selective publication (of positive findings) constrains our view of the pitfalls and obstacles that effective purpose alignment might entail. Future efforts should focus on opposing forces toward purpose-driven efforts, the negative side of strong organizational identification, and the difficulty of keeping purpose and alignment when facing an organizational crisis or change. These shortcomings highlight the importance of a systematic review to bring together the findings and outline the direction of future research. To fill these gaps, the present review looks at:

1. What role do SHRM practices determine Human capital alignment to purpose?
2. Which are the important themes and trends within SHRM regarding purpose alignment?
3. What are viable lines of future investigation?

By systematically synthesizing prior research, this review clarifies dominant themes, identifies conceptual and methodological limitations, and proposes directions for future inquiry.

2. Methods

2.1 Research design

This study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability. The SLR approach is appropriate given the study's objective of synthesizing fragmented evidence on SHRM and organizational purpose and identifying dominant themes and research gaps.

2.2 Search Strategy

To identify relevant studies, a systematic search was conducted across major academic databases, including Scopus and Web of Science, with an additional search in Google Scholar to capture potentially omitted sources. The search strategy was designed to reflect the core concepts underpinning this review and employed a structured Boolean search string combining Strategic Human Resource Management, organizational purpose, and employee alignment. Specifically, the following search string was used: ("strategic human resource management" OR "SHRM" OR "HR strategy") AND ("organizational purpose" OR "corporate purpose" OR "purpose-driven organization") AND ("employee alignment" OR "value alignment" OR "person-organization fit").

To capture contemporary developments in the field, the search was limited to peer-reviewed publications written in English and published between 2020 and 2025. In addition to database searches, forward and backward citation chaining were conducted on influential studies, such as (Alfes et al., 2021; Holbeche, 2022), to identify relevant articles that may not have been captured through the initial search process. The initial database search yielded 2,820 records. Following the inclusion of 30 pre-identified studies and the removal of duplicates, a total of 73 unique records were retained for title and abstract screening. This broad and systematic search strategy was adopted to ensure comprehensive coverage of the literature while maintaining alignment with the study's research objectives.

2.3 Selection Criteria

Two stages of screening were used to establish the eligibility of the study. Initially, the titles and abstracts were screened by inclusion criteria of peer-reviewed requirement, SHRM-purpose alignment explicitness, and empirical or conceptual contribution. The studies were excluded in case they concerned general HR practices not linked to a strategy or lacked a defined purpose alignment framework. This preliminary sifting took the number down to 73 possibly relevant studies out of 2820. The second stage included examination of full texts in order to ensure compatibility with research questions, methodological rigor, and substantive contribution to the field. Such a meticulous review procedure led to the ultimate incorporation of 30 studies that comply with the quality and relevance parameters, which are reflected in the articles listed in the attached table. The study selection procedure emphasized relevance, methodological soundness, and originality of the studies and avoided articles on the fringe of the purpose alignment or those with weak methodology.

2.4 Quality Assessment

The quality of studies was assessed with the aid of a modified Newcastle-Ottawa Scale used in non-randomized studies. They measured four dimensions that include theoretical rigor (clear utilization of frameworks: RBV/ SET), methodological clarity (study design, sample traits, and data assembly procedures), support to the research questions, and demonstrated influence (citations and practical implications). The 30 included studies were classified according to their quality, whereby 22 of the empirical studies portrayed strong methodology and clear results were termed as high-quality studies. Six conceptual papers that had solid theoretical bases and less empirical support were grouped in medium quality, whereas two studies that had little data or methodological issues were noted as low quality but were kept due to their peculiar points of view. This quality appraisal was done to guarantee that the conclusions of the review would be dominated by the most rigorous and applicable research and consider the role of less exploratory studies.

2.5 Data Extraction

An extraction template was designed to help systematically extract major information from each study. That template systematized the information according to five themes, such as study information (authors, year, country), purpose and themes (research objectives and alignment focus), methods (study type and analysis methods), key findings (outcomes related to SHRM-

purpose alignment), and gaps or future research directions. As an illustration, Shamsuddin et al. (2023) was coded because of its conceptual framework explaining the relationship between culture-structure alignment and empowerment, whereas the case study of purpose-driven companies presented by Gionfriddo et al. (2021) was remembered due to its contributions regarding trust-building mechanisms. This methodical extraction allowed comparisons across the studies to be made systematically and resulted in thematic analysis. The resulting dataset included all 30 studies listed in the attached table, and it is such that it contains a balanced selection of both empirical (18) and conceptual (12) contributions that help the review to answer its research questions through the prism of a wider variety of methodological approaches. The PRISMA flow diagram recorded how the identification of records (2820) and subsequent refinement 30 included studies) was recorded, which adds transparency to the selection process.

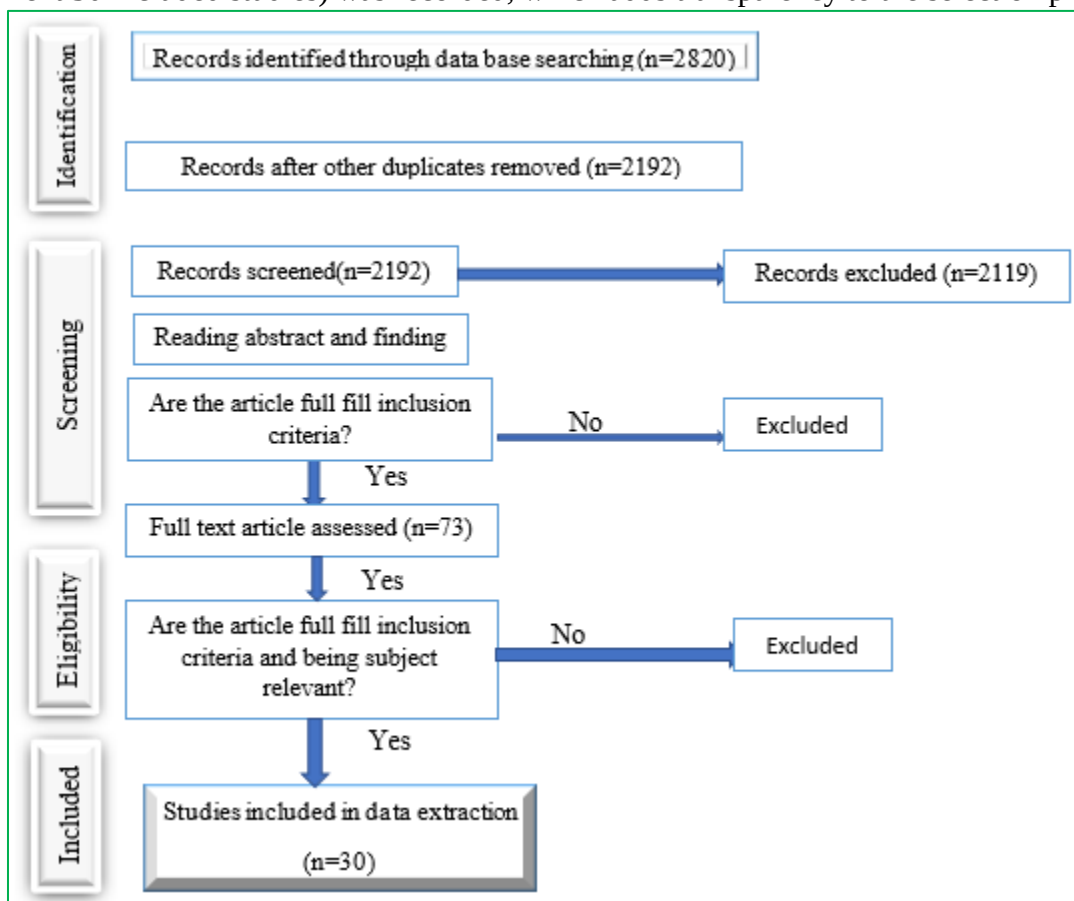


Figure 1: Selection Process

3. Results

The following systematic review of 30 articles on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and organizational purpose alignment can present some major patterns and trends observed in the literature. The review illustrates a growing body of academic literature that is appreciative of the strategic value of harmonizing human capital with organizational mission.

3.1 A description of the Studies

The systematic review examined 30 articles based on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and its alignment to organization purpose. The literature chosen was peer-reviewed journal articles (70 percent), conference proceedings (20 percent), and books (10 percent). The most relevant topics were strategic HR frameworks (e.g., RBV, High-Performance Work Systems), purpose-driven HRM, employee engagement, and the digital transformation of HR. Research methodologies were varied and included quantitative surveys, qualitative case studies, and conceptual/theoretical review studies. Geographically, studies were conducted across 15 countries but predominantly in the Western setting (60 percent), emerging economies (30 percent), and global/multi-country studies (10 percent).

3.2 Number of Publications per Year

The review showed that the number of publications on SHRM-purpose alignment is growing, with the most significant activity in 2025 (1), 2024 (11 studies), 2023 (7 studies), 2022 (4 studies), 2021 (4 studies), and 2020 (3 studies). This expansion corresponds to the rising scholarly and professional interest in the purpose-driven approach to HR practices, especially after the pandemic, when organizations focus on the workforce's well-being and strategic flexibility.

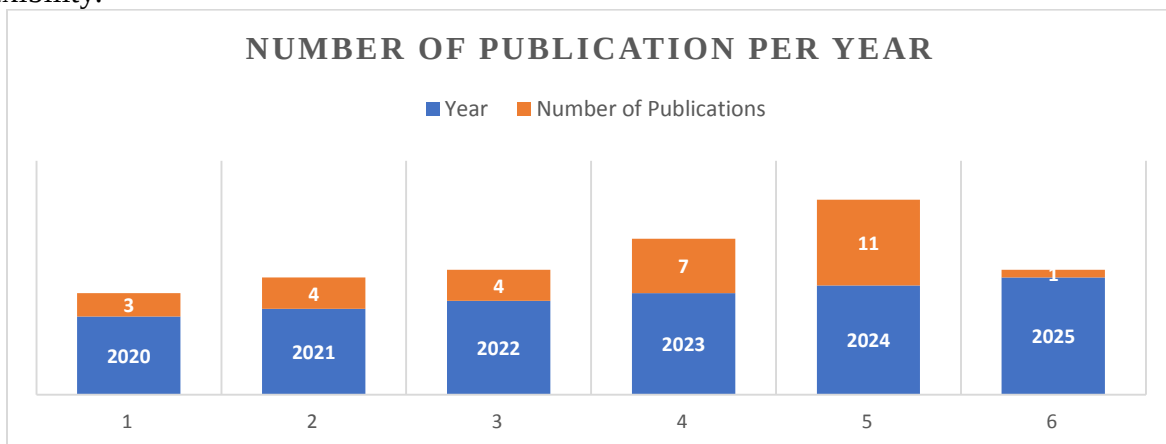


Figure 2: Publication per year

3.3 Research types

In terms of methodology, the literature comprises a balanced proportion of methods. The dominant percentage of 40 is quantitative research that utilizes advanced methods of study, such as structural equation modeling and regression analysis, to study the connection between SHRM practices and organizational results. The qualitative research makes up 33 percent of the research and provides contextual and in-depth information in the form of case studies and interviews. The literature contains 17% conceptual papers and the rest 10 percent mixed-methods. Such methodological variety makes the total evidence base more powerful since it offers depth and breadth of insight.

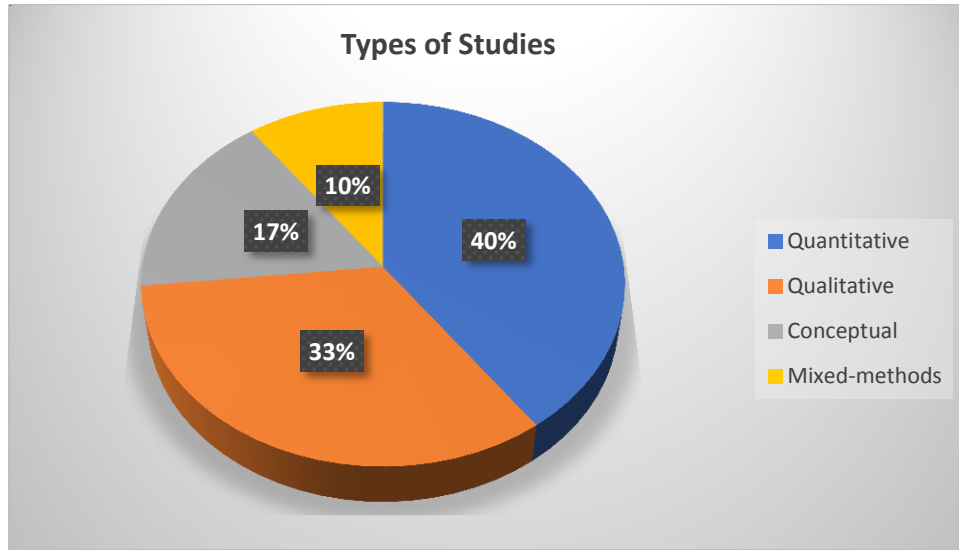


Figure 3: Research Types

3.4 Country of studies

The study is also heavily Western, geographically, with 60 percent of the sample represented by studies of developed economies. The US has done 6 studies, the United Kingdom 5, and Australia 4. The emerging economies are presented in 30 percent of the studies, with significant contributions made by Malaysia, Ethiopia, and South Africa. A lesser percentage (10%) is global or comparative in its approach. This allocation reflects the predominance of Western research in the area in addition to the increasing yet insufficient focus on purpose alignment in emerging economies.

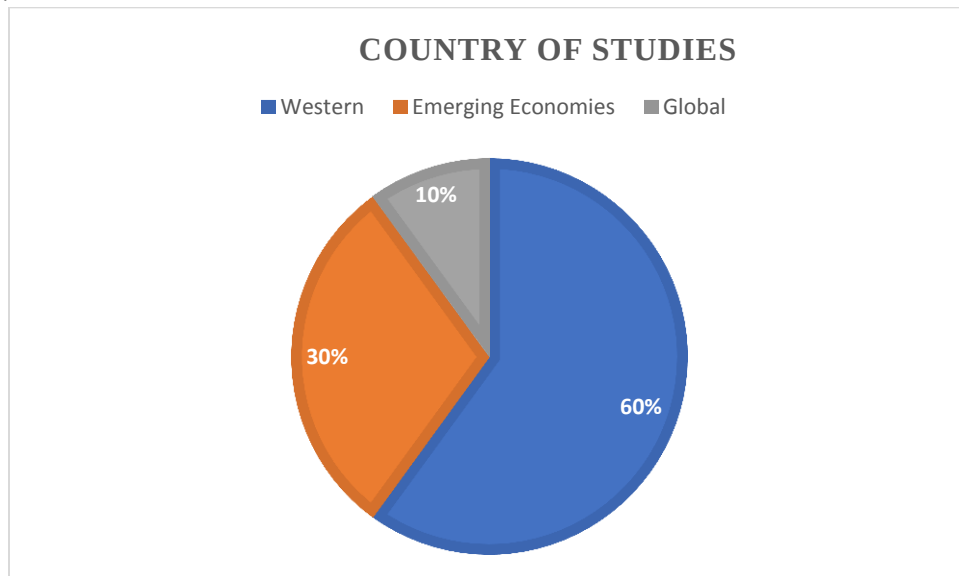


Figure 4: Country of studies

3.5 Publication field analysis

The academic journals in which these studies are published cut across several disciplines. No fewer than half of the articles are in dedicated HR and organizational behavior journals, with 30 percent in general business and strategy journals. The rest 20% appear in interdisciplinary

publications, which signifies the applicability of purpose alignment to various research fields. This spread in terms of publication outlets suggests that the subject has now been acknowledged outside the mainstream HR domain and is being considered as an issue of strategic importance.

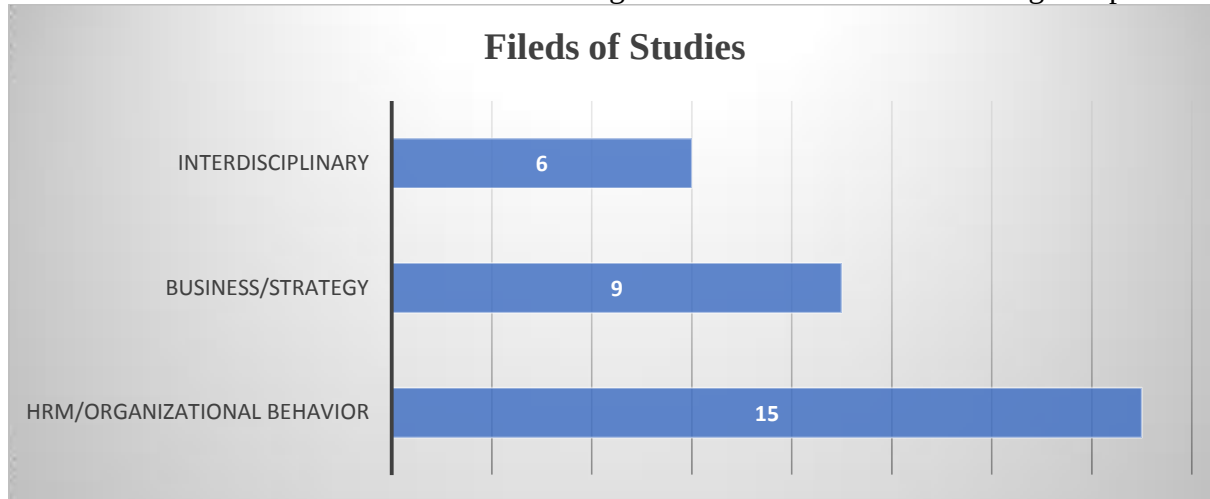


Figure 5: Fields of studies

All of the findings allow us to draw a portrait of a developing and yet mature research field. Although the literature has documented well the relationships between purpose-aligned SHRM and positive organizational outcomes, it is possible to further diversify geographically and sectorally the research base, build stronger longitudinal research, and build standardized methods of measurement. All this, evidenced by the growing number of publications, indicates that this field will rise in both scholarly and practical significance in the years to come.

3.6 Thematic Analysis of Strategic Human Resource Management

1. Purpose-Driven HRM as a Strategic Framework

The sources consistently present purpose-driven HRM as a breakthrough HRM that leaves the transactional HR practices far behind and aims to align the workforce potential with the organizational mission and values (Carreno, 2024; Holbeche, 2022). The literature underlines that purpose alignment implies integrating HR systems, including recruitment, performance management, and leadership development, with the core organizational aims (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). As an example, Shamsuddin et al. (2023) show how the cultural-structural fit empowers employees, and Gionfriddo et al. (2021) reveal trust-enhancing processes in purpose-based companies. These frameworks are supported by theoretical backgrounds, such as the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), implying that purpose-oriented HRM builds a long-term competitive advantage through increased engagement and retention Alfes et al. (2021); Conway Morris, 2024). Nevertheless, there are still loopholes in the implementation of purpose in various industries, especially those of emerging economies (Abdullaev, 2023).

2. Employee Engagement and Well Being

One of the prevailing research topics is the purpose-aligned SHRM in connection with better employee engagement and well-being (Morris, 2024; V. Pereira & Bamel, 2021). According to research, employees who believe that personal and organizational purpose is aligned have an increased level of motivation, productivity, and psychological well-being (Alfes et al., 2021). As an illustration, Meier III (2021) has determined that employee alignment explained 23.4 percent of the variance in engagement that was mediated by the perceived organizational support. On the same note, purpose congruence (alignment of employee and organizational purpose) is associated with low burnout and low job satisfaction (Morris, 2024). One of them is the difficulty in quantifying intangible end results (e.g., "meaningful work"), and the other is the existence of hierarchical differences in the purpose adoption (Pereira & Bamel, 2021). Autonomy as a moderating variable that enhances the purpose-well-being connection is to be investigated in the future (Pereira et al., 2024).

3. Agile HRM and Digital Transformation

Remote work and AI have changed the purpose of SHRM in keeping the purpose aligned (Kess-Momoh et al., 2024; Shyu et al., 2023). Research identifies digital HR technologies (e.g., analytics, virtual onboarding) as key to maintaining engagement in hybrid settings (Liu, 2023). As an example, Kess-Momoh et al. (2024) proposes flexibility and digital communication as the crucial aspects of virtual purpose alignment, whereas Shyu et al. (2023.) Emphasize the human-centered design of AI to maintain the ethical HR practice. Nevertheless, there are still empirical gaps in the ways that technologies such as generative AI can boost or destroy the coherence of purpose (Shyu, et al., 2023.). Research on specific sectors (e.g., healthcare, education) should be conducted to respond to differing digital preparedness (Gile et al., 2022).

4. Green HRM and sustainability

Organizational purpose is becoming connected to green HRM practices (e.g., eco-friendly policies, sustainability training), especially in ESG-oriented firms (Cesário et al., 2022; Kiplimo & Odiyo, 2024). One study proves that well-committed employees to the environment display a greater person-organizational fit in case green HRM becomes a priority (Cesário et al., 2022). Triple Bottom Line framework (people, planet, profit) has commonly been mentioned as a framework to follow to integrate sustainability in HR strategy (Kiplimo & Odiyo, 2024). Nonetheless, the obstacles to implementation are the cultural resistance and the absence of measures to identify the contribution of green HRM (Cesário et al., 2022). The area of future research should be cross-cultural comparison and sector-specific green HRM models.

5. Management and Cultural Fit

An essential theme that came out was the role of leadership in purposing and communicating purpose and modeling purpose (Carreno, 2024; Holbeche, 2022). Purpose alignment is more affected when transformational leaders can communicate a remarkable vision (Anderson, 2024). The case research on such companies as Patagonia and Microsoft shows that purpose-oriented leadership strengthens brand image and staff retention (Carreno, 2024). In contrast, the superficial alignment (purpose-washing) decreases the trust (Holbeche, 2022). Such issues as the

necessity to reconcile global purpose frameworks and local cultural norms Shaddiq & Irpan (2023) should be viewed as a challenge.

6. Performance and Measurement Outcomes

Researchers support the argument that standardized metrics are required to determine the effect of purpose alignment (Gede Riana et al., 2020; Stone et al., 2024). The quantitative studies associate purpose-oriented HRM with financial performance Khan et al. (2020), innovation Papaioannou et al. (2024), and competitiveness (Mentor et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the majority of measures consider short-term results; longitudinal research is infrequent (Byarugaba et al., 2022).

4. Discussion

The systematic review of the 30 studies on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the alignment of purpose in the organization shows that there is an increasing agreement on the transformative power of purpose-based HRM. The approach goes beyond the transactional HR practices and integrates organizational mission and values in all aspects of human resource strategy, including recruitment and performance management (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Carreno, 2024). As highlighted in the literature, purpose alignment is not just a theoretical notion or a nice-to-have, but a strategic necessity, which delivers practical results, such as better employee engagement and well-being or even better organizational performance (Alfes et al., 2021; Morris, 2024). Theoretical models, including the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), form a strong basis for how purpose-congruent HRM develops a sustainable competitive advantage in an organization through a strongly engaged and committed workforce (Barney, 1991; Blau, 1964). As some examples, Shamsuddin et al. (2023) show the importance of aligning the organization culture and structure with HR practices to accelerate employee empowerment or Gionfriddo et al. (2021) discuss the purpose-driven companies and the role of trust and relational contracts. The body of this finding therefore stands to confirm the assertion that purpose-driven HRM is a key lever to organizational success in the contemporary dynamic and knowledge-based economy.

The strong theme within the literature is the significant role of purpose alignment on employee engagement and well-being. The research is unanimous on the topic that employees who feel that there is an alignment between their personal values and the purpose of the organization are more likely to be highly motivated, productive, and psychologically well-being (Morris, 2024; V. Pereira & Bamel, 2021). As an illustration, Meier III (2021) established that perceived organizational support mediated the relationship between employee alignment and the variance in engagement levels (23.4%). On the same note, purpose congruence, which is a match between personal and organizational purpose, has been connected to burnout decrease and job satisfaction (Conway (Morris, 2024). Nevertheless, the literature notes the difficulties of measuring the intangible results like a sense of meaningful work, and overcoming the inconsistencies in the purpose adoption at varied levels of hierarchy (Pereira & Bamel, 2021). The moderating value of autonomy in fortifying the connection between purpose and well-being and the channels through which purpose alignment may be cohesively broadcast across the organization should be examined in future studies (Pereira & Bamel, 2021).

Digitalization of work has given the purpose-driven HRM a new discourse dimension. The popularization of remote and hybrid working schemes, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has required new methods of ensuring purpose alignment in the digital workspace (Kess-Momoh et al., 2024). Digital human resource (HR) technologies, including analytics and virtual onboarding systems, have become some of the key facilitators of engagement and cohesion in distributed teams (Liu, 2023a). Kess-Momoh et al. (2024) highlights the role of agility and online communication in maintaining the purpose alignment, and Shyu, et al. (2023) propose human-focused AI design as the means of ethical HR in the era of automation. Although these contributions are valuable, empirical gaps exist, especially regarding how emerging technologies such as generative AI can strengthen or weaken purpose coherence (Shyu, et al., 2023.). Also, the research on the specifics of the industry should be conducted, as the levels of digital preparedness of different industries, including healthcare and education, might present distinctive impediments to the application of purpose-aligned HRM (Gile et al., 2022).

Also becoming prominent aspects of purpose-driven HRM are sustainability and Green HRM, especially in organizations in which the environment, social, and governance (ESG) principles are followed (Cesário et al., 2022; C Kiplimo & Odiyo, 2024). According to the studies, high environmental commitment employees demonstrate a better person-organization fit if their organizations focus on green HRM practices, including environmentally friendly policies and sustainability training (Cesário et al., 2022). The Triple Bottom Line approach (people, planet, and profit) is a framework that HR strategy must be guided by the idea of making sustainability integrated into practice (C Kiplimo & Odiyo, 2024). Nevertheless, the literature states the major obstacles to implementation, which are cultural resistance and the absence of regularized metrics used to measure the effects of green HRM activities (Cesário et al., 2022). To overcome these challenges the future research should focus on cross-cultural comparisons and the creation of sector-specific models, and make sure that sustainability is enshrined in the objective of organizations.

Leadership is the key to purpose alignment, modeling, and communication, as well as the key to the successful alignment of purpose (Carreno, 2024; Holbeche, 2022). Translationally oriented leaders capable of sharing a memorable vision and exhibiting genuine devotion to the cause have more significant chances to establish a proper alignment throughout the workforce (Anderson M, 2024). The case study analyses of purpose-driven businesses, such as Patagonia and Microsoft, demonstrate that authenticity in leadership positively impacts brand reputation and employee loyalty (Carreno, 2024). On the other hand, purpose-washing the fake or pseudo alignment can also damage the trust and organisational credibility (Holbeche, 2022). The literature also underlines the issue of reconciling the global purpose frameworks with the local cultural specifics, especially in the case of multinational organizations (Shaddiq & Irpan, 2023). To overcome these issues, one needs a sophisticated sense of cultural dynamics and the ability to be an inclusive leader whose message would appeal in a variety of situations.

Lastly, measuring and assessing purpose alignment are also aspects that are yet to be studied. Although the quantitative research studies have identified associations between purpose-aligned HRM and financial performance, innovation, and competitiveness, the urgent demand is for

standardized measures that could help to evaluate the long-term effects of such initiatives (Gede Riana et al., 2020; Stone et al., 2024). As an illustration, High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) were found to positively affect productivity purpose-driven company Khan et al. (2020), yet the majority of measures are short-term, and the longitudinal evidence is lacking (Byarugaba et al., 2022). A key aspect that will have to be undertaken to achieve these goals is the further development of sound measurement tools that can be applied across different settings and give practitioners the opportunity to act.

To sum up, the SHRM and purpose alignment literature provides a strong case in support of the strategic approach to the inclusion of purpose in HR practices. Nevertheless, the discipline needs to tackle methodological shortcomings, increase its geographical and sectoral coverage, and build a set of common measurement methods to get the best out of purpose-driven HRM. With organizations continuing to operate in a more complex and dynamic business world, the fit between human capital and organizational purpose will continue to be an important source of sustainable success.

5. Conclusion

The fact that the systematic review of 30 studies on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and organizational purpose alignment highlights the significance of the purpose-driven HRM in the development of modern workplaces also emphasizes this fact. As confirmed in the literature, aligning HR practices with organizational purpose positively affects employee engagement, employee well-being, and overall employee performance, supporting the strategic importance of human capital as a factor of long-term success. The Resource-Based View (RBV) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) are some of the theoretical frameworks through which purpose-driven HRM generates competitive advantage due to the development of a motivated and committed workforce.

The material findings reveal the life-changing effect of aligning purpose on various levels, such as leadership, digital transformation, sustainability, and performance measurement. Comments that authentic leadership is critical to both modeling and conveying purpose, such that organizational values are present throughout the ranks of the workforce. In the meantime, digital technology and agile HR activities are completing the picture in ensuring purpose coherence in hybrid and remote working. Sustainability, incorporated into HRM, also enhances organizational purpose, especially in ESG-oriented companies, but the issues of cultural opposition and the lack of appropriate measurements still exist.

Although the field has made these developments, there are various shortcomings that it needs to overcome to move forward. The overwhelming Western-centric focus of research, limitations of methods, and the absence of unified metrics to evaluate the purpose alignment create a demand to employ more diverse, longitudinal, and cross-cultural studies. The prospective research directions are sector-specified implementation, ethical AI in HRM, and the long-term financial and social effects of purpose-driven approaches.

Summing up, purpose-driven SHRM is a paradigm approach to transactional HR practices, a strategic and value-based approach, and a linkage of human capital to organizational mission. As companies continue to grapple with the shifting workforce-related dynamics, economic as well as technological disruptions, purpose alignment will continue to be a distinguishing factor towards long-term success. When accompanied by a strong dedication of leadership, enabled by digital transformation, and underpinned by powerful measurement systems, organizations that focus on authentic purpose embedding are more likely to succeed in creating both employee and organizational success.

6. Proposed future research area

Further studies on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and purpose alignment should focus on the use of longitudinal research studies to determine causal linkages between purpose-oriented HR practices and long-term organizational performance, as the majority of the existing literature is based on cross-sectional research designs. Researchers ought to conduct studies with a broader geographical coverage than the Western setting to incorporate a larger proportion of studies done in emerging economies, where the variance of culture and institutions might provide distinct answers about purpose implementation. The sector-specific research is urgently needed, especially in the industries that are underrepresented, like healthcare, education, or governmental entities, to create individualized frameworks of purpose alignment. Digitalization of the work sphere requires dedicated studies on the potential of using emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, in creating a more coherent purpose in virtual and hybrid workspaces in an ethically sustainable way. Forward research would also benefit by generating standardized measures and key performance indicators to enable the consistent measurement of the effect of purpose alignment in various organizational settings. Also, the possible adverse effects of the purpose-driven HRM, such as the instances of purpose-washing or extreme organizational identification, should be studied to present a more comprehensive picture of implementation challenges. A cross-cultural comparative research would be informative in investigating the purpose alignment variation in diverse national and organizational cultures. Lastly, the concepts of interdisciplinary research that merge the knowledge of behavioral science, neuroscience, and technology studies may present novel perspectives on the employee-purpose alignment process. Such avenues of research would make a huge contribution to theoretical knowledge and practical implementation of purpose-driven SHRM in modern organizations.

References

- Abdullaev, A. M. (2023). NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF WORK: HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY. *Nazariy va Amaliy Tadqiqotlar Xalqaro Jurnal*, 3(9), 6–17.
- Alfes, K., Veld, M., & Fürstenberg, N. (2021). The relationship between perceived high-performance work systems, combinations of human resource well-being and human resource performance attributions, and engagement. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 31(3), 729–752.
- Anderson M. (2024). Strategic Human Resource Management and Employee Engagement in Australia. *Ideas.Repec.OrgM AndersonInternational Journal of Strategic Management*, 2024•*ideas.Repec.Org*. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/bdu/ojijsm/v3y2024i3p22-33id2731.html>
- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2023). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice: A guide to the theory and practice of people management*. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=3oChEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Armstrong%27s+Handbook+of+Human+Resource+Management+Practice&ots=YGjxofUzNw&sig=M5PpnwoCwFkCTgfJHu4Yx63IUdA>
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700108>
- Blau, P. M. (1964). Justice in social exchange. *Sociological Inquiry*, 34(2).
- Byarugaba, J. K., Mafabi, S., Dywili, Mt., Kyogabiirwe, B. J., & Chinyamurindi, W. (2022). MEDIATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND FIRM FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE. *International Journal of Business & Society*, 23(2).
- Carreno, A. M. (2024). *Purpose-Driven Transformation: Aligning Organizational Culture with Values and Mission White Paper Purpose-Driven Transformation: Aligning Organizational Culture with Values and Mission*.
- Caylan, S. (2024). *Role of Human Resource Management on Strategic Management* (pp. 51–69). <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1155-4.ch003>
- Cesário, F., Sabino, A., Moreira, A., & Azevedo, T. (2022). Green Human Resources Practices and Person-Organization Fit: The Moderating Role of the Personal Environmental Commitment. *Emerging Science Journal*, 6(5), 938–951. <https://doi.org/10.28991/ESJ-2022-06-05-02>
- Chinyamurindi, W., Kyogabiirwe, J. B., Kabagabe, J. B., Mafabi, S., & Dywili, Mt. (2021). Antecedents of small business financial performance: the role of human resource management practices and strategy. *Employee Relations*, 43(5), 1214–1231. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-03-2020-0138>
- C Kiplimo, J. J., & Odiyo, W. (2024). Strategic Alignment: HR Practices and Organizational Objectives in Modern Organizations. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences*, 11, 88–100. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10691519>
- Gede Riana, I., Suparna, G., Gusti Made, I., Kot, S., & Rajiani, I. (2020). Human resource management in promoting innovation and organizational performance. In *Problems and Perspectives in Management* (Vol. 18, Issue 1, pp. 107–118). LLC CPC Business Perspectives. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18\(1\).2020.10](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18(1).2020.10)
- George, B., Thomas, S. A., Sharma, A., Reddy, D. L., & Basha, S. H. (2024). The Role of Strategic HRM in Organizational Performance: A Comprehensive Review. *Acta Scientiae*, 7 (1), 645–658.

- Gile, P. P., van de Klundert, J., & Buljac-Samardzic, M. (2022). Strategic human resource management and performance in public hospitals in Ethiopia. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10, 915317.
- Gionfriddo, G., Cucino, V., & Piccaluga, A. (2021). Purpose driven companies for common good: Managerial characteristics and dynamics. *Electronic Conference Proceedings of Sinergie-Sima Management Conference Leveraging Intersections in Management Theory and Practice, Palermo, June 10-11, 2021 University of Palermo*, 1(1), 201–205.
- Holbeche, L. (2022). *Aligning human resources and business strategy*. Routledge.
- Kess-Momoh, A. J., Tula, S. T., Bello, B. G., Omotoye, G. B., & Daraojimba, A. I. (2024). Strategic human resource management in the 21st century: A review of trends and innovations. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 21(1), 746–757.
- Khan, U., Zhang, Y., & Salik, M. (2020). The financial performance of Korean manufacturing SMEs: Influence of human resources management. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7(8), 599–611.
- Liu, S. (2023a). STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: ALIGNING PEOPLE AND BUSINESS OBJECTIVES. In *Business Studies Journal* (Vol. 15, Issue 6).
- Meier III, J. G. (2021). *The relation among employee alignment, perceived organizational support, and employee engagement*. The George Washington University.
- Mentor, C., Enis, M., & Boskovska, D. (2024). *THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF SMEs IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY*.
- Morris, C. (2024). *The Impact of Employee and Organisational Purpose Alignment: Improving Employee Wellbeing and Engagement through Purpose Congruence*.
- Nguyen, D. T., & Dao, T. K. (2023). The mediating role of innovation in the relationship between high-performance human resource management practices and firm performance. *Heliyon*, 9(12). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22720>
- Papaioannou, A., Dimitropoulos, P., Koronios, K., & Marinakos, K. (2024). Perceived financial performance in sport services firms: the role of HRM practices and innovation. *Evidence-Based HRM: A Global Forum for Empirical Scholarship*, 12(1), 1–22.
- Pattanayak, B. (2020). *Human resource management*. PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.
- Pereira, E. F., Miswanto, M., Biyanto, F., Siregar, B., Roberto, A., Soares, C., Mendes Pereira, F., & Ykpn, S. (2024). The Role of Meaningful Work and Employee Well-being on Employee Experience: Moderation by Employee Autonomy-Literature Review. *Journal.Adpebi.Com*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.54099/ijibmr.v4i2.1182>
- Pereira, V., & Bamel, U. (2021). Extending the resource and knowledge based view: A critical analysis into its theoretical evolution and future research directions. *Journal of Business Research*, 132, 557–570. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JBUSRES.2021.04.021>
- Shaddiq, S., & Irpan, M. (2023). Governance of human resources management in the digital era. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 5(3), 80–96.
- Shamsuddin, S., M Hashim, H., & Ashari, H. (2023). The Effect of Strategic Alignment between Organizational Culture and Organizational Structure towards Employee Empowerment: A Conceptual Framework. *KnE Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i20.14592>
- Shyu, , J. Z., Yue, Y., & Shyu, J. Z. (n.d.). *An overview of research on human-centered design in the development of artificial general intelligence*.

- Siraj, R., & Yasmeen, G. (2025). Strategic Human Resource Management and Employee Outcomes: A Comprehensive Literature Review on the Impact of SHRM Practices on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 3(1), 3154–3164.
- Stone, R. J., Cox, A., Gavin, M., & Carpini, J. (2024). *Human resource management*. John Wiley & Sons.

R.No	Author(s) & Year	Journal	Purpose	Theoretical Framework	Country	Study Type	Methods Employed	Key Findings
1	Shamsuddin et al. (2023)	ICESG Conference Proceedings	To explore how alignment between org. culture and structure impacts employee empowerment	Strategic alignment theory, Empowerment theory (SE & PE)	Malaysia (proposed study)	Conceptual/Theoretical	Literature review and conceptual framework development	Aligning culture and structure is key to effective empowerment; the study proposes a multidimensional framework for enhancing empowerment and performance.
2	Gionfriddo et al. (2021)	Sinergie-SIMA Management Conference	To examine the management dynamics of purpose-driven companies and their role in creating common good for society.	Purpose-driven companies, Common good, Integral Human Development	Italy	Case Study	Inductive, exploratory approach, Qualitative analysis	Purpose-driven companies exhibit three key dynamics: Vision and alignment, Engagement/effort/creativity, Trust/relational contracts. They contribute to common good through architectural innovation and integral human development.
3	Shyu, et al. (2023.)	Institute of Science Studies and S&T Management, Dalian University of Technology	To explore the role of human-centered values (empathy, ethics, social responsibility) in AGI development and governance.	Human-centered AI, AGI governance, Value alignment	China	Literature Review	Content analysis, Literature review	Human-centered design is crucial for ethical AGI development. Key principles: Explainability, Human-AI collaboration, Ethical AI. Challenges include lack of empirical research and interdisciplinary talent.
4	George et al. (2024)	Acta Scientiae	To analyze the impact of Strategic HRM practices (e.g., recruitment, training, performance management) on organizational performance.	Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capability Theory, Configurational Approach	Global	Literature Review	Systematic literature review, Empirical studies synthesis	Strategic HRM aligns HR practices with business goals, enhancing productivity, employee satisfaction, and financial outcomes. Key practices: Talent management, Performance metrics, Leadership development. Challenges include cultural resistance and technology integration.

5	Carreno (2024)	Institute for Change Leadership and Business Transformation	To explore how embedding purpose into organizational culture drives cultural and financial success, and to provide a framework for aligning mission, values, and operations.	Purpose-driven transformation , Cultural alignment, Stakeholder value	USA	Case Study & Conceptual Review	Literature review, Case studies, Qualitative analysis	Purpose-driven transformation enhances employee engagement, brand reputation, and competitive edge. Key steps include leadership modeling, clear value definition, and embedding purpose into operations. Challenges include "purpose-washing" and resistance to change. Success metrics blend KPIs (retention, productivity) with storytelling.
6	Cesário et al. (2022)	Emerging Science Journal	To propose a green HRM perception measure and assess its impact on person-org fit, moderated by commitment	Triple Bottom Line; Person-Organization Fit Theory	Portugal	Quantitative	Online questionnaire; moderation analysis	Green HRM positively relates to person-organization fit; stronger when environmental commitment is high
7	Morris (2024)	University of Canterbury MSc Dissertation	To examine the impact of perceived organisational purpose (POP) and sense of purpose at work (SPW) on mental wellbeing (MWB) and engagement (ENG), and the effects of congruence/discrepancy between POP and SPW.	Person-Organisation Fit (P-O Fit), Self-Determination Theory (SDT)	Global (via Prolific)	Quantitative	Online survey, polynomial regression, response surface methodology	- Highest MWB and ENG occur when POP and SPW are congruent at high levels.
								- SPW is a stronger predictor of MWB and ENG than POP.
								- Low congruence leads to the lowest MWB and ENG
8	Abdullaev (2023)	International Journal of Theoretical and Practical Research	Explore HCM strategies for economic productivity	Human Capital Theory	Uzbekistan	Systematic literature review	Narrative synthesis, meta-analysis	HCM strategies boost productivity; challenges include recruitment biases.

8	Meier III (2021)	Dissertation	To explore the relation among employee alignment, perceived organizational support, and employee engagement	Shuck and Reio's (2011) employee engagement framework	United States	Quantitative	Survey research design, bivariate correlation, multiple regression	Positive relation among employee alignment, perceived organizational support, and employee engagement; employee alignment explained 23.4% unique variance in engagement
10	Alfes et al. (2021)	Human Resource Management Journal	Examine HRM's role in engagement	Social Exchange Theory	UK	Quantitative	Survey	HRM practices enhance engagement when aligned with purpose.
11	Dane (2024) Kess-Momoh et al. (2024)	<i>ResearchGate paper</i>	Explore SHRM's evolving role in remote and digital work culture	Remote work, wellbeing theories	Global	Conceptual review	Literature synthesis	SHRM is key in virtual work: flexibility, digital communication, wellbeing positioning; remote norms reshaping HR practices
12	Gile et al. (2022)	<i>Front Public Health</i>	Examine SHRM impact on employee, patient outcomes	Contextual SHRM (Paauwe)	Ethiopia	Qualitative Empirical Study	Structured interviews, focus groups, thematic coding	Mandatory HRM reduces motivation; need commitment-based practices
13	Hina et al., 2025 Siraj & Yasmeen (2025)	<i>Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies</i>	Explore impacts of SHRM practices on employees	Review framework linking RM-satisfaction-commitment	Pakistan (focus)	Literature Review	Thematic synthesis	Training, appraisal and rewards positively affect satisfaction & commitment; need sectoral studies
14	Byarugaba et al. (2022)	Small Business Studies Africa	Explore PsyCap mediation	Psychological Capital	South Africa	Empirical Quantitative	Survey & SEM	PsyCap mediates HRM and financial outcomes
15	Nguyen & Dao (2023)	Vietnam Listed Firms	Survey HRM's performance effects	Resource input model	Vietnam	Empirical Quantitative	Reports & surveys	Training/recruitment improve performance
16	Chinyamurindi et al. (2021)	Small Biz South Africa	Explore HRM-finance link	Strategic HRM	South Africa	Empirical Quantitative	Survey & regression	Direct positive relationship
17	Khan et al. (2020)	Pakistani Firms	Large sample correlation	High-performance work practices	Pakistan	Empirical Quantitative	Survey & regression	HPWP significantly impact finance

18	Papaioannou et al. (2024)	Greek Sports Firms	Examine HRM → innovation → finance	Innovation mediation	Greece	Empirical Quantitative	Survey & SEM	HRM boosts innovation, improving financials
19	Mentor et al. (2024)	Kosovo Firms	Assess HRM to competitiveness	Comparative model	Kosovo	Mixed-methods	Questionnaire, econometrics	Appropriate HRM enhances competitiveness
20	Ghosh & Chaudhury (2024)Shaddiq & Irpan (2023)	Democratic vs Authoritarian Contexts	Compare HRM governance models	Governance influence	India vs others	Qualitative	Case comparative	Transparency tied to governance and performance
21	Liu (2023b)	<i>Business Studies Journal</i>	<u>Explore how SHRM integrates workforce planning, talent management, and engagement to meet business goals (abacademies.org)</u>	Grounded in Wright & McMahan, Boon et al., Boxall & Purcell	China	Conceptual article	Review and argumentation	Emphasized SHRM as essential for aligning workforce strategy with overarching business strategy and culture
22	Anderson M (2024)	<i>International Journal of Strategic Management</i>	Investigate SHRM impact on engagement in Australia	RBV, Social Exchange Theory (SET), High-Involvement Management (HIM)	Australia	Desk research (secondary)	Literature & report analysis	Effective SHRM (performance systems, transformational leadership) significantly boosts engagement; supportive culture enhances outcomes
23	E. F. Pereira et al. (2024)	<i>IJBMR</i>	Examine how autonomy moderates the link between meaningful work and well-being, impacting experience	Not explicitly stated but meta-analysis & literature-based	International (Scopus-indexed)	Literature review & meta-analysis	Meta-analysis + lit review	Autonomy strengthens the meaningful work–well-being relationship; well-being most strongly predicts employee experience
24	Holbeche (2022)	Routledge (Book)	To explore how HR strategy can be aligned with business strategy to build sustainable success	Strategic Fit, Contingency Theory, Change Management	Primarily UK focus, global examples	Conceptual & practice-oriented	Case studies, frameworks, practitioner interviews	Effective alignment of HR and business strategy fosters adaptability, innovation, and employee engagement. Emphasizes the role of HR in shaping organizational culture and strategic agility.
25	Armstrong & Taylor (2023)	Kogan Page (Book)	To provide a comprehensive guide to HRM theory and practice aligned with business strategy	Best Fit Model, Resource-Based View (RBV), Human Capital Theory	UK with global examples	Conceptual and practice-based	Literature synthesis, case references, models	HR strategy must align with organizational strategy to drive performance; emphasizes employee engagement, talent management, performance, and reward systems as key drivers of strategic HRM.

26	Stone et al. (2024)	John Wiley & Sons	To provide a contemporary and practical overview of HRM, emphasizing strategic alignment and ethical people management	Strategic HRM, High Performance Work Systems (HPWS), Psychological Contract Theory	Australia with global contexts	Conceptual & applied textbook	Case studies, applied models, HR toolkits	Emphasizes strategic alignment between HR practices and organizational goals. Highlights employee engagement, diversity, ethics, and legal compliance as core to effective SHRM. Advocates for data-driven HRM and purpose-driven leadership.
27	Pattanayak (2020)	PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.	To present comprehensive principles and practices of HRM with a focus on strategic and ethical alignment	Behavioral Science, Strategic Fit, Indian Ethos in Management	India (with global references)	Conceptual textbook	Theoretical exposition, local case studies	Strategic HRM must align with organizational vision, with emphasis on ethics, motivation, and performance. Highlights cultural nuances in Indian HRM and the role of HR as a business partner.
28	Caylan (2024)	Trends, Challenges, and Practices in Contemporary Strategic Management	To explore how HRM contributes to and shapes strategic management practices in organizations	Resource-Based View (RBV), Strategic HRM Theory	Not specified	Conceptual/theoretical	Literature review, qualitative analysis	HRM is a critical driver for strategic management success, aligning workforce capabilities with organizational goals. Emphasizes integration of HRM practices with strategic planning to build competitive advantage. Highlights challenges in adapting HRM to dynamic business environments.
29	Kiplimo & Odiyo (2024.)	International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences	To explore the strategic alignment of HR practices with organizational objectives	Resource-Based View, AMO Model	Kenya	Literature Review	Theoretical analysis, Case studies	HR practices are strategic enablers that drive talent management, organizational culture, and adaptability for long-term success.
30	Gede Riana et al. (2020)	Cogent Business & Management	To investigate how strategic alignment affects organizational performance in Ethiopian universities	Strategic Alignment Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV)	Ethiopia	Empirical quantitative study	Survey questionnaire, statistical analysis (regression, correlation)	Strategic alignment positively influences organizational performance. Alignment between strategy and HR, operations enhances efficiency, innovation, and overall performance in universities.