It's the End of the World as We Know It: Organizational and Vocational Behavior in Times of Crisis

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Introduction

This special issue will enhance our understanding of how individuals and teams function inside and outside the workplace, and how they navigate their careers, in times of crisis. A crisis is an unexpected event that poses a significant threat to 'business-as-usual' for organizations. For employees, crises have the potential to significant impact their functioning both at work and outside of work.

Over the last few decades, organizations have faced numerous crises, including the Asian Financial Crisis, the Global Financial Crisis and, most recently, the COVID-19 Health Pandemic. The COVID-19 Crisis, in particular, has had a revolutionary effect on business-as-usual so far: Organizations across the world have had to close temporarily, change how they conduct business, increase working from home access, reduce hours for staff, and engage in staff layoffs and furloughs. Such events have exerted high levels of pressure on employees, heightened their job insecurity and threatened their well-being. In addition, as a reaction to the crisis, many organizations have had a (temporary) freeze in recruitment and new graduates are now facing significant competition in the job market.

Although researchers have begun to identify the leadership approaches that may be most effective in times of crisis (Carrington et al., 2019), and have started to examine how individuals deal with the resultant job insecurity (Adkins et al., 2001), we still have a great deal to learn about how individuals and work teams function in times of crisis, both in and outside the workplace. Prior work has typically focused on crisis management at the organizational and management level (James et al., 2011; Stoker et al., 2019) and has thus far neglected its influence on individual employees, job seekers, and work teams. In particular, we still know little about how individuals manage their work-life interface during crises and how they maintain their motivation and engagement at work (Perrewé et al., 2012). In addition, we only have limited insights on how individuals navigate their careers in times of crisis.

This special issue, therefore, will look at how individuals and work teams function during crises, and address topics such as leader behavior and development, work motivation, managing the work-life interface, career development and exploration, dealing with work stress and well-being, individual and work team resilience, as well as performance measurement and work evaluation in times of crisis. Both empirical and review articles will be considered. Quantitative and qualitative studies are equally welcomed, and cross-cultural studies will be considered, contingent on a strong research design. This special issue particularly invites articles that answer the following or related questions:

1. In times of crisis, what constitutes effective leadership? What are the differing effects of leadership approaches and communication styles on employee outcomes? How do leaders develop or emerge during times of crisis?

2. How can employees maintain their motivation in times of crises? What strategies might employees and leaders adopt to foster work engagement and deal with job demands?

3. How should employees manage their work-life interface in times of crisis? How can organizations help employees with issues (such as work-life conflict) that result from working from home?

4. How is employees' well-being at work affected in times of crises?

5. How do leaders and employees negotiate and navigate work arrangements in virtual work environments, in times of crisis?

6. How do individuals explore and develop their careers in times in crisis? How do individuals deal with loss of employment and job insecurity?

7. How should employee performance and different type of work be evaluated in times of crisis?

8. Are there types of individuals who cope better or worse with crisis situations? What role does organizational training and interventions play in preparing individuals to better deal with crises?

9. What team qualities, or qualities of individual team members, facilitate effective crisis responses in work teams, and what actions should work teams take when a crisis emerges?

The deadline for submission of papers is 28th February 2021. The editorial team may offer some flexibility on the deadline for longitudinal designs if brought up with them in advance. The journal submission site will be open for submissions from 1st February 2021. Questions and informal enquiries about the special issue should be directed to:

a.newman@deakin.edu.au or any of the other editors. We encourage authors to pitch their ideas to the editorial team and obtain feedback before commencing the study.

References

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