Talent, Participation and Organisational Well-being: New Perspectives from Cooperatives and Participatory Organisations

Thematic Area: Human Resources Management

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Summary:

The difficulty of managing talent and the demand for sustainable models drive interest in participatory firms and cooperatives, whose democratic governance offers valuable insights for contemporary management.

While traditional literature prioritises identifying and retaining high-value personnel (Collings & Mellahi, 2009), research in cooperative contexts challenges this universal view. It shows that talent is a social construction shaped by shared ownership and organisational values, giving rise to tensions between inclusive or exclusive, individual or collective, and universal or contextual approaches (Echaburu, Arando & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2026a; 2026b).

Research on cooperatives and employee ownership has demonstrated that participation in ownership and decision-making can positively influence organisational commitment, retention, knowledge sharing, and performance, while also presenting challenges related to governance and managing organizational tensions (Basterretxea, Heras-Saizarbitoria & Lertxundi, 2019).

Various studies in cooperatives have highlighted the importance of people management practices, high-involvement work systems, and trust in explaining workplace well-being (Uribetxebarria et al., 2021). Evidence also shows significant differences in these practices across professional groups (Arregi, Gago & Legarra, 2022), as well as in the relationship between the AMO model and employee well-being (Arregi et al., 2026).

These findings suggest that democratic governance constitutes a particularly fertile framework for exploring issues related to well-being, employee engagement, organizational sustainability, and talent management.

This Track seeks theoretical and empirical contributions on how cooperative and participatory organizations address contemporary challenges such as talent, well-being, digitalization, AI, and sustainability.

Keywords:

Cooperatives; Democratic Governance; Talent Management; Participation; Employee Ownership; Organisational Commitment; Organisational Well-being; High-Involvement Work Practices; Social Economy.

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