



# Editorial of Special Issue:

## Crossed perspectives on digitalization, sustainable development, and the management of human resources in the supply chain.

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This special issue of the Revue Française de Gestion Industrielle (RFGI) is associated with the 11th edition of the IRMBAM conference, which took place online from July 7 to 9, 2022. The conference track number 7 "Operations, Supply Chain Management and Circular Economy" gathered researchers from different countries such as Germany, China, Italy, Brazil, and France. Through intervention research, bibliometric analysis, and multiple case studies, several industrial sectors were studied, including manufacturing, platforms, and the service economy. The papers presented in this special issue address the key concerns of the evolution of supply chain and enterprise management through the lens of digitalization, sustainable development, and human resource management.

This special issue allows us to bring together six articles on three main topics, namely digital transformation, sustainable human resources management, and logistics. Two articles elaborate on the impact of digitalization on manufacturing organizations in China by addressing the issues of dysfunction and hidden costs. Two articles look at sustainable human resources management in the

context of the gig economy and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Two articles address two emerging logistic challenges, namely the approaches for mutualizing urban logistics and port strategy.

In their article entitled "Developing the performance of human resource management in industrial SMEs - The role of proximity managers", **Bousquet, Delattre, and Lichy** argue that effective human resource management is a key issue for many companies, especially SMEs, because they often do not have a dedicated HR function. This article addresses the issue of developing sustainable and innovative HR practices in industrial SMEs. The flexible structure of small firms facilitates organizational agility, but can also lead to disorganization, dysfunction, and suboptimal performance. Using intervention research, this article contributes to the literature on the impact of developing HR practices and employee performance in industrial SMEs. It explains the key roles of proximity managers in facilitating and developing a more responsive, effective, and strategically linked HRM interaction.

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The article entitled "Socio-economic management theory related to BPM: A case study of dysfunctions in digital transformation strategy operation" is co-authored by **Zhang, Monod, Beenen, Jiang and Willis**. In this article, they suggest that the dynamic strategies required by today's digital environment exacerbate the inconsistency between an organization's digital transformation efforts and its enterprise architecture's (EA) planning process. This leads to redundant investments, delayed implementation, and frequent failures in digital transformation projects. To investigate this inconsistency, the authors applied the theory of the socio-economic approach to management (SEAM). Through the critical analysis of four case studies in a large manufacturing organization, they clarify the relationship between digital transformation and EA and reveal the dysfunction of strategic implementation from the perspective of SEAM and business process management. This research integrates digital transformation and EA to provide a context-specific approach to the planning and design of the company's digital transformation strategy. The results show that the implementation of EA is not strongly related to digital transformation and depends on the motivation for building an effective EA and on the general understanding of EA planning. In terms of theoretical contributions, this research study develops a model of strategic coherence integrated with digital transformation. The managerial contribution is to provide a roadmap for the integration of EA and digital transformation for different types of organizations.

In an article entitled "What has digital transformation changed? A Case Study of Hidden Costs from the Perspective of Socio-Economic Approaches to Management in China", **Huang, Monod, Eisner, Korn, Jiang, Bai and Wilson** address the central issue of digital transformation and hidden costs of enterprises. This research uses a SEAM perspective to describe the impact of the growth of digital transformation maturity on hidden costs in a Chinese manufacturing company. This paper combines the case study research method with some quantitative techniques by conducting correlation analyses on employee turnover, work quality, occupational injuries and illnesses. The

results indicate that the growth of digital transformation maturity is correlated with turnover, work-related injuries, and illnesses of lower-level employees. Furthermore, this study suggests that the impact of digital transformation maturity growth on these three factors should be examined in light of corresponding contextual factors regarding organizational contexts and cultures in future studies.

In their article "Social Sustainability in the Gig Economy: insights from the on-demand delivery sector", **Silva and Nyobe** answer the following research question: What are the social sustainability issues in the supply chain that stakeholders in the gig economy of delivery need to address? The gig economy is characterized by a labor market with a rising number of short-term contracts or freelance work, as opposed to permanent jobs. The rise of the gig economy has led companies to rethink their relationships with multiple stakeholders, including gig workers. This is particularly evident in the delivery sector. This article examines how stakeholders in this sector are addressing social supply chain sustainability issues. Drawing on stakeholder theory, the authors find that the perceived influence (or lack thereof) of independent workers can affect the outcome of managing social sustainability issues. Their findings also suggest that suppliers are much more concerned with working conditions than with equity issues. This paper sheds light on the management of social issues in the gig economy and paves the way for further studies on supply chain sustainability in the platform economy. Ultimately, this paper provides guidance to stakeholders in the gig economy on how to better contribute to social sustainability. At a managerial level, the authors discuss the need for a more systematic way of thinking about social supply chain sustainability. The unique characteristics of the gig economy have led them to rethink social sustainability and its implications for the day-to-day operations of delivery companies. Their discussion also highlights the benefits of the new configuration of supply chains, which are more closely linked to the multichannel approach used primarily during the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers could also anticipate the use of new platforms, tools, or

programs to improve the ability of companies to interact with workers in different circumstances. Therefore, this study may be of interest to policymakers who wish to enact or implement diversity-friendly legislation.

In the article entitled "Trends in urban logistics pooling: a France-Germany comparison", **Wagenhausen and Oliveira Costa** address the issue of urban logistics pooling (ULP) through a comparative study between France and Germany. This issue is all the more important as many cities still fail to comply with the nitrogen oxide emission limits set by the European Union. Their research conducts a comparative analysis of the experimentation of ULP in France and Germany, two countries close to each other but with different cultures and histories. Their analysis highlights the existence of cycles of ULP. The triggers that the authors identified are corporate initiatives concerning logistic optimization in urban areas and the environmental restrictions and obligations enacted by cities. They found that the main constraint to the development of the ULP is their relative unprofitability. Their main methodological contribution is the use of "grounded theory" to analyze a complex phenomenon such as the mutualization of urban logistics. Their managerial contributions highlight the urgent need for future reflection on ULP projects, both for companies and for public authorities, in order to respect the nitrogen oxide emission thresholds set by the European Union.

Last but not least, **Laurent Fedi** analyzed the book "Les ports en France: quelle stratégie portuaire pour un développement d'activité" edited by Sophie Cros and Florence Lérique, and published in 2021 by Eska in France. At the beginning of the 21st century, the issue of "strategy" is more important than ever for port managers. French ports have undergone forty years of successive reforms with quite modest results compared to other European ports. This book proposes an in-depth analysis of the determinants of an efficient port strategy, how it can promote the attractiveness of a territory, and how ports can be part of a broader economic development policy. Divided into four parts, this

high-quality book deals with the logistical, legal, economic and social issues faced by French ports.

These five articles and the book analysis selected for this special issue bring new ideas and enrich the methodological approaches often used to study the evolution of supply chain and enterprise management through the prism of digitalization, sustainable development, and human resource management. These articles suggest relevant avenues for future research in this area, for which we thank all the authors. They have done a lot of work in preparing this special issue, revising their articles, and refining their thoughts. Finally, we would like to thank the ten anonymous reviewers for their careful reading, which helped to improve the quality of the articles, and also the editors of the RFGI, Valérie Fernandes and Ridha Derrouiche, for making this special issue possible.

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