

Sinikka Vanhala • Professor • Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration

Need for Ethics in HRM

This article aims at evaluating the state-of-the-art of the debate on human resources management (HRM) ethics. Prior research on business ethics reveals only minor interest in HRM issues, and HRM has kept an arm's length distance to ethics. The relationship between ethics and HRM is paradoxical: human resource management has always involved an ethical aspect, and all the time HRM has tried to conceal it. Right now, the major challenges in the area of HR ethics are related to: a) general values and attitudes, so-called societal-level ethical climate, b) the company-level adoption of HR ethical thinking, a kind of "total ethical management" similar to TQM, c) the need for HR ethical codification, and d) the methodological and theoretical challenges of HR research.