

## **HARNESSING HR GOVERNANCE IN EFFECTIVE VIRTUAL TEAMS**

**Dr AJ De Bruyn**

University of South Africa

E-mail: Dbruyaj@unisa.ac.za

Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0503-5099>

### **–Abstract–**

This paper reports on human resource governance (HRG) that was explored in an ethically cleared, qualitative case study on effective virtual teams in the software industry of South Africa. Embedded in corporate governance, human resource management (HRM) and general management; HRG is recognised as a control mechanism employed by management. People risks in the software industry are common, with technology cited as a contributing factor. A purposive sample was selected, while data were collected by means of an electronic questionnaire. The data were analysed by means of content analysis. Empirical evidence suggests that the traditional hierarchical role and purpose of a team leader and a team manager could be compromised in virtual teams; inflexible process management augments technology risks; and cross-country compliance with legislation contributes to greater knowledge creation. This study contributes to the emerging body of knowledge on the effective functioning of virtual teams and HR governance.

**Key Words:** Virtual teams; HR governance (HRG); high-performance work practices; flexible work practices; knowledge creation

**JEL Classification:** Business and Governance topics (general): Human Resource Management

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The shift in focus from perception-based measures to fact-based approaches in dealing with poor governance in African governments and organisations has intensified since the dawn of the new millennium (Kakumba 2012; Olawuyi 2015; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) 2016). This shift supports the notion that good governance is a prerequisite for Africa's structural transformation (ECA, 2016). The World Bank supports a systemic approach based on corporate governance (CG), indicating that a system of CG, where regulators,

owners and organisations are actively involved in directing and control, result in accountable, efficient and transparent organisations, which in turn builds trust and confidence (World Bank, 2016). Well-governed organisations carry lower risk, generate higher returns, decrease inefficiencies and minimise vulnerability. The International Labour Organization (ILO) extended the definition of CG by adding social responsibility in the international quest of realising the potential for fair and more inclusive globalisation with seamless markets. This social protection includes social justice; the redressing of social inequalities in marginalised groups (such as the youth and women); the extension of property and labour rights; decent work; and cross-border networking (ILO, 2018). Furthermore, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published the human resource governance (HRG) standard, ISO 30408 (ISO, 2016), which defines HRG and provides guidelines for its implementation. Internationally empirical research on HRG is scant (Kaehler, & Grundei, 2019). In South Africa, the few detailed empirical studies that have been conducted in this field focused primarily on conceptual papers (Meyer, Roodt, & Robbins, 2011) and HRG competency models (Schutte, Barkhuizen, & Van der Sluis, 2015).

Amplified by cross-border networking in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) through technology, business model changes can be expected in all industries (Schwab, 2017). The 4IR is interacting with other socio-economic and demographic factors to create a perfect storm, resulting in major disruptions to labour markets and thereby necessitating governance leadership (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2016). It specifically necessitates people to work effectively in teams across geographical and time lines. This form of work has had profound implications for both job content and security, and ultimately for CG, in particular HRG (Horwitz, Bravington & Silvis 2006, p.472; Derven, 2016, p.1; Roehling, 2017, p.621). A critical global trend in strategic human resource management (SHRM), especially in emerging economies (e.g., South Africa) that are striving to become innovation based, is to design and implement HR systems that boost employee creativity within structures of sound governance (Liu, Gong, Zhou & Huang, 2017).

One form of cross-border networking in the workplace is virtual teaming. Virtual teams consist of geographically dispersed team members who use electronic-mediated communication systems. In contrast to typical face-to-face team (FTFT) membership or conventional team (CT) membership, virtual team membership is not always definable, or is limited at a particular point in time. Although the members share in the particular team function independently, the team has a shared purpose and strategy, which is known from the time a team member, joins

the team (Berry, 2011). Members could be individually as well as jointly responsible for the outcome reached during their membership in the team (Brown, Huettnner & James-Tanny, 2007). In a virtual team, members are jointly accountable for managing relationships within the team. Although the role of the team leader might bear similarities to that of the FTFT manager, the dynamics of the position are different (Berry, 2011).

This article forms part of a greater study, the purpose of which was to explore best practices in effective virtual teams within the software section of the technology industry of South Africa. This particular article reports on the exploration of best practices for the functioning of those effective virtual teams and its implications for HRG. HRG is interwoven in the DNA of effective virtual teams. It encompasses the purpose, people, process and technology themes suggested by the framework of Ebrahim, Ahmed and Taha (2009) and De Bruyn (2015, p.775).

This article is structured as follows: firstly, the literature corpus on various elements related to HRG in virtual teams is presented. Next, HRG are empirically explored based on a qualitative, interpretative case study. Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire and analysed by means of content analysis. Finally, the findings and discussion of the information shared by the participants follow and some concluding thoughts are presented for implementation and further research.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Corporate governance vs HR governance**

The conflict between adherence to the technical ISO standards and balancing the competing social interests of different stakeholders caused the ILO to terminate its 2013 agreement with ISO (ILO 2017). Despite this disagreement the majority of countries across the world (162) formally agree that corporate governance (CG) is a system of practices, rules and processes by which an organisation is directed and controlled (ISO, 2016). CG according to the ISO, essentially involves balancing the interests of an organisation's many current and future stakeholders in ensuring the long-term viability of the organisation and creating responsible, accountable, well-managed and value-focused organisations for strategic decision-making. One such a stakeholder is the multiple human resource actors. Countries (187) across the world formally agree to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work (ILO 2018). Nakpodia, Adegbite, Amaeshif, & Owolabi (2018) elucidate the ISO's definition by indicating that CG is split between rule-based and principle-based approaches to regulation in different

organisational contexts. This split is often informed by the types of institutional configurations, their strengths and the complementarities within them. Aguilera, Judge, & Terjesen (2018) highlight the centrality of an organisation's entrepreneurial identity as it interacts with the national governance log (as complied with by the ISO countries) to jointly create CG discretion within the organisation. They reveal that as an organisation's governance discretion increases, it will be more likely to adopt over- or underconforming governance practices that deviate from established norms and practices. This supports the ISO's claim that effective governance contributes to strategic decision-making by creating responsible, accountable, well-managed and value-focused organisations. As virtual teams work across geographical and time barriers, this ISO standards, forms the legal base for their functioning.

Previously, HRG was regarded as the product of the different forms of corporate CG (Konzelmann, Conway, Trenberth, & Wilkinson (2006). However, Kaehler, & Grundei (2019) states that HRG is the "internal and external behavioral framework for multiple actors' human resource management and its control in a corporation and its units, which consists of formalized norms and is itself the result of multiple stakeholders' constitutive influence." This definition is aligned with the ISO (2016) specifically notes that human governance refers to the system or systems by which people within an organisation are directed and held accountable, but doesn't address the conflict with social responsibility. To provide more certainty for compliance officers, the ISO standards in South Africa is implemented through the arrangements in the King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa (King IV), (IODSA, 2015, Section 5) for the legal implementation of the ISO 38500 standard (known as the CG standard).

HRG forms one of the 13 national HR management standards at the SABPP. The SABPP is a professional HR body and quality assurance body for higher education learning provisioning and aligns itself with the ILO. Considering the association between ISO, KING IV and SABPP, which HRG principles influence virtual teams? The following voluntary audit principles and recommended practices, are forwarded by the King IV and SABPP to comply with technical ISO and ILO governance provisions:

## **2.2. Philosophy and operating principles for organisational leadership**

King IV (IODSA, 2015, part 5.3) relies on effective and ethical leadership for good governance, and goes beyond the organisation to include society, the environment and the economy for current and future generations by acknowledging the inclusivity of its stakeholders (IODSA, 2017:20; 23). The

SABPP describes HRG as the minimum, functional risk-tolerance delegating authority, management, and autonomous teams an organisation can accommodate (SABPP, 2017, p.6). Aasi et al. (2018) warn that in cases where people work in network teams enabled by information and communications technology (ICT) (such as virtual teams), organisational culture influences information technology (IT) governance performance outcomes.

### **2.3. Performance strategy, monitoring and reporting**

King IV (IODSA, 2015, part 5.2) suggests that management should assume responsibility for an organisation's strategy, purpose, risk and performance and their report should be accurate for those parties (stakeholders) assessing it. The SABPP applies this governance pillar and advises organisations to prepare a framework and metrics to evaluate and communicate the operational effectiveness, compliance and contribution to business success of various functions as part of good HRG (SABPP, 2017).

### **2.4. Governing structures, accountability and delegations**

Governance is a major part of business and project management structure (Hamersly, & Land 2015), which may be typical of the working of virtual teams. King IV (IODSA, 2015, Part 5.3) suggests that management teams should have an appropriate balance of skilled, knowledgeable, experienced, diverse and independent members. According to the SABPP, HRG involves how teams are designed, the communication protocol, relationships and roles within the teams, their relationships with other stakeholders, as well as strategic, operational and functional accountabilities (SABPP, 2017). Hart (2017, p.1) observes that online communication methods expose organisations to security issues of their ICT systems, infrastructure and data. Virtual teams have very few constraints in respect of purpose, time or location to work with the ICT enabler. Although security measures are built into the ICT enabler, it is fundamental to ensure that the individual team members within the network are also subject to security measures. Country legal regulations may also have implications for the adoption, design, or functioning of virtual teams such laws relating to taxation, corporate governance, immigration, privacy and laws addressing how specific areas of work (Roehling, 2017). Derven (2016) notes that conflict may flare up in various ways such as personality issues, priorities, accountability, which compromise trust and processes in teams and support the ILO concerns over social concern in the implementation of ISO standards.

## **2.5. Core management activities**

King IV (IODSA, 2015, part 5.4) suggests that CG in an organisation should deal with risks, including technology and information risks in functional areas, in a positive mode in order to support the organisation in reaching its strategic objectives. The SABPP applies that KING IV by identifying the functional areas of HRG as HR strategic development, business planning, oversight of rewards plans and programmes, HR resource allocation, HR staff development/leadership succession and the entrance and exit of team members. Through these core management activities, management sets direction and priorities, ensures effective execution over time and enforces internal controls (SABPP, 2017) and has a bearing on the social responsibilities of the organisation (ILO 2018).

## **2.6. Stakeholder relationships**

The interests, needs and expectations of stakeholders should be management in the best interest of an organisation according to King IV (IODSA, 2015, part 5.5). Following from the theoretical overview, these features will now be empirically explored with respect to virtual teams.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research methodology, which is in line with the predominant research approach within the interpretivist philosophy, was used for data collection (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2018; Morse, & Richards, 2013).

### **3.1. Sampling procedure and data collection**

The main study was preceded by a pilot exploratory study with a small group of participants in the software industry. The population, as defined by Salkind (2017), in this study comprised of all companies in the software sector of the technology industry of South Africa as listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). To be practical and with due regard for time and budgetary constraints, a non-probability (purposive/judgement) sample was chosen based on the problem at hand (Salkind, 2017; Saunders, et al., 2016). This population and sample were considered the most appropriate for the purpose. Firstly, this industry and sector design software programmes, which enable virtual working, and, secondly, the teams working in the software departments themselves use the programmes they design to enable their virtual way of working.

In total, 16 companies, comprising 13 JSE-listed companies and the 3 most significant software role-players in the international software industry (Forbes 2018), were approached. No ideal sample size for studies using a qualitative

approach has been established, and only guidelines are available in respect of case studies. Myers, & Haase (1989) suggests that one case suffices, while Eisenhardt (1989) proposes that a sample should consist of between 4 and 10 cases. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) suggest six cases whilst Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) and Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) prefer between three and five cases. Therefore, although the population for this study comprised 16 technology companies, only 10 of them participated in the study, which was considered to meet the trustworthiness criteria for a qualitative case study. The total number of participants were 19. (Saunders, et al., 2016).

### **3.2. Instrument**

Data were collected by means of an open-ended questionnaire according to a semi-structured data collection method. Qualitative content analysis was used (Salkind, 2017; Saunders, et al., 2016). Questionnaires are not uncommon as a method of data collection in qualitative research (Isenberg, Fisher, & Paul, 2012). To gain depth and insight into the experiences and views of virtual team members, guiding and probing questions were included to ensure the usefulness of the data collected (Isenberg, et al., 2012). Access to participating organisations was secured through consultation with gatekeepers, namely, the HR practitioners in the selected organisations (Kreitner, & Kinicki, 2008).

The questionnaire was self-administered and in electronic format, using the LimeSurvey 2.0+ tool (LimeSurvey). Thus, the data collection method simulated the virtual teams' operating method, namely, virtuality. The questionnaire was available via a Web link to the HR gatekeeper in the participating organisations. Participants completed the questionnaire in their own time (allowing for time zone barriers) using electronic devices. LimeSurvey 2.0+ allowed the researcher to design the questionnaire and to capture the data electronically. LimeSurvey has basic data analysis capabilities (Salkind, 2017).

### **3.3. Strategies to ensure trustworthiness**

To ensure the scientific value of the empirical qualitative study, the researcher endeavoured to follow the guidelines proposed by Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Morse, & Richards (2013). To achieve credibility, the researcher obtained prolonged engagement with the identified organisations by way of the assigned HR gatekeepers. Further, a pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted before the empirical study was conducted. The information of both the pilot study and the empirical research was verified by the researcher and the assigned university support staff. A field journal was kept, and experiences during the research

process were captured to increase reflexivity. The researcher obtained structural coherence of the data by utilising the themes and aligning the categories of the questions with the research method. Member checking of this research occurred at two international conferences to establish whether any important aspect in either theory or application had been missed and whether the study was “fit for purpose”. No misfit was found. A three-tier triangulation process, was utilised to ensure the credibility of the study. Multiple theories were utilised to phrase the research questions. Data were cross-examined by three parties and deemed an accurate reflection of the information presented by the participants. Triangulation of information was obtained by utilising the principle of following more than one theory and source of data, and referential adequacy was achieved by citing the authors in the adapted conceptual framework (Guba, & Lincoln, 2012). Referential adequacy was achieved in that all research utilised to draft questions, is cited in the study and noted in the bibliography of the study. The dependability of this research was ensured since an audit trail of the process, the coding procedures and the responses of each participant is available for audit purposes on LimeSurvey 2.0+. However, in the interest of ethicality, the audit trail cannot be published in this article. Further, an Excel spreadsheet was used to download the information through an institutional software technician, and confirmation is available on request. Coding of question groups and questions was created automatically and electronically via the LimeSurvey 2.0+ electronic questionnaire data collection instrument. Reasonable precautions were taken to ensure the authenticity of the voices of all respondents and companies who participated in this empirical study, and the original response document was verified by the researcher. The coding system that the researcher employed to link unique participants to a specific organisation, together with the industry’s risk alert to secure usernames and passwords for participants’ email accounts, may be considered to have contributed towards to the non-occurrence of duplicate participants. Ethical considerations, as suggested by Saunders, et al., (2016), were adhered to.

#### **4. FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Interpretive philosophy seeks to produce descriptive analysis that emphasises understanding of the phenomenon studied, rather than a search for broadly applicable laws (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2018; Saunders, et al., 2016). An interpretivist research philosophy holds that knowledge is created (Seymore, 2012). A qualitative content analysis protocol was utilised to formulate the questions rooted in theory, as well as to code, categorise and thematically analyse and interpret the data obtained from the participants (Morse, & Richards, 2013).

Following the completion of the questionnaire, the data presented by the participants were downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet. An overall impression of the data was obtained before each analysis. The descriptions of the participants' perceptions and experiences of best practices in virtual teams provided data, which formed the basis of themes regarding variables affecting best practices in the effective functioning of virtual teams in the software sector of the technology industry in South Africa. The themes could be generalised to an international audience and diverse industries, rather than generalising laws from sample to population. The findings and analysis of the empirical study indicated that significant factors contributed towards the focus of the purpose theme and specifically strategy setting in virtual teams. Regarding human governance, the four ISO pillars will now be discussed.

#### **4.1. Philosophy and operating principles for organisational leadership**

##### **Finding and analysis**

As regards the issue of effective practices regarding the establishment of the purpose of a virtual team, participants selected a number of best practices as the top practices needed to establish purpose in a virtual team. One participant maintained that the purpose of a virtual team is best described as a written, specific, quantifiable goal, and that purpose establishment at the entrance of new members to the team, where the roles, rights, privileges and accountability of the team is established, is also important. A third of the participants selected as a best practice that a virtual team align its direction, purpose, resources (people) and design with that of the organisation. These participants also noted that purpose in virtual teams is best described as a clear, quantifiable direction, and the successful handover of projects serves as evidence that a virtual team has effectively achieved its purpose.

##### **Interpretation**

This response is in alignment with the King IV requirements in that good governance relies on integrity, competence, responsibility, accountability, positive outcomes and a result-orientated focus.

##### **Finding and analysis**

On the question of the best practices to deal with governance in the facilitation of a virtual team, the participants made a number of suggestions. The foremost of these suggestions was to have a hierarchically and organisationally assigned individual who creates a culture in the team. Other suggestions were to assign a

particular hierarchical and organisational responsibility to a dedicated individual in the team; that the team leader should understand the personal circumstances of each team member; that the team leader should be able to choose and use unique team-embedded processes; and that there should be techniques and procedures for dealing with discipline. However, technical expertise at any point in the team's tenure dictate team actual leadership in the team.

### **Interpretation**

Effective virtual teaming relates to the extent to which human beings collaborate to ensure a sustainable and growing business function. Segal-Horn and Dean (2009, p.41-50, adapted by this researcher) suggest a flexible, multidimensional approach to encourage greater flexibility and constant learning in contributing towards a company's competitive edge and sustainability. This empirical study clarifies the essential elements by which virtual team members would know whether the team is effective and governance aware. These elements include qualified, technologically skilled and knowledgeable team members, in line with the findings of Daniel, Agarwal, & Stewart, (2013, p. 312-333). Further, actual and explicit measurements, inclusive of financial measurements (financial targets are being met, meaning each member is delivering his/her part), a dislike of mediocrity (quality of output) and an impetus towards innovation, real change and excellence in accomplishment suggest a higher level of expectation of effectiveness, to which participants subscribe. It is significant that although individuals contribute through their efforts, the whole team's performance carries greater value. Subjective input suggests an acceptance of logical contributions to enhance the end result. The regular use of "we" (*participants (25, 28, 35 and 37)*) by participants supports the notion that virtual team effectiveness encompasses team effort, where each individual effort contributes towards the greater yield (*27 and 37*). ISO (2016) specifically notes that human governance refers to the system or systems by which people within an organisation are directed and held accountable.

## **4.2. Core management activities**

### **Finding and analysis**

Mitigating risk in order to reach a virtual team's strategic objectives requires processes to address the various functional areas of possible HRG risk. The areas include strategic development, business planning, oversight of rewards plans and programmes, HR resource allocation, HR staff development/leadership succession, and the entrance and exit of team members. Only one virtual team member (a team manager) (*13*) responded to the question: "What are the process

practices important for virtual team facilitation to function most effectively?" The general absence of team members responding to the question indicates either a disinterest in or non-prominent notion of team facilitation in the different teams.

### **Interpretation**

Virtual team members connect with a network of educated, specialist and committed people. From earlier purpose questions (available on request), it was inferred that virtual team members have a strong desire to increase their knowledge. Working in a team set-up with people they admire and respect for their knowledge and skills, team members are prepared to learn from those individuals. This culture of sharing knowledge can only take place in a trusting relationship if all parties aspire to achieve the same goal. Trust suggests a healthy familiarity with one another and a realisation that all parties can be depended upon. It makes sense that when a virtual team is confronted with an issue, and an expert on that issue is present in the team, the members' natural behaviour will be to consent to that person facilitating the team efforts for the particular expertise needed. This could lead to conflict between the expert and the hierarchically assigned team manager if the process is not managed well. From time to time, it may transpire that the hierarchical manager must step down and allow the expert to adapt to the leadership role. When this happens, good relationships between the expert as team facilitator and the team members would serve the expert well. It will be easier to assign work and to manage performance for the period in which the expert is the team facilitator if everyone in the team knows about one another's personal circumstances and expertise. The absence of responses of many participants suggested to the researcher that this is either such a regular phenomenon that it does not need elaboration or that a process does not exist. This response concurs with similar responses in the rest of the study.

### **4.3. Stakeholder relationships**

#### **Finding and analysis**

Since virtual teams work towards a specific goal, the participants were asked how they would know if a team was functioning effectively in the best interest of the organisation and its stakeholders (IODSA, 2015, part 5.5). A total of 19 participants responded to this question in the questionnaire; 13 gave full responses and 5 moved to the next question without giving a response. The axial code revealed that participants measure their shareholder relationship through the various materialisations of objectives such explicit objectives (5, 32 and 40); innovation (12 and 13); excellence (12 and 32); revenue (13 and 27); real change

(25 and 32); accomplished (5, 30, 40 and 43); effort (25, 27 and 43); continuous measurement (25, 35 and 37); inclusion of subjective input (28 and 37); individual contribution (27 and 37); and team contribution (25, 28, 35 and 37).

### **Interpretation**

Effective virtual teaming relates to the extent to which human beings collaborate to ensure a sustainable and growing business function. Segal-Horn and Dean (2009), adapted by this researcher) suggest a flexible, multidimensional approach to encourage greater flexibility and constant learning in contributing towards a company's competitive edge and sustainability. This empirical study clarifies the essential elements by which virtual team members would know whether the team is effective and governed well. These elements include qualified, technologically skilled and knowledgeable team members, in line with the findings of Daniel, et al., (2013)). Further, actual and explicit measurements, inclusive of financial measurements (financial targets are being met, meaning each member is delivering his/her part), a dislike of mediocrity (quality of output) and an impetus towards innovation, real change and excellence in accomplishment suggest a higher level of expectation of effectiveness, to which participants subscribe. It is significant that although individuals contribute through their efforts, the whole team's performance carries greater value. Subjective input suggests an acceptance of logical contributions to enhance the end result. The regular use of "we" (25, 28, 35 and 37) by participants supports the notion that virtual team effectiveness encompasses team effort, where each individual effort contributes towards the greater yield (27 and 37).

### **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The main aim of the chief study on which this article reported was to explore best practices in effective virtual teams. Relevant literature, inclusive of scholarly articles and books, was studied to elucidate definitions and practices. Although all these sources provided valuable information, the members of virtual teams who participated in the empirical study and who were prepared to share their experiences were the source that produced the best insight into HRG establishment. These members of virtual teams highlighted the peculiarities that differentiate a virtual team from an FTFT, such as that the traditional hierarchical role and purpose of a team leader and a team manager may be compromised in a virtual team as team facilitation changes within the tenure of the team and is based on specialised skills and knowledge. Human networking to obtain talented and scarce human resources (such as experts in virtual teams) is regarded as the preferred sustainable method of talent management in the industry in question to

ensure that likeminded individuals serve on virtual team.

The article sets out issues that may need to be considered and proposes a recommendation of research on HRG in virtual teams. The main finding of this study for HR practitioners is that attention should be given to *professional behaviour and leadership* (consisting of the factors *leadership and personal credibility, solution creation, interpersonal communication and innovation*), *service orientation and execution* (consisting of the factors *talent management, HR risk, HR metrics and HR service delivery*) and *business intelligence* (consisting of the factors *strategic contribution, HR business knowledge, HR business acumen and HR technology*).

The main findings of this study for virtual team members are that not every person would serve well on a virtual team and that an orientation towards good governance, which involves integrity, competence, responsibility, accountability, positive outcomes and a result orientation – both from an autonomous perspective and within a group – is a crucial attribute. The main findings of this study for virtual team leadership are that they should have an understanding of the differentiation between the facilitation of teamwork and the duties of the hierarchical positions since they may be differentiated at any time in virtual teams. From a theoretical perspective, this research makes an important contribution towards knowledge on the importance of HRG in virtual teams in organisations within the technology industry of South Africa. This research further confirms the credibility of the HRG practices that can be applied in the multicultural South African setting. Finally, this research presents an HRM measure of competence that can be used to detect the levels of competence of HRM practitioners in South African organisations, in order to take corrective measures where necessary.

This research has certain limitations. Firstly, limited empirical research exists on the application of HRG in South African workplaces, making interpretation of the results difficult. Secondly, this research was conducted in the South African context only and by means of a qualitative approach, which means that the results cannot be generalised to other countries and settings; only the themes and the questionnaire on the themes may therefore be duplicated. There is currently limited insight into HRG, and this research adds to this insight. For future research, it is recommended that this research be expanded to other countries, especially African countries, and other industries. It is proposed that HRG in various other contexts and comparative geographies be explored. Further, it is proposed that distinct links between global corporate citizenship, risk and HRG

within virtual teams and FTFTs be investigated globally, but particularly within an African setting. Lastly, it is recommended that the following items on the research agenda for virtual team on the topic of HRG be investigated: the influence of the sociotechnical nature of digital platforms. The type of team, organisational and country specific contexts may provide comparative insights into HRG across the world and evaluation of talent management practices in compliance with HRG.

In conclusion, this research provides insight into best practices regarding HRG in the functioning of effective virtual teams in organisations within the technology industry of South Africa. Moreover, the results of this research show that HRG should be made more visible to the various stakeholders within in the workplace in order to enhance their value-adding and strategic contribution to South African organisations.

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