



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

**The Human and Task-Centric Research
Approaches in Management and Their Role
in Achieving Our Sustainable Goals**
Department of Management's Position Paper

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Position Paper on UN SDGs

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THE DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING CAPITALISM THROUGH RESEARCH

The economic and political system of capitalism has inherent flaws; we need drastic changes to provide real-world solutions to this issue (Jacobs, 2016). Our world needs creative and alternative business models to achieve sustainable solutions, and this is where *management* plays an integral role. *Management* is a multi-disciplinary approach that draws upon various disciplines (LSE, 2023). Because of this, it provides contemporary solutions to address the problems brought about by capitalism resulting in a sustainable future. Further, we believe that business-led initiatives have wider and lasting effects on society (LSE, 2023). Since management is about leading businesses, the Department of Management's research in LSE encourages sustainability and steers initiatives towards society's progress.

The Department of Management in LSE bridges the gap between the problems raised by capitalism and in attaining a sustainable world by providing global and quality research relating to the UN SDGs. Further, this position paper divides management into two approaches: *human-centric* and *task-centric*. It is through this framework that this position paper categorized the Department of Management's research (see Appendix). We have aligned two SDGs with the two management approaches, which are the following: (1) *SDG 3 Good health and well-being*, which we aligned with a *human-centric management approach* to campaign and protect our humanity, and (2) *SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth*, which we relate with a *task-centric management approach* to promote economic stability and growth (United Nations, 2023a).

RESEARCH APPROACHES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

THE HUMAN-CENTRIC APPROACH

The third SDG promotes good healthy lives and well-being for all (United Nations, 2023b, p.1). To realise this objective, a key strategy operationalized by the UN is to enhance the control of tobacco. Globally, tobacco results in the death of over 8 million individuals every year and deprives the world economy of nearly 2% of its gross domestic product (STOP, 2023). Despite the severity of the damages caused by tobacco usage, there has not been enough actions taken by policymakers to address this issue. For instance, at the current rate without further actions

taken, the countries in the EU could at best reduce tobacco usage by 12% before 2025, falling short of the goal set by the World Health Organization by 18% (Chakravarti, 2021).

The Department of Management, led by Professor Amitav Chakravarti, conducted a large, randomized control trial on tobacco warnings in 10 EU member states with 800 participants per country, using innovative research methods from behavioral economics (Chakravarti et al., 2015). The study found that removing or reducing product branding and increasing health warnings significantly decreased the attractiveness of cigarette packaging, with plain packaging being particularly effective (Chakravarti et al., 2015). Emotions also played a crucial role in reducing tobacco consumption, as images that elicited negative emotions reduced purchase intentions by about 82%, compared to 66% for images that elicited fear and disgust, and this was consistent across demographics and countries (Chakravarti et al., 2015; Chakravarti, 2021). Overall, the study contributed significantly to the goal of good health and well-being, highlighting a direction for public policy that also has considerable long-term implications in shaping social norms. It also recognizes the limitations of the capitalist model and advocates for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to business. This means moving away from the traditional focus on maximizing shareholder value and embracing a broader perspective that considers the interests of all stakeholders—employees, customers, suppliers, and the community.

On the other hand, Professor Ela Klecun's research related to SDG 3 found that social norms, rules, and contradictions from colleagues had a large impact on the adoption and usage of telemedicine in Sri Lanka (Klecun & Schwalb, 2019). Even though telemedicine's technological benefits possibly outweighed the disadvantages, there were Sri Lankan healthcare professionals who would rather not use telemedicine because of vocal opposition from other co-workers (Klecun & Schwalb, 2019). Additionally, individual motivators from medical professionals, such as their instinct to help patients, prompted them to use telemedicine to provide healthcare (Klecun & Schwalb, 2019). The findings of this research established that it is not just the management of technology which affects society, but it could also be the other way around—that social norms and behaviors can affect the adoption and management of telemedicine, ultimately influencing the availability of healthcare for some patients (Klecun & Schwalb, 2019). This gives importance to how management [of technology] affects society concerning SDG 3.

In summary, both research from Klecun & Schwalb (2019) and Chakravarti et al (2015) coincide with SDG 3 and as a result emphasize the human-centric approach of the management

department when working towards the SDGs because they significantly promote human welfare through tobacco marketing and telemedicine. Further, through this human-centered lens the research provides an alternative route to the capitalist model with the provision of a strategy focused on improving the social aspects of human lives, namely health. However, to ensure the sustainable implementation of such strategies a task centric-approach will also be discussed, to enable these businesses-led initiatives to have wider and lasting effects on society (LSE, 2023).

THE TASK-CENTRIC APPROACH

Moving on to the task-centered approach of the management department, literature will be discussed concerning *SDG 8 - inclusive economic growth and decent work for all*, which promotes productive employment (United Nations, 2023a). To begin, task orientation here will refer to the consolidation of work processes and Soane's et al (2017) work is particularly applicable as it explores organizations' potential to utilize meaningful work to enhance workers' productivity and performance. Soane et al (2017), create a model of existential labor and outlines the human resources practitioners' role in integrating the practices. This is notable because the impact of such a model corresponds highly with SDG 8, specifically targeting 8.6 and its indicators which refer to the reduction of the proportion of youth not in education or training and Soane's model suggests that organizations implement goal-setting of sending children to good schools to achieve this (Soane et al., 2017).

Similarly, Ashwin's work promotes SDG 8, however, it tackles other targets such as 8.5 and 8.8. Ashwin et al (2023), through a human rights lens, provide suggestions to multinational corporations on how they can address social challenges through the implementation of corporate social responsibility strategies. For example, setting a minimum wage is proposed within this strategy and this is significant to SDG 8 because it complements target 8.5 which promotes decent work for all, an indicator of which is the average hourly earnings of all employees regardless of gender, age, or disability (Ashwin et al., 2023). Furthermore, SDG 8 is additionally supported through the emphasis on labor rights and compliance with the International Labour Organization's core standards, and this compliance consequently supports target 8.8 and its indicators also (Ashwin et al., 2023). In addition, this conformity to ILO standards suggests that such a strategy has the potential to be implemented on a transnational level and as a result incur transnational benefits.

To surmise, research from both Soane and Ashwin promotes development-oriented policies that support decent work, hence they both additionally converge on target 8.3 (Soane et al., 2017; Ashwin et al., 2023). Therefore, the management department's literature is highly significant in promoting sustainability because it encapsulates multiple targets of SDG 8, and consequently proposes more creative and sustainable business models to follow to achieve the goals of the SDGs. Moreover, the importance of these new business models is key to tackling the flaws of capitalism where the exploitation of workers is a norm. Despite this, these predominantly task-orientated models should be implemented in conjunction with the human-centric strategies for maximum achievement of the SDGs.

ACHIEVING OUR SUSTAINABLE GOALS THROUGH RESEARCH

Therefore, it is concluded that overall, the department of management through its multidisciplinary approach is highly significant in addressing the issues of capitalism and promoting the SDGs and will continue to do so to enable a sustainable future. First, regarding the human-centric approach Klecun & Schwalb (2019) and Chakravarti et al (2015) both promote SDG 3 and ensure healthy lives through tobacco marketing and telemedicine. Secondly, research from Soane et al (2017) and Ashwin et al (2023) coincide with SDG 8 to emphasize the task-centric approach to achieve decent work through development-oriented policies such as ILO regulation and a framework for existential labor. Overall, it is suggested that the research, while notable to achieve the SDGs, is most effective when implemented simultaneously. For example, if tobacco marketing firms (Chakravarti et al., 2015) and telemedicine companies (Klecun & Schwalb, 2019) were to implement ILO regulation (Ashwin et al., 2023) and a framework for existential labor (Soane et al., 2017) into their strategy then they would significantly promote SDG 3 and 8. Hence, the multidisciplinary approach of the management department is highly beneficial in promoting sustainability. Further, the human-centered approach focuses on improving the social aspects of people's lives while the task-centric approach focuses on improving the organizational aspects of people's lives, so when combined they significantly challenge the capitalist model where exploitation of people is a norm.

APPENDIX

<p style="text-align: center;">SDG 3: Good health and well-being <i>Human-centric approach in management</i></p>			
Title	Author/s	Summary	Findings
<i>The Role of Contradictions and Norms in the Design and Use of Telemedicine: Healthcare Professionals' Perspective</i>	Pascal Schwalb, and Prof. Ela Klecun	Studied how healthcare professionals in Sri Lanka adopted, used and managed telemedicine	There were four factors that influenced the adoption and usage of telemedicine in Sri Lankan healthcare professionals: individual motivations, social norms and rules, contradictions from other healthcare professionals, and the technology's ease of use
<i>Improving public health messaging to reduce tobacco use in the EU</i>	Dr. Amitav Chakravarti	The study tested 84 combinations of purposed warning messages containing combinations of text and image. The research found that the "right" image can reduce the likelihood of purchasing a tobacco product by some 80 per cent, maximizing the efficacy of images is vitally important to attaining public health goals around reducing tobacco use.	This study conducted by the LSE is by far the largest randomized control trial, multi-country study on tobacco warnings. The countries in the EU fall short by the goal for tobacco reduction set by the WHO (30% reduction by 2030 when currently it is 18% by 2025). This study will provide a point of reference for policymakers to think about how to improve public health.

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
Task-centric approach in management

Title		Summary	Findings
<i>The mismanaged soul, existential labor and the erosion of meaningful work</i>	Dr Emma Soane, Katherine Bailey, Adrian Madden, Kerstin Alfes, and Amanda Shantz	Model of existential labor, drawing out a set of propositions for future research endeavors, and outline the implications for HRM practitioners. (14 propositions p.7-32)	Model of existential labor and how HR can encourage these practices through work in the tasks we perform, the roles we play, the relationships we build, and the organizations that employ us.
<i>'We can't compete on human rights', creating market-protected spaces to institutionalize the emerging logic of responsible management</i>	Professor Sarah Ashwin, Elke Schüßler, and Nora Lohmeyer	Institutional theory; the construction of market-protected spaces as a multilevel mechanism for institutionalizing and emerging logic in the context of a field dominated by the market logic via three forms of institutional work: restraining the jurisdiction of the market logic, infusing the responsible management logic with nonmarket elements, and maintaining market-protected spaces against resistance. ILO standards.	Contributes to institutional theory; logics positive effects and collective problems into collective solutions in structure and practice. Potential for transnational level, parties negotiate own rules (ILO emphasis). Calls for institutional and social change.

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