Book Review Of The Book Titled
"Aspects Of The Talent Management In The Workplace Environment Of The 2020s"

Editors: AMF Pelser, V Vaiman, S Nagy
Publisher: Axiom Academic Publishers, South Africa.

Book Reviewed by

*Prof. Dr. Badar A Iqbal

Adjunct Professor, Monarch Business School, Zug, Switzerland.

*Correspondence: dr.badar@umonarch-email.ch

1.   INTRODUCTION

The book builds on an important issue of talent acquisition and management in the South African region. Particularly, the focus of different chapters is on the challenges faced in the education system of South Africa. Tracing the developments through the school system to the application of Maslow's Need Hierarchy theory and entailing other such issues, a comprehensive outcome is suggested for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the people involved in institutions. In the post-COVID-19 world, a new era of competition has been unleashed, including the employees' decisions; one of the chapters entitled "Buy, Build, or Borrow a Talent" highlights the contemporary issue. The post-COVID-19 scenario of the world is focused on Industrial Revolution 4.0, and the book addresses the challenges and issues of job security and its impact on talent acquisition. The chapters in the book serve a great need of the world grown out of the pandemic, addressing issues pertaining to organizational culture in the context of the changing scenario. As a research-based book, each chapter considers an important element of talent management from a different perspective. The chapters will keep readers intrigued by the recent pieces of evidence linked with fundamental concepts and conventional theories of human behavior.

2.   EDITORS' MAIN INTENTIONS

An overview of the preface, introduction and contents will inform the reader that the book is all about the engagement of the employees with a new and improved perspective. However, as we read the book and the subsequent chapters, it becomes clear that the book is not only about talent management perspectives but also the contemporary issues such as digitalization, women empowerment, motivation theories, education systems, etc. The first four chapters of the book serve as an opening part of the book wherein topics such as "development of future workforce" (Chapter 1), "talent acquisition" (Chapter 2), "skills development" (Chapter 3), and "skills and talent enhancement" (Chapter 4) are considered. Starting with a chapter on Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory gives readers concepts that are familiar with a recent perspective in the South African region. It makes reading easy, and as the reader proceeds, more complex issues of human behavior in relation to talent are touched upon. The authors argue that Talent Management does not work in a one-way approach but rather in a two-way approach. This two-way approach needs to blend theory and practice and amplification with the evidence. Institutions and organizations the COVID-19 need to reassess their policies and practices, and the editors have selected chapters that serve the purpose. The last five chapters (Chapters 5-9) introduce some novel areas touched less upon in the existing literature, such as "machine learning enhanced talent risk management" (Chapter 5), "organizational culture" (Chapter 6), "employees' readiness" (Chapter 7), "women talent" (Chapter 8), and "organizational leadership" (Chapter 9). Editors have included these chapters that highlight the current changes in the global environment. With the pandemic and a push for digitalization, the new challenges that are emerging for organizations have been included in these chapters. With the advent of Data Analytics and Machine Learning, evidence-based decision-making has improved. From the rule of thumb in organizations, the approach is shifting to evidence-backed decisions. The presence of a chapter on machine learning application in talent risk management has induced the relevance and utility of the book. A skimming reading discloses that the editors have picked up issues in synchronization with the needs of organizations in the current scenario. Not only is this required by organizations

that are focusing on expansion and diversification but also by those that are seeking a new line of operations and enhancing the efficiency of employees. The talent acquisition strategy of the organizations requires upgradation from time to time, and these chapters serve as a basis. A new line of thinking can emerge by brainstorming the topics that are dealt with in the book.

3.   CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

The content of the book is promising as it highlights the key issues organizations need to focus on in a dynamic environment amid an increase in digitalization and uncertainty. Each chapter touches upon a critical aspect of organizational change in the light of talent management issues. However, in a few chapters, policy implications, had it been introduced, would have been much better. Chapter 1 deals with persistent problems in the education system of South Africa. Using hermeneutical-constructivist investigations, the authors identify the problems associated with the education sector in South Africa, currently, which is considered to be lacking in the learning mechanism as well as associating the students with the current world. The authors point out the dilapidated and archaic techniques in the current education system. The authors would have considered the statistics related to gross enrolment ratios as well, which is missing in the chapter. It would have been befitting had authors suggested that in case a new education policy is framed what issues must be addressed in a legal and binding framework. Chapter 2 encapsulates a key question on the nature of talent management, whether talent is inclusive or exclusive, whether it can be borrowed or needs to be purchased. The research question also focuses on whether talent can be outsourced now. With a comprehensive review of the literature, the authors discuss the current literature and the research gap that exists. The authors conclude that the presence of a professional talent team in the organization can help achieve talent goals. It gives an opportunity for the organization to review and optimize talent strategies in the organization continuously. The readability of the chapter may have been better if case-improved visualizations had been used. Also, a brief roadmap for checking the current level of outsourced talent would have added value to the study. Chapter 3 deals with future workforce issues in the context of talent acquisition. The authors make an inculcation of the fact that the South African economy is under-performing. A strong conceptual framework has been used to draw inferences.

The authors identify that the current unemployment level indicates a wastage of talent on the streets of South Africa. The point is pertinent but lacks substantiative empirical evidence. For a future workforce to be ready, a professional approach is required. The chapter lacks suggestions on a comprehensive strategy to prepare a future workforce. Chapter 4 encapsulates the issue of skills and talent enhancement by means of work-integrated learning for tourism lecturers. The authors identify the deficiencies in the tourism lecturers and the possible application of talent enhancement. The authors identify that a special focus on teaching skills, considering advances in teaching-learning, will enhance the delivery of tourism lecturers. The authors conclude that lesson enrichment is also required for preparing future lecturers. Demonstration of sample-enhanced lesson planning would have been great for practitioners to adopt. Chapter 5 inculcates the machine learning framework for managing talent risk. The authors identify that COVID-19 has forced companies and businesses to enhance their current business models. The attrition and human capital index have been altering after the pandemic and this needs policies to be formulated in a new manner. Applying a machine learning decision tree, the authors show how attrition can be predicted in organizations. As a predictable variable, this may steer organizations to refine their policies. This lacks content and context with respect to structured and voluntary unemployment.

Chapter 6, titled "Organizational culture to enhance workforce" investigates with the help of bibliometric analysis. South Africa is facing the crisis of unemployment, and it is high time to understand organizational culture constructs. The authors argue that moral training in organizations will improve the organizational culture, further enhancing the skills of the workforce. Inculcation of command ethics and deontology can accelerate workforce skills. The authors conclude that the innermost nature and traits will determine the success of the corporate environment. A critical assessment of the chapter reveals a lack of a number of studies and empirical testing of the bibliometric data. Chapter 7 deals with the readiness of employees for the implementation of new business processes. The lifecycle of a business is an important element in determining the new business process required. Most organizations use archaic business processes, and this ameliorates their organizational problems. The authors conclude that readiness to change is dependent on the process of change. Though employees were not ready for change, proper training can change the situation. Critically, the study must have been better with structured interviews of the employees. Chapter 8 introduces the topic "Role of women in the development of employee talent". A skilled labor force scarcity prevails in South Africa. If unaddressed, there can be a spillover effect on the economy. Lack of talent is currently a topical problem for South Africa. The authors have put a bunch of evidence to support this argument. The authors also state that with regard to the number of women's talents, a myth of scarcity exists. The reality is that women have been overlooked in talent acquisition and management. The authors propose a women-to-women mentoring relationship which can result in tremendous success for organizations. The chapter uses Kram's mentoring theory as the base to draw inferences. Women need mentoring to develop and inculcate leadership roles in organizations. Using qualitative interviews with the women respondents the authors conclude that senior women who have been in leadership roles should mentor new women entrants. Chapter 9 talks about Organizational Leadership, which is an important aspect of the current talent crisis in relation to Industrialization 4.0. With the advent of Industrialization 4.0, a reassessment of Organizational Leadership is required. The study ponders on such essential issues. The base argument put forward by the

authors is that within a new dynamic environment, attracting, developing and motivating talent has become the need of the hour. However, traditional practices may not work in current times. At least an alteration is required. South Africa's demography demands changes in organizational leadership policies and practices. A systematic review of literature consisting of 94 research publications has been undertook by the authors. Cultural Intelligence is another element that has long been overlooked by organizations working in South Africa, and the authors are of the view that this is a flawed understanding and a glitch in the organizational leadership roles. For inclusive leadership across organizations, it is required that cultural intelligence becomes part of the talent acquisition strategy of the organizations. The authors conclude that due to disruptive technologies and Industrialization 4.0 workforce is continuously challenged by chronosystemic challenges, and microsystem interactions and conflict resolution skills can tackle this.

4. OBSERVATIONS

The book is well written, almost no typing errors are there, and the quality of pictures and graphs is also good. The book is important for students, researchers, policy-makers and academicians in the area of Talent Acquisition and Management. It fills an important research gap in understanding workforce upskilling in South Africa. The arrangement of the sections is appropriate, but it would have been better to put the Chapter on Organizational Leadership in second or third place. The methods and datasets used in the book are important for future research and provide an opportunity for researchers to know the intricacies of collecting data on such themes. The book concludes that due to the pandemic, digitalization and Industrialization 2.0, a new skill set is required for organizations. In addition, new leadership roles and implementation of improved training can mitigate the risk associated with the employee's performance and participation in organizations.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
None.

ORCID
BA Iqbal - https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6188-6640