

Singapore Management University

Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University

Student Publications

SMU Student Publications

12-2020

Human capital leadership insights: Solving human capital challenges from the business perspective

Singapore Management University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/studentpub>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Human Resources Management Commons](#)

Citation

Singapore Management University. Human capital leadership insights: Solving human capital challenges from the business perspective. (2020). 1-273.

Available at: <https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/studentpub/10>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the SMU Student Publications at Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Publications by an authorized administrator of Institutional Knowledge at Singapore Management University. For more information, please email cherylids@smu.edu.sg.

Graduate Cohort 2020
Master of Human Capital Leadership
Singapore Management University



Human Capital Leadership Insights

**Solving Human Capital Challenges
from the Business Perspective**

Foreword by
Professor Gerard George
Dean, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, SMU

HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERSHIP

Insights



Endorsements for Human Capital Leadership Insights

“Today’s World is becoming increasingly difficult to make sense of, and the generation gap appears to be growing beyond reason as technology advances and social media becomes ever more pervasive. Looking back, it seems that the HR function of the past, lived a life of ease whereby decisions were entirely gut or relationship driven by a generation of Senior Managers who had to worry little about the true well-being of their employees. Today the HR function faces a minefield of expectation and a workforce empowered by a wealth of knowledge, both constructive, and on many occasions destructive, and often delivered in bite size doses. In these circumstances it’s easy to avoid criticism by getting distracted into making decisions based on the latest trend and fad, potentially leading to confusion and discontent. Reading this book it feels good to be drawn into the reality that whilst all of the old world and new world thinking has its merits nothing beats real world evidence based decisions to be sure that you are on the right track in both empowering employees and staying true to the organisations goals. This book breaks the subject into easy to absorb chunks, looking closely at many of the critical aspects of human capital challenges and provides a wealth of real evidence-based solutions that are sure to make you think, as all good books should....”

– *Alwyn K Bowden*
CEO, Pengerang Energy Complex

“This is an excellent compilation of ideas, concepts, theories and practical tips for anyone in the HR Profession. The knowledge presented herein is relevant to all levels of the organisation. There is something for everyone, from the Global Director to the HR Generalist. Every word written came from the hearts, the heads and the hands of a group of exemplary learners. Congratulations on a job well done!!”

– *Daniel Chew*
Professor (Hon.) of Business & HRM
Business Owner, Chrysallite Training & Education Hub
Associate Lecturer, SUSS, SHRI, SIMGE, TLA, MDIS

“This book is an excellent guide for managing talent in today’s fast evolving organisation and skills, culled from a masterful approach of combining the theses work from the Master’s class of 2020.”

– *Dr. Chong Yoke Sin*
President, Singapore Computer Society

“As I read through the different articles of this book, I am convinced that the future of the HR profession in Singapore is in good hands. The 2019 MHCL cohort covers topics from rewards to learning, from mindfulness to flex-time, all in the frame of evidence-based HR.

Congratulations to each of the writers and to the rest of the cohort. The current generation is glad to pass on the baton to you!”

– *Dr. Fermin Diez*
Adjunct Faculty, Singapore Management University

“This collection of papers centering around the need for Human Capital leaders to be evidenced-based is very timely given the availability of tools to process millions of public and corporate records. The use of analytical models and resulting insights to drive key talent management decisions has enabled more relevant and differentiated experiences for employees. This eclectic mix of papers make for an insightful and interesting read.”

– *Stephanie Gault*
Managing Director, Health & Public Service, Accenture

“Human capital is the scarcest resource in today’s highly competitive business environment. As a leader in my organization, I have recognized a key to boosting productivity and elevating business’ value proposition is through organizational culture transformation and employee experience enhancement. The group of SMU students have dedicated their time and effort into tackling some of the most important HR transformation topics and providing valuable insights that any HRM or CEO would find helpful. The collective study in this book is an expedition that business leaders should undertake to develop and motivate their most valuable asset – people.”

– *Dr. Vera Jin*
CEO, Sopra Steria Asia

“This is a great compilation of articles, well written by the HR professionals. This book provides great insight that contains good information for non-HR practitioners as well. It provides a lot of value to the reader and it is good that you have this book handy as you can revisit it often for reference whenever you face a similar subject matter. Absolutely invaluable.”

– *Eleanor Lin*
Regional Counsel Asia Pacific and Author of
Mummy’s Guilt? The Challenges and Wonders of Working Mums

“This book offers a delightful collection of insights which seek to answer many of the burning questions in the human capital arena, using an evidence-based approach. If you too are intrigued by how human capital can play a strategic role from a business perspective, then read this book – and learn from one of the best.

– *Christopher Ng*
CEO, Rigel Group

“Even as a technology company, at HP we recognise our success is predicated on people. People are HP’s most important strategic asset. More than ever our employees are looking to us to help them grow, upskill and build themselves into future-proof teams. Investing in your people brings the highest returns both from a business perspective and a personal one. It’s why I am deeply involved in shaping my team in Asia, how we develop talent, what tools we can provide for them to learn, thinking about succession and how we bring on new members of the HP family. Especially in difficult times, it’s always the people who stand up, carry the flag, connect with our partners and customers who ensure our success. I’ll always believe, no matter what technology we have, our people are more important than ever.

I hope this book helps you to rethink the strategic asset that is your Human Capital.”

– *Ng Tian Chong*
Senior Vice President & Managing Director, Greater Asia, HP Inc

“In such challenging times, staying relevant and competitive remains a top priority for many organisations. Undeniably, human capital development is an imperative agenda to maintain a successful organization and developing our people has always been our core focus. But human by nature is complex, hard to comprehend and they are all different thus grooming them is far more challenging; This book is timely as it provides valuable information to tackle similar business challenge. Human Capital Leadership Insights collates the best practices among business and provides the readers with useful insights on learning culture, leadership and human capital development to create an impact to the business growth. To the graduating cohort who demonstrates their persevering lifelong learning attitude whilst balancing work and family, Congrats and Cheers!”

– *Kenny Teo*
CEO, ATT Systems

“This is a very useful book not only for HR, but also for all business leaders. It provides us with a brilliant guide to solve human capital challenges from the business perspective by different people, especially at COVID19 period, we will get more ideas and help from this book to manage the team , encourage the team, together with the team to approach our target and have a higher level view about our work, our relationship and our will.”

— *Yang Bo*
Chief Technology Officer, Whale Cloud Singapore



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

Human Capital Leadership

Insights

Graduate Cohort 2020
Master of Human Capital Leadership
Singapore Management University



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

This book is dedicated to all our family members, colleagues at work, professors in school, friends and fellow classmates who have supported and contributed to our learning journey in Human Capital Leadership



ILLUSTRATION BY ANGELINA CHUA

Foreword

We live in a disrupted world. A world of uncertainty and change with digital technologies, geo-political tensions, new business models and trade wars that challenge business assumptions. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic unleashed health and economic crises on a global scale.

These disruptions drive unprecedented changes to how our enterprises conduct business and deliver services. Enterprises which are adaptive have learned how to re-wire their work processes, manage risks and explore opportunities by leveraging their human capital.

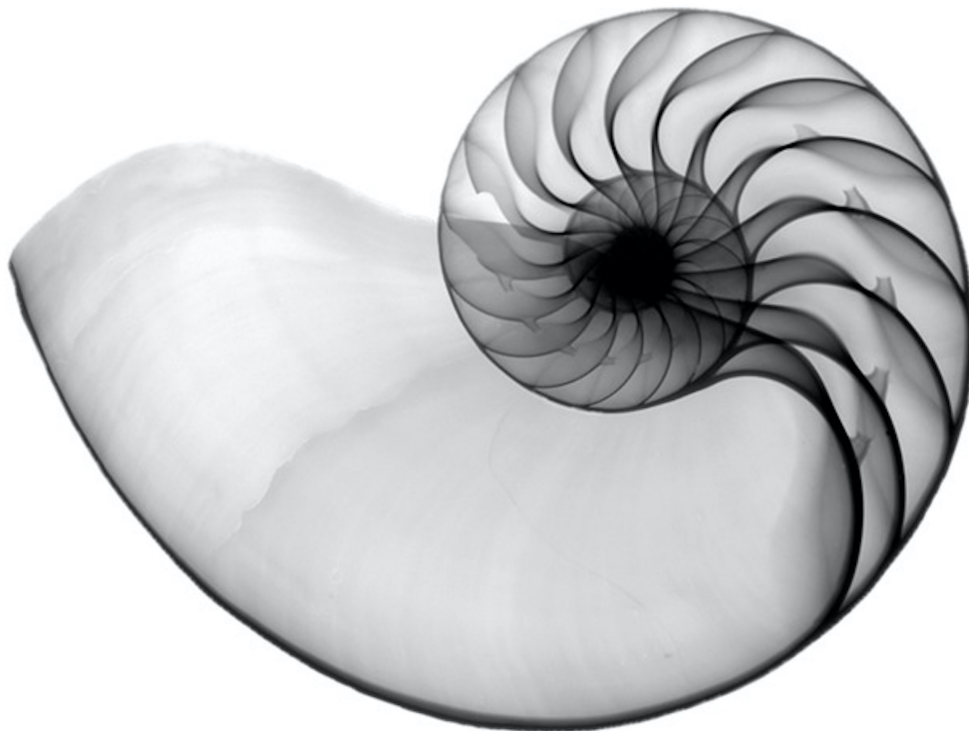
Adaptive enterprises have often unique practices related to human capital to foster innovative mindsets, entrepreneurial drive and technical know-how. This requires strong human resource management capabilities. Relevant industry practices and insights on how to attract, develop and retain human capital is now critical for enterprises keen to thrive.

In 2016, the Lee Kong Chian School of Business launched the Master of Human Capital Leadership (“MHCL”) program with the strategic objective of growing leaders to champion evidence-based human capital practices. The 2019 MHCL cohort took this a step further with their quest to share insights gained from studies and projects with industry stakeholders. This goal resonates with our mission -- to create and disseminate knowledge.

Our School is delighted with this initiative. Upon their commencement, cohort 2019 will take flight once again. To hone their capabilities, develop great partnerships and enrich their work experiences. These are life-long learning journeys. We all can benefit from a wise saying by Lao-Tze, the Chinese Philosopher: “Journey of a thousand miles begins with the single step.” This book is the first step in the right direction.

On behalf of LKCSB, I wish them great success!

Professor GERARD GEORGE
Dean, Lee Kong Chian School of Business
Singapore Management University



PEOPLE | GROWTH | HARMONY

SMU MHCL CLASS OF 2020

ILLUSTRATION BY YAMINI SINGH

Introduction to MHCL

As firms navigate the increasingly complex and digital Asia region, it becomes clear that human capital is potential resource for sustaining competitive advantage. Future leaders must understand how to cultivate, grow, and leverage human capital as a resource for sustaining firm success.

To do our part in preparing leaders, we launched the Master of Human Capital Leadership programme. To avoid falling into the trap of yet another traditional human resource management programme, we recognized that we would need to take a different view. We started with a systems-thinking approach of the organizational elements that affect human capital as a resource. Thus, a focus on areas such as culture, organization structure, strategic leadership, and of course talent management were needed.

In addition to considering a human capital as a system, we wanted to create future leaders with a strong anchoring in business foundations. In other words, building the links across the disciplines of finance, marketing, and strategy are critical for human capital leadership to be effective. Speaking the language of business to anchor human capital challenges and solutions is required to engage in board-level discussions.

Finally, we recognized that human capital decisions require an evidence-based approach. While this may sound easy, it requires a mastery of analytics, research methods, and use of data that may not have been considered previously. By taking a critical view, our MHCL graduates can develop firm-specific human capital practices for competitive advantage.

We are pleased with the results of our graduates and this book offers a glimpse into some of the challenges addressed by the MHCL students. This book was initiated, self-funded and completed by the 2019 students and their professors. This is testament of strong passion for learning and education partnership, both of which are hallmarks of our program.

Professor RICHARD RAYMOND SMITH
Deputy Dean, Lee Kong Chian School of Business
Singapore Management University

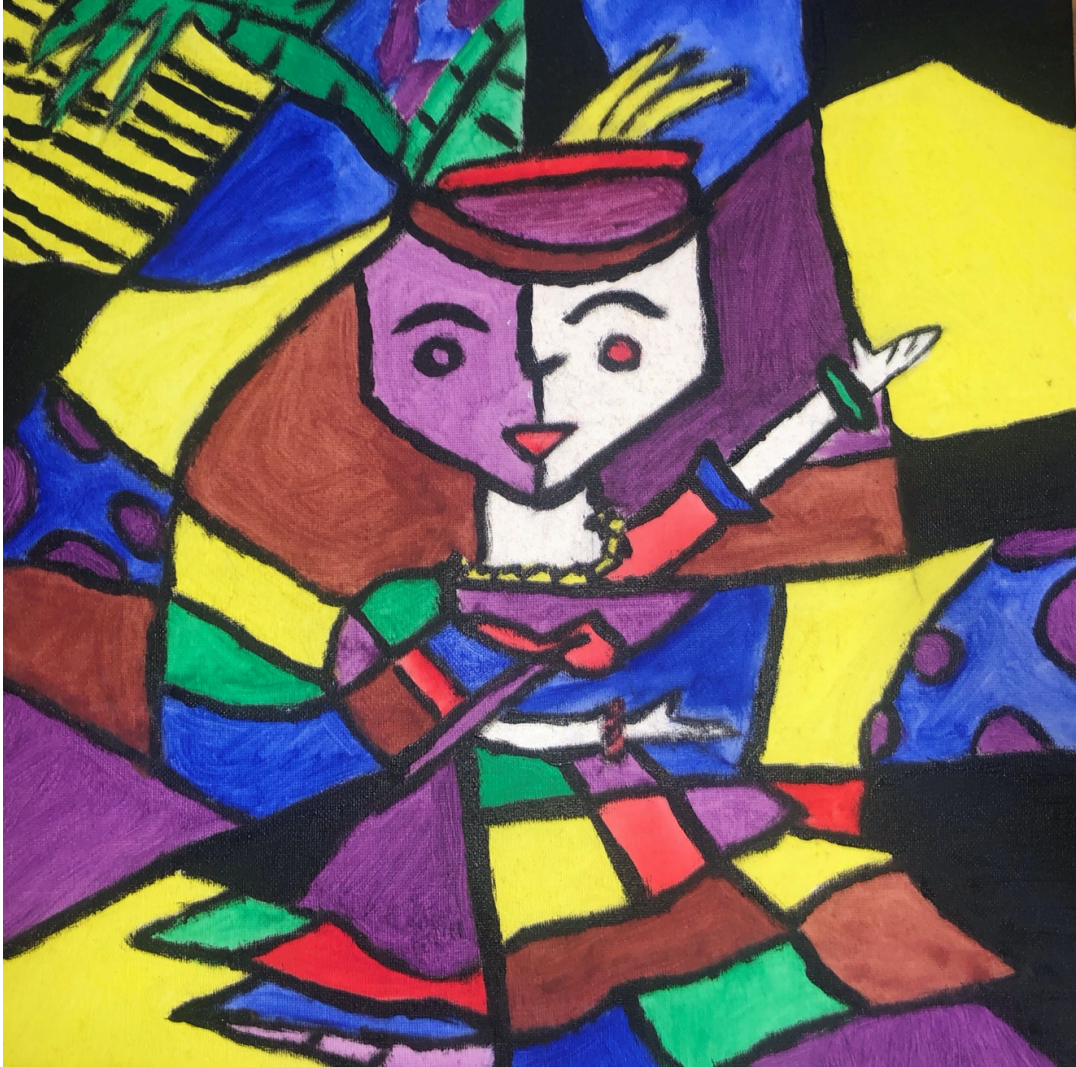


ILLUSTRATION BY AERIN TAN

Acknowledgements

This book is born out of passion and dedication from many wonderful people. We would like to sincerely thank all of them for their contributions.

1. Professor Gerard George, Dean, Lee Kong Chian School of Business (“LKCSB”) for the Foreword and gracing our book launch event as Guest-of-Honor;
2. Professor Rick Smith, Deputy Dean, LKCSB for endorsing our book project idea at the get-go, reviewing our manuscripts and writing the section on Introduction to MHCL;
3. Associate Professors Jochen Reb and Devasheesh Bhave, our capstone research project supervisors, for supporting our book idea and writing the section on Evidence-based Management for Human Capital Leaders;
4. Associate Professor Michael Bashshur, Academic Director of MHCL for his advice on the content and structure for our book;
5. Professor Filip Lievens, Professor Nirmalya Kumar, Associate Professor Abhijeet K. Vadera, Assistant Professor Yeo Su Lin, Dr. Ang Ser Keng and Dr. Fermin Diez, MHCL teaching faculties as well as Dr. Philipp Schäpers and Dr. Christoph N. Herde, research fellows in LKCSB, for their article contributions;
6. Ms. Ethel Ang and Mr. Gurbir Singh Toor, managers at Postgraduate Program Office in LKCSB, for organizing our book launch event in partnership with Institute of Human Resources Institute (“IHRP”);
7. Mr. Mayank Parekh, CEO IHRP, for his endorsements and partnership with LKCSB to launch our book;
8. All MHCL classmates who have contributed articles, artwork and served in our Editorial Committee;
9. Special appreciation for Mr. Jazin Wee who had contributed to editorial work for our book;
10. Mr. Ho Wah Yuen, Executive Director, and Ms. Jenny Wong, Manager (Publishing), Ho Printing Singapore Pte Ltd., for their professional print advices, design and delivery.

Preface

The 2019 cohort of Master of Human Capital Leadership (“MHCL”) program had enjoyed an amazing 15-month learning journey. On 5 January 2019, our class gathered for the first time as “strangers” to each other. We were curious about what to expect. On 28 February 2020, at our last lesson together as a class, we celebrated as best buddies with camaraderie forged through studies and group projects (alongside lots of drinks, football matches and karaoke singing).

Over the course of MHCL, we realized our good fortunes. Opportunities to learn from well-qualified teaching faculty members. Knowledge from a curriculum that neatly blends HR in a business context. Practical experience to plan and execute evidence-based research projects with industry stakeholders.

The idea for our book project was borne out of our gratitude for these invaluable “gifts”. Our aspiration as students is to make available these as practical and useful insights for industry stakeholders.

The content of your book mirrors closely with that of MHCL curriculum organized in three sections. In the first section, we showcased summarized versions of our capstone research projects. We have included a special feature focusing on HR in the social services sector. In the second section, we have a rich portfolio of articles across multiple HR disciplines. Negotiations in HR contexts. Evidence-based talent management. HR in strategic marketing. HR and finance. Role of HR in developing corporate reputation. In the third section, we have a collection of articles that reflected on our MHCL learning journey.

Our lessons in class may have ended but our learning journey has just started. We wish that our book can serve as a guide for fellow travelers. In time, they will publish great books to illuminate the way forward.

Let us go explore to discover a whole new world – *now*.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Human Capital Leadership Insight

Copyright © 2020 by Respective authors

All rights reserved. No part of this publication shall be reproduced, stored or transmitted by any means, whether electronically or physically, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

First Edition, 2020
ISBN 978-981-14-7715-7
Printed in Singapore

Content

ENDORSEMENTS FOR HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS.....	III
FOREWORD.....	XIII
INTRODUCTION TO MHCL.....	XV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XVII
PREFACE	XVIII
COPYRIGHT PAGE.....	XIX
CONTENT	XX
Evidence-based Management for Human Capital Leaders	
JOCHEN REB	
DEVASHEESH P. BHAVE	1
1. Demystifying Biases due to Performance or Ethnicities using Objective and Subjective Human Capital Measures to drive Sales Performance: An Asian Investigation	
CHIA WAI JYY.....	7
2. Why Investments in Learning for employees may not translate into Improvements in Innovation?	
CHONG TACK CHUN.....	21
3. Academic and Career Success: Is It Just About Grades?	
LOUIS LOW	27
4. The Myth of Flexitime – are Employees with Flexitime Happier, Healthier and less likely to Quit?	
DON MAK.....	35
5. A Qualitative Study on Promoting Mindfulness Adoption in Organization: the Case of a Public Hospital in Singapore	
JIMMY ONG	50
6. Identification of High-risk Employees through Development of Predictive Employee Turnover Model	
POH TECK KENG, ALVIS	59
7. Factors associated with Training Motivation in Building Organization Learning	
GESA KATRINA QUEJA SALVADOR.....	68

8. How can Artificial Intelligence be Implemented in a Recruitment Firm? A Qualitative Study YAMINI SINGH.....	76
9. Learning Organization and Individual Work Performance – The Moderating Effect of Employee Age GABRIEL TAN	84
10. Don’t Underestimate the Impact of Employee Onboarding AERIN TAN.....	93
11. A study on Factors affecting Employee Retention and Turnover in an Insurance firm in Singapore SARANYA VENKAT.....	102
12. Perception of Organisational Change and Organisational Identification between Transferred Staff and New Hires WONG CIXIAN	114
13. What Tweeps Tweet About Twitter: A Closer Look at Employer Branding through a Case Study on Twitter’s Global #OneTeam2020 Event PHILINE YONG.....	121
14. Perceived Talents: in the Eyes of (Line) Managers JESYLN YONG.....	131
Special Feature: HR in the Social Sector	
15. Implementing Lasting Change – HR in the Social Service Sector FERMIN DIEZ NG RUN QIAN.....	146
Negotiation in a HR Context	
16. The Negotiators’ Power ESTHER LIM.....	164
17. Managing Internal Negotiations RIAZ SAIYED	168
18. Effective Distributive Negotiation for HR Managers SRINIDHI VILANGADU SRINIVASAN.....	172

19. Salary Negotiation – Myths Busted	
ABHIJEET K. VADERA	
KARYN THYE	177

Evidence-based Approach to Talent Management

20. Performance Management: Quo Vadis?	
FILIP LIEVENS	
PHILIPP SCHÄPERS	
CHRISTOPH N. HERDE.....	185

21. No-Rating Performance Management: Does it really work?	
ANGELING OOI	
YANTI TIURMA IDA.....	201

Managing Corporate Reputation and Communication

22. Reputation Matters: Building Internal Trust and Resilience with Effective Communication	
YEO SU LIN	209

Human Resource and Marketing Management

23. Reflections of a Chief Strategy Officer in a Diversified Conglomerate	
NIRMALYA KUMAR.....	217

Human Resource and Finance

24. Value Creating Drivers for Effective Human Capital Management	
ANG SER KENG	224

Reflections on the MHCL Learning Journey

25. The Multiple Changing Lens of my MHCL Journey	
ANGELINA CHUA.....	230

26. Be More analytical: Five (5) points to be more analytical in an Evidence-based Solution	
JULIANA BINTE JOHARI.....	237

27. Personal Reflections of my MHCL Journey in SMU	
LEE WEI MIN.....	241

28. Personal Reflections of my MHCL Journey in SMU	
CARRIE TAN	246
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS.....	253

Evidence-based Management for Human Capital Leaders

JOCHEN REB

DEVASHEESH P. BHAVE

The job of the human capital leader is becoming increasingly complex. The world has globalized and along with it, become more volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (“VUCA”). How are human capital leaders supposed to make decisions, manage, and lead under these circumstances? One important measure is to upgrade their professional skills through continued education such as through Singapore Management University’s (“SMU”) Master of Human Capital Leadership (“MHCL”) program. A second, related, measure is to develop an evidence-based mindset that does not simply accept past practice and precedent but tries to gain the necessary evidence to make informed human capital decisions. SMU’s MHCL program tries to support human capital leaders in this endeavour.

Becoming an Evidence-Based Leader

Human Resource professionals are increasingly expected to practice evidence-based management (“EBM”), and this is a positive development. It is indeed one of the hallmarks of professionals that their decisions and actions are guided by valid, systematic evidence (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006). Similar to other fields, such as medicine, business leaders and other organizational stakeholders increasingly expect human resource professionals to make decisions that are not driven primarily by intuition, precedent, experience, or the notion of “that’s the way we do things around here”. This does not necessarily mean these factors have become irrelevant. It does recognize, however, the advantages of scientifically derived evidence. At the same time, and importantly, we also need to remain humble and keep in mind that evidence-based management does not guarantee “perfect decisions”, as our evidence of the functioning of social systems such as organizations is severely limited and constantly expanding.

In their seminal paper, Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) argue that EBM is characterised by a number of key principles. First, and most fundamentally,

EBM is a distinct mindset. This mindset entails a willingness to question existing beliefs, practices, and conventional wisdom and openness to learn and experiment. Second, evidence-based managers demand evidence, rather than simply accepting proposals, forecasts, and recommendations. And not only do they demand evidence, but they are willing to test – and capable of testing – whether this evidence is valid and logical. In other words, evidence-based managers apply a healthy dose of professional scepticism about current practice and new evidence. For example, they consider whether alternative explanations have been ruled out, whether causal conclusions can be drawn confidently, whether findings from a different context apply to the present context, and whether there are any unintended side effects.

Evidence-based managers glean the evidence from outside the organization (e.g., from research findings published in academic journals or based on research findings of other organizations), or from within the organization (e.g., through research findings from other parts of the organization, or by conducting novel research conducted inside the organization). The latter aspect is important: EBM recognizes that evidence is not complete or perfect, and neither are organizations. Thus, evidence-based human capital leaders treat their organization as an unfinished prototype and encourage trial programs, pilot studies, and experimentation.

Finally, they accept the loss of power that may go along with not claiming omniscience but admitting that they do not know the solution to every problem based on their existing knowledge and experience. Instead, they see their leadership role as one of instilling an EBM mindset in their team and organization where facts take precedence over opinion, inquiry and observation are encouraged, and deep learning, examining data, experimenting, and improving are valued.

Of course, doing so is not always easy given the daily work demands that human capital leaders face. However, possessing the necessary analytical skills can go a long way in helping leaders meet this challenge. To this end, SMU's MHCL program is focused on helping students develop an EBM mindset and enhance their skill set to become effective evidence-based human capital leaders. A key role in this learning journey is the MHCL capstone project.

The MHCL Capstone Project: Solving a Human Capital Challenge from a Business Perspective

Against this backdrop, the MHCL features an applied research project as a capstone to the program. The task for students in this capstone is to solve a human capital challenge from a business perspective. The capstone project is designed to provide students with an opportunity to systematically review and examine the research that informs them on the challenge, and utilize that information to design and execute a study to examine the different means by which the challenge can be resolved. The applied nature of the capstone project requires a critical evaluative approach, empirical investigation and analysis, and a combination of academic research and business report writing skills. In essence, our students assume the mantle of applied researchers as they embark on solving the challenge. In this process, they also learn about research ethics and how to conduct research that is ethical and considers participants' confidentiality. Moreover, on a practical level, they need to navigate the challenge of gaining buy-in from a sponsoring organization and its relevant decision maker(s) where they conduct the research. In so doing, they need to satisfy both the program's and the sponsor's project requirements.

The students need to report their work in a written project report. This report is evaluated carefully on the clarity and relevance of the problem, the literature review and hypotheses development (or identification of research questions), the research methodology and data analysis approach, the presentation and interpretation of the results, and the recommendations and insights to address the problem.

In the report, students also delineate their personal reflections in conducting the project. We have observed some consistent themes that emerge in these reflections. To begin with, students experienced the capstone as both challenging and rewarding. They highlight the challenges involved at each step of the project: from gaining their organization's buy-in to conduct the project to writing up the report. Along the way, they learned how to look at human capital challenges from a research perspective, to critically analyse and discuss existing literature, contemporary human capital policy and practice relevant to their chosen problem, and to compare and contrast the relative merits of different research methods and their relevance to different situations. But not only that, they need to actually conduct a research study, analyse quantitative

and/or qualitative data and present the results in an accurate and compelling manner. From these analyses, they are asked to draw appropriate conclusions and make recommendations that are both evidence-based and actionable.

Why Invest in a Capstone Project?

Given the challenging nature of the capstone project, why is it that many students find it to be one of the – if not *the* – highlight of their learning journey in the MHCL program? We believe that it has to do with the following features. First, the capstone projects provide students with an opportunity to integrate knowledge across different courses to address an organizational problem. In this way, many things “come together” in the capstone project. Second, and very importantly, through the capstone projects, students enhance their skill set as evidence-based human capital leaders. This, in turn, increases their employability, especially as more and more organizations adopt and embrace an evidence-based management approach. In addition, their projects often help address concrete human capital challenges within their organizations and provide valuable recommendations. More broadly, their newly acquired skills allow our students to contribute concretely and often in unique ways to their current or future employer, helping to build the organization’s competitive advantage (e.g., evaluate pitches from consultants regarding their products and services in a more informed manner).

Examples of Capstone Projects

MHCL students have, over the years, worked on numerous fascinating and important topics and delivered many high-quality reports of their research studies. As an illustration of the kind of capstone projects undertaken, here are some examples of recent projects, in highly summarized form:

A transformation program at a government organization resulted in a spin-off of a separate, private entity. Using a qualitative methodology, a student investigated issues related to organizational change. Interviews across employee groups (i.e., new hires and employees who had joined from the government organization) revealed important differences related to attitudes toward organizational change and perceived status differences of being an employee of the new entity.

To address the problem of turnover, a student drew on archival data from a construction company and constructed a model to predict turnover. The model helped identify key demographic (e.g., age, number of children) and job-related (e.g., pay raise, time between promotions) variables that uniquely predicted turnover at that organization. At a retail bank facing high turnover, one student looked at the converse of this problem: what makes employees stay at the bank (i.e., job embeddedness). Through a survey methodology, the student observed that employees who perceived higher on-job embeddedness (e.g., whether they believed that the organization utilized their skills well, whether they saw themselves to fit with the organization's culture) were less likely to quit their jobs.

Attracting job applicants with the requisite skills is crucial, especially for software organizations. Using a quasi-experimental methodology, one student created different recruitment messages (within the constraint of a word limit of the messaging tool) to gauge which messages would result in a greater number of job applicants. Over a three-week period, the student observed that providing applicants with a message that included relevant information about the organization as well as the job specifications resulted in a greater number of applicants. The student subsequently reflected how a relatively minor, but evidence-based tweak, resulted in an appreciable increase in the number of job applicants—an aspect that the student found to be personally and professionally fulfilling.

As is evident from these examples, we find that our students are able to identify a diverse range of very important human capital challenges. The further challenge that they then face is to make a judgment as to whether this challenge is amenable to a research study and can be addressed within the time and resource constraints of their projects. Many times, our students need to think through multiple human capital challenges before they can settle on a project that is both important and feasible within the context of their capstone.

The resulting projects utilize a diverse range of study designs and methods. In particular, there is a healthy mix of quantitative studies and qualitative studies. Regardless of the approach (quantitative or qualitative), we always emphasize the need for careful study design and rigor in analyses. The important lesson here is that there is no one ideal method for applied research projects. Instead, what is most important is to pick the appropriate

method and design, conduct, and analyse the study and its data intelligently and carefully.

By carrying out their capstone projects and learning these important lessons, our students make huge strides towards becoming evidence-based human capital leaders, for the benefit of themselves, their organizations, and their profession.

References

Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (2006). Evidence-based management. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(1), 62.

Demystifying Biases due to Performance or Ethnicities using Objective and Subjective Human Capital Measures to drive Sales Performance: An Asian Investigation

CHIA WAI JYY

Business Case

The performance of retail industry worldwide has been precarious. In 2016, the sales revenue of Top 50 consumer brands plummeted 0.7% (Eberenz & Schröer, 2019). Business Insider reported over 9300 stores shuttered in 2019 (Dohmen, 2020; Biron, 2019). The 5 years' (2013 to 2018) compounded annual revenue growth of top 250 retailers was 5% (Deloitte, 2020) dropped from 9.1% (2002 to 2006) almost half the figure 12 years ago (Deloitte, 2018). The outbreak of COVID-19 fuels exponential businesses shut with McKinsey reported recession owing to the whooping plunge in consumer spending and business revenues alluding to a prolonged global economic contraction (Craven et al., 2020).

Carré et al.'s (2008) research delineates that the job quality of retail industry in US and Europe has worsened due to advancement in supply chain enabled by technology and pressure to reduce costs. High turnover, low wages, low skills, irregular long hours and gender work segmentation caused erosion of job quality.

Low job quality poses challenges to attract, motivate and retain salesforce. To cope with the manpower crunch, companies rely on foreigners. Such salesforce management practices may impact hiring, performance evaluation, ratings and, ultimately, salary and reward decisions. There are calls for concerns of biases, inequity, and glass ceiling. On the other hand, heavy reliance on foreign workforce resulted in xenophobic altitude among locals against foreigners as they are perceived to be taking over Singaporeans' jobs and being paid higher salaries. The Government of Singapore is working assiduously to address these concerns. It has pushed for job creations for Singaporeans (Choo, 2020) and productivity improvements (Seow, 2020). However, literature reviews

indicate that tools to measure sales performance are limited (Frino & Desiderio, 2013) and previous research on efficacy of performance measures and evaluation process provide inconsistent recommendations (Cravens et al., 2015).

Moreover, the unending debates of performance evaluation (e.g. Adler et al., 2016) without inference of bias raise the concern on discrimination as with the research of Elvira & Town, (2001), Martin, (2005) and many other researchers. From the deep body of literatures, I reviewed the impact of salesperson demographics characteristics on job performance (Frino & Desiderio, 2013; Martin, 2005; McKay & McDaniel, 2006), job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Huddleston et al., 2002), job involvement (Marshall et al., 2004) performance differences and pay inequalities (Joshi et al., 2006). As stated by Elvira & Town (2001), the problem using productivity indicators to demarcate salary differences is that individual productivity is inconspicuous, but it is dependent on demographics and other characteristics; and organizational behavior and social psychology researchers did not distinguish whether the bias evaluation is due to actual performance or race differences or other characteristics. Accordingly, the main research objective of this study is to heighten human capital management and salesforce management knowledge. It identifies a performance evaluation method by examining the measurement method construct proselytized by many researchers to use objective measures because subjective measures are more susceptible to bias (JK Ford et al,1986 as cited in Roth et al., 2003). Along with this theoretical construct, and to address the concerns of biases and xenophobia to further deteriorate performance, a total of 36 hypotheses were developed and examined with 3 research objectives. Firstly, this study determines the performance differences measured in sales dollars per month among the salesforce according to ethnicities compared with top/low performers; Secondly, it examines the correlation of demographic variables empirically known to be subject to bias and discrimination at workplaces with sales performance to determine the variable most impactful to sales performance, and in this study evidenced to be ethnicity. Thirdly, it investigates the moderating effects of ethnicity and performance and the mediating effects of subjective and objective measures to identify the measurement method and demystify whether biases are due to performance or ethnicity differences. Absenteeism day, bonus, commission, and sales per month are the human capital indicators of objective performance measures. Annual managerial rating is a subjective measure. Along with qualitative

interviews, 614 salespersons' archival datapoints of 2 companies were extrapolated using Pearson correlation, One-way ANOVA, Independent-Samples T-Test, Linear Regression and PROCESS.MACRO. Practical contribution: Results do not suggest bias against any ethnicities, in fact it is in favor of locals. Theoretical Implications. A performance measurement method that proselytized both objective and subjective measures should not use interchangeably is recommended.

Methodology

This archival research retrieved 2 years' data i.e.: from 1April2017 to 31March2018 and from 1April2018 to 31March2019 provided by the 2 companies in study with the following statistics:

		Ethnicity			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.Singaporean	172	28.0	28.0	28.0
	2.Singapore PR	44	7.2	7.2	35.2
	3.Malaysian	272	44.3	44.3	79.5
	4.PRC/Taiwanese	40	6.5	6.5	86.0
	5.Filipino	29	4.7	4.7	90.7
	6.Vietnamese	5	.6	.8	91.5
	7.Thai	9	1.5	1.5	93
	8.Korean	43	7.0	7.0	100
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

		Age Range			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. 20 & below	63	10.3	10.3	10.3
	2. 21 to 25 years	281	45.8	45.8	56.0
	3. 26 to 30 years	172	28.0	28.0	82.0
	4. 31 to 35 years	56	9.1	9.1	93.2
	5. Above 35 years	42	6.8	6.8	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

Tenure range

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0.5year & below	184	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Over 0.5 to 1year	128	20.8	20.8	50.8
	Over 1 to 3years	156	25.4	25.4	76.2
	Over 3 to 5years	77	12.5	12.5	88.8
	Over 5years	69	11.2	11.2	100.0
	Total	614	100/0	100.0	

Education

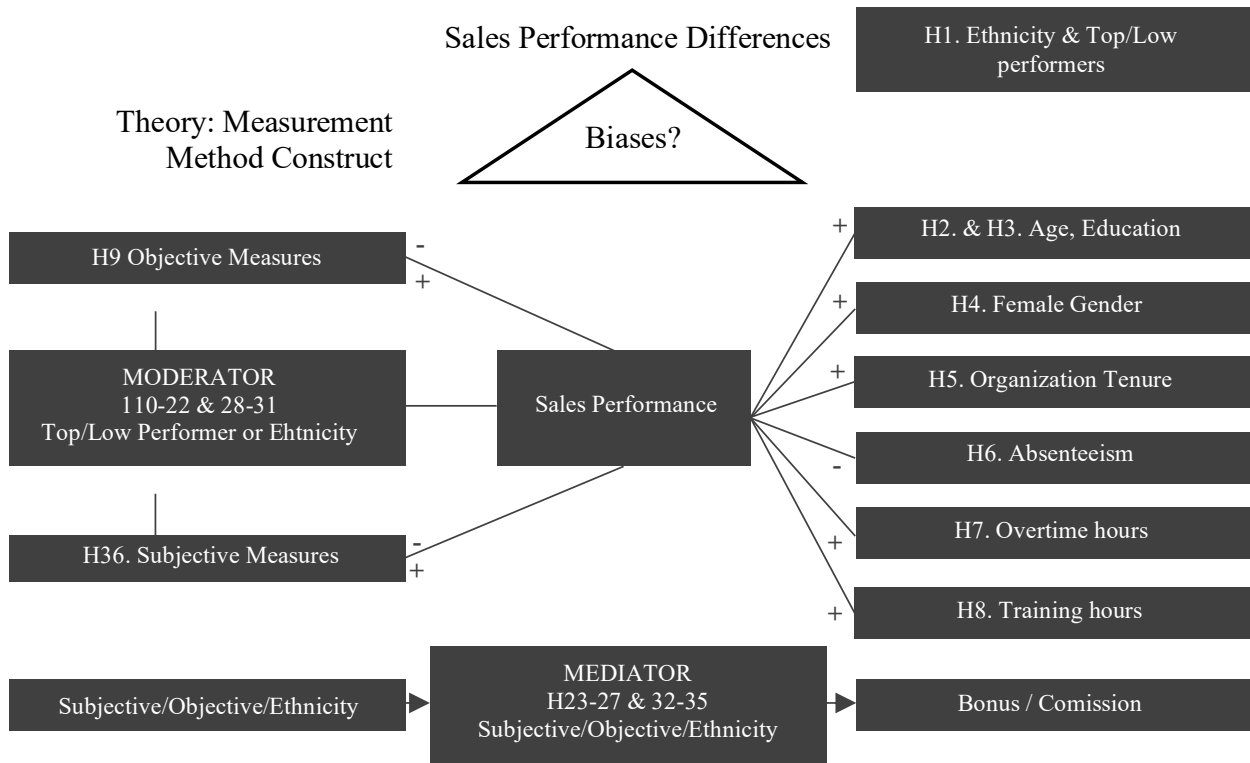
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1. Primary	75	12.2	12.2	12.2
	2. N level/SPM	214	34.9	34.9	47.1
	3. O level/Higher Nitec	82	13.4	13.4	60.4
	4. Diploma	117	19.1	19.1	79.5
	5. BachelorDegree	126	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0. Female	459	74.8	74.8	74.8
	1. Male	155	25.2	25.2	100.0
	Total	614	100.0	100.0	

Design

This is an archival quantitative study with qualitative interviews triangulate to investigate biases in 3 main streams i.e. sales performance differences, demographic impacts and measurement method construct as illustrated below:



Conclusion

Of the 36 hypotheses, 11 are supported. ANOVA analysis revealed that sales performance of local is generally lower than their co-workers from Malaysia, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and South Korea except for Philippines. Independent-Samples T-Test and Regression analyses shows that the sales per month of foreign salesperson is more than local. However, regression analysis shows that for salespersons over 1 year's service, performance of foreign salespersons is less than local. Demographic variables - age, education and gender found to have no significant relationship to sales performance. Instead, age is positively related to organization tenure for which is also positively related to sales performance. As expected, for training hours do not impact performance, in fact it is interesting to note an insignificant negative relation to sales performance.

Human Capital Measures

Overall, results do not suggest bias against any ethnicities for both subjective manager rating and objective measures. In fact, the reverse is noticed with slight evidences of bias in favor of locals. Of the 17 hypotheses to examine biases, 2 supported relating to ethnicity and 2 on performance. Objective measures provide preliminary indications that human capital strategies do not bias against ethnicity or performance. Commission and bonus are important measures of human capital strategies implementation as to how effective are the commission and bonus structures in driving business performance. An indicator of successful implementation would be the structures are biases toward performance as such moderated by performance differences between top and low performers, among top performers and among low performers. Which means the structures are imperative to motivate over-achievers and demotivate under-achievers. However, the results seem to provide primitive indication of flatness in commission structure on 3 instances. Firstly, commission positively impacting sales performance is significant and positive regardless of top or low performer. This is rather unexpected for which low performer should have less or no significant as part of its moderating effect in this relationship. This suggests primitive indication of flatness in commission structure as the antecedent to sales for which it may not be moderated by over-achievers against under-performers. Secondly, again the same top/low performers moderating effect in the relationship of commission positively impacting bonus. However, the moderator roles of ethnicity take effect well as hypothesized for foreigner against local. This means foreigners who get high/low commission get high/low bonus against locals for which this relationship does not hold as hypothesized. This suggests bias in commission measure in favor of local possibly due to issue in the commission structure in driving performance. Thirdly, bonus is related to higher performance, which in turn increased commission but commission did not result in higher performance which in turn increased bonus.

Salesforce management-Objective or Subjective Method?

It is surprising to note that absenteeism – one of the most used measures as part of salesforce management practice to mitigate labor scarcity, is found to have no significant correlation to sales performance. Whether the salesperson is top or low performer did not moderate the

relationship between absenteeism and sales performance. However, ethnicity moderates the relationship such that high or low absenteeism rate does not impact the sales performance for foreigner but for local the higher absenteeism, the higher the sales performance. This surprising positive relationship is consistent at the bivariate level in which also positive though insignificant statistically. Practically, absenteeism measure could penalize salespersons but in fact it is a hygiene factor for performance. This result suggests that such objective measure can be a complex issue because it can be bias in favor of stereotype that absenteeism is an antecedent to low performance. Against the subjectivity that absenteeism as a basis for performance such that when a salesperson is ill, absenteeism enables recuperation which then follows by performance. Hence, objective measure absenteeism used alone may not be effective predictor of performance. No evidence suggests that sales performance measure as the antecedent to reward system i.e. commission and bonus for the moderator to take effect.

Regardless of top/low performers, the relationship of sales performance impacting manager rating is positive and statistically significant. Whereas ethnicity does not moderate this relationship. This suggests a primitive evidence that manager rating is unbiased towards top or low performer and ethnicity. It is predicted that for every 1 percentage-point increase in manager rating, sales performance of salespersons over 1 years' service increase by \$225. There is also no significant correlations between manager rating and all demographic variables including bonus, but overtime and commission are significant to manager rating. This is not surprising as evidence suggests that the higher sales performance of foreign salespersons is achieved by significantly more overtime and commission than local. However, bonus paid to local is significantly more than foreign salespersons. Likewise, overtime, commission, sales performance and manager rating for top performers are significantly more than low performers however no significant difference of bonus paid to them. These findings suggest some biases in favour of local not because of manager rating but rather the commission and bonus structures as part of the human capital and salesforce management practices to be considered for further reviews and determine necessary improvement.

Implications/Theoretical Contributions

Roth et al.'s (2003) finding rejected the construct that objective measures are less bias than subjective measures, instead they found the

reverse. Performance measures regardless of objective or subjective method, McKay & McDaniel (2006) found that the measurement method did not explain the performance differences among the ethnicities. This study shed some lights that using objective or subjective measures do explain whether differences are due to performance or ethnicity. Thus, it supports the empirical finding of Roth et al. (2003) as objective measures used universally without inferences may subject to stereotype. Hence this study derives a suggestion of performance evaluation method which proselytized that objective and subjective measure should not be used interchangeably as with Rich et al. (1999).

The study reviewed agency theory indoctrinating empirical validity of the outcome-based and incentive driven theory especially when coupled with complementary perspectives (Eisenhardt, 1989). This study found evidence that short-term incentives like commission plays lack of the role in driving performance whereas longer term incentives like bonus is an objective measure to drive performance of agents. When agents are risk adverse and self-interest, shorter term incentives manifest manipulative agents thus serves as the outcome rather than driver of performance. An complementary perspective of tournament theory (Connelly et al., 2014) indoctrinating longer term approach such as wage plans and hierarchy motivation in line with agency theory of longer term incentive in which advocating retention may shed lights to drive performance of salespersons as agent in a high turnover environment.

This study also found no support for the similarity-attract and social identity theory as with (Leonard et al., 2004) such that similarities between employees and customers do not correlate to higher performance.

Limitations

Martin's (2005) study on 235 Caucasians and 59 African Americans had a sample size ratio of 4:1. He acknowledged that such sample ratio is one of the limitations in such studies and recommended to increase the sample size of African American. Likewise, for this study, the limited size of Vietnamese (5), and Thai (6) affect the generalizability of results for these countries.

The measurement methods in this study were limited to only 4 objectives (i.e. absenteeism, bonus, commission, sales performance) and 1 subjective (i.e. manager rating) measures. Moreover, this study does not

assess the correspondence of each variable measures subjectively and objectively as was carried out in (Martin, 2005; McKay & McDaniel, 2006; Roth et al., 2003).

The moderating effects of ethnicity and top/low performer are primitive indicators of their differences in influencing the relationships. Statistically, deeper analyses by plotting the slopes of the moderating variables should be conducted to understand their interactions and effects on the main variables (Dawson, n.d.) and called for further study.

Future Studies

Meta-analysis (Jaramillo et al., 2005) shows organization commitment impacts retail salesperson performance more than non-salesperson and that the relationship is stronger for collectivist than individualistic cultures. This study supports the association of age with tenure theorized based on tenure as the outcome of organization commitment in which relating to desire to stay in turn improve salesperson performance. Given the association of age with job involvement and not performance (Marshall et al., 2004), it calls for further studies on tenure in which provide a mix outcome in this study. How age related to tenure interact with objective work outcomes (e.g.: overtime, absenteeism) and subjective outcomes (e.g.: job involvement and organization commitment) in turn increase sales performance.

Recommendations

The firms in study may have to review its reward system to drive performance. The regression findings suggest that a 5% commission cost of sales worth further study. Benchmarks for fashion industry shows that total salary composition is 13.64% of revenue (BizStats, 2014), if the commission cost is 5% of revenue increase, it calls for further investigation if the 5% indicative figure is a palatable benchmark to ensure that the productivity gain as a result of performance growth is not eroded by the commission cost. Succinctly, whether the 5% is productive cost to convert more salespersons into overachievers. When each salesperson achieve more and sales growth outweigh the same rate of commission pay, commission cost % would drop in turn reflect the effectiveness of the reward system to drive real organic sales growth.

Though foreign salespersons have generally achieved higher sales, for salesperson over one year of service, sales performance of locals is higher. Likewise, it is predicted that store location is less impactful than ethnicity to influence sales performance. This signifies the importance of retention and maintaining diversity in line with Gilbert & Ivancevich's (2000) finding that associates diversity of demographics with increased creativity and employees performance; and McKay et al.'s (2008), diversity in the scarce labor market eases the manpower crunch.

This study sheds some lights in demystifying biases and xenophobia perceptions. The most critical is to address them otherwise perceptions may exasperate leading to inequity and further erode performance. Training transfer plays a significant role by not just upskilling but also institutionalize a culture of solidarity and performance. The implementation requires both the art and science in the study of organization behaviors. It is recommended for store managers to undergo tripartite training on fair employment practices. A diversity training to understand the nuances of biases and how to prevent them. Engagement programmes, monitoring, measurement system and alignment to organization values to be put in place for store managers to fundamentally change in how they leverage on diversity to drive sales performance. Training effectiveness is recommended to be evaluated using Kirk Patrick 4 level of evaluation not barely measuring training hours. Otherwise, training investment would be in vain as evidenced by Tan & Newman (2013) study of over 150 retailers in US.

References

- Adler, S., Campion, M., Colquitt, A., Grubb, A., Murphy, K., Ollander-Krane, R., & Pulakos, E. D. (2016). Getting Rid of Performance Ratings: Genius or Folly? A Debate. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 9(2), 219–252. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2015.106>
- Biron, B. (2019, December 23). The last decade was devastating for the retail industry. Here's how the retail apocalypse played out., *Business Insider—Business Insider Singapore*. Business Insider Singapore. <https://www.businessinsider.sg/retail-apocalypse-last-decade-timeline-2019-12?r=US&IR=T>

- BizStats. (2014). Corporation Benchmarks.
<http://www.bizstats.com/corporation-industry-financials/retail-trade-44/clothing-and-clothing-accessories-stores-448115/show>
- Carré, F., Tilly, C., van Klaveren, M., & Voss-Dahm, D. (2008). Retail Jobs in Comparative Perspective. 50.
- Choo, Y. T. (2020, January 6). Parliament: Chan Chun Sing addresses fears over foreign talent, telling S'poreans "this Govt will always have your back" [Text]. The Straits Times.
<https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/parliament-chan-chun-sing-allays-fears-about-foreigners-in-workforce-telling-sporeans-this>
- Craven, M., Liu, L., Mysore, M., & Wilson, M. (2020, March). Coronavirus' business impact: Evolving perspective | McKinsey. McKinsey & Company.
<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/risk/our-insights/covid-19-implications-for-business>
- Cravens, K. S., Goad Oliver, E., Shigehiro Oishi, & Stewart, J. S. (2015). Workplace Culture Mediates Performance Appraisal Effectiveness and Employee Outcomes: A Study in a Retail Setting. *Journal of Management Accounting Research*, 27(2), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.2308/jmar-51169>
- Dawson, J. (n.d.). Interpreting interaction effects. Retrieved April 26, 2020, from <http://www.jeremydawson.co.uk/slopes.htm>
- Deloitte. (2018). Global powers of retailing 2018, transformative change, reinvigorated commerce. Deloitte Turkey.
<https://www2.deloitte.com/tr/en/pages/consumer-industrial-products/articles/global-powers-of-retailing-2018.html>
- Deloitte. (2020). Global Powers of Retailing 2020. Deloitte.
<https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/global-powers-of-retailing.html>

- Dohmen, B. (2020, January 25). Is The Retail Apocalypse Over? Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/investor/2020/01/25/is-the-retail-apocalypse-over/>
- Eberenz, R., & Schröer, M. (2019). Current Challenges for Consumer Goods and Retail Companies and Their Implications for Controlling. In M. Buttkus & R. Eberenz (Eds.), *Performance Management in Retail and the Consumer Goods Industry* (pp. 29–47). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12730-5_3
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Agency Theory: An Assessment and Review. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 57–74. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1989.4279003>
- Elvira, M., & Town, R. (2001). The Effects of Race and Worker Productivity on Performance Evaluations. *Industrial Relations*, 40(4), 571–590. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0019-8676.00226>
- Frino, M. G., & Desiderio, K. P. (2013). The Role of Demographics as Predictors of Successful Performance of Sales Professionals in Business-to-Business Sales Organizations. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 25(4), 7–21. <https://doi.org/10.1002/piq.21128>
- Gilbert, J. A., & Ivancevich, J. M. (2000). Valuing diversity: A tale of two organizations. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14(1), 93–105. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AME.2000.2909842>
- Huddleston, P., Good, L., & Frazier, B. (2002). The influence of firm characteristics and demographic variables on Russian retail workers' work motivation and job attitudes. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 12(4), 395–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593960210151171>
- Jaramillo, F., Mulki, J. P., & Marshall, G. W. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relationship between organizational commitment and salesperson job performance: 25 years of research. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(6), 705–714. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2003.10.004>

- Joshi, A., Liao, H., & Jackson, S. E. (2006). Cross-Level Effects of Workplace Diversity on Sales Performance and Pay. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(3), 459–481.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.21794664>
- Leonard, J. S., Levine, D. I., & Joshi, A. (2004). Do birds of a feather shop together? The effects on performance of employees' similarity with one another and with customers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*; Chichester, 25(6), 731–754.
<http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1002/job.267>
- Marshall, G. W., Lassk, F. G., & Moncrief, W. C. (2004). Salesperson job involvement: Do demographic, job situational, and market variables matter? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 19(5), 337–343. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620410549947>
- Martin, C. A. (2005). Racial diversity in professional selling: An empirical investigation of the differences in the perceptions and performance of African-American and Caucasian salespeople. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 20(6), 285–296.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620510618129>
- McKay, P. F., Avery, D. R., & Morris, M. A. (2008). Mean Racial-Ethnic Differences in Employee Sales Performance: The Moderating Role of Diversity Climate. *Personnel Psychology*, 61(2), 349–374. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2008.00116.x>
- McKay, P. F., & McDaniel, M. A. (2006). A reexamination of black-white mean differences in work performance: More data, more moderators. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(3), 538–554.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.3.538>
- Rich, G. A., Bommer, W. H., MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M., & Johnson, J. L. (1999). Apples and Apples or Apples and Oranges? A Meta-Analysis of Objective and Subjective Measures of Salesperson Performance. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 19(4), 41–52.

- Roth, P. L., Bobko, P., & Huffcutt, A. I. (2003). Ethnic group differences in measures of job performance: A new meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(4), 694–706. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.4.694>
- Seow, J. (2020, January 31). Employment data points to drop in productivity growth last year [Text]. *The Straits Times*. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/employment-data-points-to-drop-in-productivity-growth-last-year>
- Tan, K., & Newman, E. (2013). The Evaluation of Sales Force Training in Retail Organizations: A Test of Kirkpatrick's Four-level Model. *International Journal of Management; Poole*, 30(2), 692–703.

Why Investments in Learning for employees may not translate into Improvements in Innovation?

CHONG TACK CHUN

“How employees perceive support for their learning positively influences the innovation climate in their workplace. In particular, business and HR leaders need to pay attention to *psychological safety*, which is a very significant predictor.”

The Missing Link between Learning and Innovation

South-east Asia’s Internet economy is forecasted to reach US\$300 billion by 2025 as millions of people in the region take up online shopping and embrace ride-share food delivery services¹. How organizations can encourage its employees to embark on innovation so that it can launch new products and services for this market?

The plan for a Singapore-based Multi-National Corporation (“MNC”) in the Information Technology industry is to invest in learning for its employees to acquire practical skills in various digital technologies in demand through training courses. After about two years, the MNC’s management is wondering whether more initiatives are needed to drive innovation. This is because the Human Resources Department (“HRD”) of the MNC observed that learning does not directly translates into innovation for all employees. For example, some employees had pro-actively suggested new product ideas and volunteered to work on prototypes and to test feasibilities. Some others are less motivated to venture beyond their assigned work and projects. There appear to be some other factors in between learning and innovation.

The business challenge encountered by the MNC can be framed by the following research question: “what is the association between learning and innovation for its employees?” The HRD postulated that when it is able

¹ According to the *e-Conomy SEA 2019 report* published by Temasek Holdings, global business consultants Bain & Company and Google.

to determine specific factors responsible for driving innovation for employees, it can implement initiatives to make improvements to innovation.

Learning Organizations and Innovation Climate

Based on the literature review conducted, innovation is associated with a number of factors (refer to Figure 1 below).

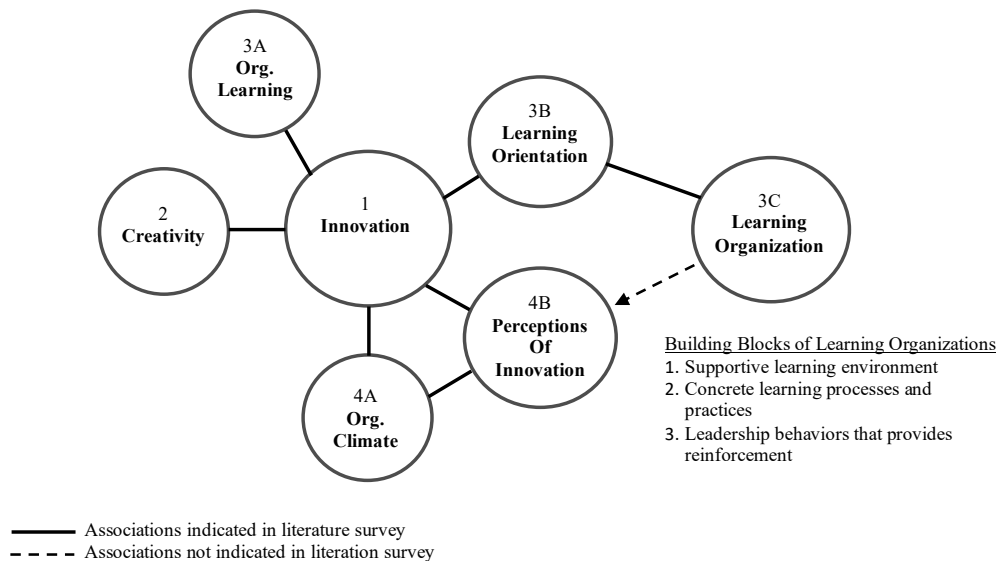


Figure 1 – Innovation and some commonly Associated Factors

We adopted the following three-step approach to build up our theory to associate learning with innovation: (1) we defined the innovation process for an organization; (2) we differentiated between creativity and innovation. We found that creativity is related to the generation of new ideas, while innovation is related to the implementation of new ideas. We decided to focus on innovation, since organizations are keen with the outcome of implementing new ideas; and (3) we differentiated between “organizational learning” and “learning orientation”. We found that “learning orientation” is a broader concept compared with “organizational learning”, which is concerned with employee training and mechanisms for them to acquire knowledge and skills. According to Mavondo (2005), “learning orientation” and innovation lie on a continuum of exploitation-exploration for organizations. In addition, we also discovered the concept of “Learning Organizations”, which are organizations that have developed “learning orientation”.

Through the literature review, we discovered that innovation is related to behaviors in workplace and it is more closely associated to organizational climate. Indeed, Baer and Frese (2003) highlighted employees’ perceptions of risks for taking initiative at work and psychological safety as an important climate dimensions for organizations to achieve the intended performance benefits of innovation.

Dwelling deeper into “Learning Organizations”, we discovered that there are three building blocks crucial for organizations to develop “learning orientation” to empower innovation at work. However, specific associations between perceptions of “Learning Organization” and innovation climate at work are *not* indicated in the literature survey. HRD proposed a field study to determine the associations between the perceptions of these building blocks of “Learning Organization” and innovation climate at work. Refer to Figure 2 below for a pictorial summary of hypotheses developed for this study.

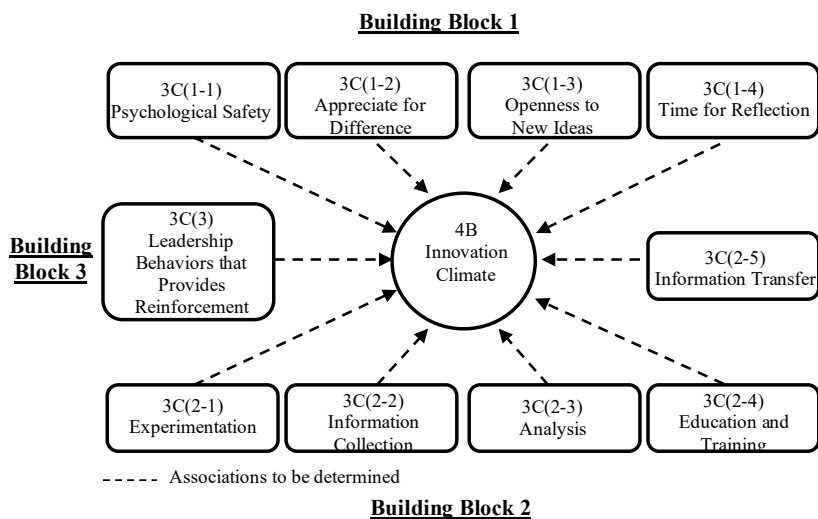


Figure 2 – Hypotheses Developed for this Field Study

The HRD will help to recruit employees in various job roles to participate in this study. These employees will complete surveys. In terms of measures, this project will leverage on scales developed and validated for (a) innovation climate in organizations by West & Farr (1990); and (b) three building blocks of “Learning Organizations” by Garvin *et al* (2008).

Key Findings and Takeaways

Based on correlation and simple linear regression analyses, each of the ten Independent Variables (“IV”), which are drivers from the three building blocks of a “Learning Organization” is positively associated with innovation climate (the Dependent Variable “DV”). All significant test results were consistent with Hypothesis 1 to 10. Through the multiple linear regression analysis, we discovered that psychological safety (one of the ten IV) is the only significant predictor among the other nine IVs. This discovery led us to postulate that psychological safety may act as a mediator to the other nine IVs when these influence the DV. Based on mediator analyses, we found that psychological safety indeed acted as a mediator to the other nine IVs when these influence the DV.

Taken together, these findings provided evidence of the positive influence of “Learning Organization” on innovation climate. In short, perception of employees of their organization as a “Learning Organization” acts as an *antecedent* of innovation climate in the workplace. In particular, organizations need to pay attention to psychological safety, which is a very significant predictor.

Future Research

The exploratory mediator analysis provided initial evidence in support of a mediating mechanism linking various IVs to innovation climate as DV through *psychological safety*, consistent with research that found *psychological safety* to predict innovation (refer to Edmondson 2019). Further research could extend these initial findings and examine in more depth and breadth the underlying mechanisms linking these factors. For example, *Leadership that Reinforces Learning* is the third building blocks of a “Learning Organization”. Leaders’ direct involvement / participation may also motivate employees to engage in innovation. Thus, future research could examine perceived leader’s direct involvement / participation as additional mediators and / or moderators of links between learning and innovation.

One limitation of the present study is that it does not examine different aspects of learning. For example, with digitalization, learning is no longer restricted to training courses and / or certification examinations, which are the most common means by which organizations develop

technical capabilities for its workforce. In this digital era, employees should have the flexibility to explore and to curate training programs in collaboration with his / her organizations by sourcing for suitable online learning opportunities globally. Employees should not feel restricted by the choice of training programs available locally. Future research should examine in more details the different types of learning modes available and their specific contributions to innovation in the workplace.

In order to determine the impact of learning on innovation, future research may consider possibilities of introducing intervention studies. In these studies, an experimental group of employees participates in learning program who is then compared with a control group of employees who did not participate in the same learning program.

Recommendations

Since *Psychological Safety* is the most significant predictor among all other IVs and it also acted as a mediator on these IVs to influence the DV, we took a closer examination on the survey returns from employees for this scale. Refer to Table 1 below.

Psychological Safety Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q1 In this unit, it is easy to speak up about what is on your mind	4	3	12	27	24
R_Q2 If you make a mistake in this unit, it is often held against you	7	5	22	29	8
Q3 People in this unit are usually comfortable talking about problems and disagreements	3	2	16	41	7
Q4 People in this unit are eager to share information about what does and doesn't work	5	0	15	36	14
R_Q5 Keeping your cards close to your vest is the best way to get ahead in this unit	6	13	28	14	9

Table 1 – Survey Return from Employees on Psychological Safety Scale

Based on the responses gathered from employees, some 37 out of 71 (i.e. 52%) respondents “strongly agree” and “agree” with survey question 2 (which was reverse-scored). In other words, slightly more than half of the respondents felt that making mistakes is *not* tolerated in the participating MNC. This goes against the grain of being innovative where making mistakes is usually the norm. Our first recommendation for the

MNC is to examine how the work culture and / or management treats making of “mistakes” by employees, especially those involved with innovation projects.

The second practical recommendation for the MNC out of this research project, is to share the survey outcomes with the management team (optionally with the employees due to potentially sensitivities involved). The objective here is to enable the management team to be aware of the employees’ perception of the MNC as a “Learning Organization” and how it impacted the innovation climate in the workplace. With this awareness, the management team can opt to improve on specific aspects in the “Learning Organization” scale.

The third recommendation is for the MNC to identify potential issues which have contributed to the organization achievement compared against industry benchmarks. According to Garvin et al. (2008), the goal of this industry benchmark is to promote dialogue (not critique) amongst managers and employees to start examining strengths and weaknesses in terms of learning. In addition, it is to paint an honest picture of the MNC’s corporate culture and leadership with respect to learning (as well as to innovation).

References

- Baer, M. & Frese, M. (2003). Innovation is Not Enough: Climates for Initiative and Psychological Safety, Process Innovations, and Firm Performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24, 45–68
- Edmundson, A. C. (2019). *The Fearless Organization*. John Wiley & Sons, NJ.
- Garvin, D., et al. (2008). Is Yours a Learning Organization? *Harvard Business Review*, March 2008.
- Mavondo, F. T. (2005). Learning Orientation and Market Orientation: Relationship with Innovation, Human Resource Practices and Performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39, 11/12, 1235–1263
- West, M. A. & Farr, J. L. (1990). *Innovation and Creativity at Work: Psychological and Organizational Strategies*. Chichester: Wiley.

Academic and Career Success: Is It Just About Grades?

LOUIS LOW

Academic and Career Success: Is it Just About Grades?

It would be imprudent to answer this question without empirical evidence because the impact of academic performance on career success is debatable due to conflicting research outcomes. The nature of the correlation between educational achievement and future career success is also unsubstantiated. For instance, the association between both identified in various studies is either positive or negative, while some researchers have found no relationship. Consequently, mixed research findings infer that the effect of academic performance on career success remains uncertain based on scholarly and professional grounds. Besides, unfounded assertions also contribute to the perception that academic performance influences the decisions of employers. As a result, people tend to believe that attaining a university degree leads to a successful career life. Besides, established organisations, such as the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (2016), suggest that investing in education is one of the ways of improving income and eliminating poverty in families with low earnings. However, extant research indicates that extrinsic and intrinsic factors could influence the decisions of employers. Due to the interrelationship, I conducted a study to identify the nature of the correlation between academic performance and career achievements to help human resource (“HR”) professionals make appropriate decisions during recruitment and talent identification process. This reflection paper highlights the steps and the findings of my study, including some recommendations for HR practitioners.

Main Findings from Existing Literature

I reviewed the current literature to identify research gaps and acknowledge the contributions of other researchers. Literature was also valuable in formulating a research question and hypothesis for this study. In the first section, I evaluated current research that explores the correlation between academic performance, measured by Grade Point Average or GPA, and career success. It is worth noting that evidence which links educational achievement to a successful career indicates conflicting outcomes based on

aspects such as field of study or type of education. On the one hand, research shows that employers tend to rely on academic performance when screening potential job applicants. For instance, a study by Kool, Mainhard, Jaarsma, Brekelmans, & Beukelen (2016) demonstrated that HR professionals significantly tend to favour resumes with high GPA ratings compared to those with lower GPAs. As a result, most students pursue high grades in educations to benefit from the perceived employment choices based on GPA.

In addition, academic performance tends to influence income levels for employees. In a study by Kool et al. (2016) involving 11,000 baccalaureate degree holders, the author tried to determine whether income is dependent on the level of education. The authors found out that the GPA tends to influence annual average income across different categories of workers. The study also established that employees with lower GPA earn lower salaries than those with high GPA ratings. However, the career success of employees with high GPAs is attributed to other factors such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism, which influence work engagement in highly educated workers. Another study by Backes-Gellner & Geel (2014) noted that employees with educational achievements, associated with a higher GPA, have higher earnings compared to those with vocational training, associated with lower GPA. These findings suggested that educational achievement influences career success by affecting the decision of employers and determining wages. However, the author also suggested that other attributes could affect professional accomplishments.

I will review the association between GPA and career success based on individual attributes and employer-related factors in the second section. This examination is essential to understand whether personal and employer factors affect professional outcomes in addition to academic performance. Based on literature reviewed, I found that succeeding in a career depends on several aspects that augment educational achievements for job applicants. The analysis by Afarian & Kleiner (2003) indicated that professional accomplishments depend on a mix of individual attributes in addition to academic performance. The authors argued that HR practitioners tend to consider non-academic features such as relevant work experience, transferable skills, and flexibility when recruiting employees. These considerations aligned with the rapid changes in current workplaces, whereby workers incorporated these new features into their job roles to enhance their competitiveness and be successful in their careers. Thus,

GPA is sparingly used in the screening process in which employers prefer non-academic qualifications.

Based on job categories, research suggested that employers look for qualifications beyond academic performance during the hiring process. A review by Brown and Campion (1994) confirmed that recruiters use non-academic qualities such as focussing on values that align with organisational culture as opposed to grades across job categories. I noted that the use of GPA is disputed because there is inadequate empirical evidence to ascertain how employers use it to influence hiring decisions. Besides, Carr, Celenza, Puddey, & Lake (2014) challenged the use of academic performance in recruitment because irregularities in the education system compromises the reliability and validity of GPA, examinations, and other assessment tools. The unsubstantiated, insignificant, and disputed use of GPA implies that academic performance should not be the primary used to screen employees.

As a result, I explored more literature to identify motivational factors that inspire an employee's success in a particular profession. In this regard, the applicant's goal significantly influences their career success based on job rewards and employees' satisfaction. For instance, workers tend to attribute success to a decent salary and job satisfaction. A study by Willoughby, Lee, Jr., & Beil (2013) suggested that college GPA and reported salary have a positive correlation. However, salary does not contribute to happiness at work; graduates who demonstrate satisfaction show no significant correlation between their pay and GPA. This discrepancy suggests that graduates succeed at work due to their strong goal orientation skills that help them approach issues differently in life. Reviews by Dierendonck & Gaast (2013) also argued that general competencies, such as verbal communication and interpersonal abilities, presentation of ideas, and management skills, influence one's career as opposed to academic knowledge.

Therefore, current evidence shows that career success depends on educational achievement, individual attributes, and employer preferences. Employers tend to prefer performance in the interview, resume, and prior experience to academic performance when hiring. Based on the perspectives of credentialism theory, educational qualifications only subscribe a person to a privileged class in society rather than indicating their technical abilities. Besides, the employment sector's current patterns

show that recruiters are also shifting from reliance on psychometric tests toward the applicant's values and cultural principles consistent with organisational goals. Although research and theoretical models indicate that academic performance has an insignificant correlation with career success, some studies suggested that GPA might influence career success. Hence, it is imperative to evaluate the possibility and the nature of the correlation between educational achievement and career success due to current mixed outcomes noted in various studies. As a result, I formulated a research question and hypothesis based on the evidence obtained from the literature review.

Research Question:

1. Does academic performance influence career outcomes?

The research question is based on the findings that educational achievement tends to influence professional accomplishments. The lack of substantiated evidence makes it difficult to identify the nature of the correlation between career success and academic performance. Thus, answering this question could help HR professionals to understand whether both variables have any relationship.

Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant difference in GPA between the different levels of career success.

I developed this hypothesis to help identify the nature of the correlation (if any) between career success and academic performance. Current literature indicates that the relationship between both variables is unconfirmed. Thus, this hypothesis ought to describe the nature and degree of association between academic achievement and career success.

Methodology:

I used historical data aggregated from different studies conducted in Singapore that contained information about 107 working graduates from 29 different countries, graduated from top institutions in their respective countries. Due to the scattered nature of available information, this step was a significant limitation for this study. The retrieved data included a graduate GPA for the academic performance variable and career position categories in the workplace. The data came from participants from different countries

who have attended Singapore universities. Thus, I standardised the GPA data using a 5-point scale to align it with the grading scale used by top learning institutions in Singapore. The participants have graduated and worked in different organisations under various job categories. Therefore, I classified the different points of career seniority into four broad categories. "0" denotes participants who are currently studying or unemployed. "1" indicates those who are in entry-level junior positions. "2" means those who are in Mid-level positions, such as managers and assistant directors. Lastly, "3" indicates respondents in senior, Top-level management. The coding of the data enabled me to convert categories into values that can be regressed and to identify some directionality in the regression equation. After aggregating the data, I computed Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Independent t-test to obtain the result.

Findings:

The results of my data analysis answered the research question and respond to the hypothesis.

The data analysis returned with a significance value of 0.001. A value which is > 0.05 shows that at least one group of respondent's postgraduate GPA has a positive effect on their career success. The multiple comparison table showed that those who are unemployed are the ones who also have the highest GPA score. This finding might sound puzzling. However, in the data points we have collected, the coding of "0" which denoted unemployed, referred to respondents who are currently pursuing further education. We reviewed the raw data and found that there were 4 respondents coded with "0", and all of them are currently pursuing their PhD studies.

ANOVA

Postgrad GPA (Round up)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.003	3	.668	6.380	.001
Within Groups	10.779	103	.105		
Total	12.783	106			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Postgrad GPA (Round Up)
Tukey HSD

		95% Confidence interval				
(I) Current Career Seniority Coding 0= N/A (Unemployed) 1= Junior 2= Mid Level 3= Senior	(J) Current Career Seniority Coding 0= N/A (Unemployed) 1= Junior 2= Mid Level 3= Senior	Mean Difference (I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
0	1	.70385*	.18497	.001	.2208	1.1869
	2	.059492*	.16714	.003	.1584	1.0314
	3	.44000	.17187	.057	-.0088	.8888
1	0	-.70385*	.18497	.001	-1.1869	-.2208
	2	-.10893	.09912	.691	-.3687	.1499
	3	-.26385	.10689	.071	-.5430	.0153
2	0	-.59492*	.16714	.003	-1.0314	-.1584
	1	.10893	.09912	.691	-.1499	.3678
	3	-.15492	.07176	.142	-.3423	.0325
3	0	.44000	.17187	.057	-.8888	.0088
	1	.26385	.10689	.071	-.0153	.5430
	2	.15492	.07176	.142	-.0325	.3423

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Discussion and Conclusions

The group analysis provided a positive correlation between the postgraduate GPA and the career success of the respondents. However, this holds only for those who are currently pursuing advanced education, such as PhD. This observation suggests that employers would consider other factors, such as moral conduct and personal attributes, and use past academic performance as a reference more than a determinant when recruiting competent talents. Dhingra (2018) alluded that recruiters use interview performance, resumes, and internship experience when hiring. Based on this research and previous studies, academic standings alone do not determine career success for graduates. The negligible nature of the positive correlation between career success and academic performance indicated that talent acquisition managers would consider other assessment criteria in addition to an applicant's GPA when recruiting for talents.

I would recommend HR professionals to develop employee-screening tools that incorporate academic performance and personal attributes in the recruitment process. Hiring decisions should not solely rely on educational qualifications. Today, recruitment managers consider personal attributes, such as communication skills, management abilities, and ethics that align with organisational culture, to select the most appropriate candidate. Individual features tend to be valuable as an employee progresses from one level to another. Thus, using academic performance as a critical determinant to qualify applicants is inadequate and discriminative. A comprehensive screening instrument that integrates academic and personal attributes in the hiring process will help HR professionals to obtain the best candidates and avoid biased recruitment tools.

References

- Afarian, R., & Kleiner, B. H. (2003). The relationship between grades and career success. *Management Research News*, 42-51.
- Backes-Gellner, U., & Geel, R. (2014). A comparison of career success between graduates of vocational and academic tertiary education. . *Oxford Review of Education* , 266-291.
- Brown, B. K., & Campion, M. A. (1994). Biodata phenomenology: Recruiters' perceptions and use of biographical information in resume screening. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 897–908.
- Carr, S. E., Celenza, A., Puddey, I. B., & Lake, F. (2014). Relationships between academic performance of medical students and their workplace performance as junior doctors. *BMC Med Educ*, 157.
- Dhingra, M. (2018). Factors Affecting Hiring Decision: Employers Perspective in National Capital Region. *Journal of Strategic Human Resource Management*, 15-21.
- Dierendonck, D. v., & Gaast, E. v. (2013). Goal orientation, academic competences and early career success. *Career Development International*, 694-711.

- Kiriakids, P., Decosta, J. W., & Sandu, A. (2011). What is the effect of grade point average (GPA) on courses taken either face-to-face or online by undergraduate working adult students? *Revista De Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala*, 7-26.
- Kool, A., Mainhard, M. T., Jaarsma, A. D., Brekelmans, M., & Beukelen, P. v. (2016). Academic success and early career outcomes: Can honors alumni be distinguished from non-honors alumni? . *A. Kool, M. T. Mainhard, A. D. C. Jaarsma, M. Brekelmans & P. van Beukelen*, 179-192.
- Puddey, I. B., Mercer, A., & Carr, S. E. (2019). Relative progress and academic performance of graduate vs undergraduate entrants to an Australian medical school. *BMC Medical Education*, 19.
- Ren, J., & Hagedorn, L. S. (2012). International Graduate Students' Academic Performance: What Are the Influencing Factors? *Journal of International Students*, 135-143.
- The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity . (2016). *The Learning Generation - Investing in Education in a Changing World*.
- Willoughby, D., Lee, F., Jr., & Beil, J. (2013). Academic performance in a two-year Turfgrass management program as an indicator for career success. *NACTA Journal*, vol. 57, no. 3.

The Myth of Flexitime – are Employees with Flexitime Happier, Healthier and less likely to Quit?

DON MAK

Introduction

Flexitime becomes one of the must-have perks to attract talents. According to The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey 2019, flexitime is one of the top 3 attractions appeal to most Millennials and Gen Z. Modern employees simply do not like a 9-to-5 routine work life as their parents and grandparents did. They want the freedom to integrate their work and personal lives at their own pace. If attracting talents is a goal of most companies, is flexitime the simple solution for getting there?

From the employer's perspective, however, offering employees with flexitime raises two major issues. First, is it a practical management practice? Although flexitime is possible for any job function, it is much more difficult to offer it to customer service-focused employees. This is especially the case when the employees are required to be on premises during certain hours. For example, while the receptionists are expected to answer the incoming calls and welcome the guests during the standard office hours, flexitime is not a practical perk for them.

The second issue related to the concern over treatment consistency. If flexitime is written into the company policy, it should be offered to all employees. But most of the companies typically consist of various job functions, include those customer services-focused employees who are unlikely to be offered flexitime due to the job responsibilities. These employers are concerned with the perception of unfairness as a result of inconsistent treatment across employees.

In summary, one of the leading luxury retail groups with prestigious brands, is keen to implement flexitime. Given the uncertainty effects and limitations of flexitime, before officially implementing it in South Asia region with 900 employees, management decided to have a trial run in Singapore office, starting from July 1, 2019.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of flextime on job satisfaction, psychological health and turnover intention. The study was conducted among employees in a real business setting in which about 50% of customer service-oriented employees in the organization are not provided with flextime.

A survey was conducted among these 130 employees either with flextime or fixed working hours after 6 months of the trial run. An independent sample T-test was conducted to assess if there are differences on job satisfaction, psychological health and turnover intention by an independent variable – flextime.

This study highlights the challenges of flextime in the retail industry and offers insights to companies that are interested to implement flextime. Organizational culture, ongoing metrics and internal communication are important factors for flextime success.

Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

Flexible workplace arrangement has traditionally been considered as a Human Resources practice that enables employees to balance personal and professional responsibilities, especially for childcare leave (Leslie et al 2012). Work and personal life balance are often one of the key challenges for employees (Rotondo et al., 2003). To stand out from the crowd, many companies are happy to provide a flexible workplace arrangement as part of the employer branding practices. It is believed that offering a flexible workplace arrangement can enhance the attractiveness of the organization to applicants (Carless and Wintle, 2007).

Flextime trends up and generates a great deal of interest to investigate the employees' perceptions of flextime. Past studies, mainly based on the experiments and surveys, have examined the association between flextime and several work-related factors include productivity, work engagement, turnover intention, job motivation and employee stress levels. These studies tend to show a positive association between flextime and work-related factors. According to Solanki (2013), employees who can have flextime could be more satisfied, productive and less stressful than their counterparts who don't have flextime. Orpen (1981) also observed that flextime caused a significant increase in employee satisfaction.

Nonetheless, Ralston (1989) observed that the benefits of flextime might not exist as expected. The findings were also supported by the study conducted by Golden (2001), who argued that despite impressive gains in flextime, the distribution of flextime among employees was quite uneven according to the demographic and job characteristics of the employees, such as race, gender, education level and occupation.

Job Satisfaction

According to Locke (1969), job satisfaction is the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values. In fact, job satisfaction is recognized as a predictor variable with respect to job performance (Judge, 2001; Schleicher et. al., 2004; Jones, 2006), turnover intention (Adeyemo & Afolabi, 2007; De Moura et al. 2009), organization commitment (Yousef, 1998) and absenteeism (Siu, 2002; Wegge, 2007).

A satisfied employee is not just a company's greatest asset but also a valuable ambassador for employer branding, internally and externally. While considerable evidence has shown that employee job satisfaction is crucial for organization success, it explains why more and more organizations are committed to boosting their employees' job satisfaction with different means.

Psychological Health

Broadly speaking, psychological health is defined as optimal living. It refers to one's social well-being, emotion and behaviour. It also affects the individual how to handle stress, relationship and make the decision. Considering a good amount of time that employees spend at work, it is not surprising that the psychological health of employees plays a significant role in the organizations. Increasingly, researchers study the importance and impact of psychological health on the employees and organizations (Brough, *et. al.*, 2009; Dollard, 2012; Trépanier, *et. al.*, 2013).

Turnover Intention

While the turnover rate is a measurable indicator to measure the percentage of employees in an organization during a period, the turnover intention is viewed as an intangible predictor as it is the final step in the

decision-making process before an employee actually leaves the organization (Mobley, 1982; Horn et al., 1984).

Bothma (2011) suggested that leaving a job may not always be an option for an individual. It is a combination of personal and contextual factors such as the employability of the individual and the general labour market. It is also based on the perceived chances to find another job, risk acceptance and availability of alternative employment (Senter & Martin, 2007).

Based on job satisfaction, psychological health and turnover intention, the following hypotheses were developed:

To investigate the association between flextime and job satisfaction, the first hypothesis to be examined in this study:

H1: Staff with flextime have a higher level of job satisfaction than those with fixed working hours

It is believed that offering employees flextime enhance their autonomy. After all, employees can better manage their work and personal time and therefore life is less stressful. With this, the second hypothesis is formed and to be tested:

H2: Staff with flextime have a higher level of psychological health than those with fixed working hours

Like the other retail companies, employee turnover is one of the key HR challenges. In this context, the third hypothesis is developed and to be tested:

H3: Staff with flextime have a lower level of turnover intention than those with fixed working hours

Methods

Procedure and Sample

Data were collected among 130 employees across 8 functions in Singapore: Building of Services, Chief Operating Officer's Office,

Customer Services, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology and Logistics. All participants were full-time permanent employees based in the Singapore office. To enhance the participants' awareness and encourage their participation, an invitation email was sent by the researcher to these 130 participants prior to conducting the survey. Participants were only informed that the survey was to investigate the workplace behavior for academic purpose. To avoid any bias, however, they were not told the content of the survey nor the research topic throughout the whole process. The data collection was completed in the office hours during the period of January 30, 2020 to February 14, 2020 – the 7th month since the trial run started from July 1, 2019.

In terms of online survey design, there were 27 items in total, consisting of 3 measures: Job Satisfaction (5 items), Psychological Health (12 items), Turnover Intention (6 items) and demographic questions (4 items). The online survey was completed anonymously and voluntarily in groups. All online survey questions were identical with the following 3 measures: The Index of Job Satisfaction - Brayfield-Rothe (1951), General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) and Turnover Intention Statement (TIS-6).

Measures

The Index of Job Satisfaction - Brayfield-Rothe (1951)

The job satisfaction scale developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) is one of the popular measures for job satisfaction assessment. The full version of this job satisfaction measure consists of 18 items. To simplify the survey design, this project followed the research conducted by Judge et al (2000), only 5 items were taken from the Brayfield-Rothe measure of job satisfaction (1951).

These 5 items include “I feel fairly satisfied with my present job.”, “Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.”, “Each day at work seems like it will never end.” (reverse scored), “I find real enjoyment in my work.” and “I consider my job rather unpleasant” (reverse scored). In addition, responses to the Brayfield-Rothe measure of job satisfaction items were assessed on 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. With this 7-point scoring scheme (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), the total score in Brayfield-Rothe measure is between 7 and 35. A higher score indicates a higher level of job satisfaction.

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)

The General Health Questionnaire developed by Goldberg (1972) has been widely used to measure general psychological health. The questionnaire at first included 60 items and subsequently, questionnaire involving 30, 28, 20, and 12 items were developed. To ease the administration, the 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), validated by Lobo & Muñoz (1996), was used in the survey. GHQ-12 contains 6 Positively Worded (“PW”) items (e.g. Have you recently felt you were playing a useful part in things?) and 6 Negatively Worded (“NW”) items (e.g. Have you recently felt you could not overcome your difficulties?). One of the features of GHQ-12 is it needs to with it differentiated response scale for the PW items (i.e. Much less so than usual, Less so than usual, Same as usual, More than usual) and NW items (i.e. Not at all, No more than usual, Rather more than usual, Much more than usual).

Like the study conducted by Molina et al (2014), a 4-point scoring scheme (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4) was applied in this research with a total score ranged from 4 to 48. A higher score implies a higher level of general psychological health.

Turnover Intention Statement (TIS-6)

Turnover Intention Statement (TIS-6) is a 6-item scale adapted from the 15-item scale initially developed by Roodt (2004) as a measure for examining employee’s intention to stay or leave the organization. Bothma & Roodt (2013) observed that TIS-6 is a reliable and valid scale for measuring turnover intention and for predicting actual turnover.

Examples of TIS-6 items include “How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?”, “To what extent is your current job satisfying your personal needs?” and “How often do you get frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?” Osgood’s (1964) semantic differential technique of bipolar 5-step response scales was used to measure the response of participants in TIS-6 (e.g. never - always; to no extent - to a very large extent; highly unlikely - highly likely).

Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the completed online survey, an independent sample T-test was undertaken to compare the mean of the Index of Job Satisfaction (Brayfield-Rothe, 1951), General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) and Turnover Intention Statement (TIS-6) between staff with flextime and fixed working hours. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was applied to check the internal consistency of the test items. An α above 0.6 was found: The Index of Job Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.712$), General Health Questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.799$) and Turnover Intention Statement ($\alpha = 0.628$) (Refer to Data Section), suggesting they are considered high reliability and acceptable index (Pallant 2001).

Results

In summary, among these 130 employees, 117 finished the survey (90% response rate) with 104 fully completed surveys (Female: 48.2%, Male: 43%, Did not report: 8.8%). Refer to Table 1. Out of these, 52 surveys were completed by the group of employees with flextime (COO Office, Finance, Human Resources, I.T, Building of Services) and fixed working hours (Logistics and Customer Services) respectively (Refer to Table 2). Among them (2 of them did not report), the mean of age was 37.8 (SD: 9.97) while the mean of tenure was 7.15 years (SD: 6.33) (Refer to Table 3).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	49	43.0	47.1	47.1
	Female	55	48.2	52.9	100.0
	Total	104	91.2	100.0	
Missing	System	10	8.8		
Total		114	100.0		

Table 1 – Descriptive Statistics of Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	COO Office	6	5.3	5.8	5.8

	Finance (Accounting / FP&A / Compliance)	24	21.1	23.1	28.8
	Human Resources	11	9.6	10.6	39.4
	I.T.	7	6.1	6.7	46.2
	Logistics (Warehouse / Shipment)	27	23.7	26.0	72.1
	Customer Services (Technician / Non- Technician)	25	21.9	24.0	96.2
	Building of Services (Admin / Security)	4	3.5	3.8	100.0
	Total	104	91.2	100.0	
Missing	System	10	8.8		
Total		114	100.0		

Table 2 – Descriptive Statistics of Job Function

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	102	18	66	37.83	9.97
Tenure	102	1	31	7.15	6.33
Valid N (listwise)	102				

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics of Age and Tenure

Analysis for Job Satisfaction

H1: Staff with flextime have a higher level of job satisfaction than those with fixed working hours

To test *H1*, an independent sample was conducted to examine if there is any difference in job satisfaction between the group of employees on flextime and on fixed working hours. However, the results show job satisfaction in the flextime group (**Mean: 4.60 SD: 0.79**) is lower than the fixed working hours group (**Mean: 4.98 SD: 0.98**). Refer to Table 4. The test value shows the significant difference in job satisfaction between these two groups ($p=0.029$). Therefore, *H1* was rejected.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
Thinking specifically about your current job, do you agree with the following - I feel fairly satisfied with my present job	Fixed Working Hours	52	5.52 (a)	1.18	.164
	Flextime	52	4.92 (a)	1.20	.167
Thinking specifically about your current job, do you agree with the following - Most days I am enthusiastic about my work	Fixed Working Hours	52	5.27 (a)	1.17	.163
	Flextime	52	4.94 (a)	.916	.127
Thinking specifically about your current job, do you agree with the following - I find real enjoyment in my work	Fixed Working Hours	52	5.27 (a)	1.21	.167
	Flextime	52	4.75 (a)	1.10	.153
Thinking specifically about your current job, do you agree with the following - Each day at work seems like it will never end	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.73 (b)	1.62	.225
	Flextime	52	3.48 (b)	1.75	.243
Thinking specifically about your current job, do you agree with the following - I consider my job to be rather unpleasant	Fixed Working Hours	52	5.15 (b)	1.46	.203
	Flextime	52	4.90 (b)	1.32	.183
Overall Job Satisfaction Mean	Fixed Working Hours	52	4.99	.984	.136
	Flextime	52	4.60	.792	.110

Table 4 – Independent Sample T-Test of the Index of Job Satisfaction (Brayfield-Rothe, 1951)

(a) Scale: 1 = Strong disagree - 7 = Strong agree

(b) Reverse coding used to compute item mean scale. Item mean scale 1 = Strong agree - 7 = Strong disagree

Analysis for Psychological Health

H2: Staff with flextime have a higher level of psychological health than those with fixed working hours

To test *H2*, an independent sample was undertaken to assess if there is any difference in the psychological health between the group of flextime and fixed working hours. *H2* is supported as the results show the psychological health in the flextime group (**Mean: 3.06 SD: 0.31**) is higher than the fixed working hours group (**Mean: 3.04 SD: 0.42**). Refer to Table 5. However, the test value shows the insignificant difference of psychological health between these two groups ($p=0.775$).

	Group	N	Mean	Std Dev.	Std. Error Mean
Have you recently? - Lost much sleep over worry?	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.12(a)	.784	.109
	Flextime	52	3.12(a)	.808	.112
Have you recently? - Felt constantly under strain?	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.08(a)	.682	.095
	Flextime	52	2.81(a)	.817	.113
Have you recently? - Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.27(a)	.795	.110
	Flextime	52	3.13(a)	.658	.091
Have you recently? - Been feeling unhappy and depressed?	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.19(a)	.908	.126
	Flextime	52	3.33(a)	.678	.094
Have you recently? - Been losing confidence in yourself?	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.37(a)	.742	.103
	Flextime	52	3.35(a)	.764	.106
Have you recently? - Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.42(a)	.915	.127
	Flextime	52	3.69(a)	.544	.075
Have you recently? - Felt you were playing a useful part in things?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.69(b)	.579	.080
	Flextime	52	2.94(b)	.502	.070
Have you recently?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.88(b)	.676	.094

- Felt capable of making decisions about things?	Flexitime	52	2.92(b)	.479	.066
Have you recently? - Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.85(b)	.638	.088
	Flexitime	52	2.73(b)	.528	.073
Have you recently? - Been able to face up to your problems?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.88(b)	.615	.085
	Flexitime	52	2.98(b)	.313	.043
Have you recently? - Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.85(b)	.538	.075
	Flexitime	52	2.87(b)	.397	.055
Have you recently? - Been able to concentrate on what you're doing?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.88(b)	.615	.085
	Flexitime	52	2.87(b)	.397	.055
Overall_GHQ_Mean	Fixed Working Hours	52	3.04	.422	.059
	Flexitime	52	3.069	.31054	.04306

Table 5 – Independent Sample T-Test of the General Health Questionnaire

(a) Reverse coding used to compute item mean scale. Item mean scale 1 = Much more than usual - 4 = Not at all

(b) Scale: 1 = Much less so than usual - 4 = More so than usual

Analysis for Turnover Intention

H3: Staff with flexitime have a lower level of turnover intention than those with fixed working hours

To test *H3*, an independent sample was conducted to examine if there is any difference in Turnover Intention Statement (TIS-6) between the group of flexitime and fixed working hours. The results show the overall TIS-6 mean of flexitime group is **2.91** with a standard deviation of **0.563** and the fixed working hours group is **2.71** with a standard deviation of **0.518**. Refer to Table 6. The test value showed the insignificant difference of TIS-6 between the group of flexitime and fixed working hours ($p=0.06$). As such, *H3* was rejected.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.79(a)	.936	.130
	Flexitime	52	3.08(a)	.813	.113
How often do you get frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.81(a)	.841	.117
	Flexitime	52	2.98(a)	.852	.118
How often do you consider leaving your job?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.27(a)	.992	.138
	Flexitime	52	2.81(a)	.768	.106
How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.73(b)	1.122	.156
	Flexitime	52	2.94(b)	1.349	.187
To what extent is your current job satisfying your personal needs?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.96(c)	.885	.123
	Flexitime	52	2.94(c)	.752	.104
How often do you look forward to another day at work?	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.73(d)	.931	.129
	Flexitime	52	2.75(d)	.590	.082
Overall TSI-6 Mean	Fixed Working Hours	52	2.71	.518	.072
	Flexitime	52	2.92	.563	.078

Table 6 – Independent Sample T-Test of Turnover Intention Statement (TIS-6)

(a)Scale: 1 = Never - 5 = Always

(b)Scale: 1 = Highly unlikely – 5 = Highly likely

(c)Reverse coding used to compute item mean scale. Item mean scale 1 = To a very large extent – 5 = To no extent

(d)Reverse coding used to compute item mean scale. Item mean scale 1 = Always – 5 = Never

Conclusions

To summarize, this study aimed to examine the impact of flexitime on job satisfaction, psychological health and turnover intention by comparing 2 groups of employees working with flexitime and fixed working

hours. Results with respect to hypotheses are mixed. Contrary to expectations, the flextime group has a lower level of job satisfaction and a stronger turnover intention than a fixed working hours group (Hypotheses 1 and 3). Consistent with Hypothesis 2, the flextime group are found a higher level of psychological health than the fixed working hours group. Nonetheless, the difference is insignificant. Among these hypotheses, only Hypothesis 2 was supported.

*Average Days of Sick Leave taken/ Per Employee	Jul - Dec 2019
<i>Flextime Group</i> <i>Building of Services, Chief Operating Officer's Office, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology</i>	3.04
<i>Fixed Working Hours Group</i> <i>Customer Services (Technicians/Non-Technicians) Logistics (Warehouse / Shipment)</i>	3.31
Turnover Rate	Jul - Dec 2019
<i>Flextime Group</i> <i>Building of Services, Chief Operating Officer's Office, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology</i>	5.5%
<i>Fixed Working Hours Group</i> <i>Customer Services (Technicians/Non-Technicians) Logistics (Warehouse / Shipment)</i>	2.8%

Table 7 – Descriptive of Frequency of Sick Leave and Turnover Rate

**Sick Leave include outpatient sick leave and hospitalization leave*

In addition, the findings in this study also supported the archived data retrieved from the system (Table 7). Consistent with the findings, during the trial run period (July – December 2019), the average days of sick leave taken by employees working with flextime (**3.04 days/employee**) was lesser than employees working with fixed working hours (**3.31 days/employee**). Similarly, the actual turnover of the flextime group (**5.5%**) during the period between July and December 2019 was higher than the fixed working hours group (**2.8%**).

In conclusion, although employees working on flextime are healthier in general, no evidence was found to prove that they are happier and less likely to quit than employee working with fixed working hours.

Recommendations

Organizational culture can be a critical element in making flextime successful. Implementing flextime is only the first step, the key to success is whether the employees make good use of it in a supportive organization environment. Dikker et al (2004) found that the actual use of flextime was influenced by pre-existing culture of the workplace. In fact, some organizations employees are pressured not to use the flextime because they believed that recognition may only be awarded to “visible” work, rather than that work completed offsite (Kirby and Krone, 2002). They would rather start and finish work as the usual business hours instead of using the flextime to avoid being “penalized”.

To create a supportive culture, organizations should value the non-work aspects of people’s life and show recognition of work-life balance. This helps to influence the employees whose value, belief and behavior shape the unique culture of the organization. Moreover, it is important to develop some practical common practices. For example, meetings should be held within the core hours to accommodate the flextime arrangement. The management team should also lead by example.

Furthermore, companies are to use ongoing metrics to measure the effects and outcome. Like any other implementation in the organization, setting up measurable and timely metrics would be helpful to understand the progress and whether the desired outcomes are achieved. While some employees may welcome flextime allowing them to take a good work-life balance, it also may be that some employees struggle with using flextime considering the negative perception.

These metrics should include the individual employee (e.g. usage of flextime, staff engagement and performance) and organization level (e.g. productivity, turnover rate and profit). Meanwhile, the measurement is recommended to be on-going and on a regular basis like every 6 months in order to provide better insights for decision making. Hearing the feedback from employees to see what went well and what could be better is another practical source of data collection.

To make flextime work, internal communication also plays a crucial role. The organizations not only ensure the employees are clear about how the flextime program work, but also get them involved in the change process and help them understand the purposes of flextime. The more and earlier the involvement, the more buy-in from the employees.

While flextime allows employees to organize their work schedule, it implies that managers may not see the team all the time and hence they also need to adjust the way of team management. Clear communication of the dos and don'ts of flextime is recommended to ensure both managers and employees are clear about the expectations. Team collaboration software programs (e.g. Monday.com, Confluence, etc.) can help the teamwork closer in a constructive and open manner.

Context

This study was conducted in a large public hospital in Singapore. This particular context allowed for consistency since the professional expectations of the employees are central to the mission of the organisation according to Wallace². I refer to the specific firm studied here as ABC. ABC offers general hospital services with community-based care, partnering with primary care physicians, polyclinics and intermediate and long-term care providers. ABC adopted mindfulness as the corporate culture as quoted from the website: *“Our culture of mindfulness reminds us that people are important in the equation, be it patients, visitors, or staff. Whether it is attending to patients or discussing work among colleagues, focusing on being 'in the moment' helps us deliver care more thoughtfully instead of looking at it as just a routine”*.

While there are highly visible MBP, the program participation rate has not been the most encouraging as compared to other out of office programs in the organisation. The study is guided by the following Human Capital research question: What are the factors influencing the adoption of mindfulness in an organisation? Addressing the research question would allow ABC to drive effective promotion and adoption of mindfulness. The study focus on patient care employees, consisting 80% of the total ABC population.

Literature Review

We begin by reviewing the literature on motivations theory, Self-Regulated Learning (“SRL”) models, Social learning theory and the Schein's model of organizational culture. The SRL in workplace describe various forms of learning that professionals may engage in – formal and informal, structured and unstructured, on-the-job or off-the-job by Colley *et al*³. We contextualise the motivation of workplace learning (“WPL”), to the mindfulness based program conducted in ABC. Social learning theory and Schein's model of organizational culture provide a model for promoting the mindfulness values in organisation. We then explain the research methodology, present and discuss the findings from our study. Finally, we conclude by outlining the practical applications, limitations and propose directions for future research.

Methods

To answer the research question, qualitative field study in face-to-face, semi structured interviews were considered the most suitable primary data collection tool to access this knowledge. We used the purposive and quota sampling technique and selected individuals who are proficient and better informed on mindfulness. The interview questions were designed to elicit data about the employee motivation to attend the mindfulness program. See figure 1 on the non-identifier interviewees detail and Figure 2 the interview questionnaire

Figure 1: Interviewees role and length of service

Role with non-Identifier	Tenure (years)
Doctor 1	5
Doctor 2	1.5
Doctor 3	0.5
Doctor 4	2
Doctor 5	1.5
Psychologist1	2
Psychologist2	4.5
OT1	2
Nurse1	2.5
MSW1	5
Peer1	0.5

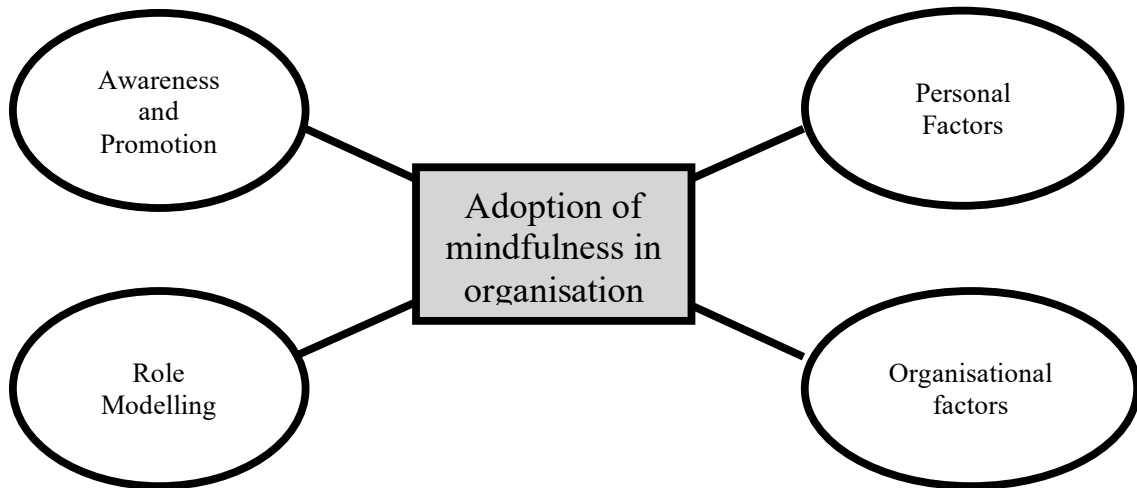
Figure 2: Semi Structured Interview Questionnaire

- How do you decide what to attend and not to attend any learning program in ABC?
- What motivates you to attend learning program in ABC?
- How do you define mindfulness?
- How can mindfulness help you do your work better?
- Which aspects of mindfulness is most helpful to you?
- What prevents or hinders you from learning about mindfulness?
- What will motivate you to attend mindfulness program in future?
- Does ABC has a mindfulness culture?
- How ABC leaders and employees display mindfulness values?
- How can the ABC help you learn about mindfulness?
- How you get to know about the mindfulness programs schedule in ABC?
- How can the ABC help you learn more about mindfulness?
- How to improve our program promotion and communication?

Key Findings and takeaway

The analysis followed an iterative pattern of moving between the data and the literature to gain insights into what motivate employees to learn mindfulness. Over 80 open codes were identified and sorted into 17 explanations derived on the basis of 1) recurrence on the factors of learning mindfulness; and 2) specific issues on the promotion of mindfulness. The salient construct in the discussion finally categorised into 4 major themes: a) personal factors; b) organisational factors; c) role modelling; and d) awareness & promotion.

Figure 4: Thematic network: Adoption of mindfulness in organisation



Personal Factor

We found that the level of prior experience in mindfulness is a motivation factor for learning. When they have more exposure to mindfulness, they are more likely keen to attend future mindfulness sessions. Virgili⁴ found that the benefits of mindfulness come only after some amount of quality in-class contact hour and regular practice as quoted by a respondent *Peer1*, who has attended mindfulness for few years, “*I would say on average probably takes almost a year. Is through a year of practice that I see the difference.*”

Organisational factors

Culture: Expanding on Schein’s theory, the espoused values may be different to the actual, underlying values of an organisation. We look for significant artifacts if existed and consistent with the espoused value to verify its genuineness of ABC value. We found inconsistency on the espoused value against the actual situation.

“Now here you’re promoting mindfulness culture. One of the prerequisites is time. Right. But at the same time, your other action is contradictory. So it’s not very practical.” Doctor3

Manager’s endorsement can encourage learning of MBP. “*To ensure more attendance, the supervisor should inform the staff that there is this program and I would like you to attend. If comes from them, it’s easy for the staff to attend.*” *Peer1*

Job relevancy: According to Zimmerman⁵, Self-regulation is the ‘self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals. This explains why job relevancy is important to the learning motivation to reach personal career goal. *“I think, I don't really find, there's no venue or situations that I think I will need to practice.”* Doctor2

Role modelling

Many respondents are able to describe that ABC has been actively promoting the mindfulness credit to CEO and Head of Psychiatrist leadership. The role modelling effect extend to friends and colleagues, direct managers and even Psychologist.

On friends and colleagues, for example, Doctor1 was resistant to attend mindfulness program at the beginning interview as he was very busy with clinical work and will prioritise for family time. He goes on to become more open if his trusted friends and colleagues are attending. This changed behaviours through observing others in social context can be explained by the social learning theory (Bandura, 1986),

Manager’s endorsement can encourage learning of MBP. *“To ensure more attendance, the supervisor should inform the staff that there is this program and I would like you to attend. If comes from them, it’s easy for the staff to attend.”* Peer1

“People are nice but if you're asking about whether everyone is committed and aware of mindfulness on a day-today basis, I don't really think so. So that has to come from the middle level bosses to practice it” Doctor4

Finally, the findings suggest that the learning of mindfulness can be enhanced when peers learn and practice together.

Awareness and Promotion

On Program, there were high recall rate of the CEO weekly Friday connect and the Lunch-time Mindfulness sessions. A few respondents mentioned that the email communication was too frequent that might create more opposite effect of deleting emails pertaining to mindfulness

communication. The lunch-time mindfulness session attendance was much lower than the Friday connect. There are no formal attendance tracking from the HR operations since this is managed directly by the organiser.

The findings suggest that ABC need to clarify on how Mindfulness can bring benefits to the organisation and employee. There were different understanding and also misconceptions. *“People misuse it. They think that oh yeah, we are mindful culture, we need to be mindful about being on time and be mindful here, mindful there. My understanding of the mindful practice is much deeper.” MSWI*

Limitations and Future Directions

The interview sample has representation from a range of roles within patient care but the sample was small (N=11) and therefore not capable of producing results that could be generalized. Furthermore, the fact that the respondents were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study may have introduced a sampling bias. Given the busy schedule and the job shift nature of healthcare professionals in the public hospital, this sampling strategy did not account for potential participants like the non-clinical staff who have been omitted from the study. Foregoing these methodological weaknesses, the study offers a valuable contribution to empirical research in the field.

For ABC, the study described in this paper can be very valuable to form the questionnaire around mindfulness culture and values for subsequent annual employee survey aims at increasing employee engagement. Future mindfulness training research should continue clarifying how these factors or personal, organization, role modelling and awareness & promotion influence the nature and consistency of workplace mindfulness practice.

Recommendations

The recommendations are 2 pronged, one is on how to promote, followed by what to promote mindfulness.

How to Promote

Role modelling is one big factor on promoting the learning of mindfulness. The advocates, managers and friends & colleagues are key group of people to role model the learning process. The good news is that this should be low hanging fruits as there are already existing structure in place and don't need to create new ones. The focus is on evaluating, enhancing and embracing these key roles to amplify the promotional effects.

Target Mindfulness Advocate as Key position Talent: The findings has revealed the importance of Mindfulness Advocate's role in promoting mindfulness in ABC. The Mindfulness Advocate is the catalyst to nurture the mindfulness values and practices. We recommend recruiting the Mindfulness Advocates carefully and selectively. They must process high interest, willing to invest time on learning and practice. Once appointed, he or she must be properly trained on mindfulness practices, e.g. MBRS or equivalent program, to ground him or her with the theory and practice that will provide consistency when communicating mindfulness values and leading the MBP, i.e. CEO Friday Connect or Lunch-time Mindfulness.

Another idea on promoting MBP is setting up a quiet corner in the office to encourage employee to practise mindfulness together and role model each other, This may even attract others to join in and form a small group that share similar interest. If appropriate, putting up a mindfulness corner in company food court, making the ambient comfortable and interesting with a board talking about mindfulness practice can further promote awareness and practice.

Friend and Colleague as Influencer: The psychologist can be more proactive recommending their friends and colleagues to participate in MBP. Given that they already have good knowledge on mindfulness, hence would be able to educate the right mindfulness values.

Another opportunity is to organise the MBP within each department. For example, the Mindfulness Advocates can organise monthly 45 to 60 minute departmental mindfulness practice. The familiarity with each other and understanding within the job function can encourage participation. This also support the earlier findings that practice together help promote learnings.

Manager as management Endorsement: We need the managers to embrace the mindfulness values, promote and endorse the program as self-regulated learning for work. The findings clearly called out manager's attitude towards mindfulness would encourage employee wanting to attend mindfulness program.

To enable the manager, ABC might want to consider having mandatory mindfulness MBSR training for the Managers, for example make this part of the formal professional development program.

What to promote

What mindfulness means: While there are clear evidences on the benefits of MBP in clinical setting, ABC needs to define what mindfulness means to the organisation and for each employee. One way is focus on job relevance by educating and inculcating the mindfulness values and practice into workday. For example, provide guidance on how mindfulness can translate into patient care process and activities. Give clear examples of mindfulness values in clinical practice by roles and by functions.

The misconception of mindfulness likely due to “fundamental culture incompatibility” of linking mindfulness with busy hospital work often having patient turnaround as KPI. For example: *“Now here you're promoting mindfulness culture. One of the prerequisites is time. Right. But at the same time, your other action is contradictory. So it's not very practical.” Doctor3*

To clarify this, ABC can alter the MBP towards more work-based approach. One of the recently popular program focus on workplace mindfulness is Mindfulness Based Strategic Awareness Training (“MBSAT”). According Dr. Juan Humberto Young, founder of MBSAT, the program offer a secular, contemporary training method to enhance personal resources, enable skilful and wise decision making at work and in personal matters.

In summary, adoption of mindfulness requires the understanding of personal and organisation factors and varies by individual and work situations. Organisation should consider these factors in optimizing MBP promotion and increase adoption. The action priority matrix hereby provides an easy reference for practical implementation and should be

localised based on organisation unique business priorities and align to the culture.

References

- Inc.com. 2020. Why Google, Nike, And Apple Love Mindfulness Training, And How You Can Easily Love It Too. [online] Available at: <https://www.inc.com/marissa-levin/why-google-nike-and-apple-love-mindfulness-training-and-how-you-can-easily-love-.html> [Accessed 26 March 2020].
- Wallace, J. E. 1993. Professional and organizational commitment: Compatible or incompatible? *J. Vocational Behav.* 42(3) 333–349.
- Collin, Kaija & van der Heijden, Beatrice & Lewis, Paul. (2012). Continuing professional development. *International Journal of Training and Development.*
- Virgili, M., 2015. Mindfulness-Based Interventions Reduce Psychological Distress In Working Adults: A Meta-Analysis Of Intervention Studies.
- Zimmerman, B., 2000. Self-Efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), pp.82-91.
- Business.smu.edu.sg. 2020. [online] Available at: <https://business.smu.edu.sg/mindfulness/TT/MBSAT-TT> [Accessed 26 March 2020].

Identification of High-risk Employees through Development of Predictive Employee Turnover Model

POH TECK KENG, ALVIS

Motivated and loyal employees are the basis of any organization's competitiveness (Gabcanova, 2011). Therefore, it is important that organizations retain their employees to ensure that they maintain their competitive position in the market (Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). Therefore, voluntary turnover of employees from any organization creates both internal and external issues with negative impacts on various operational and supporting business functions.

Addressing the Cause of High Employees Turnover

The thought process leading towards each intention to resign does not happen overnight. It can be a response to a push factor of internally culminated unhappiness induced by within the organization or an external pull factor by better offers or career prospects from other organizations. Some employees of certain profiles may pose a higher resignation risk than others due to family background (Choi, Azami, Owee Kowang, & Goh, 2016) or personality or organizational circumstances. If the management are able to recognise the profiles of employees with high resignation risk ("high-risk employees"), they will be able to engage these employees in time to address their concerns and help to prevent resignation.

This study aims to develop a predictive employee turnover model to flag out high-risk employee based on various personal and work-related variables. In addition, this study will be able to determine high-risk employee profile unique to the sample organisation, a local construction company, and specific to their field of business. The model will fulfil two key purposes: firstly, to assist the organization's management to salvage any potential turnover by timely engagement with the identified high-risk employees. Secondly, to provide insights for management on their internal managerial issues which influence turnover intentions and to review their current policies (e.g. recruitment, talent management, employee's remuneration and benefits, etc).

Predicting Turnover with Models

Through the years, many researchers have developed models of turnover processes with different determinants of turnovers. In a study to investigate turnover of nursing assistants in nursing home, a model (See **Figure 1**) was developed to suggested that turnover intention varies from different individual, depending on their job-related attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction, etc)., factors (e.g. employee benefits, etc.) and demographic variables (Rosen, Stiehl, Mittal, & Leana, 2011). It was highlighted that turnover intention can be triggered either by demographic (e.g. age) or/and job-related variable (e.g. job satisfaction).

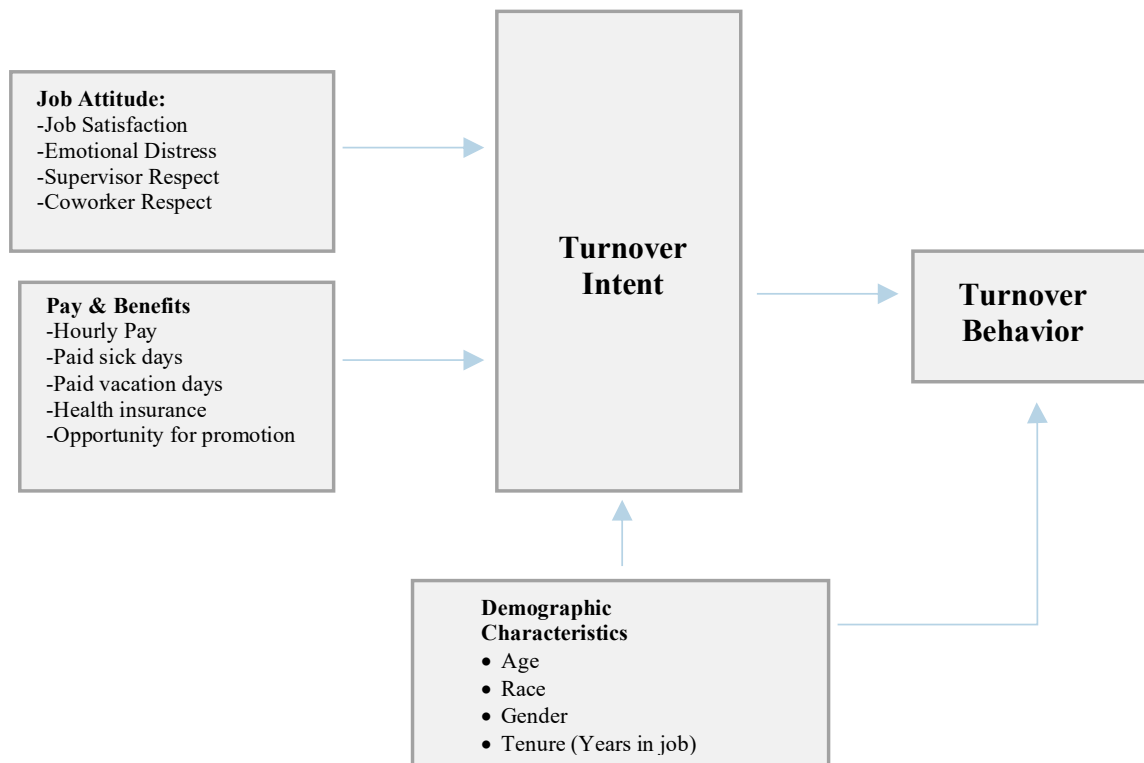


Figure 1. A conceptual model of turnover among certified nursing aides. ‘Stayers, Leavers, and Switchers Among Certified Nursing Assistants in Nursing Homes: A Longitudinal Investigation of Turnover Intent, Staff Retention, and Turnover’, by Jules Rosen, Emily Stiehl, Vikas Mittal and Carrie Leana, 2011, *The Gerontologist*, 51, pp. 598. Copyright 2011 The Author

Development of Predictive Employee Turnover Model

The combination of both personal and work-related data is likely to be sufficient to identify high-risk employees with turnover intention (see **Figure 2** for proposed model). While there are many other attributes that may influence turnover intention and actual turnover, some organizations may not have the resources or capabilities to obtain and to analyse complex data to produce results that to offer practical measures to mitigate resignations.

Surveys used to estimate job satisfaction that involves employee's participations may mislead organizations' perception of the current situation due to biasness in their responses and different individual's intention when completing the surveys (Gravelle, Hole, & Hossain, 2008). Compared with biographical data (age, gender, etc) and work-related data which the employee have no direct influence over (promotion, etc), the variation of response from the employees are negligible and may produce turnover prediction to a degree of accuracy.

Personal and Work-related Data as Turnover Predictors

Through literature review, it was suggested that attributes in the employee's personal history such as age, education or marital status maybe predictive of how long an employee remains in a job position (Schuh, 1967). Also, biographical data can be used to predict turnovers with a considerable degree of accuracy (Cascio, 1976).

Research has suggested that there are three main categories of correlates and variables, (1) external factors; (2) work-related factors; and (3) personal characteristics (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). For work-related category, salary, satisfactions (with job, work, salary and supervision) and commitment shows a high negative correlation with turnover. For personal characteristics, variable such as age, tenure, education, kinship responsibility (number of dependents) indicated strong negative correlation to turnover while behavioral intentions show positive correlation (Cotton et al., 1986).

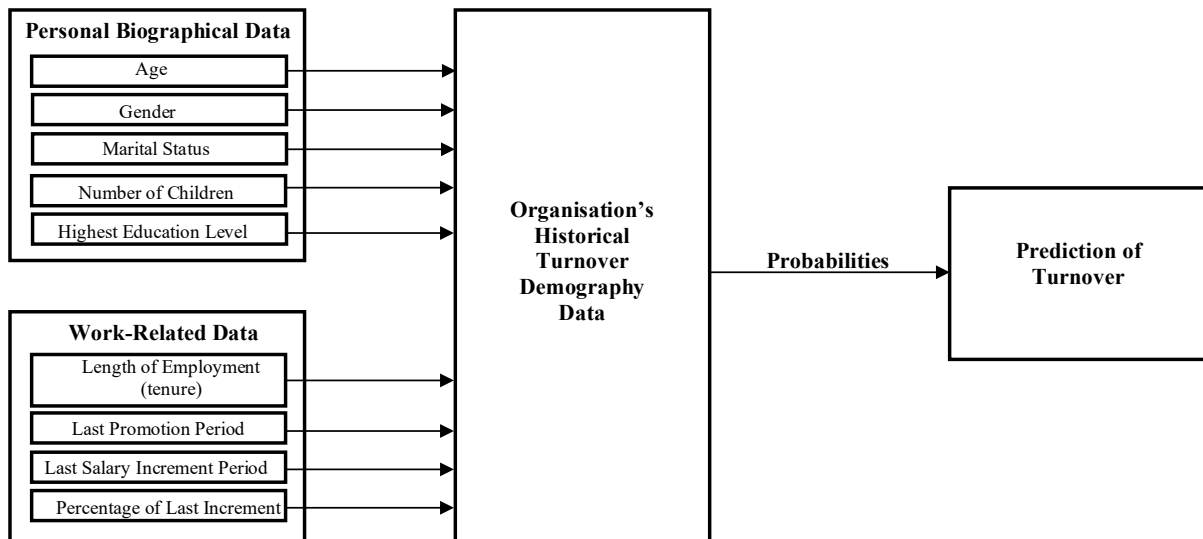


Figure 2. Predictive Employee Turnover Model/

Key Findings and Discussion

The result of the Pearson's Correlation Analysis shows that most of the variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) while some with no correlation to turnover. Personal variables such as age and number of children are negatively correlated to turnover, while education and gender are not. It was also suggested that married employees are less likely to resign as compared to their unmarried colleagues. For work-related variables, tenure was found to be negatively correlated to turnover while frequency of pay raise and promotion shows positive correlation. It was also found that the percentage of pay raise has no correlation to turnover. This suggested that higher frequency and consistency in showing of appreciation by promotion and pay increment are shown to be more effective than high amount of pay rise.

The Predictive Employee Turnover Model

To calculate the predicting probability of turnover from the obtained database, logistic regression was used to investigate the effects of the independent variables on the turnover probability of the employees as turnover is a binary dependent variable (resigned = 1, currently employed = 0). The predicted probability can be calculated generated with the following formula:

$$\text{Predicted Probability } (P) = \frac{e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}}{1 + e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}}$$

By finding each value of each variable (**Table 1**) from logistic regression, a Predictive Employee Turnover Model (see **Appendix A**) can be created to predict turnover probability of individual employees by entering their profile into the variable values (as highlighted in yellow). A set of sample values was entered in the table below as an example. The sample profile is a male, unmarried, university graduate who have completed his first year of employment with the company and have yet to receive any promotion or pay increment. For this profile, the predicted probability that he may resign is at 49.15%.

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Value (x)</u>	β_n	$\beta_n x_n$	$\beta_0 + \dots + \beta_n x_n$	$e^{(\beta_0 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}$	<u>Predicted Probability</u> $\frac{e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}}{1 + e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}}$
Age	26	-0.012	-0.312	-0.034	0.9665715	49.15%
Marital status	0	0.617	0			
Sex	1	0.269	0.269			
Education	8	-0.068	-0.544			
Tenure (years)	1	-1.413	-1.413			
% of Increment	0.00%	-0.007	0			
Number of children	0	-3.899	0			
Period since last promotion (years)	0	2.612	0			
Period since last increment (years)	0	-1.285	0			

Table 1: Computation of Predicted Turnover Probability

Note:

- 1) $\beta_0 = 1.966$
- 2) Both β_0 and β_n are unique to the obtained database.

The model has a prediction accuracy of 91.2%, with up to 98% accuracy predicting resignation. In the study, 131 of 550 current employees

were predicted to leave with predicted turnover probability of more than 50%. These 131 current employees are hence labelled as “High Risk” as they are highly likely to resign anytime soon when there is an internal push or external pull factor.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to the suggested predictive model. Firstly, the above model is only relevant and restricted to the organization which the data is obtained from. As the organization’s main business is construction and engineering services, the turnover behavior of the employees may be a result from the job function and a reaction to the work demand in their specialized field. Therefore, variables such as education, while it is not a strong influence to turnover in construction field, may be an effective predictor in organizations from a different industry (e.g. government agencies, consultancy, etc).

Secondly, the prediction did not take into consideration of employee’ job satisfaction and does not tell if the employees were satisfied with their job. The accuracy of the prediction is greatly dependent on two key factors: (1) the company’s capability to assess on employee’s job satisfaction and engagement; and (2) the effectiveness of employee data management of a company. Both factors, if analyzed in tandem, will be able to provide a much greater insight on the current HR climate in the organization and allow a wider range of options to retain high-risk employees. While the accuracy of the ideal prediction model is desirable, it requires a considerable amount of financial investment in an advanced Human Resources Information Systems (“HRIS”) and employee engagement initiatives, and a top management who believes in the effectiveness of evidence-based approach in employee retention.

Thirdly, it is difficult to influence changes to personal variable. For employees with personal variables that have a greater influence over their turnover probability, the actions that the organization can act on are very limited. For example, having children may reduce the predicted probability of turnover from a particular employee, but the organization is unable to influence the employee to have children as it is a personal choice. Likewise, for marriage.

Future Directions and Recommendations

To improve the accuracy of the prediction, there are two possible future directions to investigate further into turnover prediction. Firstly, more variables should be included into the prediction, such as distance between home location and workplace, employee's appointment/ position, managerial level and tenure in last job. Nationality and race are not suggested as variables as they are highly controversial and may produce biasness. It is also highly recommended that companies should start to study their employee's unique turnover behavior and establish a robust data management system and procedures that allow the capturing of essential data for analysis. Secondly, the prediction should be integrated with employee's engagement and job satisfaction level. An assessment for engagement and satisfaction must be carefully studied and how can the results be integrated with the employee's personal and work-related data to predict turnover.

To differentiate between industry and organization turnover behavior patterns, data should be collected from other construction organization if permitted. This will produce a large database enough to plot the trend of turnover in the construction industry to allow organizations to differentiate between industry and unique organization turnover behavior.

Lastly, to address the high-risk employees in the organization, one possible recommendation is to conduct interviews by their superior to have an overall sensing on their satisfaction with their current work areas and show concern to their personal life. These personalized and frequent interviews may help the supervisor to identify any dissatisfaction the employee may have in their work and show interest in attempts to improve their current situation.

Guide to create a Predictive Employee Turnover Model

The following steps is a guide to create a Predictive Employee Turnover Model from Archival Data:

1. Run a Pearson's Correlation Analysis on the independent variables from the archival data with SPSS.
2. With the analysis results, eliminate variables which are not statistically significant.

3. Run a Logistic Regression with remaining significant variables to find Beta (β) and Constant (β_0) in SPSS.
4. In Microsoft Excel, create the table as follow in **Table 2**.
5. Enter the Beta value (β) into the Column C (β_n) with their corresponding variables.
6. To create the model, enter the following formula in Microsoft Excel:
 - a. Column D = Column B * Column C
 - b. Column E = Constant (β_0) + D2 + D3 +..... D(n)
 - c. Column F = EXP (Column E)
 - d. Column G = F / (1 + F)
7. To find out a specific employee's turnover probability, enter their data into the corresponding variable under Value (x). The predicted probability in percentage will be generated under Column G.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Value (x)</u>	β_n	$\beta_n x_n$	$\beta_0 + \dots + \beta_n x_n$	$e^{(\beta_0 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}$	<u>Predicted Probability</u> $\frac{e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}}{1 + e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n)}}$
2	Age						
3	Marital status						
4	Sex						
5	Education						
6	Tenure						
7	% of Increment						
8	No. of child						
9	Period since last promotion						
10	Period since last increment						

Table 2: Predictive Employee Turnover Model

Note: β_0 = Constant

References

- Cardy, R. L., & Lengnick-Hall, M. (2011). Will They Stay or Will They Go? Exploring a Customer-Oriented. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 213-217.
- Cascio, W. (1976). Turnover, Biographical Data, and Fair Employment Practice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 61(5), 576-580.
- Choi, S., Azami, A., Owee Kowang, T., & Goh, C. (2016). An Analysis on the Relationship between Work Family Conflict and Turnover Intention: A Case Study in a Manufacturing Company in Malaysia. *International Business Management*, 176-182.
- Cotton, J., & Tuttle, J. (1986). Employee Turnover: A Meta-Analysis and Review with Implications for Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 11(1), 55-70.
- Gabcanova, I. (2011). The Employees - The Most Important Asset. *Human Resources Management & Ergonomics Volume V*, 1.
- Gravelle, H., Hole, A., & Hossain, M. (11 November, 2008). Response Bias in Job Satisfaction Surveys: English General Practitioners. *The University of York - Discussion Papers in Economics*, 2008(28).
- Rosen, J., Stiehl, E., Mittal, V., & Leana, C. (2011). Stayers, Leavers, and Switchers Among Certified Nursing Assistants in Nursing Homes: A Longitudinal Investigation of Turnover Intent, Staff Retention, and Turnover. *The Gerontologist*, 51(5), 597-609.
- Schuh, A. (1967). The Predictability of Employee Tenure: A Review of the Literature. *Personnel Psychology*, 20(2), 133-152.
- Simon, H., & March, J. (1993). *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.

Factors associated with Training Motivation in Building Organization Learning

GESA KATRINA QUEJA SALVADOR

“The organization could not just depend on the employee’s self-motivation to learn but need to foster and cultivate a learning culture that encourages and supports employees’ developmental journey.”

Introduction

As all companies strive to compete in a global economy, skills, and knowledge differentiation takes paramount importance. A Singapore based Engineering and Information Technology company promotes continuous learning to adapt in a technology-intensive environment and improve organizational learning. However, the company's annual training participation rate per employee started to decline for the past years in comparison with the industry average of 6.9 days per adult (MOM, 2020).

According to Meier, a college degree and any skills have a shelf-life of fewer than two years, and most organizations are placing bets on training and development as one of the essential corporate strategies to stay competitive and sustainable (Meier, 2017). However, conducting training does not guarantee the acquisition of knowledge; instead, employees must be motivated and willing to learn (Meier, 2017). Before the company continues to spend resources on the training program, it is critical to engage the employees and understand the organization's situational characteristics that are associated with training motivation.

Organization Learning and Training Motivation

The corporate speed to adapt to the various impact of workplace automation and digitalization is one of the critical competence in this era. It could be developed by attending skills upgrading and pursuing self-development activities. Organization learning focuses on continuous training and personal development process that is considered an integral part of organization development to have an effective skilled and competent workforce (King, 1994). The employee's reskilling and upskilling is a

corporate level agenda for implementing comprehensive people strategies that include investing in the training and development (Schwartz, Monahan, & Stockton, 2017).

Training Motivation and Organization's Situational Characteristics

Training motivation is a complex process composed of internal and external forces that trigger and direct a given behavior, leading individuals to invest effort and make them persist in this behavior to reach their goals (Kochoian et al., 2017). The individual must be psychologically ready before participating in learning and development activities for effective learning to occur (Cohen, 1990). Training motivation has an essential impact on employee's behavior of preparation, how much he or she will learn, his performance level in the actual training program, and the knowledge and skill to be acquired and apply to his actual daily job (Smith, Jayasuriya, Caputi, & Hammer, 2008) Employees who believe they are capable of improving their skills report more participation in development activities in the past (Noe, Wilk, & Schmitt, 1993) The presence of some external factors within the organization could enhance the employee's intrinsic motivation to learn (McEvoy, 2011).

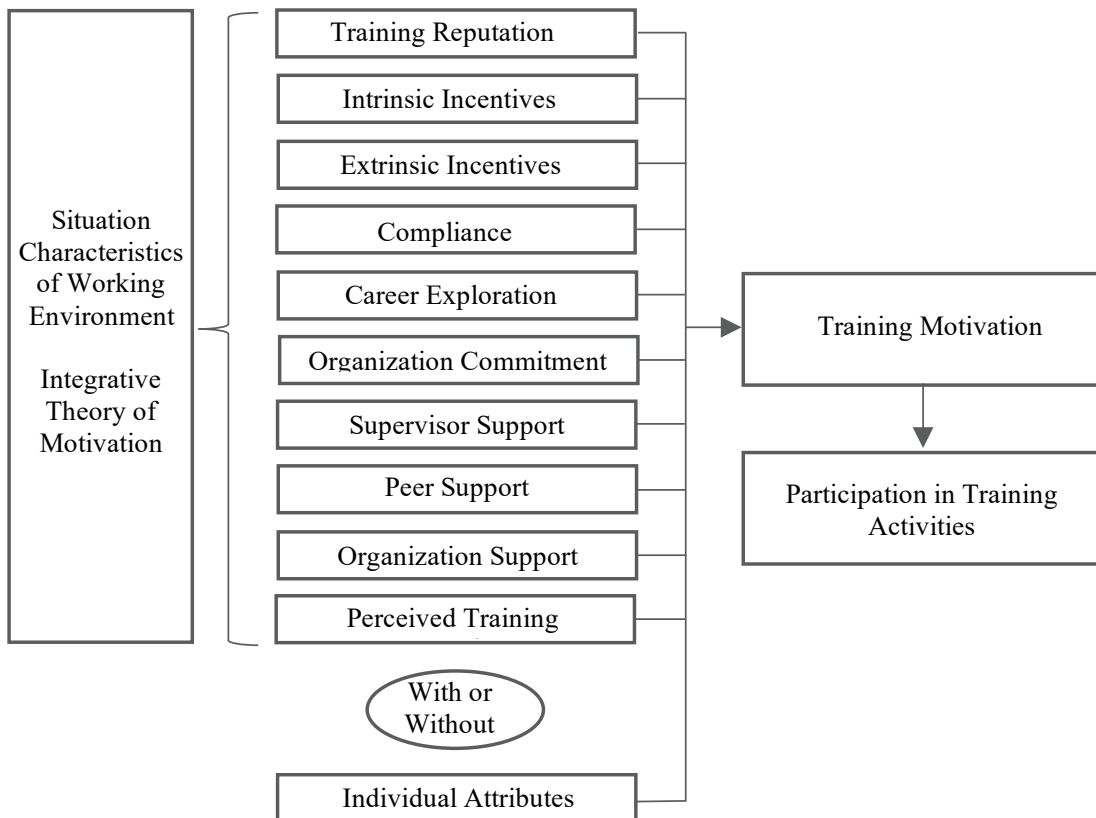
The significant components of the situational variable in the organizational model would be like organization structure, system, process, values, leadership support, rewards, and peers that could influence an individual's attitudes and performance (James, Jones, & Deese, 1974). There is substantial backing support for the notion that perceived organizational support has a positive correlation with employee's actions because organizations that have a learning culture have a set of values, beliefs, and practices that encourage a continuous process of learning (Park, Kang & Kim, 2018) .

Integrative Theory of Training Motivation

In the study, the integrative theories (Refer to Figure 1) of Need-Value-Paradigm and Maslow's Theory aided in explanation of how external stimulus in combination with internal psychological construct affects the individual in performing the desired outcome (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000). Need-Motive-Value paradigm emphasized on personality, values, and needs that define the individual's motivation level (Tharenou, 2001).

The individuals' characteristics and values create several self-set goals in consort with the perceptive formation of his workplace environment (Tharenou, 2001). In a similar context, Maslows' theory emphasizes on innate forces that drive people for the satisfaction of needs. For example, self-determination that leads to specific behavior while others focus on environmental conditions that enhance behavior expression (Colquitt et al., 2000)

Figure 1



Source: (Fecteau et al., 1995; Colquitt et al., 2000)

Methods

A group of 105 employees participated in the research study and completed an e-survey questionnaire. Their respective training data for year 2017 and 2018 were retrieved from the company's Human Resource Department. The study used correlation and multiple linear regression method to analyze the data between four independent variables (i.e. Task Goal, Supervisor Feedback, Perceive Training-Transfer, and Training Relevance) and dependent variables which is the employees' training hours in year 2017 and 2018.

Key Findings

The result showed that only supervisor feedback and perceived training transfer are significantly associated with the training motivation of the employees to participate in training and developmental activities. The employees agree that feedback and perceived training transfer were related to their motivation to attend and participate in training programs. The situational characteristic of the employees partially influenced them to participate in some training activities.

Any challenging works that require new knowledge or skill are likely to believe that attending the training will help them to perform the job successfully, but if the supervisor does not cultivate learning culture, this will reduce the employees' willingness to take the initiative to participate in training. Based on the interview conducted, the employees stated that they did not receive regular feedback to participating in training for skills improvement. Some employee's feedback indicates that they are eager to attend training provided that they understand their developmental plan and relevance to their work. These related to the other factor, which is perceived training transfer. The more the employee expects that the effort invested will result in a learning value and lead to mastery of knowledge, the more he is motivated to learn and demonstrate a higher level of training motivation to participating in developmental activities.

Conclusion

The individual attributes and company's learning culture are both factors that determine the individual's training motivation. The organization could not just depend on an individual's self-motivation to learn but need to foster and cultivate an environment that encourages and supports employees' learning and development journey. It is helpful to understand the specific external factors that are associated with employee's training motivation to ensure that company can provide adequate attention with its limited resources. Any organizational program to be implemented to address these external factors is very crucial because it also influences an employee's intrinsic motivation. This research revealed that, in general, supervisors' feedback and perceived training transfer were the leading factors associated with training motivation. This should be the company's priority when planning an intervention program. Management, leaders, and supervisors need to be innovative in creating a proposition to understand

the key levers and drivers to motivate their employees and tailor it based on individual differences.

Recommendations of the Study to the Organization

Based on the analysis of the data, three recommended activities will facilitate the incorporating of supervisor's feedback and employees' perceived training transfer at the workplace in building organization learning.

The first recommendation is to cultivate a "Feedback Culture" within the organization where it creates a safe environment to engage the employee to seek and to receive feedback. The company needs to train supervisors on what, when, and how to provide transparent and constructive feedback regarding an individual's skills gap for training development. The company must cultivate an ongoing commitment feedback process that is clear, realistic, and aligned with the company's performance expectation. The HRD role is to create a clear guideline in providing feedback and monitoring its implementation. Through implementation and providing training to the supervisor, it will strengthen the organization's "Feedback Culture" overtime.

The second recommendation is to look into increasing the frequency of providing feedback. The HRD role is to streamline administrative and feedback processes in the organization and create various channels towards increasing regular feedback exchanges (e.g. monthly or quarterly). Conducting annual performance reviews may not be sufficient to follow through their training needs as it may change from time to time. A regular performance checkpoint on a monthly or quarterly basis could complement formal annual review for the acquisition of new technical or personal skills. The role of the HRD is to ensure training needs analysis is being integrated into the employee's development plan discussion and aligned with the company's business objectives.

The third recommendation is to enhance the perceived training transfer by having a pre-training discussion between supervisor and employee to frame the training relevance to employees' current or future job roles. The company could create opportunities for employees to provide input in redesigning their work to apply their new knowledge and skills for process improvement.

Limitation

While this study provides insights regarding training motivation, there are some limitations for further investigation. The first limitation of the study was the questionnaire designed in collaboration with the company's HRD. There may be possible bias based on the observable behavior within the organization. Another limitation is that the survey design was based on one (1) question per factor in which the reliability and validity are considered weak. Finally, the result of this study focuses on the situational characteristics of the company based on its current business set-up and operation.

Future Directions

For future study, researchers could explore conducting a more comparative study on the other industry to provide a deeper understanding of the various factors affecting training motivation. A potential area of research is the comparison of employee's individual attributes (e.g. cognitive ability, self-efficacy, anxiety, age, conscientiousness) in contrast with situational characteristics to understand the leading motivation factor. Another perspective in a research study could be intrinsic motivation as a mediator to broaden the understanding the extent of situational characteristics to predict an individual's behavior when participating in training and development activities.

References

Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research and Statistics Department, MOM. 2020.

Maier, A. (2017). Using Expectancy Theory to Assess Employee Motivation for Corporate Training (Doctoral dissertation, Trident University International).

King, J. (1994). "Reskilling" the workforce. *Computerworld*, 29(1), 46.

Schwartz, J., Monahan, K., & Stockton, H. (2017). Forces of change The Future of Work. Retrieved March 3, 2019, Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/technology-and-the-future-of-work/overview.html>

- Kochoian, Nané, Raemdonck, Isabel, Frenay, Mariane, & Zacher, Hannes. (2017). The Role of Age and Occupational Future Time Perspective in Workers' Motivation to Learn. *Vocations and Learning*, 10(1), 27-45.
- Cohen, D. J. (1990). The Pretraining Environment: A Conceptualization of How Contextual Factors Influence Participant Motivation. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 1(4), 387–398. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1002/hrdq.3920010408>
- Smith, R., Jayasuriya, R., Caputi, P., & Hammer, D. (2008). Exploring the role of goal theory in understanding training motivation. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 12(1), 54-72
- Noe, R., Wilk, S., & Schmitt, N.. (1993). Investigation of the Factors That Influence Employees' Participation in Development Activities. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(2), 291-302
- McEvoy, G. M. (2011). Increasing Intrinsic Motivation to Learn in Organizational Behavior Classes. *Journal of Management Education*, 35(4), 468-503
- James, L., Jones, A., & Deese, J. (1974). Organizational climate: A review of theory and research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 81(12), 1096-1112
- Park, S. Kang, H.S., & Kim, E.J. (2018). The Role of Supervisor Support on Employees' Training and Job Performance: An Empirical Study. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 42(1-2), 57-2), p.57-74
- Kanfer, R. (1990) Motivation theory and Industrial/Organization psychology IN M.D. Dunnette and L. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology*. Volume 1. Theory industrial and organizational psychology (pp.75-170) Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

Colquitt, J. A., LePine, J. A., & Noe, R. A. (2000). Toward an Integrative Theory of Training Motivation: A Meta-Analytic Path Analysis of 20 Years of Research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(5), 678–707

Tharenou, P. (2001). The relationship of training motivation to participation in training and development. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 74(5), 599-621.

How can Artificial Intelligence be Implemented in a Recruitment Firm? A Qualitative Study

YAMINI SINGH

Introduction

Rapid evolution in technology has metamorphosed the way organisations work, penetrating every department and function. The Human Resources (HR) department, often considered to be a dark bureaucratic force that blindly imposes nonsensical rules (Hammonds, 2005), is also transforming via technology delivering systems to support the daily functions. Automation tools include online payroll systems, e-leave application, and e-claims. These paperless approval processes have removed delays. Many organisations are now moving to Artificial Intelligence (AI) to further this transformation.

In HR, AI is being used in functions like candidate screening, replying to candidate queries, interview scheduling, assessment, background screening, performance measurement, internal recruiting, among others. (Meister, 2019). A 2017 survey of 1,500 senior executives found that only 17% of them were familiar with the concept of AI and its applications at their companies. (Davenport, et al., 2017). Limited proven application, integration capabilities, privacy concerns and lack of skilled workforce are some of the barriers to adapting AI technology (Ernst & Young LLP (2018)). So, how can Artificial Intelligence be introduced in a recruitment firm to increase productivity?

The following study tries to answer the above question.

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

A Gartner study published in January 2019, titled A Framework of applying AI in enterprise, defines AI as follows:

Artificial Intelligence: A discipline that applies advanced analysis & logic-based techniques, including machine learning, to interpret events, support & automate decisions, & take actions.

AI is a tool used to do a task that requires some level of human cognitive intelligence to accomplish. This makes it unique from mechanical tools and current automated tools. As compared to existing programs and software available, AI programs use advanced algorithms which compute gigabytes of data accurately at lightning fast speed. Artificial Intelligence advances have soared in the recent past due to increased cloud storage, processing speeds and bandwidth sophistications. AI is a smart technology and seen as a driver for the transformation of decision making as a cognitive and information-centric process. (MacCrorry, et al., 2014).

Evolution of HR Function: From Manual to Automation to AI

Technology integration in Human Resources has evolved the job role of a HR professional in the last 3 decades, from manual to automation (automation of pay systems, leave application among others) to now Artificial Intelligence.

AI's value in HR is in its ability to crunch data and assess objectively, to do things faster, easier, and cheaper (Altemeyer, 2019). Current AI technology is improving response time of employers to potential candidates. One such AI tool is a chatbot. It is an AI program that can conduct a conversation with auditory and text methods. Chatbots are being used by companies on their website to allow potential candidates to seek answers regarding job queries. This multilingual tool has natural language processing and text recognition and operates even during non-working hours. Other offerings include tools that use predictive analysis to find the best suited candidate for an open position, tools that carry thousands of pre-built tests to objectively test candidates on skills and behaviour, and tools that allow aggregation of CVs from various job portals into one central source, thereby reducing human time and effort in talent sourcing.

As humans, we rely on experience and subjective testimony from the applicant, which is a poor indicator of future performance in comparison to mind-set, communication style and any number of other personal and intellectual capacities that AI and data science measure and quantify with speed and ease. (Altemeyer, 2019). Machine learning applies statistics and inductive reasoning to supply best-guess answers where formal procedural rules are unknown. (David, 2015). IBM has created an AI tool for recruitment called Watson. Watson Recruitment helps prioritize

resumes for recruiters without considering personal details like age or gender. (Castellanos, 2019). The technology knows the specifics of IBM's jobs in 170 countries, understands the skills needed for each job and maps that to the data coming in from job applicants. (Castellanos, 2019). AI in HR can decode video interviews to identify education level, lying, and cognitive ability. (Schwartz, et al., 2018). AI is even being used to create chatbots that can interact with job candidates, identify, and score video interviews, and understand the sentiment of engagement surveys. (Wolfgang, 2019).

How can AI improve productivity at work?

In June 2017, Price Water House Cooper conducted a study titled “The economic impact of artificial intelligence on the UK economy”, and highlighted, 4 elements of Artificial Intelligence being used in organisations today. They are listed in the table below:

<i>4 elements of Artificial Intelligence</i>	<i>What each element means?</i>
<i>Automated intelligence:</i>	Automation of manual, routine tasks
<i>Assisted intelligence:</i>	Helping to perform tasks faster and better
<i>Augmented intelligence:</i>	Helping people to make better decisions
<i>Autonomous intelligence:</i>	Automating decision-making processes without human intervention

Source: “The economic impact of artificial intelligence on the UK economy”, PwC (2017)

AI can help eliminate repetitive tasks (with Automated Intelligence), accelerate the search for talent, reduce employee attrition (via Assisted Intelligence) and improve employee engagement. AI reacts faster in helping draw out the insights and inferences that might otherwise take reams of manpower or stay uncovered at all (via Augmented intelligence) (PWC).

Econometric modelling and machine learning algorithms conducted by PWC estimate AI can increase productivity by up to 14.3% by 2030. But,

what is productivity? $\text{Productivity} = \text{output} / \text{input} = \text{management results} / \text{input resources}$ (Sakamoto, 2010).

Study Design

The above productivity formula was used for this Ethnographic Qualitative study. The study analyzed the recruitment workflow processes in-depth to ascertain the inputs of the firm. For this, the study unearthed the job tasks involved in a recruitment process, from start to finish. The productivity formula was used to identify the high input steps that were reducing productivity. Interviews with the c-suite ascertained the outputs of the firm (i.e. expected management results). Recommendations included what AI technologies can be used to inputs required which in turn would increase the productivity of the firm.

Data analysis, using coding techniques, identified the manual vs automated nature of each recruitment task, and the man-hours spent on them.

Synopsis of Study Findings

The recruitment process flow was divided into a framework of non-overlapping 4 steps. The steps were identified as: Client acquisition, Talent Sourcing, Interview Protocol and Administration. The steps directly increasing the output (i.e revenue/ sales) of the firm were identified as core steps.

Step 1: Client acquisition, first step of the recruitment framework is a Core step as directly contributes to increasing the output (Sales revenue) of the firm. Any new business successfully acquired from a client means additional revenue for the firm.

Step 2: Talent Sourcing, second step of the recruitment process is also a core step. Successfully sourced candidates help in closing open positions and bring revenue to the firm thereby increasing the output of the recruitment firm. Non-integrated technology tools for talent sourcing increases input, i.e. each consultant must individually access each job portal, one by one, to upload open positions and download potential talent CVS. This increases their input and decreases their productivity. There is no standardization of Step 2 of the recruitment process which means this step

is of varying duration for each consultant, depending on the nature of her hiring portfolio.

Step 3: Interview Protocol, is also a core step. Successfully interviewed and selected candidates help in closing open positions and bring revenue to the firm thereby increasing the output of the recruitment firm. However, it is a Manual step with varying duration & customization depending on the consultant. Hence there is no standardization in the interview protocol process across the various recruitment consultants within the firm.

Administration, step 4, is a non-core step. This step is time-consuming and manual. Wages and documentation processing are done manually. Administration is a necessary, manual step, not directly related to firm's output. Hence this process, even though necessary, is not identified as a core step.

There are 3 Core steps of the recruitment process, namely Client acquisition, talent sourcing and interview protocol. They increase firm's output, ie bring in revenue, and hence productivity. Currently, these steps are high on inputs due to the manual nature of the job tasks. Non standardized processes also make these steps high on input. Nonintegrated technology, which is time consuming, increase inputs in these steps.

Recommendations

So, how can Artificial Intelligence be introduced in such a recruitment firm to increase productivity? The study recommends that AI be introduced in the 3 core steps of the work process. An analysis of the existing AI tools in the market reveals existence of AI tools that allow integration of all job portals into itself, thereby providing Assisted intelligence (one-click access to multiple job portals to upload open positions and to source talent CVs.) This will reduce the manual access to each job portal one by one and increase productivity by decreasing input of consultants' time. It will also allow integration of disparate technology tools and standardise the process flow. Remove human biases and current non-standardised use of technology: The artificial intelligence tools in the market provide skills and competencies test, without human intervention, that allow the best candidate to come forth. This will remove human biases and provide a better quality of candidates to the firm for their clients. (Augmented intelligence). Allocation of tasks between humans and AI:

Companies see the biggest performance gains when humans and smart machines collaborate (Wilson & Daugherty, 2019). This study agrees with the academic research on this topic and recommends that AI and humans should work in synergy in the recruitment firm. Job tasks requiring judgement work (Thomas, et al 2016) should be led by human discretion. These include managing client relationships, candidate relationships and interview processes. In-house job tasks, that require higher speed, accuracy and turnaround time should be led by AI tools. This includes the step of talent sourcing. Allocation of administrative process to administrative assistant will give more man-hours available to focus on 3 core steps of the recruitment process which drive output.

References

- Daugherty, Paul R., Wilson, James H., Collaborative Intelligence: Humans and AI are joining forces. Harvard Business Review. July- August 2018 issue
- MacCrory, F., Westerman, G., Alhammadi, Y., & Brynjolfsson, E. (2014). Racing with and against the machine: Changes in occupational skill composition in an era of rapid technological advance. In Proceedings of the 35th International Conference on Information Systems (pp. 295—311). Red Hook, NY: Curran Associates Inc.
- Davenport, T., Loucks, J., Schatsky, D. Bullish on the business value of cognitive: Leaders in cognitive and AI weigh in on what's working and what's next, Deloitte, 2017.
- Davenport, T., Kirby, J. Just how smart are smart machines: MIT Sloan Management Review, Volume 57, No 3, Spring 2016
- Marshall, G., Stamps M., Moore, J. (1998) Preinterview Biases: The Impact of Race, Physical Attractiveness, and Sales Job Type on Preinterview Impressions of Sales Job Applicants, Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 18:4, 21-38
- Tambe, P., Cappelli, P., & Yakubovich, V. (2019). Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources Management

Light, R. (2017, 03). Revolutionizing human resources: How artificial intelligence can make your life easier. HR Strategy and Planning Excellence Essentials, Retrieved from <http://libproxy.smu.edu.sg/login?url=https://search-proquestcom.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/docview/1952820333?accountid=28662>.

David, H. The Journal of Economic Perspectives; Nashville Vol. 29, Iss. 3, (Summer 2015): 3-30. DOI:10.1257/jep.29.3.3

Hammonds KH. Why we hate HR (Cover Story). Fast Company.2005;40-47

Thomas, Robert J., Richard, A., Vegard, K. (2016, November 02) How Artificial Intelligence

Will Redefine Management. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2016/11/how-artificial-intelligence-will-redefinemanagement?referral=03758&cm_vc=rr_item_page.top_right

PwC (2017) Artificial Intelligence in HR: a No-brainer. Available at <https://www.pwc.at/de/publikationen/verschiedenes/artificial-intelligence-in-hr-a-no-brainer.pdf>, access 12 December 2018

KPMG (2017) HR Transformation, which lens are you using? <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/jm/pdf/hr-transformation2017.pdf>.

Ernst & Young LLP (2018) - The new age: artificial intelligence for human resource opportunities and functions- Retrieved from: [https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-the-new-age-artificial-intelligence-for-human-resource-opportunities-and-functions/\\$FILE/EY-the-new-age-artificial-intelligence-for-human-resource-opportunities-and-functions.pdf](https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-the-new-age-artificial-intelligence-for-human-resource-opportunities-and-functions/$FILE/EY-the-new-age-artificial-intelligence-for-human-resource-opportunities-and-functions.pdf)

Deloitte (2018) The rise of the social enterprise 2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends- https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/HCTrends2018/2018-HCTrends_Rise-of-the-social-enterprise.pdf

Davenport, T., Ronanki, R. Artificial Intelligence for the real world. Harvard Business Review. January–February 2018 Issue. Retrived from <https://hbr.org/2018/01/artificial-intelligence-for-the-real-world>

Acemoglu Daron, Restrepo (2018). Artificial Intelligence, automation and work. Pascual Working Paper 24196 National Bureau of economic research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w24196>

Sakamoto, S. (2010). Definition of Productivity/Requirements for Improving It. In Beyond World-Class Productivity: Industrial Engineering Practice and Theory (pp. 49–64). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-84996-269-8_4

Learning Organization and Individual Work Performance – The Moderating Effect of Employee Age

GABRIEL TAN

“An organization’s ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.” – Jack Welch

Introduction

The Global Flavors and Fragrances industry captures a market size valued at USD 22 Billion in 2019, and it is being projected to hit USD 38 Billion by 2026. The proportion of this market size is largely determined by how great the competitive edge each industry player has over one another. A learning organization is a known competitive edge. Knowledge creation and organizational learning provide pivotal importance to managing change and achieving more exceptional performance in organizations (Adzic, 2018). Several types of research show the importance of learning and performance but lacking in identifying the critical elements involved for aligning learning (individual, group/team and organization) and performance indicators (e.g., financial results and new product launch) to optimize performance at every level in improving organizational knowledge (Alagaraja, 2014).

This study aims to explore in-depth into what key elements will have an impact on employee performance in a learning organization environment and in the context of human resource development theories. In this study, employee age is an essential factor in interactions between individuals in groups or teams rather than being considered a control variable. Though many research studies have been conducted using the influence of employee age as a demographic attribute, little attention was given to the importance of employee age on learning organization and individual work performance (Tsui & O’Reilly, 1989). This leads to the objective of this study, which is to examine how an employee's age affects the perceived relationship between learning organization and individual work performance. Investigating age as a potential moderator is timely and

relevant in the current workplace because it can have a positive or negative impact on the organization and employee performance.

Learning Organization and Individual Work Performance

The learning organization constructs thrive in a changing economy by investing significantly in organization support at systems-level and promoting learning environment (refer to Figure 1) (Watkins & Dirani, 2013). A learning organization conceptualized model was developed, validated, and applied with the capability to learn and change (refer to Figure 1). This model defines seven (7) dimensions of a learning organization that collectively promote a culture of ongoing learning, openness to change, and adapt to its ever-changing environment. This model is being used in this study because it can integrate all the seven dimensions into a theoretical framework by defining their relationships, offering instrument development, and validation for possible future organizational studies.

Being a learning organization is one of the key differences that sets apart a high performing teams and companies from others (Senge, 1990). This means the entire organization relies upon the competencies and talent of individuals and teams to learn from each other and learn together with every project rather than relying on one leader. This study adopted Yang's shortened version of the 'Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire' (DLOQ) to measure respondents' perceptions of learning organization dimensions in the context of continuous learning opportunities, inquiry and dialog session, team learning, empowerment, corporate system, and strategic leadership (Yang, Watkins, & Marsick, 2004).

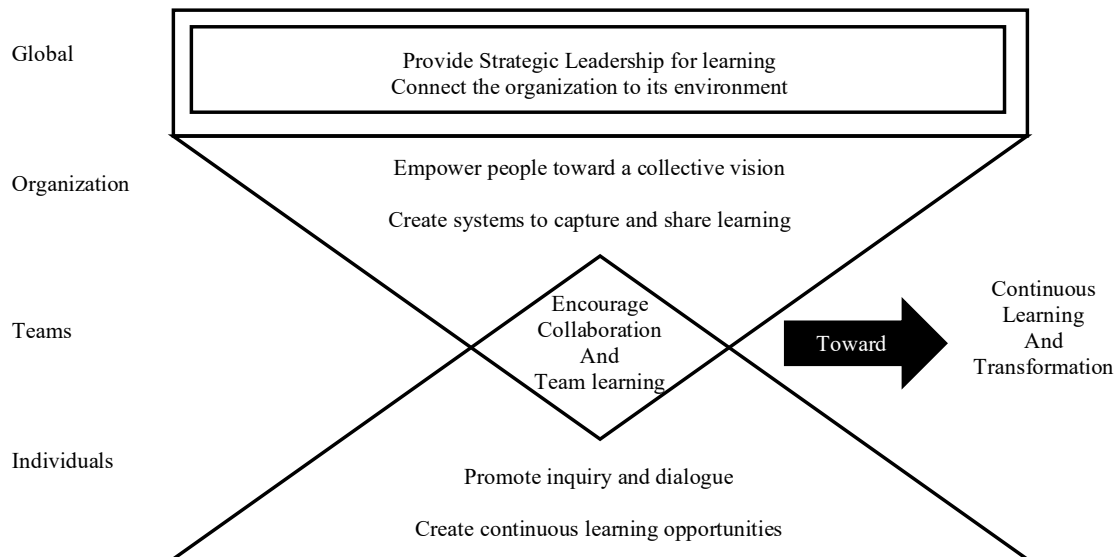


Figure 1 – Learning Organization Model (Watkins & Marsick, 1997)

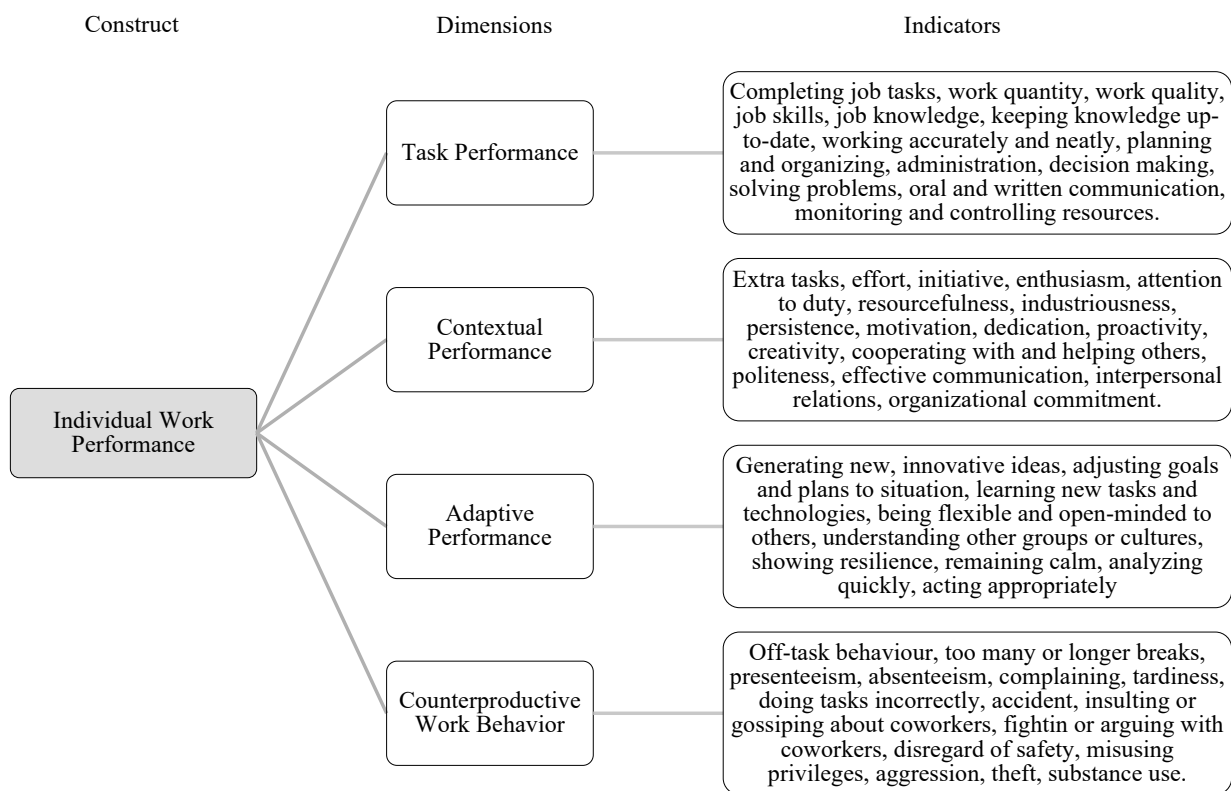


Figure 2 – Conceptual Framework of Individual Work Performance (Koopmans, L. 2014)

Individual work performance (“IWP”) is in the context of employee’s set of behaviors or actions directly linked to the organization’s goals, rather than just the results of their behaviors or actions (Koopmans, 2014). Improving the employee’s work performance arises due to increasing economic globalization, industrial competitiveness, economic recessions, and the need for sustainable employability. These behaviors are under the control of the individual, excluding the ones which are environmentally constrained, forming the IWP. Koopman’s heuristic conceptual framework of IWP consists of four broad generic dimensions:

1. Task performance that shows employee’s proficiency to perform central job tasks;
2. Contextual performance that includes employee’s behavioral support the organization;
3. Adaptive performance showing employee’s proficiency in adapting to changes in work roles or its environment; and
4. Counter-productive work behavior includes the behaviors and actions that are toxic to the well-being of the organization.

The IWP questionnaire is used to provide more in-depth information regarding the association of learning organization and employee’s work performance. With an in-depth understanding of the association of learning organization with IWP, the company would be able to reap the desirable individual performance with a combination of organizational alignment and high employee engagement (Alagaraja, 2015).

Employee Age

Employee age is defined as the number of years a person has lived, and it is a continuous variable in this study. The construct of age encapsulates all possible age-related changes being captured through people’s experience in concurrent with growing old. More researches had been conducted to understand how these age-related changes vary differently in people, where a large portion of the differences among people of the same age demand the need for a more complicated perspective at the workplace (Bal, De Jong, Jansen, and Bakker, 2012). As part of social observations, some aged 50-year old still feel young and motivated to work, while the rest of the same age feel unenergetic and unmotivated to work. In most studies, age itself is often disqualified as an explanatory variable in accounting the differences in work behavior, work motivation, and work

actions. With an increasingly aging population in Singapore, this topic is getting more relevant to investigating the underlying influences caused by age, which can determine individual work outcomes and individual performance. On the contrary, Giniger, Dispenzieri, and Eisenberg (1983) theorized a negative relationship between age and performance, also known as the "decremental theory of aging." This theory demonstrated that individual abilities such as reflexes, agility, vision, hearing, dexterity decline with age. Though there is evidence to predict job performance decline with age, there is evidence to show the positive correlation between age and job performance. This research study will further examine the relationship of a learning organization with individual employee performance in the company and the moderating effect of employee's age (Refer to Figure 3).

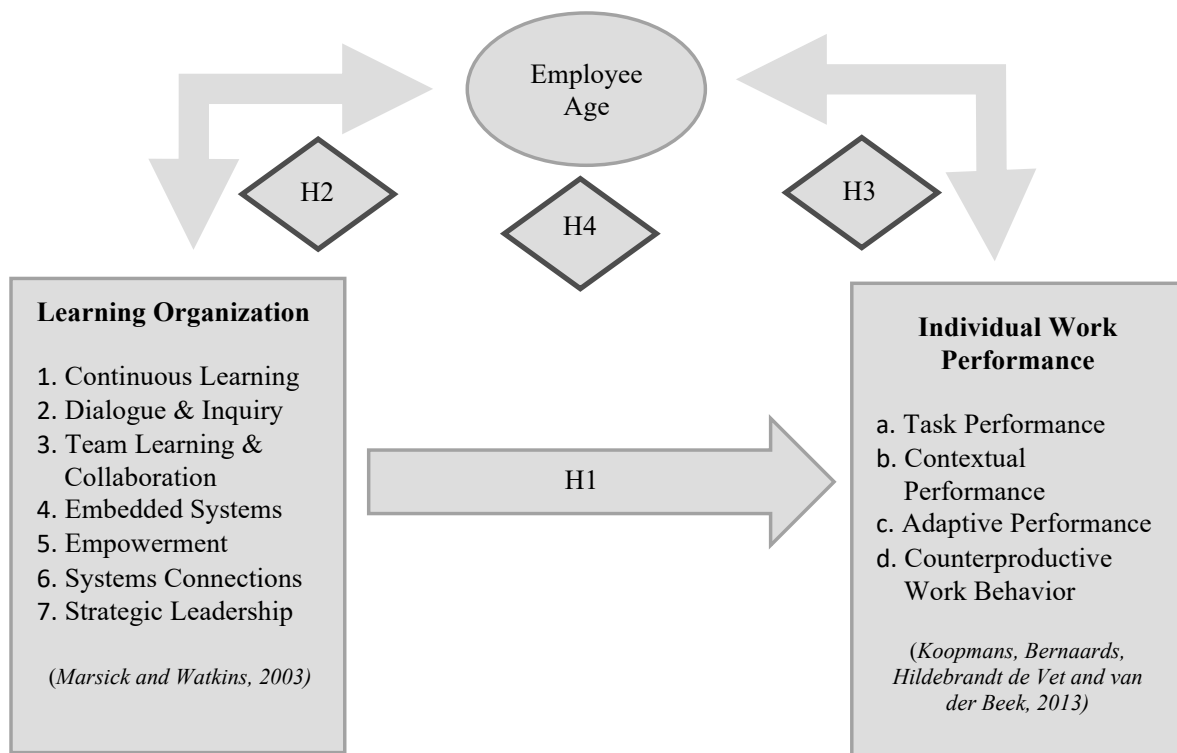


Figure 3 – Hypotheses Developed for this Field Study

Key Finding and takeaways

The study used the descriptive statistics and multi-linear correlation analysis to determine the association of seven (7) independent variables of Learning Organization with four (4) dependent variables of IWP. Regression analysis was performed to identify the moderating effect of

Employee's Age on the relationship strength between learning organization and individual work performance (Refer to Figure 3).

The research findings showed that a learning organization is significantly associated with individual work performance, whereas employee age was found to be unrelated between the learning organization variables and IWP variables.

The findings between learning organization and IWP are being supported with many studies recognizing the importance of interactive relations of environmental and organizational factors and behavior elements of individuals to improve overall performance (Song, Chai, Kim and Bae, 2018). Learning culture is the glue that holds the organization's set of beliefs, values, desired behaviors that reflects their internal learning support system leading the company to achieve its shared vision with its employees. The learning culture sets the learning climate, where it is considered as a management tool that enables the company to develop HRD practices for achieving employee performance.

Interestingly, the employee age does not affect the relationship between the two variables. It is noteworthy to mention that regardless of the employee's age in the workforce, this does not affect the employee's disposition to perform. With a better understanding of how age play the role of a moderator helps to relook its implications for learning and development in organizations and recommendations for practice. According to McEvoy and Cascio (1989), it is possible that employee's performance will not decline on average among the older workforce based on other individual attribute like mastery of skills and contextualized work experience.

Conclusion

In any organization, it is essential to identify the key elements which contribute positively to optimize an employee's performance from a learning organization. Evidence from the above shows that employee age is not a barrier to work performance improvement. Older workers have a dominant role to play in the labor market over the next few years. It is crucial to understand how to harness a learning organization to leverage on their behavioral characteristics and wealth of experience towards business success while minimizing the challenges they may face in their jobs.

The above finding also helps to validate a study that found the relationship between HR practices development and employee performance bond firmly with age. The correlation relationship between the learning organization dimensions and individual work performance dimensions enable organizational management to view the value of embedding learning systems and support infrastructure for continuous learning across the organization.

It is widely known that well-trained employees will lead to incline performance and linking to organizational success. A well-trained employee is a result of his/her environment, learning organization principles in practice, and support learning systems.

Recommendations of the Study to the Organization

The first recommendation focuses on the organization level, whereby a conducive learning environment needs to be fostered. Learning is multidimensional; organization's efforts are needed to improve the workplace environment, processes, and leadership behaviors that serve as a foundation to build the learning culture. This initiative has to spring from the top level and echo it to down to ensure continuity. Leaders have a powerful voice in inspiring employees to constantly upskill and provide reflective practice for themselves to self-reflect situations that will push them to grow and learn.

The second recommendation is to improve team learning by establishing a more supportive and open environment which stimulates the exchange of ideas freely without fear. Managers are empowered to promote teamwork collaboration and leveraging through knowledge transfer and sharing. Knowledge retention is highest from learning in action, and making mistakes is normal and it serves as a pathway to learn and discover something new. A supportive environment contributes to the employee's positive learning experience that will cultivate a team learning culture. Human Resource Department function has a crucial role planning together with the senior management in creating and implementing a conducive working environment. This working environment includes a learning infrastructure with embedded learning systems that cater to all ages and gender diversity to promote a learning culture, employee engagement, and overall performance. Continuous learning is the individual and corporate responsibility. Employee must take charge of their personal and

professional development while line managers and supervisors do need to take on a more proactive role in promoting learning culture.

The third recommendation is to nurture a learning mindset in every employee with activities fostering learning without boundaries or obstacles. Employees are encouraged to learn from mistakes and failures, thrive in challenging situations. A robust feedback system provides a platform for new ideas and areas for improvement.

Future Research and Recommendations

These findings suggest that in future studies, it is recommended to include additional demographic variables such as work tenure of each employee in the organization, educational background, and professional level as moderators that may affect the relationship between a learning organization and IWP. The study also raises an important issue on which learning organization may introduce additional possible influencing variables into the model, such as motivation factors, employee resilience, and employee engagement. Other consideration includes a qualitative study which may help in identifying the additional key influencing elements that may affect the relationship. Essentially, there is a need to conduct a further test of the conceptual model and to identify linkages among the key variables.

Future research studies in longitudinal or in statistical demographic differences across age groups are needed before the interaction between learning organization, employee's age, and IWP can be fully understood. We also suggest a comparative study on the rest of the group consisting of non-executives or employees with minimal education to be beneficial to understand the findings holistically.

References

- Adzic, S. (2018). Learning organization: A fine example of a management fad.
- Alagaraja, M. (2014). A Conceptual Model of Organizations as Learning-Performance Systems: Integrative Review of Lean Implementation Literature. *Human Resource Development Review*, 13(2), 207–233

- Bal, P., Kooij, D., & Rousseau, D. (2014). Aging workers and the employee-employer relationship.
- Bal, P., De Jong, S., Jansen, P., & Bakker, A. (2012). Motivating Employees to Work Beyond Retirement: A Multi-Level Study of the Role of I-Deals and Unit Climate. *Journal of Management Studies*, 49(1), 306–331. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2011.01026.x>
- Giniger, S., Dispenzieri, A., & Eisenberg, J. (1983). Age, experience, and performance on speed and skill jobs in an applied setting. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68(3), 469–475. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.68.3.469>
- Koopmans, L. (2014). Measuring individual work performance. *Body@Work*, Research Center on Physical Activity, Work and Health
- Mcevoy, G., & Cascio, W. (1989). Cumulative Evidence of the Relationship Between Employee Age and Job Performance.
- Tsui, A., & O'Reilly, C. (1989). Beyond Simple Demographic Effects: The Importance of Relational Demography in Superior-Subordinate Dyads.
- Watkins, K., & Dirani, K. (2013). A Meta-Analysis of the Dimensions of a Learning Organization Questionnaire: Looking Across Cultures, Ranks, and Industries. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 15(2), 148–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422313475991>
- Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline : the art and practice of the learning organization* . London: Century Business.
- Song, J., Chai, D., Kim, J., & Bae, S. (2018). Job Performance in the Learning Organization: The Mediating Impacts of Self-Efficacy and Work Engagement.
- Yang, B., Watkins, K., & Marsick, V. (2004). The construct of the learning organization: Dimensions, measurement, and validation.

Don't Underestimate the Impact of Employee Onboarding

AERIN TAN

Why is Employee Onboarding Important?

Research conducted by Deloitte had shown that about 4% of new employees leave the job after a disastrous first day with 22% turnover occurring during the first 45 days of employment (Carucci, 2018). New employees usually would feel energized and exciting about joining a new organization for a fruitful journey with the organization. Effective onboarding will help new employees feel more valued, gain better understanding of their role, increase their productivity and performance, resulting in increased job engagement. It also helps to eliminate time spent on implementing the expectation rather than overwhelm the new employees for falling short and leaving the organization.

Introduction

Recent years, onboarding has evolved from mere ("HR") transactional processes to improving employee engagement and retention. Employee retention is the number one issue on the minds of CEOs today around the world; however, organizations often spend little time onboarding new hires (Carucci, 2018). Reports have shown that the average 17% of new hires leave an organization during the first three months of employment (Ellis, Nifadkar, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2017). It has been reported that "half of all senior outside hires in a new position fail within 18 months and half of the hourly employees leave a new job within the first 4 months" (Bauer T. N., 2010). In a survey with a HR technology firm, one-third of the 1,000 respondents left their job within the first six months with 23% did not receive clear guidelines to their job responsibilities, 21% require more effective training, 17% require support from a co-worker, 12% wanted to be recognized for their contributions, 9% wanted more attention from their manager and co-workers and 18% due to better prospects (Gupta, Bhattacharya, Sheorey, & Coelho, 2018). The financial cost incurred for losing an employee during the first year is estimated to be at least three times of the former employee's salary.

Onboarding provides an opportunity for the organization to fulfil a return on investment from processes of recruitment, hiring and ensuring that new employees meet their full potential. Research suggests that most organizations believe onboarding is a crucial component of the newcomer experience and proves to be effective in helping to socialize new employees (Klein, Polin, & Sutton, 2015). Onboarding is also known as “*organisational socialisation*” is a formal or informal process to integrate new hires and transform them from being “outsiders” to productive members of the organization (Bauer T. N., 2010). The more quickly that employees get up to speed, the sooner they will start to contribute to the bottom regardless of their role and functions. The transformation requires the transfer of knowledge, skills, rules, familiarity with the organisational culture to foster teamwork (Britto, et al., 2018).

Research revealed that the first 90 days in the new job is important and it has an impact on the success of a new employee on the job (Watkins, 2013). In practice, there is a correlation between retention rates and onboarding (Becker & Bish, 2019). Organisations that do not appreciate the importance of the introduction phase for new employees will make the new employees risk losing productivity and interest in the organization that leads to a possible turnover. The learning curve for new employees is a financial liability for the organization before they become productive (Meyer & Bartels, 2017). Experts suggested that it may take between 6 to 12 months before new hires become productive (Sharma & Stol, 2019).

Key factors that contributes to Employee Onboarding

Onboarding is a pivotal moment for making employees feel inclusive from day one which is a critical part in the employee’s journey in the organization. Onboarding is essential to ensure retention and preparedness of the employees for work that also translates to positive onboarding experience by the new employees.

1. Orientation

The first step for a smooth transition in the organization is to prepare the new employees by having an effective orientation. Orientation typically takes place within the first month of an employee joining an organization. Entry into an organization is a critical time for new employees as they learn to adjust to the new environment and to assess their fit and contributory potential as a new organizational member (Klein & Heuser, 2008). The

initial unfamiliarity, stress and anxiety will prevent new employees in becoming productive. During the integration period, new employees' anxieties and uncertainties about the demands and fit to the new job in the organization should be reduced. Research suggests that new employees decide within the first 30 days whether or not they feel welcome in the organization (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2008).

Orientation not only helps to integrate employees into the organization, but it will also help to reduce the costs associated in learning the job by integrating the employees quickly into the organisation. This will reduce anxiety by helping to provide guidelines and have open communication without experiencing the stress of guessing. To retain and engage them, the organization needs to leverage the enthusiasm, energy and excitement they bring to the employee (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2008). Early studies of orientation programs showed few significant correlations such as job engagement and organizational commitment (Britto, et al., 2018). Several studies have demonstrated the benefits of attending structured formal orientation programs (Wanous & Reichers, 2000).

2. Training

New employee is expected to be trained and performed, which will happen at any stage during the employment in the organization (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). Training is identified as practice-based learning (PBL), online training, class-based learning and mentoring. It was found that active mentoring of new employees correlated with higher levels of activity that suggested a higher level of productivity (Bauer T. N., 2010). If the new employee has low levels of self-efficacy from the beginning, training is necessary to boost the ability to cope and perform at the job (Bauer T. N., 2010).

3. Job Engagement

Job engagement is whereby the employees feel passionate and invest time about the job, and that includes a commitment to the organization and discretionary effort into the work. In other words, job engagement is "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work to others" (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010).

4. Workplace Relationships

Workplace relationships will need to develop over time, and they are not an immediate tangible effect. Employees' working relationships were determined to be crucial to the overall well-being, loyalty, and job performance. New employees who are socializing and have positive relationships with their colleagues will feel more adapted to their new job demands with an improved level of self-efficacy and commitment to the organization that leads to increased greater organizational commitment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). It was found that 60% of employees feel that failure of onboarding is due to strained relationships with peers that created the atmosphere of unhappiness and tension that leads to performance being affected (Fisher, 1985). Job engagement will be affected as it is about contentment and commitment to job responsibilities.

5. Support from co-workers

Onboarding that starts from orientation is a continuous process that can be achieved through a continuous system of providing support and feedback to the new employee. Support from co-workers will need to build the bond and trust over time. Presence of support from co-workers and organization such as understanding the new employees' issues in the challenges or discuss personal issues that may impact performance is positively related to the onboarding experience of the new employee. Support from co-workers is not just a discrete time-bound activity but a continuous process which can be easily overlooked. It is not about just "pushing" information, materials and training to the new employees to process the information. This is a critical part of onboarding where new employees will "pull" support from colleagues for assistance.

Conclusion

Effective onboarding is important as it drives new employee productivity, accelerates learning to enhance job engagement and improves talent retention significantly. It will help new employee to adjust to new processes, tools and responsibilities and address skill gaps which will translate to productivity to meet target objectives. The support for new employees to adjust to their jobs by establishing better relationships to increase satisfaction, engagement, clarifying expectations to improve performance and providing support to help reduce unwanted turnover (Bauer T. N., 2010). It also helps to eliminate time spent on implementing the expectation rather than overwhelm them for falling short and leaving the organization. The new employee who has started the employment are

unlikely to have the intention to leave the organization within a short time unless adverse discrepancy has occurred during employment.

Designing new employee onboarding to create employee experience is important as it is a key part of the organization's talent management and retention strategy. It is essential to engage new employees as retaining talent starts from day one. It is important to captivate and engage new employees as retaining talent starts from day one. It will help new employee to adjust to new processes, tools and responsibilities and address skill gaps which will translate to productivity to meet organization's ability to meet target objectives. Research has shown that if onboarding is done correctly, it will lead to higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, lower turnover, higher performance levels, career effectiveness and lowered work-related stress (Bauer T.N., 2010).

Recommendations

1. Create a clear and formal written onboarding plan

It is important to define organization goals and objectives. Onboarding plan should include a checklist to achieve these goals. The checklist is to (1) identify stakeholders in the onboarding process (e.g. HR, hiring manager); (2) clarify department goals and objectives; (3) support the new employee by creating a welcome and supportive environment including helping to familiarize the values and culture; (4) set goals and expectations by hiring manager; (5) identify skill gaps by arranging relevant job skills training; (6) introduce the performance management system to evaluate employees; and (7) arrange coaching and mentoring throughout the onboarding process.

2. Cultivate Teamwork and Leadership

Managers play a key role in the employee onboarding process. Managers are the first point of contact for an employee's journey in the organization. Employee onboarding is not simply just a matter of the first day meet and greets with the paperwork, but rather it is an ongoing continuous process. Employee onboarding should be shared by various key stakeholders across the organization including the managers and senior leaders to set aside time to forge powerful and lasting connections with employees. In addition to supporting new employees to feel acclimated to

the organization, effective onboarding also uses the human element to connect with employees. It is important that managers plan and develop team members and plant the seeds for future organizational leaders. This will make employees motivated to go after roles within the organization instead of looking for new job.

3. Engagement and Empower New Employees

This is a vital step to align the new employee with organization's values and goals. Engagement plays an important role to motivate the employee to contribute to organizational success. Make the new employee's first day on the job special. Be crystal clear with new employees on the objectives, timelines, roles and responsibilities. Provide onboarding toolkit with the essential information that new employee needs to know. Having a distinct and consistent company culture will help the employee feel that they are part of the organization and it is more meaningful than just a job.

The importance of assigning a peer "buddy" that can make them feel at ease for asking the question without feeling embarrassed. This peer "buddy" will also be a mentor who can interact on the same level. Discuss goals and expectations will provide direction to the new employee, so that both individual goals and company goals are aligned. Organization's goals and individual performance goals are to be explained clearly so that new employee can work to develop maximum potential.

4. Offer Ongoing Support

Organizations with high employee engagements are likely to boast a culture of learning and development. Given the importance of providing coaching to accelerate performance, new employee should be assigned a coach to help him/her develop skills and meet performance goals. A coach, in contrast to peer sponsor or "buddy", is a senior colleague to provide guidance and training to support the learning of the new employee.

5. Evaluate and Follow-up

Evaluate the employee onboarding and ensure it is consistently implemented to meet organization goals and objectives. Use milestones such as 30, 60, 90 and 120 days on the job and up to 1-year post-organizational entry to check on employee progress (Bauer T.N., 2010). New employees will feel the sense of being valued for getting feedback throughout the year. Talk to the hiring managers and peer sponsors to get feedback about the onboarding so that it can be revised to improve its effectiveness.

Managers play a pivotal role in the onboarding process. Unfortunately, it is easy to fall into a trap where onboarding tasks becomes the responsibility of the HR. Both the managers and HR has a crucial role to play in the development and implementation of onboarding programs and processes to integrate new employees into the organization. The key is to engage important stakeholders and new employees to help understand one another and interact over time to increase job engagement and reduce employee turnover. The bottom line is the faster new employees feel welcomed and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to contribute to the organization's mission.

References

- Armstrong, S., & Mitchell, B. (2008). *The Essential HR Handbook*. New Jersey, U.S.A: The Career Press.
- Bauer, T. N. (2010). *Onboarding new employees: Maximizing success*. In SHRM foundation's effective practice guideline series. USA: SHRM Foundation.
- Bauer, T. N., Bodner, T., Erdogan, B., Truxillo, D. M., & Tucker, J. S. (2007). Newcomer Adjustment During Organizational Socialization: A Meta-Analytic Review of Antecedents, Outcomes, and Methods. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(3), 707-721.
- Becker, K., & Bish, A. (2019). A framework for understanding the role of unlearning in onboarding. *Human Resource Management Review*. doi:<https://10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.100730>

- Britto, R., Cruzes, D.S., Smite, D., & Sablis, A. (2018). Onboarding software developers and teams in three globally distributed legacy projects: a multi-case study. 30(4), 1-17.
- Carucci, R. (2018). To Retain New Hires, Spend More Time Onboarding Them. Harvard Business Review.
- Ellis, A. M., Nifadkar, S. S., Bauer, T. N., & Erdogan, B. (2017). Newcomer Adjustment: Examining the Role of Managers' Perception of Newcomer Proactive Behavior During Organizational Socialization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(6), 993-1001.
- Fisher, C. D. (1985). Social Support and Adjustment to Work: A Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Management*, 11(3), 39-53.
- Gupta, P. D., Bhattacharya, S., Sheorey, P., & Coelho, P. (2018). Relationship between onboarding experience and turnover intention: intervening role of locus of control and self-efficacy. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Vol. 50, No.2, 61-80. doi:10.1108/ICT-03-2017-0023.
- Klein, H. J., & Heuser, A. E. (2008). *The Learning of Socialization Content: A Framework for Researching Orientating Practices*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Klein, H. J., Polin, B., & Sutton, K. L. (2015). Specific Onboarding Practices for the Socialization of New Employees. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 23(3).
- Meyer, A. M., & Bartels, L. K. (2017). The Impact of Onboarding Levels on Perceived Utility, Organization Commitment, Organizational Support, and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 17(5).
- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job Engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance . *Academy of Management*, 53, 617-635.

Sharma, G. G., & Stol, K.-J. (2019). Exploring onboarding success, organizational fit, and turnover intention of software professionals. *The Journal of Systems and Software*.

Wanous, J. P., & Reichers, A. E. (2000). New Employee Orientation Programs. *Human Resource Management Review*, 10(4), 435-451.

Watkins, M. D. (2013). *The First 90 Days, Updated and Expanded: Proven Strategies for Getting up to Speed Faster and Smarter*. Harvard Business Review.

A study on Factors affecting Employee Retention and Turnover in an Insurance firm in Singapore

SARANYA VENKAT

“Human Resources isn’t a thing we do. It is the thing that runs our business”
– **Steve Wynn, Wynn Las Vegas**

“Time spent on hiring, is time well spent.” – **Robert Half**

“If you fulfil the wishes of your employees, the employees will fulfil your visions”

“Children imitate their parents, employees their managers.”- – **Amit Kalantri**

Finding and keeping the best people

Talent is the multiplier. The more energy and attention you invest in it, the greater the yield. **Talent** always starts with our DNA and characteristics that have impact (make a difference) on the strategy of the organization and on which employees differ a lot regardless of their expertise, where talent is 1% to 20% of the organization which drives the remaining 80% of the business. As Interpersonal relationships amid different departments has a significant impact on Employee Turnover intention, wanted to check if it would be beneficial for the company to implement **HR Talent Management model (AARRR model)** : **Acquisition, Activation, Revenue, Referral, Retention**

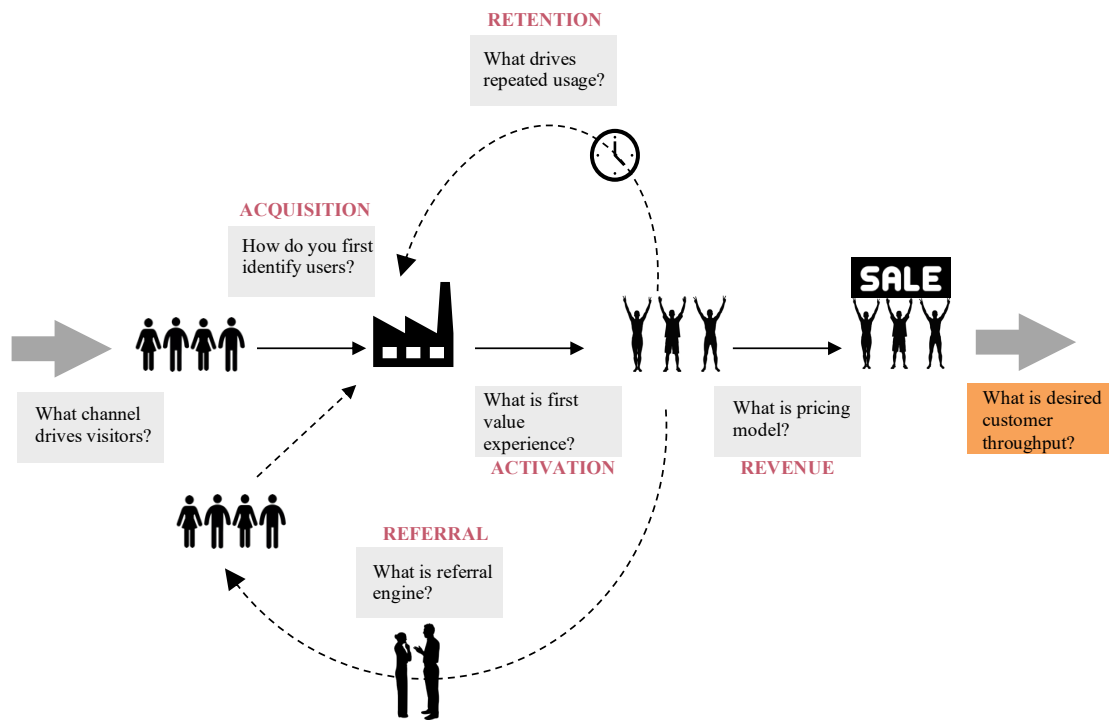


Figure 1: HR Talent Management Model

One of the biggest reasons new hires do not work out is *bad onboarding*. When done well, onboarding lays the groundwork for the employee to settle into their role and thrive. It should start with the basics: Checking if they have been offered a proper joining kit, Taking a tour around the office, Helping them understand things like: seat location, person in-charge for IT support/Admin/Finance, Get them introduced to their team members, etc., so they have what they need to function. And when it comes to their job, it is important to set clear and realistic expectations by providing them with a detailed job description that includes well-defined responsibilities and a clear explanation of what decisions rights and resources they will have. Over the next few months, check in regularly. Put a weekly meeting on the calendar so that they can touch base and make sure they have sufficient guidance and coaching they need. Our goal is to ensure they can make meaningful contributions as soon as possible.

Below are few aspects which could be predictors of turnover that merit careful attention to **Employee Job Satisfaction** and **Engagement**: Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels, Ample & diverse opportunities/Workgroup cohesion, Role clarity/Challenging Work, Rewarding Top performers, Training opportunities, Compensation/Pay,

Trust between Employees & Senior Management, Job Security/Work Culture, Organizational commitment, Interpersonal relationships and Quality of employee-supervisor relationships. and are comprehensively analysed with literature and thereafter this finally concludes that, if the aim of Employee Retention is to be achieved, all the above factors will have to be put into practice together rather than individually, because only if all are implemented together the objective of achieving Employee Retention will be successful, both in the short and long term. The simplest way to stop our employees from leaving is to develop a plan to make them stay. We believe that we do not build a business; our job is to develop individuals who in turn does our business.

Why employees stay or leave

Retention is defined as the process by which a company ensures that its employees do not quit their jobs as every company and industry have a varying retention rate. It is impossible for an organization to survive if its top performers quit. It is essential for the management to retain its valuable employees who think in favour of the organization and contribute their level best. An organization needs employees who are loyal and works hard with full dedication to achieve the organization's objective. Therefore, while it is certainly important for firms to attract and secure talent, learning how to retain these talents is also a key aspect in maintaining a company's productivity and competitive edge.

It is very important for an organization to attract, hire, and retain the right resources. Most of the organizations are very effective, when it comes to attracting and hiring new talents, but they fail in retaining the same talents. **Retention** is a phenomenon where employees choose to stay with their current company and do not actively seek other job prospects. The opposite of retention is **Turnover**, where employees leave the company for a variety of reasons. However, there is no standard reason why people leave organisations (Ongori, 2007).

Let us look at the different types of turnover and how they impact an organization's retention rate. Example: Now, consider an employee who joined the company a couple of years ago and grew quickly through the ranks. But lately, the employee has become discontented as the job is no longer challenging for them. They become an active job seeker and might be scooped up with other offers. By keeping your eye on an employee's

engagement level, it is possible to retain them, engaging and retaining employees is critical to an organization's survival to let alone its success. Employees who are engaged provide better customer service, are more productive, happy, and more likely to be loyal to an organization. Meanwhile, employee disengagement results in higher absenteeism, low energy, lower business profitability, bad attitude, lack of enthusiasm and a lower share price. This happens when there is Poor Management, Lack of Career growth, Poor Communication, Lack of Recognition, Poor Leadership, Lack of Training, Excessive workload.

Some direct consequences of poor Employee Retention are increased costs and lower productivity and team morale. When somebody in the company leaves within only a few months of being hired, the time and money spent during the hiring and onboarding process are lost. Having to start the hiring process all over again, thus results in increased expenses and restarting the training process also lowers efficiency. Additionally, office morale is affected as other employees might have to temporarily take up additional tasks. Gradually, they might lose confidence in management and also end up leaving. So, its important to foster teamwork. When people work together make sure everyone and not just your team's stars, gets a chance to contribute ideas and solutions. Further foster a culture of collaboration by accommodating individuals' working styles and giving them the latitude to make smart decisions.

Retention strategies refer to policies companies follow in order to retain employees and reduce turnover and attrition and ensure employee engagement. The main goal is to meet the expectations of employees without losing sight of the company's goals to ensure maximum return on investment.

Indispensable Employees: How to Hire and Keep Them

Practically every company these days has some form of program designed to nurture its rising stars. A recent research on leadership transitions demonstrates that nearly 40% of internal job moves made by people identified by their companies as "high potentials" ended up in failure. Retaining employees is not an easy task, yet every business cannot afford to keep hiring. It is, therefore, a company's responsibility to ensure they treat their employees well both to motivate and retain them for a longer period. One of the most useful ways companies use to maximize

productivity and performance is by maximizing on employee's commitment and motivation. The top five reasons for quitting jobs are: Unsure of career progress, Lack of career opportunity, Achievement not recognised, Lack of learning opportunity, challenge in the job and expertise not valued and Dissatisfied with the boss.

A problem of Employee Turnover mounting particularly at the lower level: 52% of the employees were satisfied with the work environment & work-culture, 56% feels Job security, but still improvement is required in some of the HR domains like Job Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, Job design, Perks and benefits, Work life balance, Work flexibility, and maintaining relationship with employees/Supervisors/Managers. Exit interviews conducted by the HR department are the most popular way to measure why people leave.

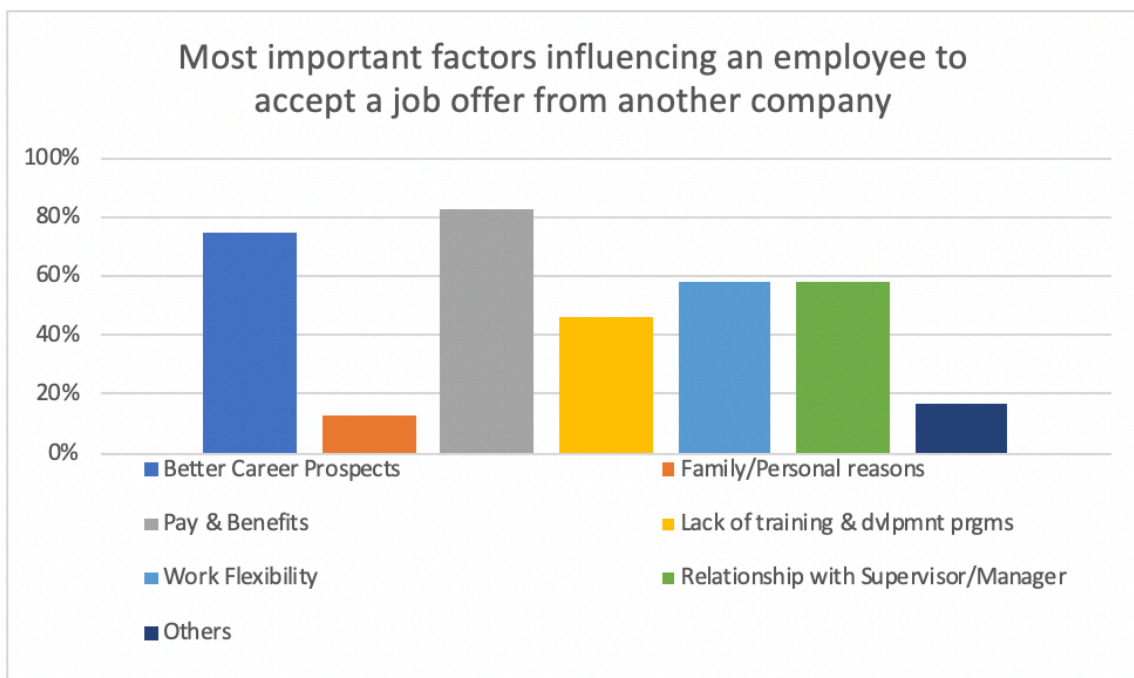


Figure 2: Influencing factors to accept another job offer

From the above figure we infer that employees prefer: **83%** Pay & Benefits, **75%** Better Career prospects, **58%** Work Flexibility & Relationships with their Supervisor/Manager, **46%** Lack of training & development programs, **17%** Other reasons, **13%** Family/Personal reasons as the influencing factors for an employee to accept a job offer from other companies if given a chance.

Better Career prospects: With **75%** of respondents, many Singaporean workers value career development, with 37% of employees

spending one to two hours a week enhancing their professional skills, according to the 2019 Hays Asia Salary Guide. The Qualtrics survey also found that receiving the right training is an important driver of loyalty, with Singapore being the only country where this driver appeared so high. When you invest in your employees, they usually reciprocate by being loyal to the company. The Ministry of Manpower(MOM) offers a nationwide Continuing Education and Training (CET) program to encourage Singaporean citizens and residents to upskill. Workers can take courses and programs under SkillsFuture and Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) to upgrade their skills. By offering such programs, the firm also enjoys the benefits of having a highly skilled workforce, thus maintaining its competitive advantage.

Workplace flexibility: With **58%** of respondents, work-life balance becoming a prime concern for many employees, so companies should try to offer Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA). The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) reported that workers are more likely to stay with companies that offer such flexibility. FWAs enable employees who were previously held back by other commitments to work more efficiently. Some options include flexible working hours (flexitime), compressed work week, and telecommuting (flexi-place). So, if the firm is not in a position to award pay increases or above-average salary packages, workplace flexibility is one key method to retain top performers.

Relationships with their Supervisor/Manager: With **58%** of respondents, there is a lack of engagement efforts by managers make workers feel like commodities instead of humans. It is thus essential for companies to enable managers and give them the tools and insights needed to improve employees' experience. This can also complement efforts by the HR department to engage workers. Few people want to be leaders, but everyone wants to be the boss. Remember, though, that people follow leaders, while they abandon bosses. A boss is a dime a dozen while leaders are rare. So, its important to have Leaders, but not Bosses.

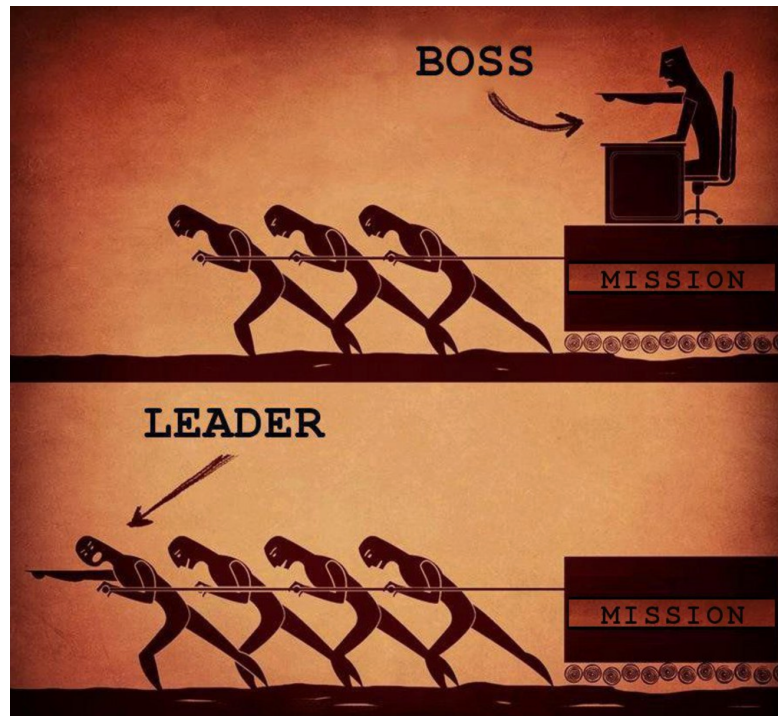


Figure 3: Have Leaders, but Not Bosses

So, based on the research and interviews a **360-degree feedback program** is recommended in the case company for managers to get direct feedback from the team and to identify key areas of development. As there is no such existing feedback system in the case company, which is also one of the challenges for employees. Putting leadership development programs in place also helps to improve managers' leadership skills, allowing them to better understand their team. A better relationship with management will make employees feel valued in the company and thus improve retention.

A company's workforce is now more diverse than ever – employees are from several different generations, with varying backgrounds and work experiences. Therefore, a generic strategy to improve employee experience is no longer feasible. So, I believe that retention initiatives should be personalized to each employee, firmly stating that the benefits of an engaged workforce outweigh the costs. As an organization, we should have certain sentiments, asserting that newer employees need a different approach from those who have been with the company for a longer time. If workers are engaged in the early stages of their employment, they are encouraged to stay longer. Consequently, the longer they stay, the more engaged they become.

However, as per research the top 3 countries with the highest expected turnover: Singapore, Malaysia (38%), and Australia (35%), are

amongst the countries with the “happiest employees”. Top pull factors in Singapore include: Better pay, Career Prospects, and Work-Life balance. Yet, when given the right opportunity, 73% of employees are likely to switch jobs, with 43% in average considering doing so within a year or two.

Each company would adopt different retention strategies and every company strives to hold onto its people assets for the longest time improving productivity, maintaining uninterrupted business flows, and reducing the cost of rehiring, where retention is a top priority for most organizations, but in a competitive hiring climate Employee Retention can often be a challenge. Hiring is considered a hefty investment in human capital, and employers expect to reap a return on each headcount. The hardest challenge being a HR is that sometimes you have to be the LAWYER, the JUDGE, and the HANGMAN.

By applying the right tactics, you can hold onto your best-performing talent and create a workforce that is loyal, engaged, and outcome-focused. It is important to remember that retention strategies differ from employee to employee. So, it is important to consider that our high-performing talent is not likely to have the same drivers as the mid-performing group. Similarly, poor performers need different retention strategies altogether. So, more focus should be on the different strategies an organization can deploy to ensure maximum retention.

An insider’s guide to retain top talents

Based on the employee groups, the retention strategies are followed as follows:

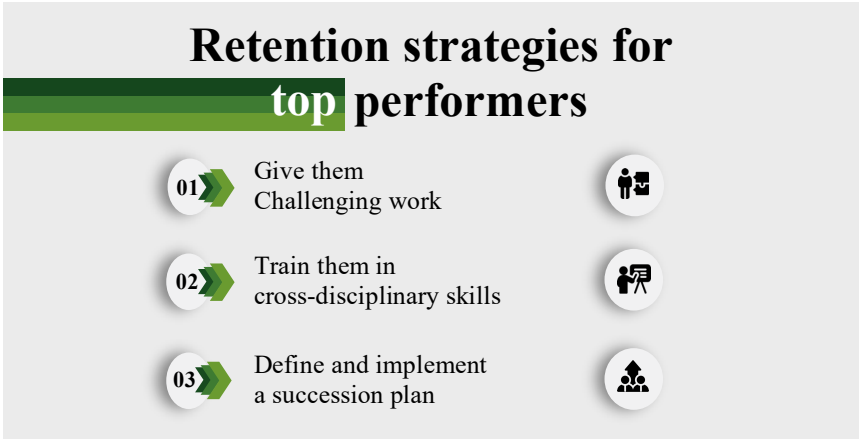


Figure 4: How to retain top performers

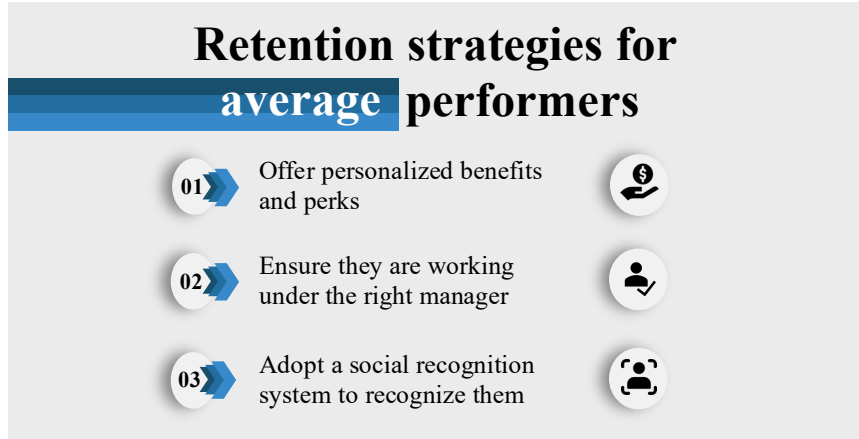


Figure 5: How to retain average performers

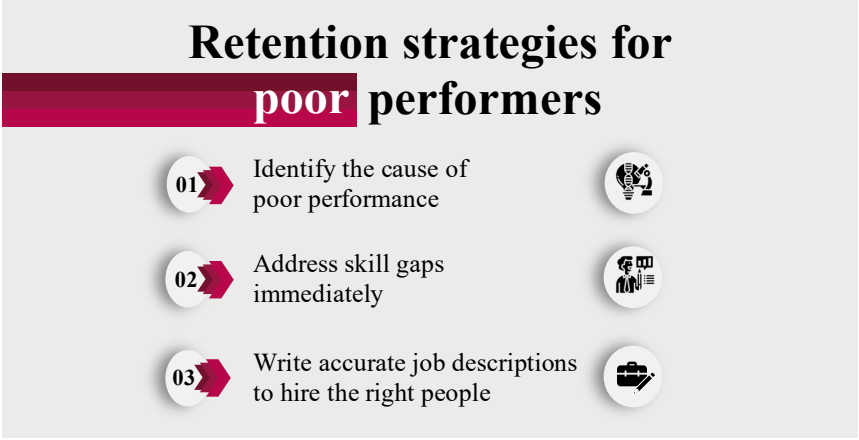


Figure 6: How to retain poor performers

Recommendations

Employee Retention starts with great **on-boarding**, considering the amount of time, resources, and money that goes into training a new employee. Productivity will slow down due to existing staff helping out the newest addition to the team. There is a possibility of losing resources and money due to any errors that typically arise from new employees. Maintaining our employees, as long as they are a good fit for the company, is crucial to a successful business. A low Employee Retention rate will hurt the organization.

It all starts with who we hire. Hiring the wrong employee can go a few ways: they either quickly leave or cause existing employees to resign. Either way, we end up repeating the process. So, as we go through the screening process of applicants, thorough look at their resumes for: What does their work experience look like? Where have they worked and for how long? Someone who has had multiple jobs in a short span of time might mean they still have not found their right fit, or they are not very loyal to their company is very crucial.

Another aspect of the screening process should include considering if they are a match for the company's culture. A new employee that is not on board with the rest of the staff could soon cause problems in the office atmosphere. Tests, questionnaires, and interviews may be staples of the hiring process, but they are not the only ways to gain insight into a potential employee's aptitude and personality. Organizations should not only design on approaches to best attract talent, but also to ensure that the attracted human capital pool creates a human capital advantage.

When designing a hiring process, getting the level of stringency just right can be tricky. Diversity is another aspect of hiring that employers are increasingly paying attention to. People of different genders, ethnicities, ages, and backgrounds sharing a workspace not only strengthens a company's culture, but also allows better representation of a company's client base, which could lead to improved productivity and performance.

Due to their impact on workforce quality and diversity, talent acquisition and talent assessment are of pivotal importance to organisations. There is some pivotal recent research showing that talent acquisition and assessment not only impact individual performance but also

firm performance. This should convince higher and top management to keep investing in talent acquisition and assessment.

The HR technologies that have enabled businesses to be more flexible, agile, and open to their employees' needs to support stronger retention. Other examples include platforms for producing employee awards and recognition, virtual training opportunities to expand your company's professional development focus, and systems that help streamline or automate workflows to eliminate menial tasks. No one piece of technology is the key to shifting your business's focus toward thoughtful Employee Retention. By using these tools in concert and combining them with other efforts, such as expanding your employee benefits programs, you can reinvest in the terrific employees that you already have.

Treat your employees with the same respect they give you; they will enjoy working with you. Do not only show concern about their work life but their overall life, that is the only way to keep them happy. If you want to treat your employees well, recognize their efforts and help them in their weaknesses. It takes a lot of time and energy to build a great employee and only a second to lose one. Whether the team just finished a huge project under budget, or an employee celebrated a 1-year or 5-year or 10-year work anniversary, seize the chance to celebrate together with a shared meal or team outing.



References

- Allen, David G. (2008) "Retaining Talent: A Guide to Analysing and Managing Employee Turnover". Society for Human Resource Management. SHRM Foundation
- Andrew Chamberlain. (2017). Why Do Employees Stay? A Clear Career Path and Good Pay, for Starters. Harvard Business Review.
- Cardy, R. a.-H. (2011). Will They Stay or Will They Go? Exploring a Customer-Oriented Approach to Employee Retention. Journal of Business and Psychology(26), 213-217.
- Everett Spain, Boris Groysberg, (April 2016). "Making Exit Interviews Count". Harvard Business Review
- Harris, D. (2000). Benefits of Exit Interviews. Information Management System, pp17-20
- Lievens Filip (2017). Organizational Image/Reputation. The Encyclopaedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (pp. 1116-1118), 2nd edition. Sage Publication Inc
- Lievens F (2006). Organizational Image/Reputation. In.S. Rogelberg & C.L.Reeve (Eds). The Encyclopaedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (pp.568-570). Research Collection Lee Kong Chian School Of Business.
- Passmore, & C. Semedo (2017), The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Recruitment, Selection, and Employee Retention (pp. 226–246)
- Rebecca Zucker, (2020). "What to say in an Exit Interview". Harvard Business Review

Perception of Organisational Change and Organisational Identification between Transferred Staff and New Hires

WONG CIXIAN

Introduction

Due to organisational restructuring, organisations could possibly set up a separate entity either to focus on a particular field or perform an expanded role. In such a new set-up, there are two distinct groups of employees (i.e. transferred staff and new hires). Given their respective backgrounds, there could be differences in terms of how they perceive organisational change and their identities within the new organisation. Therefore, the research questions are: **(1) What are the differences in the perception of organisational change between the transferred staff and the new hires? (2) What are the differences in organisational identification between the transferred staff and the new hires?**

Literature Review

Organisational Change, Types of Change & Change Leadership

Change is defined as “perceived or felt differences in circumstances and behaviour, to such an extent that a situation becomes or is made different” (Mills and Murgatroyd, 1991).

According to Nadler & Tushman (1990), organisational changes vary along the following dimensions: (a) strategic and incremental changes; and (b) reactive and anticipatory changes. The types of organisational changes are shown in Figure 1 below.

	Incremental	Strategic
Anticipatory	Tuning	Re-orientation
Reactive	Adaptation	Re-creation

Figure 1: Types of Organisational Changes

Based on Figure 1, *tuning* refers to changes that not system-wide redefinitions, but rather modifications of specific components, and these are initiated in anticipation of future events. *Adaptation* is an incremental change which is initiated reactively. *Re-orientation* is a strategic change initiated in anticipation of future events. As for *re-creation*, it is change prompted by immediate demands (Nadler & Tushman, 1990).

Tushman, Newman, & Romanelli (1986) mentioned about *frame-breaking change*, which occurs in response to or, better yet, in anticipation of major environmental changes – changes which require more than incremental adjustments. This seems to be similar to the re-orientation (anticipatory – strategic dimensions) as highlighted by Nadler & Tushman (1990). Research was done on implementing change in public organisations. As shared by Van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld (2016), there are two types of change – (a) planned process of change; and (b) emergent changes. *Planned processes of change* are top-down and pragmatic, while *emergent changes* rely on the participation of employees.

Other than top leadership, middle managers are also critical in shaping the organisational change. Middle managers are the change intermediaries fulfilling inter-related roles during change implementation – undertaking personal change, helping others through change, implementing necessary changes in their department and keep business going (Balogun, 2003).

Organisational Identification & Place Identity Theory

As defined by Reade (2001), organisation identification is the process of psychological bonding between an individual and his or her work organisation. The length of period an employee works with the organisation has an influence on organisational identification. Tenure

may be associated with identification because the longer one is associated with an organisation, the more time one has to develop a clear prototype of the organisation. Individuals with longer tenure are likely to have more occasion to be publicly identified with the organisation and to have their fate intertwined with that of the organisation (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005).

Reference could be made to a merger situation regarding the status position of employees. Employees of the dominant organisation are more prone to feel a sense of continuity of their pre-merger identity in the post-merger identity and to maintain their pre-merger position (Giessner, Viki, Otten, Terry, & Täuber, 2006).

Based on a research on place identity theory (PIT), people respond to physical changes in their environments to defend their sense of connectedness and self-efficacy in that environment, especially when such changes are perceived as a threat to their identity (Bonaiuto, Breakwell, & Cano, 1996). As people form emotional attachments to the places in which they live and work, they are more likely to resist changes to those places (Korpela, 1989; Proshansky et al., 1983).

Qualitative Research Study

In order to gather insights from the two groups of employees on the research questions, a qualitative study was conducted. Face-to-face interviews with 14 employees from a private organisation, which was set up by another organisation for strategic purpose, were conducted. Seven participants were transferred staff and the other seven were new hires.

Research Findings

Perception of Organisational Change

The themes relating to organisational change that have emerged from the qualitative study are: (1) Attitude towards change; and (2) Role of leadership. The results are mixed. The perception of some elements of organisational change between the transferred staff and the new hires are more convergent than different.

(1) Attitude towards change

An interesting element that has emerged from the interviews is the attitude towards change, whether the staff feels positive or negative about it. While the new hires were not part of the initial process of shifting from the original organisation to the new one, their perception of organisational change seems more positive than those of the transferred staff. This could be due to their personal experiences in their previous jobs, where changes within the organisations could be more prevalent.

(2) Role of leadership

There is no distinct difference in terms of perception on role of leadership between the transferred staff and the new hires. From the interviews, it is vivid that leadership, both top and middle, play a key role in organisational change at the new organisation, especially from the perspectives of staff engagement, communication and motivation. Both groups of employees generally feel that top leadership has done what they could for the initial transformation and the current organisational change (i.e. improvements to the work environment and work processes). Both groups also echo the essence of literature review on middle managers that they are the change intermediaries fulfilling inter-related roles during change implementation. For example, helping others through change and implementing necessary changes in their department (Balogun, 2003).

Organisational Identification

The themes relating to organisational identification that have emerged from the qualitative study are: (1) No clear distinction between organisations; and (2) Perceived difference due to status.

(1) No clear distinction between organisations

The transferred staff are of the view that there is too much similarity between the original and the new organisations, and some ponder if there is a need for a new set-up in the first place. The jobs remain largely similar compared to the time at the original organisations, although the current scopes have expanded. The new organisation as a whole from work processes to HR policies reflects similarity to the original organisation.

It is apparent that the transferred staff could identify themselves more to the original organisation and better sense the similarities as they came from there. For the new hires, as they do not have prior experience with the original organisation, they are relatively more indifferent.

(2) Perceived difference due to status

Transferred staff seems to identify the new organisation as more inferior compared to the original one. Being in the original organisation before, they used to speak to fellow colleagues in other departments on equal grounds. With the shift, their identity changed. They perceived a difference in the treatment by former colleagues from the original organisation.

There was some feedback from the “new hires” sample who raised about the divide between the staff groups. According to one of them, the transferred staff see themselves as more superior in terms of capabilities and competencies. This is aligned to theory shared by Giessner, Viki, Otten, Terry, & Täuber (2006), which is that employees of the dominant organisation are more prone to feel a sense of continuity of their pre-merger identity in the post-merger identity and to maintain their pre-merger position. As such, it reinforces the point that the transferred staff identify themselves more to the original organisation.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the research findings could be summarised as follows:

- On research question (1), the main difference in the perception of organisational change between the transferred staff and new hires is the area of attitude towards change. The transferred staff are more resistant or negative towards change while the new hires are more open to change. There is no difference in their perception of organisational change in terms of role of leadership during organisational change and career opportunities arising from the change.
- On research question (2), the difference is that the transferred staff identify themselves more to the original organisation and the new hires more towards the new organisation. The transferred staff see a lot of similarities between the two organisations in terms of job,

and organisation. The divide between the two groups of employees accentuates the difference in terms of organisational identification.

Limitations

Other than the qualitative research being limited by sample size and time, the organisations chosen for the study could not represent all scenarios of organisational change and organizational identification. There could be other factors of consideration such as public and private sectors, the corporate reputation of the original organisation, etc.

Future Directions

Areas for further research may include whether perception of organisational change and organisational identification between the transferred staff and the new hires would be different after a few years of operations. Another area may also be the perception of organisational change and organisational identification between the mature and young generation of employees, and also the between executive and the support staff.

References

- Balogun, J. (2003). From Blaming the Middle to Harnessing its Potential: Creating Change Intermediaries. *British Journal of Management*, 14(1), 69–83. doi: 10.1111/1467-8551.00266
- Bonaiuto, M., Breakwell, G. M., & Cano, I. (1996). Identity Processes and Environmental Threat: the Effects of Nationalism and Local Identity upon Perception of Beach Pollution. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 6(3), 157–175. doi: 10.1002/(sici)1099-1298(199608)6:3<157::aid-casp367>3.0.co;2-w
- George, E., & Chattopadhyay, P. (2005). One Foot in Each Camp: The Dual Identification of Contract Workers. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(1), 68–99. doi: 10.2189/asqu.2005.50.1.68

- Giessner, S. R., Viki, G. T., Otten, S., Terry, D. J., & Täuber, S. (2006). The Challenge of Merging: Merger Patterns, Premerger Status, and Merger Support. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(3), 339–352. doi: 10.1177/0146167205282151
- Korpela, K. M. (1989). Place-identity as a product of environmental self-regulation. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 9(3), 241–256. doi: 10.1016/s0272-4944(89)80038-6
- Mills, A. and Murgatroyd, S. (1991), *Organisational Rules*, Prentice Hall, London, in Tiernan, S.D., Morley, M.J., Foley, E. (2001), *Modern Management: Theory and Practice for Irish Students*, 2nd ed., Gill and Macmillan, Dublin.
- Nadler, D. A., & Tushman, M. L. (1990). Beyond the charismatic leader: Leadership and organization change. *Long Range Planning*, 23(5), 133. doi: 10.1016/0024-6301(90)90333-y
- Reade, C. (2001). Antecedents of organizational identification in multinational corporations: fostering psychological attachment to the local subsidiary and the global organization. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(8), 1269–1291. doi: 10.1080/09585190110083794
- Tushman, M. L., Newman, W. H., & Romanelli, E. (1986). Convergence and Upheaval: Managing the Unsteady Pace of Organizational Evolution. *California Management Review*, XXIX. doi: 10.2307/41165245
- Van der Voet, J., Kuipers, B. S., & Groeneveld, S. (2016). Implementing change in public service organizations. *Managing Change and Innovation in Public Service Organizations*, 18(6), 842–865. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2015.1045020>

What Tweeps² Tweet³ About Twitter: A Closer Look at Employer Branding through a Case Study on Twitter's Global #OneTeam2020 Event

PHILINE YONG

Tweets are a valuable source of information that helps media and people alike paint the picture on what is happening. This is all the more so in the absence of other official media releases, such as during Twitter's Global #OneTeam2020 event, an employer branding effort by Twitter in January this year. Using the event as a case study, I seek to find out what Tweeps tweeted about Twitter and what they used the platform for in response to employer branding efforts. The paper closely examines all public tweets by Tweeps with the hashtag #OneTeam and #OneTeam2020 using a thematic approach.

Literature Review

Social media revolutionised the way we live, work and think. It is deeply integrated into our lifestyle and habits too. Using social media to recruit has become increasingly popular that 92% of the companies surveyed used social media for recruitment (Chamber & Winter, 2017). Besides, 59% of candidates were reported using social media to research on companies that they are interested in working for (Robert Walters, n.d.). On the same note, with the vast capability to inform, influence and for direct communication, social media are good resources to improve an organisation's brand. Kaur et al. (2015) looked at how companies can more effectively brand themselves via social media by improving perceived dimensions of employee attractiveness in economic, application, and social values.

Elegbe (2018) demonstrated through his longitudinal study that employer branding spurs positive impacts on both current and prospective

² Employees of Twitter are more affectionately known as "Tweeps".

³ A tweet is a post on Twitter containing photos, videos, links, GIFs, and texts of up to 280 characters.

employees, across talent attraction, hiring, engagement, and retention; it is a powerful tool amidst competition for scarce talent. CIPD (2019), a globally recognised association for HR professionals, holistically discussed the concept and explained employer branding to be "the way in which organisations differentiate themselves in the labour market, enabling them to recruit, retain and engage the right people". On the other hand, others have taken a look at employer branding more thoroughly through the internal and external lens, depending on whom the efforts are targeted at. The term internal employer branding has been used in reference to an organisation's strategies and initiatives to make themselves valuable and attractive among internal constituencies, namely current employees, while external employer branding focuses on external constituencies, mainly potential employees (Foster et al., 2010). In this paper, I take employer branding as the process for an organisation to stand out from its competitors, among its current employees (i.e. internal employer branding) and potential employees (i.e. external employer branding).

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) convinced academics and organisations the importance of delegating resources for employer branding through their model that combined brand equity theory with the resource-based view. According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), employer branding creates 1) brand association, which frames employer image and further shapes employer attractiveness; and 2) brand loyalty (via organisational identity and culture) that influences employee productivity. Organisational identity and culture have been referenced to attitudinal and behavioural elements respectively.

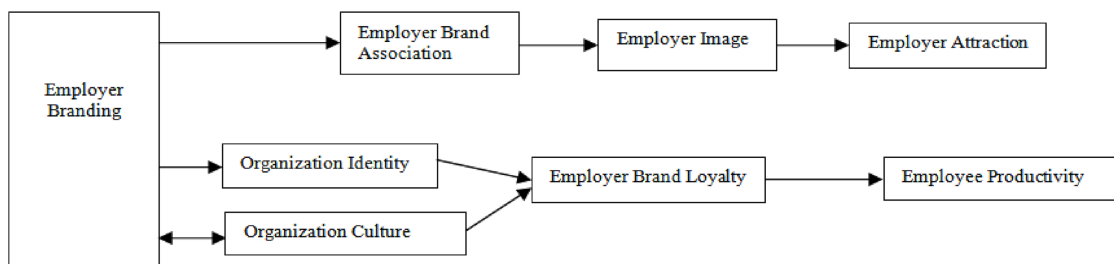


Figure 1: The concept of employer branding according to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004).

Existing literature on employer branding and social media focused on how to leverage social media to improve employer branding. However, studies on employer branding efforts looked at through social media are

rare. Employer branding brings immense value to an organisation, both externally and internally. Having established that, I move into the case study.

Methods

Public tweets with the hashtags #OneTeam and #OneTeam2020 in January 2020 were identified through the search function on Twitter using a new user account created. Care was enacted to remove all tweets not in relation to Twitter and to the event. Based on the name, handle (username) and content, an assumption was also made if the user is a Tweep, non-Tweep or if it was from an official account under Twitter, such as Twitter Careers. Only tweets from Tweeps were collected for analysis. Tweets were coded descriptively, categorised until themes were identified with reference to the method adopted by Shepherd et al. (2015). However, given scope constraints, the codes and themes were not further reviewed by independent parties. Yet, in order to maintain objectivity, all prior analysis was constantly revisited after every 20 tweets.

Results

A total of 209 public tweets posted by 154 Tweeps were analysed. It was noted that a tweet could be associated with a number of themes and sub-themes too. The three overarching themes from the tweets were sense of community, feel good and appreciation. Interestingly, no one tweet analysed spoke ill of Twitter and the event. Tweets were also broken down into single words and the frequency of common words in the tweets was separately tabulated. Excluding the hashtags #OneTeam and #OneTeam2020, the top ten words most frequently mentioned were captured as follows: 1) work or working; 2) team; 3) thank or thanks; 4) Houston; 5) #LoveWhereYouWork; 6) @jack; 7) people; 8) Tweeps; 9) amazing, and 10) company. These terms coincided with the themes and subthemes identified from the tweets.

Theme 1: Sense of Community

A sense of community was strongly present in these tweets analysed. However, while an overarching Twitter community was noted among the tweets, multiple senses of communities dynamically interacted concurrently on two other levels, namely across teams and countries or regions. In addition, despite the idea that more interactions should result in closer relationships and stronger bonds (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), the concept of a Twitter community took precedence and was more frequently tweeted.

Affiliation and identification to the Twitter community. In 112 out of 209 tweets (54%), Tweepers tweeted about their collective Twitter sense of community. The sense of community had been observed in the frequent use of the word “Tweepers” that called out to their membership as employees of Twitter. This term could also be used to activate the community for advice or trigger the delivery of collective efforts:

Tweepers, I need your help! While I'm here working on #oneteam in Houston, my favorite human is turning 7 today! Please drop a reply to wish my baby girl...

Similarly, Tweepers set boundaries through word choices such as “our”, “we” and “us” in contrast to “your”. The sense of community was also heightened through expressions that demonstrated intentions to put “us” in a more positive light. Examples include associating “us” with favourable comparative adjectives and by describing others to be possibly inferior:

Our CFO is cuter than your CFO... I mean c'mon your CEO could never!

References to and sharing of insider references or information were also prevalent among the tweets to accentuate the sense of community across Tweepers. An example of an insider joke would be the many tweets with the #JIRAJoe hashtag:

Meet #JiraJoe aka the King of #OneTeam...

Affiliation and identification to people working in the same team. The sense of community across teams within Twitter was recorded in 19 out of 209 tweets (9%). Creative variations on popular hashtags were noted on such tweets for Tweeps to better represent themselves with their specific teams. Example included:

#OneTeam with the best team. #Twittertainment

Affiliation and identification to people working in the same country/region. Similarly, a sense of community across countries or regions within Twitter was recorded in 18 out of 209 tweets (9%). Again, we see that Tweeps created interesting variations on the popular hashtags to highlight their country or region-specific memberships within the Twitter community:

This #OneFrenchTeam is kicking ass! 2020, here we come...

Theme 2: Feel Good

Maslow (1943), as cited in Watson (1986), posited that there are five categories of needs: 1) psychological; 2) safety; 3) love; 4) esteem, and 5) self-actualisation. In particular, esteem needs are associated with factors such as status, recognition, confidence and achievement (Maslow, 1943 as cited in Watson, 1986). With the background of an underlying need to satisfy esteem needs, it was observed that Tweeps tweeted content that makes them feel good about their esteem; they showcased their outstanding achievements and made statements that spark interests.

Achievement. Tweeps tweeted about what they have achieved and the special privileges they enjoyed during the event, all of which not easily achievable or attainable. Such tweets were noted 57 times among 209 tweets (27%). Personal achievements accomplished with significant efforts and perhaps, at the right opportunities were shared on Twitter:

I had no idea I could walk on stage and talk to over 4,600 people who work hard each day to serve the public conversation. I mean, I get nervous on Hangouts...

Other examples include having the prized opportunity to interact with famed individuals:

Oh we're just facetimeing @elonmusk during a team meeting...

Spark interest. Tweeps also actively expressed their excitement on what was to come, gave suggestions, and shared information on their tweets. This

was recorded on 16 out of 209 tweets (8%). Such tweets typically included at least one open-ended question so as to drive interest and encourage further conversations around the topic. Example included:

... Are you feeling #TwitterForGood today? Cuz y'all sure are lookin (sic) good!

Theme 3: Appreciation

Twitter was also used informally as a platform for Tweepers to openly express their appreciations for the contributions by others; they tweeted their thanks and gave recognitions.

Recognising contributions & efforts by Tweepers & teams. Tweets that recognised contribution and efforts of fellow Tweepers and teams in Twitter were observed 30 times across 209 tweets (14%). Shout-outs directed to specific individuals generally identified the contributor's name and included a simple write up on the outstanding contribution he or she made:

A major #OneTeam thank you to Norma. She is the woman/wizard responsible for the live closed captioning.

On the other hand, fulfilling its purpose as an informal platform compared to the employee recognition programs in Twitter, recognitions on the platform without clear details of the contributions made were also observed:

Damn proud to work with this Texan! Texas and Twitter are lucky to have you @Lauran...

Similarly, recognitions directed to teams, especially those directly involved in the Global #OneTeam 2020 event, were recorded among the tweets:

Twitter's events team is the best in the biz...

Recognising contributions & efforts of & in Twitter. Tweepers tweeted about the contributions Twitter made to the greater community for a total of 25 times among the 209 tweets (12%). Tweepers cited the people, purpose, or impact of Twitter as the reason why they work and are still working in Twitter. Tweepers view Twitter as an organisation that "helps people" and working in Twitter was deemed "meaningful":

Why do I work @Twitter... I'm here to make real world impact and help people...

Ten years ago today was my first day at Twitter. I stay for the ongoing opportunity to solve meaningful problems working with amazing people...

The hashtag #LoveWhereYouWork effectively captured how Tweepers aligned themselves with the purpose and values of the organisation to serve the public such as in the example below:

... WHAT OTHER COMPANY SENDS THEIR 4,500 EMPLOYEES OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY TO VOLUNTEER... #LoveWhereYouWork...

Recognising contributions & efforts by Twitter's executives. Tweepers were grateful for the great leader in Jack, Twitter's CEO, and his executive team in 17 out of 209 tweets (8%). Under Jack's charismatic leadership and especially through his sharing during the event, Tweepers were inspired and motivated to work towards the betterment of themselves and for others:

Thankful to @jack for this reminder at #OneTeam "Life's most persistent and urgent question is 'What are you doing for others?'"

Discussion

From the paper, it is crucial for organisations to brand themselves, both externally (for employer attractiveness) and internally (for employee productivity) to compete for talent and stand out. The paper also examined employer branding efforts looked at through social media amidst extensive social media use and influence today. Public tweets with the hashtag #OneTeam and #OneTeam2020 tweeted by Tweepers in January 2020 were collected and analysed using a thematic approach. From the analysis of the contents in the collected tweets, three key themes were observed: 1) sense of community; 2) feel good; and 3) appreciation.

While Tweepers tweeted about the overarching Twitter community, it was observed that they also tweeted about their teams and countries or regions. Membership in the community (or communities) were viewed in high regard. This was demonstrated through word choices or hashtags that celebrated membership within the community (or communities) and the frequent mentions of insider references in the tweets.

Twitter is a platform for public self-expression. With the huge user base on Twitter, it is all the more a good platform for users to share things

that sparks interest for them feel good about their esteem. Likewise, Tweepers tweeted about their outstanding achievements and the special privileges they enjoyed during the event.

The far-reaching influence of Twitter also justified its use as an informal platform among Tweepers to appreciate efforts across individuals and teams, executives, as well as contributions of and in Twitter. Tweepers were also aligned to the purpose and impact of the organization to the greater community.

Theoretical Contributions & Recommendations

In response to the Global #OneTeam 2020 employer branding effort by Twitter, we see good publicity externally and internally, for the camaraderie among Tweepers: Tweepers bragged, shared about their achievements and talked about how proud they were to be part of the Twitter community on Twitter, but not without giving thanks and showing appreciation. It pays to encourage Tweepers to tweet about Twitter's employer branding efforts on Twitter.

Limitations

Firstly, the generalisability of the study to other organisations and industries is greatly restricted. Secondly, coding and themes were not independently reviewed. Hence, while efforts were made to maintain objectivity through multiple revisits during data analysis and identification of frequently used words to test relevance to subthemes and themes identified, subjectivity might still be present.

Future Directions

The study could be extended to organisations in the Internet industry such as LinkedIn. Given similar takeaways, it would greatly improve the generalisability of this study across organisations in the industry.

References

- Backhaus, K., & Tikoo, S. (2004). Conceptualizing and researching employer branding. *Career Development International*, 9(5), 501–517. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430410550754>
- Chambers, R., & Winter, J. (2017). *Social media and selection: A brief history and practical recommendations* [white paper]. Retrieved from http://www.infocoponline.es/pdf/Social_Media_and_Selection.pdf
- CIPD. (2019). Employer Branding: Factsheets. Retrieved from <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/people/recruitment/brand-factsheet>
- Elegbe, J. (2018). Determinants of Success of Employer Branding in a Start-up Firm in Nigeria. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 60(3), 265–277. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.21897>
- Foster, C., Punjaisri, K., & Cheng, R. (2010). Exploring the relationship between corporate, internal and employer branding. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6), 401–409. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610421011085712>
- Kaur, P., Sharma, S., Kaur, J., & Sharma, S. K. (2015). Using social media for employer branding and talent management: An experiential study. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, 12(2), 7.
- Robert Walters (n.d.). *Robert Walters Whitepaper: using social media in the recruitment process*. Retrieved from <https://www.robertwalters.us/content/dam/robert-walters/country/united-kingdom/files/whitepapers/rw-social-media-whitepaper.pdf>
- Shepherd, A., Sanders, C., Doyle, M., & Shaw, J. (2015). Using social media for support and feedback by mental health service users: thematic analysis of a twitter conversation. *BMC psychiatry*, 15(1), 29.

Watson, T. (1986). *Management, organisation and employment strategy new directions in theory and practice*. London; Routledge.

Perceived Talents: in the Eyes of (Line) Managers

JESYLN YONG

Talents – Made or be made? There are many varied views and studies that have shown view on talents being innate and naturally within, making such individuals branded as the gifted beings. Some beliefs spoke about talents as individuals who can be further developed, like unpolished gems after being moulded and shine brighter. However, there were also many research materials citing the complexity in defining who and what talents are. With different perceived talents, views on approaching and managing talents in the working world have been discussed, be it if you are taking the position as a HR Practitioner (“HR”) or a Line Manager (“manager”) with supervisory responsibilities.

Riding on an earlier paper published in 2019: *“HR managers’ talent philosophies: prevalence and relationships with perceived talent management practices.”* (Meyers C. M., van Woerkom, Paauwe, & Dries, 2019), which has addressed the perceived views from HR managers on talents and cited certain talent philosophies. Pursuing on, I read through the 4 talent philosophies by (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014). The philosophies were split by 4 classifications of talents: (a) rare (exclusive) or universal (inclusive); and (b) stable or developable. With that, 4 quadrants were developed and identified as: the **exclusive/stable**; **exclusive/developable**; **inclusive/stable**; and **inclusive/developable** talent philosophy. Besides the 4 philosophies, the literature also highlighted that *“as organisations tend to differ in how many employees they consider being talented, and as these differences can mainly be explained by their assumptions about the nature of talent (i.e. talent philosophies)”* (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014).

With that, this humble paper of mine will seek to determine how line managers define talents and how their talent philosophies would be like. It has also sought line managers’ opinions on the talent identifications and percentage of talents the organisation should have. The interviewed line managers were managers with hiring and firing decisions, responsibilities in assessing potentials, provide development plans and also, involve in rewarding performance.

Background

With the constant evolving economy and coupled with strong emphasis on digitalisation and technology, skills of employees will need to change in keeping up with the moving pace. A global financial institution (“Organisation”) with hundred years of legacy and spanning across 50 countries, faces similar challenges like most corporations. With diversified businesses, its key strength, not only lies in upholding its integrity and professionalism, but also the responsibilities of developing and nurturing its employees worldwide. The Organisation crystallised its business plans which focus on customers, re-align businesses and introduce digital technologies. In so doing, there were talks and plans on providing training programs to equip employees with new skills and also to recruit specialists in preparation for digital transformation. Indeed, organisations either “buy” (to acquire) or “grow” (to develop) talents. Sometimes, organisations “borrow” (to deploy) talents too.

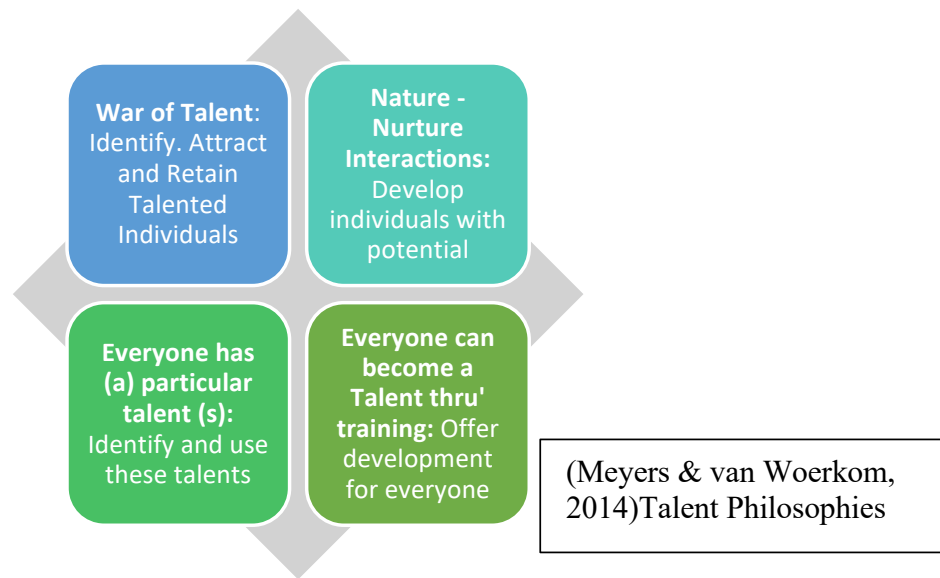
Questions hovered around: how the managers in this Organisation feel about talents? Would the managers perceive to acquire rather than grow or borrow talents? Will the managers’ perception of talents determine how they will manage today’s talents? What would be the manager’s perceived percentage of talents an organisation should have?

Method

A qualitative study was done across **13** managers from the Organisation. The purpose of qualitative method is to draw detailed comments and views from the selected line managers. Though not a collection of exhaustive viewpoints from all line managers in the Organisation, it will serve as certain perceived views from those with managerial experiences.

The profiles of the interviewed managers varied by their seniority in age and work experience, sizes of team being managed, roles and responsibilities in the organisation, i.e. management/c-suite level, revenue-driven or support function managers. On diversity, it was a good balance of female versus male; local (Singaporean) and non-local managers.

The managers were presented the 4 talent philosophies using the following diagram shared during the interviews.



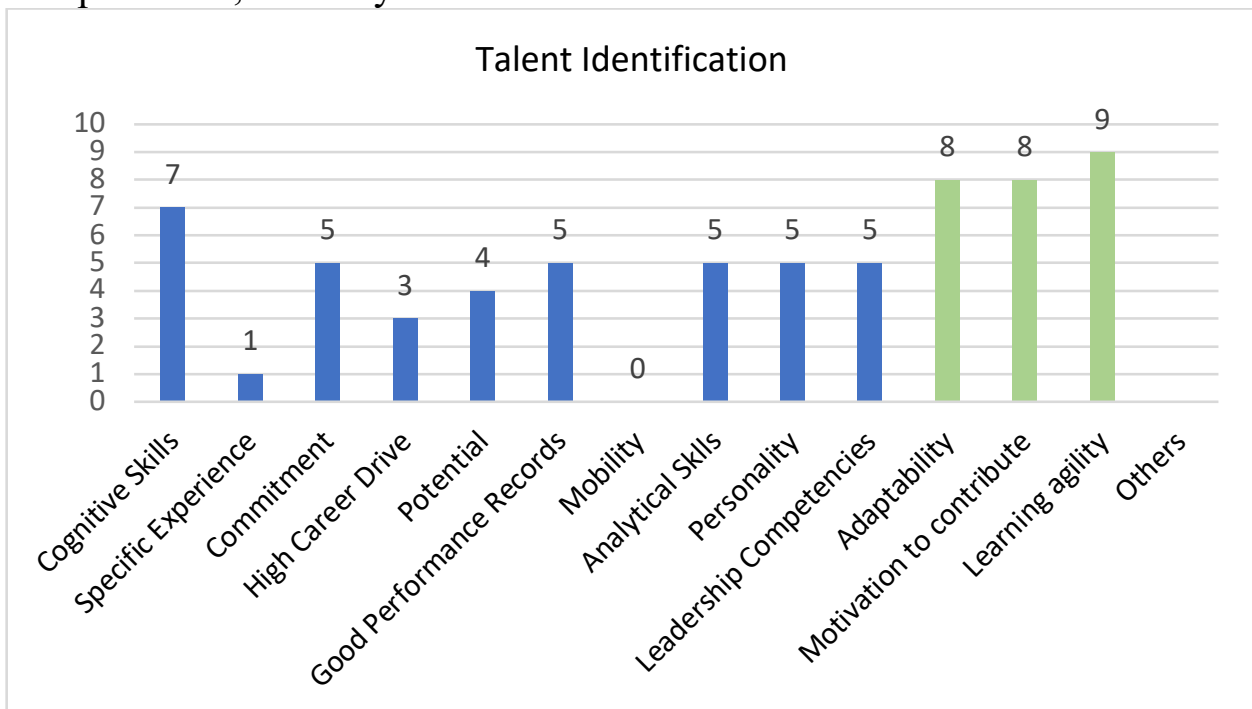
Results

On Talent Definition: The interviews requested the managers for their talent definition. Many quoted talents as natural ability, skills or aptitude that one will possess. Out of 13 interviewed, 2 managers shared that talent can be developed with future focus. When asked if talent is truly innate, acquire or both, majority of interviewed managers agreed on the presence of nature and nurture. These managers associated talents with certain abilities like in sports, arts or certain flair of intelligences. With that innate ability these individuals possess, coupled with efforts in re-defining and further developed, talents will shine. However, these managers added that they believe there is a limitation of developing talents as it still boiled down to innate ability and other elements like the acceptance of environment and talents' willingness. Somehow, these managers have associated individuals with giftedness and they believe that over time, talents' abilities can be developed. Quoting one of the managers' comments, *"The key word is natural. I strongly believe that every individual is unique. They have their strengths and weaknesses. To me, their strength is where their real talent is. They do not need additional effort to make it better. In other words, it is natural"*. Another manager quoted, *"At the most simplistic level, talent is an aptitude or skill that one possesses which allows the individual to thrive in areas where others may (still) find."*

The comments from the managers shared similar views as Francoys Gagne. In the perspective of Gagne, giftedness is a one with natural ability(ies) whereas talent is one who possesses systematically developed skill(s). i.e. ...*the term "giftedness" designates the possession and use of*

untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts). On talent, he believed “(talent) designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills and knowledge in at least one field of human activity... ” (Gagne, 1999). He introduced the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talents (DMGT), presented views between giftedness and talents. He believed that natural abilities are the elements to constitute talents. With environmental and intrapersonal, and also chance, which act like catalysts, talents can be developed. He shared that there are 6 components that cover all the variables relevant to analysis of talent development.

On Talent Identifications: I have asked the managers, besides looking at performance and potential, what would be other elements they will look for when identifying a talent. Based the list of elements, the managers were supposed to pick 5, in no preference of order. The given list of elements included: Cognitive abilities, Analytical Skills, Specific experience, personality, adaptability, learning agility, motivation and commitment, high career drive, potential, performance records, leadership competencies, mobility.

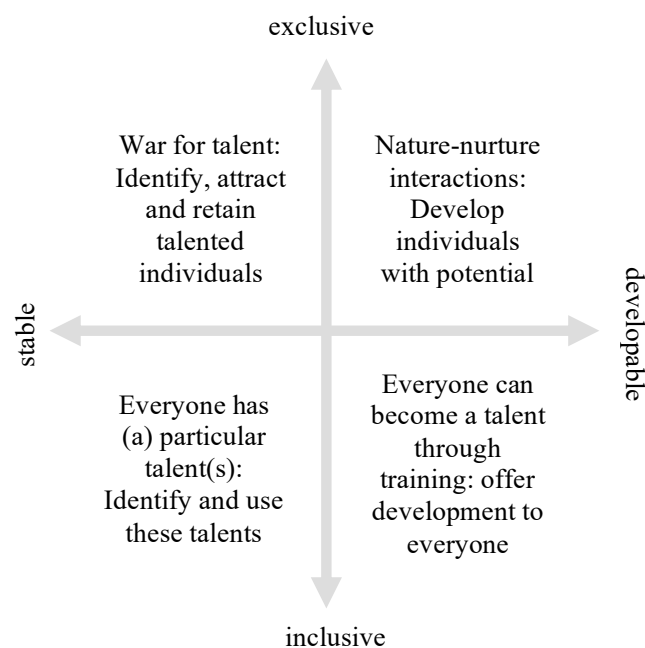


Learning agility, Adaptability and Motivation to Contribute were the favourable elements picked by the managers on talent identification. When asked the managers to further elaborate, many felt that the right positive attitude from individuals would be important for identifying and furthering talent development. One manager shared on “...talent refers to

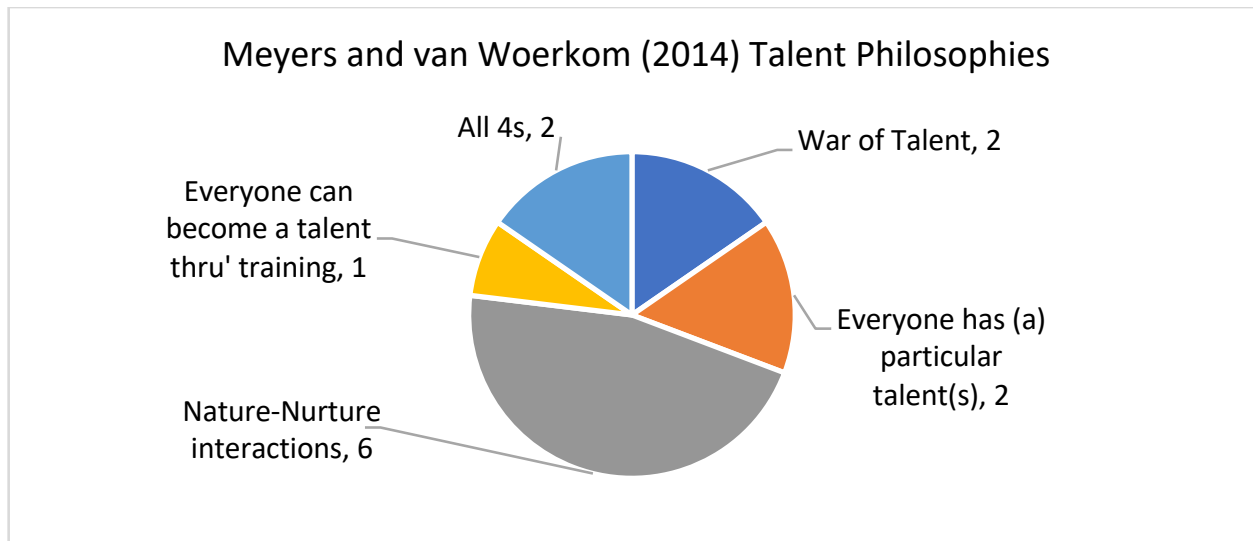
someone with the right combination of attributes, characteristics and style that enables them, within a particular environment or a particular context, to deliver outstanding performance and/or to demonstrate great potential to perform with excellence in a particular role.”

On Talent Approaches: There were some interesting views from the managers. Many agreed that it is important to identify the strengths of individuals, to further train and develop, provide opportunities to stretch their abilities and manage the expectations. A couple of managers shared that it is equally important in aligning to company and business objectives when identifying the talents and deploying them in business-critical roles, even review succession plans. I have also questioned the managers on their perspectives whether talents should be bought, developed or both, 10 of them quoted a mix (i.e. buy and develop). One even shared that “20% to buy and 80% to develop” and the buy should be for strategic reasons or when time is an essence for organisation shift or change of business mode. When in buying talents, there will be concerns of adaptability and fit for culture for these hired talents. Developing talents will always be needed for long-term sustainability of business success.

On Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) Talent Philosophies: Recap on (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014) 4 talent philosophies: (a) rare (exclusive) or universal (inclusive), and (b) stable or developable: the **exclusive/stable**; **exclusive/developable**; **inclusive/stable**; and **inclusive/developable** talent philosophy.



Based on the 4 quadrants, I have asked the managers on how they will describe their talent approaches. Nearly half of the interviewed managers chose “*nature-nurture interactions*”. It was not surprising as these managers were also strong advocates of nature-nurture based on some leading questions asked. Two of the managers, at management/c-suite level, shared that they practice all 4 quadrants. They believed that the use of 4 talent approaches would be in *varying degrees and at varying levels* in the organizational hierarchy, within the *considerations of business need and priorities* as well as practical considerations of budget, resources, etc.

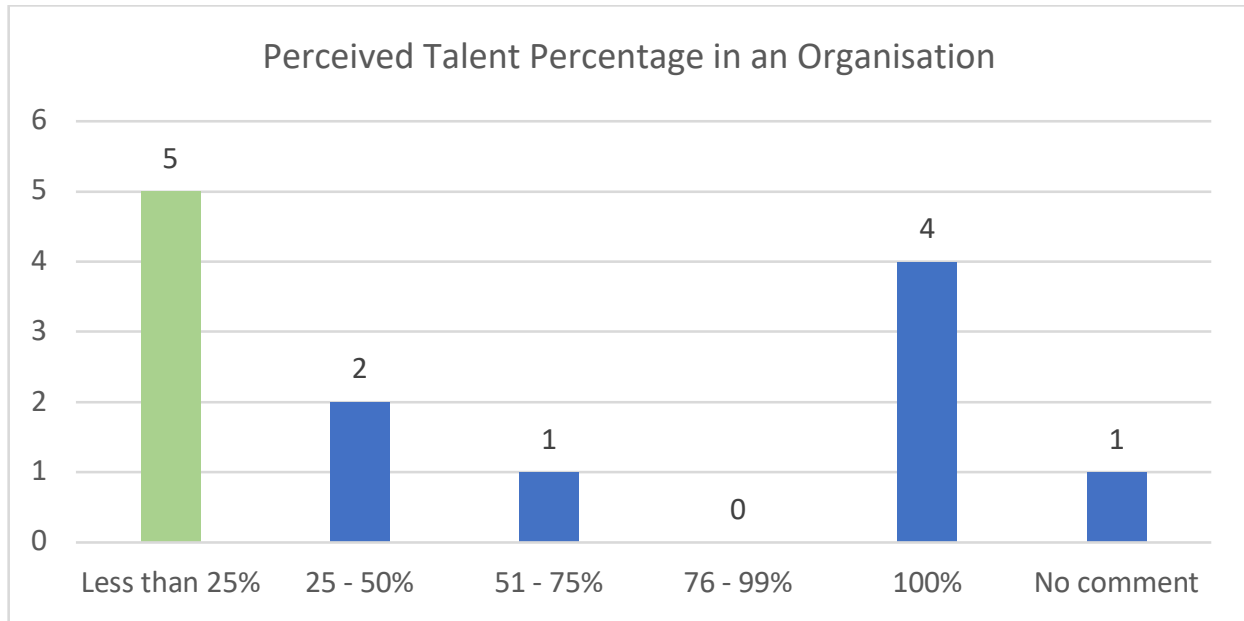


Importance of Talent Management: Unanimously, all managers agreed with the importance of talent management. When asked how important Talent Management is to an organisation, 9 of the managers highlighted that talent management is to build a pool of talent for business continuity and sustainability. To drive a high-performing culture and to create a motivated workforce as workable assets, talent management is key to company’s success. There were a couple of interesting observations on the importance of talent management. One manager actually cited that talent management is to bring the organisation to the next level. He believed that *having talent will give the business the ability to deliver something extraordinary*. The other observations were to groom talents to take on critical or leadership roles.

When asked if they would agree that Talent Management is about (1) Attract to hire; (2) Develop; and / or (3) Retain (any or all), all managers agree that Talent Management is about retention. Ten of them believed that Talent Management is about all these three initiatives. When probed further, three of the managers who did not think Talent Management is about

attracting to hire, agreed that this initiative is considered talent acquisition but did not feel that it should be part of talent management process or framework.

Perceived Talent Percentage: The managers were asked on their views about the percentage of talents to have in an organisation. Below, the spread of results:



Those managers who believed that talents should stand less than 25% of organisational workforce believed that these talents are groomed in taking up leadership roles. One manager shared his observations that smaller organisations could possibly have higher percentage of talents whereas in larger organisations, the percentage would be lower. One added that “20% would provide enough gravitas to carry an organisation”. Those managers who believe that talent pool should be 100% of total workforce in an organisation are strong advocators that “each individual is talent in some way” and should deserve certain development plans in meeting his highest potential. With 100% talents in the organisation, it will drive a high-performing culture and maximise organisational outputs.

In relation to the Organisation they worked in: I followed up in seeking the managers’ views about the perceived talent percentage in the current Organisation. The views were similar except for one manager, who initially did not comment on any perceived percentage, mentioned that she believed the percentage should be less than 25%. When asked if the current (organisation) is far from their perceived percentage, seven out of thirteen

managers believed so (far from perceived percentage). There were a couple of good takeaways from these managers in narrowing the perceived percentage gaps. These seven managers quoted about managing talents in order to retain talents. Besides pay-and reward competitively, one manager mentioned about removing the fear of making mistakes from staff and looking at individuals' strength to develop and challenge them further. Another commented that hiring some talents in allowing the existing talents to interact and promote ideas sharing and knowledge transfer. Adding on, another manager shared that “buy” senior-level talents to groom the junior or mid-level talents is a part of succession planning.

The final bit was the managers' views on the distribution of talents in the Organisation. Almost all the interviewed managers shared that there should not be any restriction or bias which business function should have more talents comparable to another. They felt that talents should be spread across all levels and in the Organisation. However, three of the managers have deferring views. One mentioned that mundane roles should not be helmed by talents. Another felt that in order to drive certain business objectives, revenue-driven business functions or certain related function(s), there should be demand for a higher level of talents.

Conclusions and Takeaways

To emphasize, this was a qualitative study done across thirteen line managers in the Organisation and should not be used to generalise the views of all. Via the interviews, these managers have varied views about giftedness and talents, echoing the literature reviews surfaced by academic researchers. The managers believed strongly on talent retention and, to them, developing talents would mean to provide opportunities and challenges to employees; empower them and rewards them; and, needless to say, managing the talents' expectations. The managers knew the importance of talent management as they believed talents are organisational assets and for sustainable business growth and driving high performance, talents should be well-developed and taken care of. The sense of developing talents is high among these interviewed managers. Even a couple of interviewed managers quoted about acquiring talents but more on the perspective of “buying” for scarcity or “hire” senior managers to influence change and groom the junior and mid-levelled staff as part of succession planning. Relatively, well balanced views were presented by the managers.

There was no ideal percentage of talent an organisation should have. However, on ways to narrow the talent percentage between perception and current stage, the sharing included putting fear of making mistakes away to aid in talent retention and create a positive environment for talents to be developed; tweak the culture and break down silos across varied business units to allow talent deployment and exposures.

Future Directions and Recommendations

Given the sharing from the various line managers, we can consider switching gear to pursue research on the employees' views on talent management. We can also look at the engagement level of staff, retention rate and development plans initiated by the organisations in gauging the perceived level of talent approach. It would be interesting to gather employees' responses on what they think and how an organisation can drive talent management.

Secondly, take the research across other countries and regions and more managers' participation. Thus far, these line managers are mainly based in Singapore except for two, who are in Malaysia and Australia. Given that the Organisation and many other large corporations are operating on a global platform and also running global talent management programs, it will be interesting to collect the views of line managers across locations and countries. Talent Perspectives would differ, possibly, across cultures. Wider research to review the talent approaches and if there is consensus for highly rated talent factors which can be used in the organisation, like besides using Performance and Potential as the main elements in talent identification.

On widening the talent identification elements, in my view, ethical considerations in operationalise talent management programs should be part of the agenda. Bias and favouring effect, gender presence or leadership could have certain skewed preferences and influences on executing talent framework and follow-up programs. (Swales, 2013). "*Capabilities Approach*" can possibly *restore vital social and ethical considerations to conceptualizations of talent*. (Downs & Swales, 2013) Capabilities Approach was originated from Amartya Sen. This approach focuses on individual freedoms, reflecting that the well-being of each person that count. There were five principles in talent evaluations featured by the authors. Out of which, there are a couple of recommendations to be considered in avoiding preferential treatments when structuring talent evaluation. I would

agree that (i) Talent identification processes must be democratic in which, the contributions from talents should be in relation to organisation's interest; (ii) talent programs need to be inclusive since all talents are to be nurtured; (iii) Capabilities approach stresses on ethical talent individuals; (iv) It is important that organisations should consider how they will benefit the individual in relation to what person values and individual freedoms are being addressed; and (v) Any evaluation, capabilities approach should be the focus rather than performance (Downs & Swailes, 2013). As shared by the interviewed managers, organisational needs and objectives should be identified before talent identifications. Talents' expectations should be managed via assessing them fairly and discuss developmental plans and career objectives with them.

When identifying talents, companies adopt the nine-box matrix, looking at high potential – high performance individuals. However, it is arguable that the performance yardstick measures the individual's performance in his or her current role; his or her potential can also be rated highly based on the role he or she has performed well and familiar in. Hence, would that be the only good measurement in identifying talents? Via the simple interviews with thirteen managers, learning agility was ranked with most votes. Relating to the statement: *“learning agility is, indeed, a strong predictor of being identified as a high potential or not. Learning agility even proved to be a better predictor than job performance, which is still the key determinant of high potential identification processes in many organizations today”* (Dries, Vantilborgh, & Pepermans, 2012). Indeed, learning agility has gained certain importance in talent identification process. However, how to measure one's learning agility then? The authors did hypothesis survey and shared that people, with varied careers and working experiences through different employments, would likely have higher learning agility. Possibly, reviewing career histories of individuals could speak about their learning agilities. That said, more researches can be done to define one's learning agility.

Another consideration point: the evolution of Talent Management Approaches caters to the ever-changing talent landscape but also, the categories of our workforce: - Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y or alternative savvy label - the Millennials. The distinct characteristics of these generations have proven the presence of perceptions in managing these groups of workforces. In today's world, Baby Boomers are armed with wealth of experience in their skills, knowledge and managerial

experiences. However, Baby Boomers will unlikely to be talent identified or part of the succession planning. Even so, the key roles identified to be filled by Baby Boomers would be more as contingent cover. Moving to Generation X, Y and Millennials; Gen X are known to be the productive herd with high teamwork characteristics and strong relationship builders. Given that Gen X is the batch that seen through the progress of Technology and witnessed the ups and downs of economies, the sense of appreciation and gratitude is stronger comparable to the “Me Generation” – the Millennials. However, as the earlier generation is moving out of the work arena, the challenge will sink in on how to manage the new wave of Millennial talents.

Millennials are best known to be tech-savvy and fan of social media platforms (Anonymous, 2014). In order to catch the Millennials’ attention, the advertised jobs would need to “*provide fun*” element with less restrictions and “*many entrepreneurial opportunities*” and “*special projects*”. To retain the Millennials, they would appreciate “*open communication*” as they would like to be kept informed and providing their views and opinions, “*involvement in decisions and change making*”, “*high needs*” of “*continual feedback to seek reassurance of their positions*” and themselves. On development plans, they would love rotation to widen their exposure and perspective. Their learning agility would possibly be higher than the other generations. (Ferri-Reed, 2014)

Many companies have been embarking on change movements to tackle the dynamic economy for business sustainability, i.e. Change Management, Change Culture and Change Mindset. It is very much persuading individuals to innovate and to think out-of-the-box. However, in order to constantly challenge oneself to beat the status quo, a growth mindset, (Dweck, 2003), should be adopted. Start with Leaders and organisational culture. At organisational level, leaders or managers should value passion, effort and improvement. Teamwork over natural talent and abolish the fear of making mistakes. Leaders and managers would encourage continuous learning and allow staff to have the opportunities and platform to challenge and confront deficiencies. Leaders turn to be mentors and not judges and understand the role of effort in creating talent. Such approach may also be well-received by the Millennials, given that they are individuals with high needs of continual feedback in seeking assurance of their self-being and actualisation. With growth mindset approach, staff can be talents of themselves who thrive to excel and embrace failures. Possibly,

a 100% talent population can be achieved in the organisation, leading high-performing culture as cited by the interviewed managers.

Finally, there is no one-size-fits-all talent management framework that we can get off-the-shelves. Given today's global economy with high intensity and complexity, organisations are fighting for business sustainability, continuity and growth. Needless to say, the added pressures of competition and human capital retention. "*It has created the need for organisations to manage their workforce in a global context*" via global talent management (GTM) process (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). When deep-dive into the challenges of GTM, there were a couple of important drivers identified, i.e. (i) "*Globalization and talent flow*" creating regional workforce. Companies would need to consider feasible regional talent strategy which includes the identified talents on cross countries work exposure or training. Be it if companies have a well-thought through GTM, sometimes, the strict countries' entry of foreign talent restrictions will hinder the plans; (ii) "*Demographics like generations of employees*" to attract, develop and retain talents across the levels of generations; (iii) "*Demand-Supply Gap*" in which, there could be shortage of required competencies and talent flow; (iv) "*Talent retention in international strategic alliances*"; and (v) relating to the "*general business competencies and cross-culture competencies*".

Amidst of the challenges of GTM as mentioned, there are six recommended principles of "effective" GTM discussed: (a) *alignment with strategy*; (b) *internal consistency*; (c) *cultural embeddedness*; (d) *management involvement*; (e) *a balance of global and local needs*; and (f) *employer branding through differentiation* (Stahl, et al., 2012). These six recommended principles may not be the gold standard. What may work well in one global organisation may not deem effective model in another one. The recommendation could be to "*adapt talent management practices in relation to the company's own strategy and align closely with the leadership philosophy and value system. Create unique culture identity to differentiate themselves from competitors*" (Stahl, et al., 2012).

References

- Anonymous. (2014). Managing Through the Ages. *T + D*, 68(1), 15.
Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1477205338/>
- Downs, Y., & Swailes, S. (2013). A capability approach to organizational talent management. *Human Resource Development International*, 16(3), 267-281.
- Dries, N., Vantilborgh, T., & Pepermans, R. (2012). The role of learning agility and career variety in the identification and development of high potential employees. *Personnel Review*.
- Dweck, C. (2008). *Mindset : the new psychology of success* (Ballantine Books trade pbk. ed.). New York: Ballantine Books. Retrieved from https://search.library.smu.edu.sg/permalink/65SMU_INST/11k8vc3/alma996276202601
- Ferri-Reed, J. (2014). Are millennial employees changing how managers manage?. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 37(2), 15.
- Gagne, F. (2000). A Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent. Year 2000 Update.
- Meyers, M. C., & Van Woerkom, M. (2014). The influence of underlying philosophies on talent management: Theory, implications for practice, and research agenda. *Journal of World Business*, 49(2), 192-203.
- Meyers, M. C., van Woerkom, M., Paauwe, J., & Dries, N. (2020). HR managers' talent philosophies: prevalence and relationships with perceived talent management practices. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(4), 562-588.
- Stahl, G., Björkman, I., Farndale, E., Morris, S. S., Paauwe, J., Stiles, P., ... & Wright, P. (2012). Six principles of effective global talent management. *Sloan Management Review*, 53(2), 25-42.
- Swailes, S. (2013). The ethics of talent management. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 22(1), 32-46.

Tarique, I., & Schuler, R. S. (2010). Global talent management: Literature review, integrative framework, and suggestions for further research. *Journal of world business*, 45(2), 122-133.

SPECIAL FEATURE
HR in the
Social Services Sector

Implementing Lasting Change – HR in the Social Service Sector

FERMIN DIEZ

NG RUN QIAN

Introduction

The Human Resources (HR) practices in any organisation can make a big difference in its ability to implement the strategic plan (Thomas, Smith & Diez, 2013). This assertion points towards an additional question: Can a whole sector of the economy increase its overall capability and capacity by improving the overall HR abilities of the organisations in the sector?

The Social Service Sector in Singapore has been undergoing just such a sector-wide transformation over the past 6 years, and provides a great opportunity to analyse empirically whether a systemic approach to improve the overall HR practices of the Social Service Agencies (SSAs) can improve their ability to implement organisational strategies and, at the same time, deliver services more efficiently and effectively. For HR professionals in the sector, this is an ideal time to develop and implement HR practices that will continue to enhance the service that SSAs provide to their clients, with support from staff, volunteers and caregivers. This article reflects on the transition that the HR practices in the sector have been through to better support the work of their agencies and highlights next steps in this journey.

To illustrate the state of the HR practices in the sector we relay the fictional story of an HR Practitioner who was “on the ground” some years ago, and use it as a framework to describe the HR interventions that have happened systemically in the Social Service Sector to increase the Capability and Capacity of the SSAs. Many HR practitioners in the sector have passion and dedication to serve to the best of their abilities, but perhaps not all have enough training and experience as HR Professionals. Our journey traces the story of our “protagonist”, whom we shall call Ms. Dee, from the time when she first began a career in social service and how eventually that led to an HR role. In parallel, we relate how NCSS used HR

analytics and other tools to progressively improve the situation that Ms. Dee describes:

“I started out as a regular volunteer in 2009 in the eldercare sector. Subsequently, I joined the disability sector as a full-time staff for five years before moving back into the eldercare sector for another year and a half. During the orientation as a volunteer, I was informed that my key role was to conduct regular visits to elderly who were socially isolated. During each visit, I was expected to observe the home condition and well-being of the elderly. This is to minimize or avoid the situations in which these elderly individuals fell sick or passed on without anyone knowing. These tasks are simple enough that most people can carry them out without formal training.

After completing my degree education in 2010, I joined the disability sector not knowing what to expect. During the interview, I was told that I would be supporting the administration and operations of the facility. However, within the first few months on the job, I was disappointed with some of the practices I saw. For instance, Psychologists were turning down referrals to conduct behavioural management interventions, claiming that it was the trainer’s job, despite knowing that trainers were not adequately trained with the skills to do so, and hence needed advice from the psychologists to carry out these interventions.

There was a shortage of formal training for staff in my area. Soon, I experienced burnout when my suggestions for improvements were ignored. However, with the strong support from two of my colleagues, we managed to effect changes, implemented structured programmes with outlines, sent the staff for training and we also set goals. We did all these without any support from HR.

About a year later, I was asked to get involved in the job evaluation and appraisal process, and it nudged me towards finding out more about the role of the Human Resource Department within the organisation. As I read more into the various functions of HR, and recalled my readings in

organisational psychology during my university degree, I began to question: what if the HRD has an active role in social services? What would be the impact, considering social services is a highly people-oriented business? Why are the talents in social service not being developed like those in the private sector?"

In response to this apparent need for enhanced HR in the sector, in early 2014 the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) created the Human Capital and Organisational Development Group. As part of their initiatives, this team developed a People Practice Index for the Social Service Sector to measure the state of People Practices across SSAs. A total of 101 SSAs participated, chosen mostly by the fact that they had at least one dedicated HR Professional looking after the function. The goal was to guide organisations on their talent strategies by identifying the people-related areas that should be prioritized and further developed, to enhance the capabilities of the workforce and to drive positive service quality for the sector. In this way, progress in the HR practices in the sector can be measured over time.

The Social Service Sector in Singapore is currently composed of over 450 SSAs, working in one (or sometimes more than one) of the following sub-sectors:

- Healthcare
- Seniors
- Adults and Family
- Children and Youth
- Disability
- Mental Health

By size, around one third of the agencies have less than 30 employees, a third have between 31 and 73 employees, and the rest have more than 74 employees. Only a handful of SSAs have in the neighbourhood of 1,000 employees.

During the initial development and application of this index, several HR challenges in the sector were identified:

- Attracting and Selecting Talent
- Performance Management, Rewards and Recognition
- People Development & Career Planning
- Leadership & Culture
- People Engagement
- Talent Supply

We will analyse each of these in subsequent sections below.

Attracting and Selecting Talent

Ms. Dee continues by recalling the time after starting to work in the HR Function of an SSA. In this segment, the comments refer to attracting and selecting talent for the SSA.

“The key means of sourcing was through candidates that wrote to the corporate website or through placing ads on job portals, such as JobStreet. These platforms provided little support to differentiate the quality of the talent pool available. The shortlisting of candidates from the pool of applicants then relied on the administrative staff. Subsequently, the candidates were interviewed by the hiring managers. More often than not, these interview sessions did not involve any HR personnel.

The HR team thought that, regardless of job level, we could conduct evidence-based interview and assessment approaches, such as identifying the personalities to match the organisational culture. Having a better way to determine the right fit would be crucial given the nature of work where the newly hired staff were to deal with beneficiaries from the vulnerable groups”.

Attraction and selection of talent is a key aspect for SSAs who often find themselves short of staff at all levels: professionals, administrative and support. In fact, the sector has been growing at a pace in excess of 7% in the last 10 years, whereas the increase in the national workforce is more

closely aligned to growth of the population (slightly over 1%). One challenge our protagonist was facing related to the need for people to join the SSA vis-à-vis the shortage of qualified – and willing – personnel to fill the vacancies. With the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), NCSS conducted a study to assess the current state of recruiting practices in the Social Services (Yu, Chin & Diez, work in process). The results of the study provided several key insights:

- **Work values**, such as altruism, work relationships and job security, are often more important to potential talent entering the sector than other elements of the job. However, pay is still a consideration, and more so for mid-career candidates.
- Potential employees contemplating entering the sector rely more on the word of friends and relatives currently in the sector when gathering information on social service jobs.
- ITE and Polytechnic students interested in social service as a career tend to be more thorough in their search, pointing to an additional pool of candidates
- Conversely, individuals in related programmes do not have enough awareness about jobs and careers in SSAs
- There are many “**myths**” associated with social service jobs: Among them that the sector offers low levels of pay and limited career opportunities.
- 21st century modern career attitudes are quite prevalent across younger candidates, meaning they are quite willing to work across organisations, switch roles and manage their own careers.
- The recruiting and selection operations in most SSAs are small, with limited budget, resources and tools.
- Traditional forms of recruitment like job ads still are most prevalent. However, digital platforms - like social media - are gaining acceptance.
- Organisations also seem to be aware of the need for an **employer brand/employee value proposition**.

At any given point in time over the last few years, there could be between 500 and 1000 posted job openings in the sector. The majority of these openings refer to professional jobs (Social Workers, Therapists, Special Education and Early Intervention Teachers, Nurses, Clinical Psychologists, Counsellors, etc.).

Given the data from the NTU study, NCSS initially began to set up a recruiting agency within its Sector Manpower area, which would address the lack of experience, resources and tools in the SSAs and help them recruit the staff needed. The initial results were promising, but it was soon apparent that NCSS was doing the fishing, instead of teaching the SSAs to fish.

Thus, the efforts moved to four other areas to improve talent attraction and recruitment in the sector:

- **Salary Guidelines:** One of the points mentioned in the NTU study was the need to dispel some of the myths surrounding Social Service jobs. One such myth was the levels of pay. NCSS began to post sector salary guidelines on its website which potential as well as current sector employees could access. The intention was to provide public information that the sector pay was competitive with similar roles in related fields such as Education and Health. Initial reactions were mixed. Employees appreciated the transparency and potential entrants had a clearer idea of what to ask for and expect. However, some HR Heads in organisations raised concerns about their organisation's ability to pay. Over the years, the latter concern has subsided while the "myth" of low levels of pay has begun to dissipate.
- **People Practice Consultancy (PPC):** It was important that SSAs figuratively learned to fish, as stated earlier. To achieve this end, NCSS secured the services of HR advisors to provide support, training and hands-on tools to SSAs wishing to improve their recruiting practices. More than 90 Agencies availed themselves of these services (more on PPC later).
- **Social Service Tribe:** It was clear from the NTU study results that there was a sector-wide need for an Employer Brand. Each of the SSAs could have (and some have) created its own Employer Brand. However, as a sector, we compete for talent with larger sectors such as Education and Health Care. To have a stronger voice, NCSS created the Social Service Tribe Employer Brand for the entire sector, aimed at attracting employees to join anywhere in Social Service. Having a single Employer Brand (which SSAs can customize to fit their specific needs) allows SSAs to have a unified voice and a clear message with regards to communicating sector-

wide values (such as working with like-minded individuals). In the three years since its launch, the number of followers to the Social Service Tribe website has exceeded 18,000, while the number of unique job applicants has reached 5,800 people (a more than 25% increase in three years).

- **Job Portal:** Linked to the Tribe website, and in partnership with e2i, NCSS launched a job portal which SSAs can access to support their recruiting efforts. This portal has posted more than 3,000 jobs from over 200 SSAs and is proving to be a key tool in recruiting for the sector. Current plans include adding an on-line assessment tool (developed in association with the National University of Singapore) to help in screening candidates. Other related ideas are to support the deployment of online recruiting tools which SSAs can use directly. The latter is part of an overall digitalization plan currently in development for the whole sector.

Performance Management

Ms. Dee continues to relate the experience of working in the HR Department. This time, the focus is on performance management practices:

“The performance appraisal is often completed by both manager and staff, as an annual affair for the purpose of performance bonus payout. Goals set at the start of the year were not always challenging and were often easily attainable. For example, in a job training facility, managers avoided giving goals such as successful placement of beneficiaries into the workforce. They supported this rationale by justifying that it depends on the social functioning of the beneficiaries. However, this practice runs the risk of instilling in the organisation the belief that changes in the receptivity for our beneficiaries in the workforce are not possible, rather than finding the strengths in every individual. For instance, one of our students continually rejected all jobs, until a trainer found that he enjoyed eating tofu and suggested to place him into the tofu factory. He has now been in this job for 5 years. A more appropriate goal setting process could drive staff to seek more and better solutions.”

The research findings of the study conducted for NCSS by SMU (Ferrin et al., 2018) show the following trends:

- The analyses identified a set of factors that encouraged commitment of social service professionals. These include ‘traditional factors’ (e.g., flexibility and autonomy, work-life balance, professional development, leadership, and organisation culture), and factors that are specific to the sector (passion, purpose, calling or faith, transformative life experiences, societal recognition for sector work)
- The analyses also identified factors that undermine social service professionals’ commitment to the sector. These included ‘traditional factors’ (e.g., remuneration and benefits, heavy workload and poor work-life balance, poor leadership, and organisation culture factors including not valuing staff, lack of a supportive team, poor work environment and politics). Commitment was also undermined by factors that are specific to the sector, in particular burnout arising from compassion exhaustion, insufficient funding, involvement of volunteer board members, and insufficient recognition and appreciation by both the social service organisations and society at large for the work that social service professionals do.

Resolving as many of these factors as possible has been a key pursuit for NCSS. Specifically, through the PPC project, an area of concern was the SSAs abilities to set individual and team targets (KPIs) and link these to pay. More than 60 Agencies have undergone changes in their pay strategies to develop merit increase and annual incentive programmes to better align pay, performance and competency development. This effort alone should help to significantly improve the SSAs ability to attract and retain staff, improve engagement and increase the level of HR maturity of the function. Furthermore, an additional research done by SMU helped to identify how mindfulness practices can help reduce burnout in sector professionals and training programmes have been instituted for this purpose. NCSS also created a programme aimed at improving Board effectiveness in SSAs (currently run in partnership with the Singapore Institute of Directors - SID). The Tribe branding efforts have addressed the area of appreciation by society at large of the work done by sector professionals. This effort has

also expanded to include a sector-wide recognition programme which we are rolling out soon.

Regarding the more ‘traditional factors’ mentioned in the SMU study, the PPC reviews of pay policies and the publication of salary guidelines have already contributed to increase attraction, retention and engagement. There has also been considerable work done to improve leadership and culture (see sections below about retention and about leadership).

Talent Development

The attention of Ms. Dee now turns to initial reactions to existing training and development practices in the SSA:

“There are many low-skill workers in the social service industry, who serve with great intent. HR could do a better job in ensuring talents like them remain relevant and contributing to their organisations. For instance, as they are the front-facing employee with the beneficiaries, they should be actively sent for training and courses such as first aid, customer service, etc. Taking another step, they could be sent for programmes to understand the abilities and disabilities of their beneficiaries. Going for useful trainings gives employees a sense that they are valued. Upskilling the workforce is beneficial to both the organisation (more productive) and individuals.

My organisation did not have a team dedicated to learning and development. Employees initiated their own training needs and identified courses on their own. The greater availability of courses at SSI [Social Service Institute] is a positive move. This allowed the employees to find relevant courses to attend and upskill. However, without proper needs analysis, employees may attend courses that might not be relevant, or the employees are unable to transfer the skills to their field of work. For instance, while the basis of behavioural management is similar, a less highly educated employee might not be able to apply the same skillset to the youth and elderly alike. Similarly, with little differentiation,

some employees might find the courses too simplified and less meaningful.”

SSI has increased the number of training places by more than 40% (from 9,901 in FY2013 to 14,163 in FY 2018) to accommodate the need for more training for sector professionals. To address the question of the relevancy of courses, SSI has implemented courses that are tightly aligned to the sector-wide skills frameworks (the first one was for social workers, and more are on the way for therapists, psychologists, counsellors and teachers) that allows individuals to “peg” their skills to their current level of expertise and thus choose courses that suit them to either increase their skill level in the current job or better prepare them for the next career level. Furthermore, SSI is currently conducting a thorough Training Gaps Analysis of the sector to determine which courses are needed (or not needed) by sector professionals.

Other initiatives to improve the SSI’s reach into the sector include a substantial investment in e-learning to allow for on-line, any-time skills improvement programmes. More than 40% of SSIs programmes now include an on-line component, making training more accessible. SSI has also entered into a number of partnerships both with SSAs that can provide training programmes to other SSAs in their areas of expertise, and with Institutions such as SID, Singapore University of Social Sciences, other Universities, etc.

Talent Retention & Turnover

Next, Ms. Dee’s attention turns to retention of staff:

“In some organisations, employees who are constantly rated as low performers are placed on performance improvement plans and closely monitored to either improve or be dismissed. This practice is not evident in my organisation. Poor compensation practices often result in low performers being rewarded nonetheless, and yearly increments are distributed. These provide little incentive or motivation for improvement. High performers are often given more tasks to cover the gaps in the low performers. Instead of a progressive organisation, we remain status quo. Subsequently, the high performers face

burnout and find little motivation. Eventually, the high performers leave the organisation, resulting in a talent drain.”

Earlier, we have mentioned that NCSS has addressed compensation practices (PPC, Salary Guidelines), commitment (burnout, board effectiveness, etc.) and social recognition (Tribe).

With greater understanding of the sector’s workforce data, NCSS has determined that the rate of leakage in the sector (leakage refers to individuals leaving the sector to go work elsewhere – a key metric to ensure sector growth can keep pace with the increase in societal needs) has also decreased over the 5-year period 2013-2017 by a factor of 47%. These are encouraging signs that SSAs are now better able to recruit for fit, pay more competitively, provide more training, address turnover and, generally, that sector employees are increasingly finding their work in the sector is recognised and is rewarding.

Leadership and Culture

Ms. Dee comments on her perceptions of the state of leadership in the sector during her early years:

“Sometimes, it is poor management that results in dissatisfaction. For instance, a team of fund-raising employees were hired, with key responsibility to raise funds. However, instead of raising funds to support the services as advertised, the operational staff were fully responsible to engage their own donors or corporates. As a result, it drained the operational staff and reduced the capacity to deliver quality services to the beneficiaries.

Also, from the ground the sense we have is that the board and senior management are often not aligned. It is clear that the board is constantly intervening in operational decisions. In our case, a board member vets the expense accounts, even taxis, for all senior staff, and the CEO can’t hire anyone without their interviewing and approving the staff, even at lower levels.”

An area of particular attention for NCSS has been the improvement of leadership skills in the sector. Four specific initiatives have been launched in the last six years to address this gap:

- **Milestones and Capstone:** SSI has developed and launched a suite of programmes aimed at improving leadership in the sector, patterned after Ram Charan’s “Leadership Pipeline” (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2011). The programmes are all built around the leadership competencies developed by the Centre for Non-Profit Leadership (CNPL) specifically for non-profit organisations in Singapore. Starting with the first programme, “Leading Self”, and continuing with “Leading Others”, “Leading Teams”, and finally the Capstone Programme “Leading Organisations”. Sector professionals can progressively learn the right skills and competencies to turn them from practice professionals (or out-of-sector transfers) to become effective leaders of people and resources, as well as to develop and implement a vision and strategies to guide their teams and organisations. To date, more than 400 professionals have attended these programmes, and we aim to cover over 1,800 middle managers in the next three years to accelerate this process further.
- **GLS:** Another area of attention over the last three years has been to bring globally recognised social service leaders into Singapore to bring new ideas to the sector that can take root and yield fruit in due course. Areas such as innovation, fund-raising, governance, service quality, productivity and talent management have been addressed in these 2-day events, attended by an average of 250 senior executives and board members each time.
- **Sun Ray:** The Sun Ray programme has been a flagship in the last six years to develop leaders for the sector. Similar to a High Potential programme, Sun Ray participants are carefully selected and groomed for eventual leadership roles in the sector. There are currently close to 120 Sun Rayz (as they are called) in 42 different agencies in the sector. Over 70% of them come from outside the sector, allowing for “new blood” to come in and assist in the overall sector transformation.
- **Scholarships:** NCSS provides approximately 40 scholarships and awards each year to deserving students to pursue undergraduate or master’s programmes in professions of interest to the sector. The returning scholars also aid in improving the quality of practices as they rotate through various SSAs.

Measuring Success

Have all these interventions by NCSS worked? Would Ms. Dee be satisfied that the work done by NCSS has paid off? There are metrics in place at three levels:

- **Individually:**

SSI uses Level 3 Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 1996) measurements to ensure all skills imparted are implemented 6 months after the staff completes the course. So far, results show that over 80% of participants have achieved this level as assessed by their supervisor. This addresses a crucial need in ensuring that training helps to increase the quality and quantity of people needed.

- **Organisationally:**

The PPC Index has shown that overall HR maturity of the sector is currently at the developing level, with smaller agencies (less than 30 staff) falling below this level. The intent is for all organisations to improve at least one level in their HR maturity, to an overall “capable” level. This is a key metric to ensure attraction, retention, engagement and leadership are all moving in the right direction.

In addition, recently NCSS has embarked on an Organisational Development journey (ODJ) with 28 SSAs. The impact of the work done at this level will be measured by Enterprise Singapore’s Business Effectiveness Model, which has been modified by NCSS for use in non-profit organisations.

- **Sector-wide:**

A key metric to address the need for more services due to the ageing of the population (among other trends) in the face of a workforce shortage is People Productivity: NCSS has embarked on a series of initiatives aimed at introducing productivity-enhancing technology and process redesign to aid in this respect. Initial results have shown productivity improvements in excess of 30% for the technology that has been introduced to date. iShineCloud, a Shared Services Organisation for Non-profits, launched in partnership with Singapore Pools, is another initiative aimed to improve productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and IT related tasks.

We are currently developing organisational metrics to determine overall social impact of the SSAs (akin to profitability or growth in the corporate sector)

Conclusion

Ms. Dee leaves us with these thoughts:

“Despite the things that are being done to improve current HR practices, I also recognise the limitations that some of these social service organisations might face, especially the smaller setups. Some organisations have more established and structured Human Resource strategies. The presence of these human resource structures and strategies adopted by these organisations serves to remind other organisations within the sector that human resource is a relevant and important component of an organisation’s strategy”

Working in HR in the sector today is vastly different than when I first started as a volunteer over 10 years ago. It is clear that there is now greater professionalism in the sector, greater recognition by boards and senior management of the importance of proper HR practices in the delivery of services to our clients. Today we have better tools and support to recruit, train, develop, pay and manage our staff. I enjoy my job much more now. I tell my HR colleagues in other sectors that they should join us: Social Service is a people sector with purpose!”

Progress is being made, and there are currently several areas being addressed:

- **Automation/Digitization** needs to be accelerated to better support the growing needs in the sector to provide more efficient and effective services to beneficiaries and include all stakeholders (e.g. caregivers, volunteers, donors, regulators, etc.).
- More attention needs to go into **engagement**, particularly if we want to improve the Net Promoter Score (In-Service Professionals

recommending the sector as a place to work to their friends and families).

- The work started to address both **Leadership and Boards** needs to scale up to reach more of these individuals in a shorter amount of time. In fact, there are many skills needed on our boards, and a key one is Human Resources Experience. Perhaps more HR Professionals should consider joining the boards and the HR committees of the SSAs, and the SSAs, in turn, should look for this expertise in incoming board members.
- There is still a need to develop more in-sector (e.g. across SSAs) **Career Opportunities**. NCSS has recently started a Career Development Panel pilot with 15 SSAs willing to do joint people planning for their staff to address this need.
- There is also a need to improve **collaboration and cooperation** among SSAs. GatherHere, an online closed platform for sharing among participants, is a pilot in this direction.

If you are an HR professional, it is a good time to be in the Social Service sector!

References

Charan, R., Drotter, S., Noel, J.: The Leadership Pipeline. Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Ferrin, D. et al: A Qualitative Study of Social Service Professionals' Commitment to the Singapore Social Service Sector. SMU White Paper, 2018.

Kirkpatrick, D. & Kirkpatrick, J.: Evaluating Training Programs. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1996.

Thomas, H., Smith, R. & Diez, F.: Human Capital and Global Business Strategy, Cambridge University Publishing, 2013.

Yu, T., Chin, S., & Diez, F.: Improving Recruitment Outcomes for the Social Service Sector in Singapore: Strategic Recruitment in the Social Services, Nanyang Technological University, Work in Process.

NEGOTIATION
in a
HR Context



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

The Negotiators' Power

ESTHER LIM

The only real competitive edge an organisation has is that its employees can learn faster and better than their competitors. In one of the role in my career, I was charged with the learning and organisation development (“L&OD”) of Consumer Business Customer Facing business unit. This is the front face of an organisation which consists of 5,000 employees in Singapore and 4,500 sales touchpoints. Part of my role entails negotiating a compulsory cross-organisational learning programs for 7,000 employees in Singapore and Asia. These programs can span across several years. Hence, **choosing the right learning provider, content and negotiating the best possible deal is of paramount importance to the organisation in the competitive industry landscape.**

Given the multiple threats from new competitors on the market, in one of such negotiation, there was a critical business need to improve the level of Service Excellence. L&OD needs to run a compulsory cross-organisation program in Singapore and Asia on Service Excellence and measure its success through metrics like Customer Service Index of Singapore (“CSISG”) and comparison on historical statistics on compliments, complaints, and Net Promoter score. **As good customer service has a direct impact on unnamed organisation’s reputation, branding, sales and profit, the stakes of the program were high and there was substantial long-ranging impact for the organisation.** With a substantial learning budget and 7,000 employees to cover for learning in Singapore and Asia, I have considerable power in the negotiation with learning providers as a deal of this magnitude can *make or break* learning providers which are many a time, small-medium enterprises.

“Power in negotiations is our use of power to force or manipulate others into giving in. Negotiation power is our ability to get the value we want in a negotiation.” (Falcão, 2010) Being a Ron Kaufman certified Service Excellence facilitator and a subject matter expert in Service Excellence with academic credentials and rich industry experience, these are the powers I held as I reflected on the negotiation case retrospectively **(1) Legitimate power; (2) Expert power; and (3) Referent power.** Due

to the **Legitimate power** as Learning Business Partner (LBP) for Group Consumer, the preliminary round on selection of Learning Providers from the market was entirely my call and it was up to me to distil and shortlisted the best in this subject matter from the knowledge market using my **Expert power** before calling for an evaluation panel with management. As I conveyed organisation award for Outstanding Cross-Functional Team Player from the CEO of Group Consumer, I had considerable **Referent power** as I was well-liked and had good rapport with the 1 Group CEO, 5 VPs and 40 directors whom I worked closely with.

After numerous screening meetings with learning providers, I refined my list to 6 learning providers out of which 3 were shortlisted to present to top management. I was a fresh graduate and a novice negotiator back then as I had yet to attend any formal training in negotiation. Reflecting, these are the effective ways that I could have implemented to increase my power in the negotiation.

“First, a major source of negotiators’ power is the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA)”. A BATNA determines what a negotiator would walk away with in case of an impasse (Fisher and Ury, 1981; Giebels et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2005). **I could have increased my power considerably if I had done both my BATNA and WATNA and an assessment of the opponents.** What I had was surface information on the learning providers from their websites and submitted learning proposals which were insufficient. Being the greenhorn, I was totally caught off guard when one of the shortlisted learning providers presented a “multiple offers of equivalent value simultaneously” (“MESO”) where the learning investment were anchored in packages with tier pricing tagged with a pre-determined number of learners. The anchored numbers were designed to lock the organisation into the unnecessary high committed number of learners over 3 years with the lowest offered learning investment per learner.

To **increase my negotiation power**, I should have:

1. assessed of the other party’s and my *reservation price, aspiration price* and the *zone of possible agreement*;
2. identified the *possible issues in the negotiation and the weakness* of the other party and *anchored* the pricing in the learning investment first;
3. (Malhotra, 2016, p. 32) “...draft the initial version of the agreement or process gain leverage”;

4. demand for a *reciprocal concession* in the form of a *contingent contract* that a percentage of the payment will be tied to the outcome of the program whose metrics of measurement will be based on the CSISG, NPS and the figures on customers' compliment and complaints; and
5. access and know the point where I will *walk away or give the learning provider the exit option* and leverage on other learning providers.

By not knowing my own and the opposite party's BATNA and WATNA, I had placed an otherwise advantageous positioning in negotiation to being locked down by the opposite party's MESO which were anchored on the extreme end of the spectrum and not advantageous to the organisation. I should count my lucky stars that management reframed the negotiation and demanded a reciprocal concession in the form of the contingent contract and re-anchored the price tier with a counter-proposal which broke down the MESOs and swings the power pendulum back to our side. It was truly a valuable learning experience that I will keep in mind and use for future negotiation.

References

- Falcão, and Falcão. Value Negotiation : How to Finally Get the Win-win Right , Singapore : Prentice Hall/Pearson Education South Asia (2010).
- Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. Getting to Yes : Negotiating Agreement without Giving in , New York, New York : Penguin Books (2011).
- Giebels, E. , De Dreu, C. K. and Van De Vliert, E. (2000), Interdependence in negotiation: effects of exit options and social motive on distributive and integrative negotiation. Eur. J. Soc. Psychol., 30: 255-272. doi:[10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-0992\(200003/04\)30:2<255::AID-EJSP991>3.0.CO;2-7](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(200003/04)30:2<255::AID-EJSP991>3.0.CO;2-7)
- Kim, P. H., & Fragale, A. R. (2005). Choosing the Path to Bargaining Power: An Empirical Comparison of BATNAs and Contributions in Negotiation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 90(2), 373–381. <https://doi-org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1037/0021-9010.90.2.373>

Kim, P., Pinkley, R., & Fragale, A. (2005). Power Dynamics in Negotiation. *The Academy of Management Review*, 30(4), 799-822. doi:10.2307/20159169

MALHOTRA, D. E. E. P. A. K. (2016). *Negotiating The Impossible: how to break deadlocks and resolve ugly conflicts* (first). Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Managing Internal Negotiations

RIAZ SAIYED

“Internal negotiations are even more complex than external, and we always have to bear in mind how internal decision - making process and issues affect external negotiations. “ - Mikael Krapivin

After having completed HR policies and compensation structures for international locations like Beijing, Dubai, Madagascar and Papua New Guinea, I got my first overseas opportunity to execute an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (“EPC”) project in Singapore. This was the first time I was heading the HR function and from opening a simple bank account to set up the entire life support services and project site facilities I dealt with many negotiations externally. Some of these negotiations were a bit challenging but in these negotiations there were times when I could not clinch the deal, I moved onto other alternatives or I can say opted for best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA). On the other hand, I had experienced internal negotiations where I failed twice for the same purpose. I found that internal negotiations were more challenging compared to external negotiations as internal negotiations are connected with individual emotions, ego and pride.

While setting up the HR for EPC Project in Singapore, I required staff in my department and started hiring a local person in my department. Subsequently, workload increased and department needed a manager – human resources, who needed to understand the internal systems and was acquainted with the company procedures. It was more appropriate to move internal candidate within the group. I had identified one person – Mr. Akshay Kumar⁴ who earlier worked along with me in Corporate office at Mumbai and later moved to other locations on internal transfer. Akshay showed his interest to move to Singapore and wanted me to discuss the same with his reporting manager - Mr. Harish Raichandani**. Harish and I had passed out from college In the same batch. We were working in the

⁴ Names have been changed for the purpose of this article

same company at the same level and, coincidentally, we both were classmates and had family relations. I was quite sure that Harish would not say no and released Akshay for this role. I fixed up a video conference meeting with Harish and during the meeting, I explained to him my requirements and requested for the release of Mr. Akshay. Harish explained that he was not in a position to release Akshay and also conveyed that he had too much workload due to expansion work in Heavy Infrastructure Business. Later on, this discussion moved into conflict of interest when I suggested for him to appoint a new person in his department. I would wait till the new person joined his department and gave the opportunity to Mr. Akshay for the overseas assignment. We both wanted the same talent, but he was not ready to release this person. I was a bit surprised with the response from Harish but, due to personal relations, I did not escalate this matter to the next level. As such, it is not uncommon that disputes were settled based on power, authority arguments, coalitions or alliance or even escalation. (Horacio Falcão & Alena Komaroni, 2017).

With this experience I was more careful and wanted to follow the proper protocols for internal movement of candidate but again the similar outcome of the negotiation happened with another Head of department. The reporting manager was not ready to release the selected person. The outcome of these two interactions and failure made me realized me that internal negotiations may involve higher level of conflicts because of the differing views held by different parties, making it difficult to arrive at a consensual agreement. Failure of internal negotiations can cause detrimental effects to the company, as it is very necessary to get both the parties on to the same page to ensure the success of any company or processes.

As it has been found that internal negotiations are the most important and quite difficult comparatively, I have gained a few insights to improve within company negotiation experience. The foremost reason for the failure of negotiations is under preparation. By preparing well for the negotiation process, through evaluating the conflicting views and objectives of the counter party, it will place the person in a better bargaining position. The stance put forward will also be aligned to the counter party's views and objectives. Thus, the chances for successful negotiation will go up (Wood, 2015). Secondly, as an HR person, I will have to be mindful that with the passage of time, each department develops its reputation based on rumours and perceptions. It will be necessary for me to account for these as

otherwise the employees, in this regard, I will not be willing to invest in improving relations through negotiations. Therefore, I will address their insecurity concerns first so that the associated rumours and perceptions are washed away and a trusted relationship is built. Once this is done, I will proceed with the negotiation process. Lastly, during the negotiation, I will focus on co-creating options to highlight the mutual benefits. This way, negotiation will become easier as all the members taking part in it would consent mutually to a particular decision (Morse, 2019).

When negotiating externally, parties focus on value creation to reach the win-win situation for both the parties and develop long term partnership. For internal negotiation, ego often clash and the lack of alternatives increases the internal negotiation tension and causes mini monopolies to emerge inside a firm. (Horacio Falcão & Alena Komaroni, 2017).

If I get the opportunity to perform this negotiation again and based on learning from this course, my approach to this negotiation would change in the following ways:

- The most important aspect of the negotiation is never to assume anything and never take the other party for granted. If I know the other person very well, then work on the issues of the negotiation. I also want to avoid making any commitment before the negotiation and completion of the process. When Akshay approached me for transfer, I should have asked more questions. Like what was your current assignment? Where were you presently engaged? I will also try to find out more what will be the alternative if you moved out of the current assignment. This information would have helped me with the negotiation process with Harish.
- Before inviting me for the meeting, I should have prepared myself for the meeting and worked on my BATNA. Instead of telling my agenda and directly asking for the person, I should have explained my objective and invited him to help me to resolve this issue or gave him alternative attempt to understand other's underlying needs, desires and concerns. These tactics would help me to set the ground to create the cooperative approach in the bargaining process. Try to focus on the underlying interests of the other parties and address the other parties concerns by asking questions and sharing more

information openly. This would help both the parties to find common interests and create value.

- Rather than focusing on my personal interest, I would focus on the overall objective and the other party's interest by asking for his help to resolve my issues. I will also suggest alternatives candidates which could be suitable for my requirement, thereby helping him to make decision on this issue.
- If both the parties were still not able to reach for consensus and made no deal, then use the best alternative to a negotiated agreement.

References

Four reasons why internal negotiations are harder than external ones.

Horacio Falcão & Alena Komaroni, INSEAD Knowledge, July 17, 2017. <https://knowledge.insead.edu/blog/insead-blog/four-reasons-why-internal-negotiations-are-harder-than-external-ones-6656>

Morse, Richard. (2019, January 14). Internal Negotiations: Supporting the External Deal. Retrieved from Negotiation Experts: <https://www.negotiations.com/articles/inner-conciliations/>

Wood, I. T. (2015, March 10). Internal Negotiations: The Key to Success in External Negotiations. Retrieved from Thought Bridge: <https://www.kithoughtbridge.com/leadership-skills-and-best-practices/internal-negotiations-the-key-to-success-in-external-negotiations>

Effective Distributive Negotiation for HR Managers

SRINIDHI VILANGADU SRINIVASAN

Distributive bargaining tactics are at the core of effective negotiation. One must not only be aware of the tactics used, but also be cognizant of effective use and defence against these tactics. Sometimes the tactics could be used in combination to increase power or bargaining position. It's important to be well prepared, gather and share relevant information and resist being misled or intimidated – all the while being within ethical boundaries.

Introduction

Distributive negotiation is the process of dividing up the pie of value in negotiation. In distributive bargaining, the goals of one party are usually in fundamental and direct conflict with the goals of the other party. It is also called competitive, or win-lose bargaining. Here the resources, usually money, are limited and both parties want to maximise their share. Distributive Bargaining is common within organizations. There is a tug-of-war at many instances to claim most value. From an HR perspective, it is especially true during hiring and talent management activities.

Distributive Negotiation Techniques

There are several tactics used in distributive negotiation to ensure a successful outcome. Here are three commonly used ones.

i. Concession Making

Concessions are movements that are made to the opening offer or counteroffer. This is often used while negotiating corporate medical insurance. The aim, usually, is to pay the lowest possible premium for employees while getting the best possible cover. Typically, the first offer comes from the insurance agent, which tends to be exaggerated. Based on the company's priorities, one would need to be firm on some issues in the bargaining mix and be willing to trade off on others (perhaps a better deal for outpatient versus inpatient treatment).

Preparation is key: To be effective at making concessions, preparation and planning are important. Research by Hendon, Roy & Ahmed (2003) suggests 12 guidelines for making concessions. The two most important ones are giving enough room to make concessions and making the other party work hard for every concession. Experts believe successful negotiation is 80% preparation (Rich, 2011). Concessions can be effectively used with a proper BATNA (Best Alternative To Negotiated Agreement), which in the above example would be trying another agent or insurance company. Thus, knowing the premiums and benefits offered by other companies could be extremely valuable.

ii. Hardball Tactic

One of the frequently used hardball tactics is to change the anchor of potential negotiation settlements using extreme offers. For example, during budget allocation for annual salary increments, some line managers could propose a very high percentage for themselves and their respective teams. Malhotra (2016) suggests that the best way to counter this tactic is to simply ignore. However, as a HR Manager it might be difficult to ignore, particularly if it's coming from high performing team members. A more rational approach would be to share information about average salary increases in the market together with company performance, so they might reconsider their stand.

Information is key: Research by Murnighan, Babcock, Thompson & Pillutla (1999) explain that experienced negotiators will outperform naïve ones when they have information about priorities and preferences. Hence, in the above example, it is important to remain prudent while sharing information. In dealing with a highball tactic, it's important not to respond immediately. The aim is not to be "anchored" with the extreme first offer but try to "re-anchor" after information sharing.

iii. Closing tactic

The exploding offer is a type of closing tactic, which contains a tight deadline in order to get the other party to agree quickly. This kind of tactic is often used in hiring to get candidates to accept the job offer quickly. The aim is to seal the commitment and ensure they will not look for alternative offers. Usually, a strict timeline is given before the offer would expire.

Power is key: As the employer, there is a power leverage that can be used in the above example. Haase (1992) explain the ability to take charge and influence others by outlining 8 principles of power. However, this needs to be used with caution as power relationship can change. Furthermore, for effective persuasion impact, one needs to stress the similarities of two positions not the differences and the desirability of reaching an agreement. Hence, in the above example one could reiterate the exciting job opportunity and the need to move on to the next steps as soon as possible.

Conclusion

While employing distributive negotiation tactics, the following need to be considered.

- **Ethics:** While ethical approach should generally be all-pervasive in negotiations, one should be particularly mindful with the tactics deployed. According to Ogden (2018), something between the two extremes of honesty and total lies would be acceptable. Particularly, Reframing could help parties see other's point of view and subsequently transform views of the situation and outcome.
- **Gender differences:** Interesting research by Miles (2010) suggest that gender does moderate, disadvantaging women, in the intended opening offer and actual first offer. It also impacts intended opening offer and actual counter offer too.
- **Remote negotiations:** Research by Paese, Schreiber, & Taylor (2003) suggest that phone and email (versus Face-to-Face) induce competitive behaviours when there is no honest disclosure in distributive bargaining. In other words, one can expect cooperation inducing effect upon honest disclosure while negotiating using remote media.

References

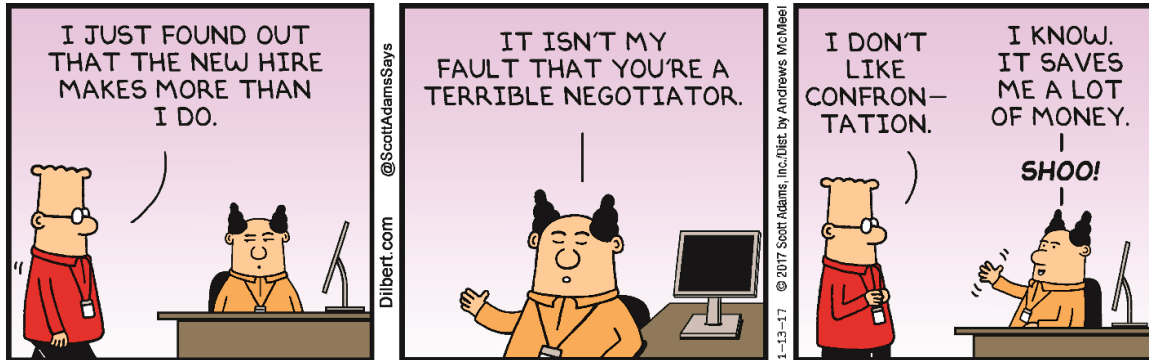
- Goldman, B., Cooper, D. A., & Koc, C. (2019). An exploration of whether engineers differ from non-engineers in their approach to negotiations. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 30(4), 420-440. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1108/IJCMA-02-2019-0034>
- Haase, S. D. (1992). Effective negotiation hinges on power: The national magazine of business fundamentals C&FM. *Business Credit*, 94(1), 28. Retrieved from <http://libproxy.smu.edu.sg/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/docview/230135663?accountid=28662>
- Hendon, D. W., Roy, M. H., & Ahmed, Z. U. (2003). Neotiation concession patterns: A multi-country, multiperiod study. *American Business Review*, 21(1), 75-83. Retrieved from <http://libproxy.smu.edu.sg/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/docview/216290481?accountid=28662>
- Miles, E. W. (2010). Gender differences in distributive negotiation: When in the negotiation process do the differences occur? *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(7), 1200-1211. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1002/ejsp.714>
- Murnighan, J. K., Babcock, L., Thompson, L., & Pillutla, M. (1999). The information dilemma in negotiations: Effects of experience, incentives, and integrative potential. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 10(4), 313-339. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1108/eb022828>

- Ogden, J. S. (2018). WHEN DO NEGOTIATION TACTICS BECOME UNETHICAL? HONESTY IN REFRAMING
1. *Southern Journal of Business and Ethics*, 10, 98-113.
Retrieved from
<http://libproxy.smu.edu.sg/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/docview/2228578716?accountid=28662>
- Paese, P. W., Schreiber, A. M., & Taylor, A. W. (2003). Caught telling the truth: Effects of honesty and communication media in distributive negotiations. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 12(6), 537-566. Retrieved from
<http://libproxy.smu.edu.sg/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/docview/223827149?accountid=286>
- Rich, C. (2011). Successful negotiation is 80 percent preparation: How to get more of what you want by preparing properly. *Strategic Direction*, 27(3), 35 doi: <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1108/02580541111109543>

Salary Negotiation – Myths Busted

ABHIJEET K. VADERA

KARYN THYE



DILBERT © 2017 Scott Adams, Inc. Used By permission of ANDREWS MCMEEL SYNDICATION. All rights reserved.

Don't be a Dilbert

Introduction

A negotiation expert and a compensation geek came together to answer some of the toughest salary negotiation questions from the Master of Human Capital Leadership (MHCL) 2020 graduate cohort. We hope that our combined experiences in this field would help shed some light on the complex world of salary negotiations.

Myths Busted

Q: How do I know what is a competitive salary for my role?

A: Research, Research, Research!

We recommend the following websites:

1. **Glassdoor.** The site gathered a rich global salary repository based on anonymous user contributions. Its popularity has been soaring in Asia and it's a great free source to start your research. Glassdoor indicates the "confidence" level for the average salary shown based on the number of data points they have for the job. From our experiences,

thesalaries marked with “very high confidence” are good reference data to gauge whether you are paid competitively.

2. **Salary.sg**. This is an informative site on all salary related topics in Singapore. The vast number of threads in their forums might seem overwhelming at first but you will be able to find good salary insights on specific companies and roles if you look hard enough.

Finally, it is also beneficial to speak to headhunters to get a sense of what the market is paying for the role you are in.

Q: What's the best way to negotiate for a higher salary in a job interview?

A: There are three rules we ask people to follow when they are negotiating for a higher salary:

1. Ask for what you want but be realistic and polite.
2. Explain the logic behind your requests.
3. Understand the “interests” of the person across the table.

People often do not ask for a higher salary in a job interview because (a) they expect the recruiter to make a “fair” offer, and (b) they do not want to derail the recruitment process by appearing greedy. But it is important to note that what is “fair” to the recruiter may not be “fair” to you. If you truly believe that you deserve or need a higher salary, then you need to ask for it. If you don’t ask, you don’t get. It is important to make reasonable requests though. We have seen incidents in which folks have taken the idea of anchoring to such an extreme that recruiters have gotten infuriated and rescinded the offer made.

Also, our conversations with recruiters in multiple countries, including the US, India, and Singapore, underscored the fact that recruiters judge candidates based on what, and how, they negotiate. Candidates who negotiated assertively but politely and who provided logical explanations for their requests are more likely to be viewed positively than candidates who do not negotiate at all.

Finally, it is important to understand the “interests”, that is, the needs and constraints of the person with whom you are negotiating. For example, if you are negotiating with a HR manager, then this person is

likely to be interested in maintaining parity across all the hiring candidates and may be reluctant to bend any rules or policies for you. But if you are negotiating with your reporting manager, then this person may be more willing to go to bat for you. But you want to then make sure you do not bother them with petty matters.

Q: What's the best way to negotiate for a raise after I joined the company?

A: You need to first build credibility in the organization that you are a good (or at least solid) performer before asking for more money. It might also be beneficial to signal your willingness to diversify your work portfolio or to take up additional responsibilities.

The best time to broach the subject would be after a good performance review with your Line Manager. You should highlight any training or certification courses you took to upskill, your sustained good performance and the impactful projects you delivered in recent months. We also recommend that you raise this subject to your Line Manager if the company has not conducted a salary review for you in the last 2 years. There is typically an annual salary review process in larger-sized companies, but this might not be the case in small businesses where people processes are usually not as well defined.

Q: Are there gender differences in negotiation outcomes? And if “yes”, what are some ways to minimize these differences?

A: This question merits a typical MHCL response: It depends! A recent meta-analysis (Mazei, *et. al.*, 2015) found that men, on average, achieved better negotiation outcomes than women. However, gender differences depend both on the situation as well as on the persons involved. For example, gender differences favouring men can be reduced and potentially reversed when (a) negotiators have had prior negotiations experience, (b) information about the bargaining range was made available to negotiators, and (c) negotiators negotiated on behalf of others.

There are two findings in the literature on gender differences and negotiations that stand out for us (see Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007; Kugler, Reif, Kaschner, & Brodbeck, 2018): Compared to men, women

are less likely to initiate negotiations and ask for higher salaries. However, when they do negotiate higher salaries, women incur more social costs than men do. Other employees view women who ask for higher salaries as less nice and too demanding and therefore express an unwillingness to work with them. Then what's the solution? What can women do to escape this salary negotiation dilemma - of asking for a higher salary without bearing the social costs?

The solution is two-fold. First, the meta-analysis noted above showed that women are likely to be more assertive in negotiations when they are negotiating on behalf of someone else rather than themselves. A direct implication of this finding is that women need to change their mindset from “negotiating for self” to “negotiating for family.” That is, every time they negotiate for a higher salary, women need to remind themselves that they are not doing it out of self-interest but for the benefit of the family who are dependent on them for a better way of life.

Second, women need to use “relational accounts” when they negotiate for higher salaries (Bowles & Babcock, 2013). Relational accounts are negotiation strategies that explain why the negotiating behavior is appropriate under the circumstances and that affirm concern for organizational relationships. Relational accounts thus have two parts: First, women need to explain to their negotiating counterparts why the counterparts should view women's negotiating to be legitimate. Second, women's script should communicate concern for organizational relationships. For instance, women can say something to the effect — “I am not sure how much of my job will involve negotiating for the company, but I am hopeful that you'll see my negotiation skills as something important that I can bring to my job.” It is important to note that women need to be authentic and use scripts that feel right for them. Some may believe that these strategies perpetrate gender stereotypes in society. However, we believe that these strategies will help women succeed in the current workplace while we, as a society, figure out ways to ensure gender parity at large.

Q: What is the ultimate “no-no” in salary negotiations?

There are several and we would like to call out the common ones we have seen:

1. **Poor Attitude.** It pays to be humble and polite even if you are a Rockstar in your field. We would like to reiterate that we have seen offers being revoked (rare but it's possible) when dealing with an arrogant jerk or a candidate with an unsatisfiable greed.
2. **Dishonesty.** There are no grey areas here. Recruiters must and do withdraw the offer if they find out that the candidate is dishonest about his / her previous employment data including salary, tenure, education, etc. Do note that it is very common for companies to conduct a background or reference check on candidates prior to making them job offers.
3. **Over-Emphasis on Job Titles.** We have seen candidates who became over-focused on job titles and neglected the bigger prize (i.e. salary) in the negotiation. Some companies have a well-established internal job levelling system which might explain their reluctance to budge on the job title as that can cause internal equity issues. Do try asking your Line Manager for the possibility of using an external title. The agreed external title should also be used on your name cards.

Key Takeaways

Overall, we ask you to keep these points in mind for salary negotiations:

1. Do your homework by figuring out what to ask, when to ask, whom to ask and how to ask.
2. And then ask!
3. But be polite, truthful, and authentic.
4. And adapt! While the principles of creating and claiming value generally hold, how to create and claim value may differ based on your gender, cultural context, industry, occupation, etc.

References

- Bowles, H. R., Babcock, L., & Lai, L. (2007). Social incentives for gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations: Sometimes it does hurt to ask. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 103(1), 84-103.
- Bowles, H. R., & Babcock, L. (2013). How can women escape the compensation negotiation dilemma? Relational accounts are one answer. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(1), 80-96.
- Mazei, J., Hüffmeier, J., Freund, P. A., Stuhlmacher, A. F., Bilke, L., & Hertel, G. (2015). A meta-analysis on gender differences in negotiation outcomes and their moderators. *Psychological Bulletin*, 141(1), 85-104.
- Kugler, K. G., Reif, J. A., Kaschner, T., & Brodbeck, F. C. (2018). Gender differences in the initiation of negotiations: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 144(2), 198-222.

EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH
to
Talent Management

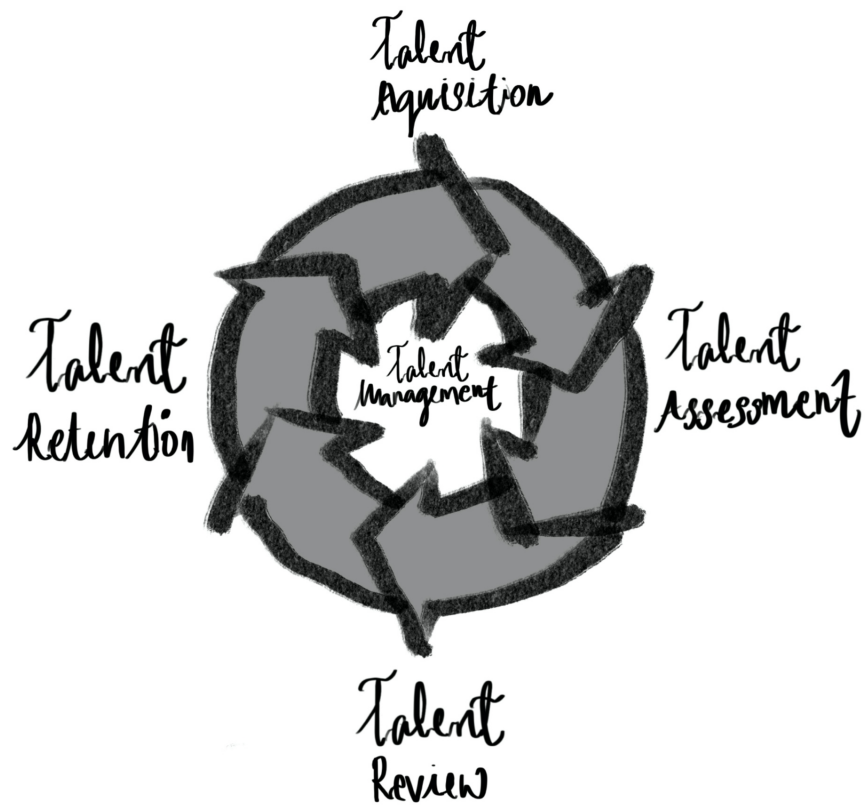


ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

Performance Management: Quo Vadis?

FILIP LIEVENS

PHILIPP SCHÄPERS

CHRISTOPH N. HERDE

Performance Management: Quo Vadis?

Traditionally performance management has been described as a powerful tool in Human Resource Management (HRM) because it has potentially a wide array of application possibilities for various HR topics. However, the reality in practice is different. Various surveys reported that more than 90 percent of the performance management systems are unsuccessful. Further studies have shown that up to 75% of staff feel that their organization's performance management system does not help them to improve their performance and is largely a waste of time (e.g., Capelli & Tavis, 2016; Pulakos, 2009). Economic analyses of the return on investment (as compared to the costs and time spent) on performance management activities appear to confirm these negative perceptions (e.g., CEB, 2012). What are the reasons for failure in the area of performance management? In this article, we aim to identify the main problems with the current performance management systems. At the same time, we aim to present a wide array of possible solutions to these recurring issues. All of this should further stimulate the debate about how to revamp performance management systems in organizations.

Performance Management: An Overview of Recurring Problems

Resistance of Key Stakeholders

A first core problem is that both employees and line managers have a strong resistance to performance management systems (De Nisi & Sonesh, 2011). Instead of being motivating and encouraging, line managers find giving and receiving (negative) feedback frustrating. It is like a “feared dental appointment” (Baer, 2014). They often try to avoid, postpone or soften giving (negative) feedback. In any case, line managers are at least said to be nervous when the time of the performance management meetings

arises. Especially, this is the case if there is no trustful relationship between employee and supervisor.

From their part, employees also tend to react defensively to negative feedback. They dismiss the feedback offered as incorrect and attribute their failure to external factors, such as the bad mood of the line manager or the negative attitude of colleagues. This defensive attitude has a negative impact on the feedback process (Moss & Sanchez, 2004). This is even confirmed by neuroscientific research: evaluations induce a flight or fight response among employees, which often leads to lower performance afterwards (Rock, 2008; Rock & Jones, 2015).

These dynamics create a “feedback gap” (Moss & Sanchez, 2004). Thus, a lot of managers are reluctant to give feedback and employees do not seek feedback from their manager. It is therefore not surprising that empirical research confirms that giving feedback does not always improve employee performance. This is confirmed by a meta-analysis that shows that in 1/3 of the cases where feedback is offered to employees, performance even decreases; in a 1/3 there is no effect, and only in the remaining 1/3 there is a positive effect (Alvero, Bucklin, & Austin, 2001; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

Conflicting Objectives

A second major problem is that performance management systems often have two conflicting objectives. That is, about 70% of organizations use performance management as a starting point for feedback (and thus for development and coaching) as well as for administrative decisions (e.g., compensation or promotion; Cleveland, Murphy, & Williams, 1989). This is problematic, because research shows that such a double and conflicting use of performance management is disastrous for both objectives (see for example Boswell & Boudreau, 2002). How can you expect employees to be honest about their weaknesses (development) when they know that this could affect their salary or promotion chances? This double focus erodes the system.

Other ‘Implicit’ Motives

Current systems are often too focused on psychometric qualities. However, the supervisor often has little concern for accurate assessments.

When making assessments, he/she has many other objectives in mind (see Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). For example, by giving high ratings, he/she wants to maintain the good atmosphere in his/her team. Or by giving almost everyone a good to very good assessment, he/she does not want to come across as incompetent and might want to increase one's own reputation and the reputation of the workgroup in the organization. Thus, some have argued that political or social factors are more important drivers of performance ratings than intentions to provide accurate ratings or to differentiate well between employees (Adler et al., 2016; see also Pulakos & O'Leary, 2011). It is clear that many existing performance management systems do not take those implicit objectives of managers into account.

Administration and Complexity

Many performance managements approaches in organizations have grown into cumbersome complex systems (Levy, Tseng, Rosen, & Lueke, 2017). These manifests itself, for example, in complex assessment forms in which too many competencies have to be assessed. In addition, both parties typically have to discuss a large set of meticulously worded objectives. The time-consuming "multisource feedback carousel" is another example where managers assess a large number of employees each year. Typically, this administrative performance management mill starts once a year. No single party (line manager and employee) looks forward to this annual rush to carry out the performance appraisals in each department. After that, everything comes to a standstill again. Many feel that formal performance appraisal is thus separated from daily work.

Lack of Strategic Impact

Today, organizations must have the ability to respond with agility to rapidly changing environmental demands. That's why the objectives are often no longer relevant after six months. Project-based work also contributes to this (Levy et al., 2017). In short, feedback and evaluation processes are at odds with the dynamic work cycles in organizations.

As a result of the above-mentioned problems, performance management is also often used to de facto confirm and justify a decision already taken (e.g. promotion or dismissal). In performance management, there is often a 'lag' between performance management ratings and HR decisions. In concrete terms, a manager will rate someone highly because

(s)he has already decided for himself that that person will be promoted (see also Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, Arad, & Moye, 2015). Such a “lag” relationship between performance management and other HR decisions illustrates the lack of strategic impact of performance management and actually goes against the essence of performance management (i.e., in terms of its vertical and horizontal integration in the objectives of the organization and HR policy).

Lack of Support from Senior Management

Line managers and senior/top management should understand, accept, and be able and willing to carry out their part of the program. This is only possible if senior/top management actively participates in the implementation and support of the performance management program. However, clear support from senior/top management in the implementation of the performance management program is often lacking. Senior/top management might approve the performance management system but is not itself evaluated according to it.

Performance Management Solutions

What can organizations do to address these recurring problems? In what follows, we discuss a range of possible solutions (see also Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, & Arad, 2019; Schleicher, Baumann, Sullivan, & Yim, 2019). We place them on a continuum. On one hand, there are strategies that are still close to the core of performance management as we discussed above. On the other hand, there are solutions that imply a radical turnaround.

System Technical Upgrades

The first and most traditional solution is to make the performance management system even more objective, so as to avoid resistance and negative reactions. This means providing the manager (assessor) with even more detailed guidelines (training) and tools (instruments) so that the quality (reliability and validity) of the assessments is improved.

To this end, the following system technical upgrades might be deployed: (1) one developed a standardized assessment instrument to make assessments across different people comparable; (2) one checked whether the criteria to be assessed are relevant to the job and are unambiguously

defined in terms of concrete observable behavior; (3) one makes performance levels explicit by means of examples per competency, and (4) one develops a system with an orientation towards the future, so that the development of the individual is compared from year to year.

Unfortunately, this first solution only tackles possible measurement shortcomings in performance assessment. The problem here is that they do not address the deeper underlying structural problems. This solution further ignores the fact that performance management is essentially a communication process rather than a measurement process. Good tools and thorough training of assessors are therefore insufficient prerequisites for a meaningful performance management system. The success of this first solution is therefore not at all certain. Pulakos et al. (2015) summarize this well: “For over 50 years, we have repeatedly attempted to address dissatisfaction and disappointing PM results (e.g., lack of differentiation among employees) by tweaking PM systems. These attempts to fix PM have led to vicious cycles of reinventing PM processes only to achieve disappointing results and then reinventing these processes again and again” (p. 52).

Reengineering

A second solution aims to reduce the complexity of performance management (e.g., Pulakos et al., 2019). Three basic principles underlie the reengineering logic. First, an evidence-based approach is used as a yardstick for reducing complexity. Second, the aim is to retain only those steps and aspects that provide real added value for the organization. In this reengineering logic, for example, organizations abandon the complex SMART process in order to determine the objectives to be achieved. They replace it with SIMple, which stands for Specific, Important and Measurable. As another example, only three objectives are set per term, which are truly crucial for both the individual and the organization. Moreover, rankings instead of assessment scales are used. Third, the process must radiate transparency and accountability. For example, transparency might be increased because performance appraisal results are shared with everyone at group level. Accountability might be improved by not paying out a bonus to a manager if (s)he has not assessed his team.

This reengineering solution is increasingly popular because it goes against the bureaucracy and administrative burden that performance

management often entails. For example, the book *One page talent management* (Effron & Ort, 2010) became a bestseller.

Separation Between Performance Management Purposes

This third solution proposes a clear distinction between organizational (between people decisions) and individual applications of performance management (within people decisions). There should be no more contamination between these two objectives. An organization can achieve this by having two types of interviews/meetings. Employees must be informed clearly in advance about the formal separation between these two meetings. They must also be aware of the fact that the implications of each meeting differ. That is, the first type of interview (appraisal interview) relates to performance appraisal with effects on remuneration and promotion. Such interviews are held only once a year and are recorded in writing. The manager clearly has the role of an assessor. The second type of interview (coaching interview) focuses on individual feedback about strengths and weaknesses. This interview is held by a career expert (if there is one) or by the manager in the role of a counselor. It can take place several times a year and does not always lead to a written report. Such an interview gives rise to the aforementioned individual development plans or personal development plans. These plans try to find a fit between the organization and the individual. Note that self-assessment, lateral assessment and multisource feedback are best used only within the coaching interview. These forms of assessment and feedback trigger a communication process.

A problem with this solution is that the first interview (the pure appraisal interview) is still subject to some of the listed problems. This does not stand in the way of development-oriented initiatives because this component is completely separate from these problems. Empirical research supports the usefulness and value of this third solution (Bettenhausen & Fedor, 1997). Fletcher (2001) even found that multisource feedback programs systematically fail when used for assessment and reward (and not just for development).

Informal Feedback: Check-ins and Feedback Culture

In the fourth and most radical solution, organizations abandon the entire system of formal and periodic performance reviews and replaced it with informal feedback (Culbert & Rout, 2010). Informal feedback can best

be described as follows: Managers express their expectations on a weekly basis (also known as weekly "check-ins", "continuous review systems", "checkpoints", or "regular touch points") and provide direct and informal feedback (according to the motto: "Giving feedback is like serving champagne, it's best to serve champagne when it's still sparkling"). The focus of the feedback is always future-oriented and targeted to employee development. No written notes are made or kept.

If organizations follow these recommendations, this creates a favorable feedback environment for employees, also known as a feedback culture (Levy & Williams, 2004).

In recent years, the use of a 'system' of informal feedback has increased considerably. Companies like Deloitte, Gap, Microsoft, Adobe, and PwC have been forerunners (e.g., Culbert & Rout 2010; Cunningham 2015). As we have already stated, some organizations opt for this because the formal system simply does not work or is being eroded (see the above-mentioned problems). Notably, informal feedback is easy to handle and does not involve any administrative paperwork. Often a mobile app like "Anytime feedback" supports this process.

For the time being, most positive evidence about the effects of informal feedback is based on case studies (e.g., Aguinis 2013; CEB 2004; Kirkland & Manoogian, 2007; Gregory, Levy, & Jeffers, 2008). For example, frequent informal feedback seems more in line with the agility required of today's organizations. However, there are also possible drawbacks. For example, in organizations in which the use of formal feedback was eliminated, top performers reported reduced satisfaction (Levy et al., 2017). Another tricky point is on what basis organizations without a formal performance management system can make objective decisions about salary increases, promotions, and dismissals (see Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Some scholars (e.g., Adler et al., 2016) have argued that such decisions will then still build upon evaluations of employees' performance, even if these evaluations might take the form of implicit mental models on behalf of the supervisors. In sum, more systematic research in organizations is required to further demonstrate the effectiveness of it.

Focus on Strengths vs. Weaknesses: Feedforward and Reflected Best Self Portrait

On the basis of positive psychology, a movement (The Positive Organization; Positive HRM) has been set in motion in performance management that aims to identify and develop people's strengths rather than highlighting their weaknesses (Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2012; Buckingham & Goodall, 2015). The reason is that people have already heard enough about their weaknesses and are often reluctant to respond to negative feedback. As a result, corrective feedback often leads to dissatisfaction, defensive reactions and less actual behavioral change. In terms of theoretical underpinning, this movement is based on the principle of so-called appreciative inquiry (Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). In other words: build and change an organization on the basis of what works and not on the basis of things that do not work properly.

This movement does not state that negative feedback should not be given in organizations. Such corrective feedback is needed for poor performers. However, negative feedback makes little sense for talented employees. For instance, what is the point of telling an excellent defender to work on his scoring ability? According to the proponents, positive feedback and thus a focus on people's strengths increases their individual well-being, involvement and productivity (Clifton & Harter, 2003). However, there is a danger that people overinvest in their strengths ("too much of a good thing" effect). For instance, a person can develop his adaptability to such an extent that he is seen as someone who always wants to change everything, so that stability is hard to find.

Feedforward is one way to focus on strengths rather than weaknesses. An evaluation conversation too often results in a 'fight' in which both parties mainly argue about past performance and behavior, it is proposed to replace this traditional conversation with, or at least complement it with a feedforward conversation (Kluger & Nir, 2010). In such a conversation, the employee has the most say. He is asked to tell the story of concrete successes in which he was at his best. The emphasis is not on the result achieved, but on the feeling (positive emotions and flow) that employees had when they carried out the activity. In simple terms, it comes down to employees telling about their best day(s) at work in the past year. In this way, the broader circumstances are identified in which employees could best work in the future. Thus, there is a strong emphasis on positive

aspects, on creating a bond of trust between managers and employees and a psychologically safe environment for information exchange. Consequently, both parties are prepared to review their ideas about each other, and this dialogue should facilitate change. Feedforward increased the commitment of employees and the interpersonal relationship with their managers (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Budworth, Latham, & Manroop, 2015). Feedforward also did this better than the traditional feedback method in a performance appraisal. Research into feedforward is gradually getting under way.

In addition to feedforward, the method of reflected best self-portrait ("self-portrait of how a target person is at his best"; Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005) also plays into this strength-based movement. A reflected best self-portrait is based on the qualities and characteristics that the target person currently effectively possesses; it is not an ideal self-image. Because it is not always easy to determine the strengths yourself (e.g. based on the popular Clifton Strengths questionnaire), the target person asks family, friends, teachers, supervisor, and colleagues for feedback about their strengths. (S)he asks them to write short stories about their strengths. In this way, the target person gets specific examples of moments when he used those strengths in a meaningful way. Afterwards, the target person adds his/her own observations and searches for common themes in all of this. As an end result, the target person writes a description of themselves that summarizes the collected information. This self-description starts with: "I am at my best as ..." and can be used to make adjustments to the function and work context.

Gamification

Gamification is also gaining ground in the field of performance management (Armstrong, Landers, & Collmus, 2016; Cardador, Northcraft, & Whicker, 2016). The underlying reason is simple: The use of game-based principles in performance management improves work motivation and performance by giving more access to visible, comparable and immediate (on-demand) performance information. It also gives additional recognition to employees. As a result, these gamification principles appeal to the new generations of employees who have grown up with games. Notably, an important factor for success is that participation in the game is optional: this motivates more to play.

Organizations can apply gamification in many ways in performance management. Some organizations set up "leaderboards" of the best performers. For example, a leaderboard indicates which staff member scores the highest on customer friendliness or sales performance. With these leaderboards, organizations can adjust the allocation of points according to their objectives. In this way they can clarify the relative importance of different tasks by giving each task a certain number of points. Employees rise on the leaderboard depending on the points they earn. Logically, employees will focus on tasks that score a lot of points (and as a consequence, the organization attaches the most importance to them).

Other organizations apply gamification principles by working with "badges". Employees receive specific badges when they acquire important skills or meet predefined performance standards. Avatars show the status of each player (e.g. in terms of experience and knowledge) and employees know who they can turn to for help or information. It is clear that gamification competition can be conducive. That's why more research is needed to show for which people and objectives gamification works best in performance management.

Epilogue

For many years, performance management was one of the most static HR domains. In the last decade, this has vastly changed. It has emerged as one of the most innovative areas in which organizations experiment with a variety of approaches. In this paper, we discussed the reasons why many management performance systems fail. We uncovered the following key reasons: resistance of key stakeholders, conflicting objectives, implicit objectives, high system complexity, lack of support from senior management, and lack of strategic impact. At the same time, we present a wide array of traditional and more innovative possible solutions such as system technical upgrades (e.g., higher system objectivity or less complex performance management systems), separation between performance management purposes, and the integration of an informal feedback culture.

We are convinced that the future of performance management consists of blending traditional approaches with more recent insights. As an example of such a hybrid approach, organizations might implement a system of instant continuous informal feedback during the year (supported

by mobile technology) and a formal assessment at least once a year. Through instant feedback one has access to more concrete check points, which track employee performance over time. This also makes the final assessment less dependent on recent events. All this then increases the accuracy as well as the acceptance of the end result.

References

- Adler, S., Campion, M., Colquitt, A., Grubb, A., Murphy, K., Ollander-Krane, R., & Pulakos, E. D. (2016). Getting rid of performance ratings: Genius or folly? A debate. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 9*, 219-252. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2015.106>
- Aguinis, H. (2013). *Performance Management*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Aguinis, H., Gottfredson, R. K., & Joo, H. (2012). Delivering effective performance feedback: The strengths-based approach. *Business Horizons, 55*, 105-111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.10.004>
- Alvero, A. M., Bucklin, B. R. & Austin, J. (2001). An objective review of the effectiveness and essential characteristics of performance feedback in organizational settings. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 21*, 3-29. https://doi.org/10.1300/J075v21n01_02
- Armstrong, M. B., Landers, R. N., & Collmus, A. B. (2016). Gamifying recruitment, selection, training, and performance management: Game-thinking in human resource management. In D. Davis & H. Gangadharbatla (Eds.), *Handbook of research on trends in gamification* (pp. 140-165). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- Baer, D. (2014, April 10). Why Adobe abolished their annual performance review and you should, too. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from www.businessinsider.com/adobe-abolished-annual-performance-review-2014-4.
- Bettenhausen, K. L. & Fedor, D. B. (1997). Peer and upward appraisals: A comparison of their benefits and problems. *Group and Organization Management, 22*, 236-263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601197222006>

- Boswell, W. R. & Boudreau, J. W. (2002). Separating the developmental and evaluative performance appraisal uses. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 16, 391-412.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1012872907525>
- Bouskila-Yam, O., & Kluger, A. N. (2011). Strength-based performance appraisal and goal setting. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21, 137-147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmmr.2010.09.001>
- Buckingham, M., & Goodall, A. (2015). Reinventing performance management. *Harvard Business Review*, 4, 40-50.
- Budworth, M., Latham, G. P., & Manroop, L. (2015). Looking forward to performance improvement: a field test of the feed forward interview for performance management. *Human Resource Management*, 54, 45-54. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21618>
- Bushe, G. R., & Kassam, A. F. (2005). When is appreciative inquiry transformational? A meta-case analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 41, 161-181.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886304270337>
- Capelli, P., & Tavis, A. (2016). The performance management revolution. *Harvard Business Review*, 1, 9-11.
- Cardador, M. T., Northcraft, G. B., & Whicker, J. (2016). A theory of work gamification: Something old, something new, something borrowed, something cool? *Human Resource Management Review*, 27, 353- 365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmmr.2016.09.014>
- CEB. 2004. *Driving employee performance and retention through engagement: a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of employee engagement strategies*. Washington, DC: CEB.
- CEB. 2012. *Driving breakthrough performance in the new work environment*. Washington, DC: CEB.

- Cleveland, J. N., Murphy, K. R., & Williams, R. E. (1989). Multiple uses of performance appraisal: Prevalence and correlates. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 74*, 130-135. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.74.1.130>
- Clifton, D. O., & Harter, J. K. (2003). Investing in strengths. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline* (pp. 111—121). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In R. W. Woodman & W. A. Pasmore (Eds.), *Research in organizational change and development* (Vol. 1, pp. 129-169). Stamford, CT: JAI.
- Culbert, S. A., & Rout, L. (2010). *Get rid of the performance review: How companies can stop intimidating, start managing--and focus on what really matters*. New York: Business Plus.
- Cunningham, L. (2015, July 21). In big move, Accenture will get rid of annual performance reviews and rankings. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2015/07/21/in-big-move-accenture-will-get-rid-of-annual-performance-reviews-and-rankings/>
- DeNisi, A. S., & Sonesh, S. (2011). The appraisal and management of performance at work. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 255-280). Washington, DC: APA Press.
- Effron, M. & Ort, M. (2010). *One-page talent management*. Boston, MS: Harvard Business Press.
- Fletcher, C. (2001). Performance appraisal and management: The developing research agenda. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 74*, 473-487. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317901167488>

- Gregory, J. B., Levy, P. E., & Jeffers, M. (2008). Development of a model of the feedback process within executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60, 42-56.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/1065-9293.60.1.42>
- Kirkland, K., & Manoogian, S. (2007). *Ongoing feedback, how to get it, how to use it*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Kluger, A. N. & DeNisi, A. S. (1996). The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119, 254-284.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.119.2.254>
- Kluger, A. N. & Nir, D. (2010). The feedforward interview. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20, 235-246.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmmr.2009.08.002>
- Levy, P. E., Tseng, S. T., Rosen, C. C., & Lueke, S. B. 2017. Performance management: A marriage between practice and science: Just say “I do.” In M. R. Buckley, A. R. Wheeler, & J. R. B. Halbesleben (Eds.), *Research in personnel and human resources management* (Vol. 35, pp. 155-213). Bingley, England: Emerald.
- Levy, P. E., & Williams, J. R. (2004). The social context of performance appraisal: A review and framework for the future. *Journal of Management*, 30, 881–905.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.005>
- Moss, S. E. & Sanchez, J. I. (2004). Are your employees avoiding you? Managerial strategies for closing the feedback gap. *Academy of Management Executive*, 18, 32-46.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2004.12691168>
- Murphy, K. R., & Cleveland, J. N. (1995). *Understanding performance appraisal: Social, organizational and goal-oriented perspectives*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Pulakos, E. D. (2009). *Performance management: A new approach for driving business results*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Pulakos, E. D., Mueller-Hanson, R., & Arad, S. (2019). The evolution of performance management: Searching for value. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 6, 249-271. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015009>
- Pulakos, E. D., Mueller-Hanson, R. A., Arad, S., & Moye, N. (2015). Performance management can be fixed: An on-the-job experiential learning approach for complex behavior change. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 8, 51-76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2014.2>
- Pulakos, E. D., & O'Leary, R. S. (2010). Defining and measuring results of workplace behavior. In J. L. Farr, & N. Tippins (Eds.), *The Handbook of Employee Selection* (pp. 513–529). New York: Psychology Press
- Roberts, L. M., Dutton, J. E., Spreitzer, G. M., Heaphy, E. D., & Quinn, R. E. (2005). Composing the reflected best self-portrait: Building pathways for becoming extraordinary in work organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 30, 712-773. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2005.18378874>
- Rock, D. (2008): SCARF: A brain-based model for collaborating with and influencing others. *NeuroLeadership Journal*, 1, 1-9.
- Rock, D., & Jones, B. (2015, September 8). Why more and more companies are ditching performance ratings. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2015/09/why-more-and-more-companies-are-ditching-performance-ratings>
- Schleicher, D. J., Baumann, H. M., Sullivan, D. W., & Yim, J. (2019). Evaluating the effectiveness of performance management: A 30-year integrative conceptual review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104, 851-887. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000368>

No-Rating Performance Management: Does it really work?

ANGELING OOI
YANTI TIURMA IDA

Many companies have done away with the traditional rating system to embark on no-rating system, and incorporated it in their performance management program. However, managers and human resources practitioners have continue with their debates about how this new system can objectively manage performance as well as fairly allocate rewards. In this article, we will look at no-rating performance management from the lenses of manufacturing and technology services environments. We aim to provide recommendations on how to integrate it as a strategic process to provide success to the organisation.

No-rating Performance Management: In a Manufacturing Environment

A manufacturing company recently adopted the no-rating performance management. The elimination of numerical performance scoring allows managers and employees to focus on regular conversations with an ultimate goal to create an engaged workforce for a safer workplace. The company is heavily dependent on manual labour. The Key Performance Indexes (“KPIs”) are operational measures such as safety, productivity, efficiency, and quality. Performance goals were typically set at the beginning of the year, communicated and documented by the managers. Throughout the year, there will be quarterly performance review exercises. Supervisors or managers play an important role to initiate performance conversations with employees, provide feedback for improvement and recognize the good performers. However, the company has been struggling with its implementation to ensure that employees are assessed consistently and compensated based on performance.

The implementation of no-rating performance management is raising concerns on the effectiveness of the system to measure performance, which includes fairness in differentiating performance and rewards distribution. Without performance rating, how do the managers

measure the employees' performance and establish the perception of fairness especially under a manufacturing operational context?

No-rating Performance Management: In a technology services environment

A technology services company faces a different challenge from the recent adoption of no-rating performance management. The company's goal when embarking on such a system was to manage performance by providing opportunities for both the managers and employees to have better discussions pertaining to performance and development, rather than a mere annual exercise to rate past performance. The vast majority of the population are professionals whose performance goals are aligned with the business' strategic direction of a particular financial year. For instance, the successful acquisition of new customers through the go-to-market strategy or Profit and Loss margins. In this company, the result of financial gain is typically obtained through various projects' Total Contract Value and by compounding quick wins throughout the financial year.

In this company, the essence of the new performance management model is having regular check-ins between the managers and employees. Those are aimed to address performance issues, recognised achievements in a real-time manner as well as to establish and strengthen employee engagements. However, the new system does not seem to work and contribute much to performance management. It was deemed as an exercise only to serve the decision making of merit increment and bonus allocation. Such misconception is detrimental to employees' development, job satisfaction, and will eventually lead to attrition.

Deeper insights about the no-rating performance management

The benefit of no-rating performance management presented by Cappelli & Tavis (2016) is to provide opportunities for both the managers and employees to have real-time and quality discussions pertaining to performance and development. While Lai & Nazim (2017) postulated that eliminating ratings was not meant to get rid of performance management but as an enhancement and supplement to the existing systems to strengthen the strategic alignment, enhance performance management process effectiveness, and better reward employees.

Reading multiple journal articles on performance management, we recognize two key success factors for the implementation of no-rating performance management. First, provide ongoing feedback and review of the goals as often as needed. Deloitte's practice suggested that the managers and employees must consistently practice ongoing conversations which cover both regular evaluations and coaching (Buckingham & Goodall, 2015). It further explained that conversation is the key. Such conversations are not necessarily only initiated by the managers. Employees also have the accountability to approach managers to discuss about their performance. The frequency of these conversations would then lead to a direct and measurable correlation with employees' engagement. It is because regular conversations would provide clarity regarding manager's expectations and how to achieve good results. Additionally, these conversations also enable both manager and employee to revisit goals throughout the year. It will help to prevent goals from drifting into meaninglessness by year-end, which will undermine trust (Hancock et al., 2018).

Second, the creation of climate that supports feedback and coaching is also important. The nuances surrounding it would include the content, delivery, and the giver and receiver (Gregory & Levy, 2015). For instance, the credibility of the source of feedback, how the feedback is delivered and the recipient's ability to respond and to use feedback. In order to support feedback and coaching culture, Ledford & Lawlet (2015) posited that using technology in performance management would allow the stakeholders within an organisation to provide feedback and recognize the individual's performance at any time almost instantaneously. This also enables the process to be more efficient where the individual is able to gain self-awareness and put in effort to improve the gap. Undeniably, there must be honest, transparent and two-way conversations between managers and employees in an effective performance management process.

We analysed research by Adler et al. (2016) to further validate the foundation of the two key success factors mentioned earlier. There are two significant challenges in getting no-rating performance management to be successful. First, the consistent engagement of ongoing quality performance conversations which are characterised by positive and impactful feedback. Often, the managers are not well-equipped to provide constructive feedback. Second, employee's attitude on improving performance depending on their learning appetite which promotes continuous search for specific actionable feedback and not feedback

avoidance. Based on these factors, it could be inferred that for no-rating performance management to be successful, it is crucial to secure conscious efforts from both the managers and employees.

The unsettled challenges

From the two scenarios above, both companies clearly understand why they chose to on-board the no-rating performance system in the first place. The issue in the manufacturing company seemed to be the lack of procedural fairness postulated by Hancock et al. (2018), which in the absence of performance ratings, most of the companies will struggle to help the employees to know where they stand in term of performance and rewards distribution. In the case of the technology services company, the new system failed to take off because both the managers and employees did not work on the real-time and quality discussions pertaining to performance and development.

Does the new system give rise to a new set of problems? Perhaps not. Instead, in the infant stage of adoption, a few teething issues would likely to occur. First, the ineffectiveness of no-rating performance management could be resulting from both managers and employees who are not well equipped to have valuable performance discussions. Therefore, when embarking on no-rating performance management, improving the frequency and quality of discussions between the managers and employees are important (Pulakos & O'Leary, 2011).

Second, the presence of positive atmosphere during the discussion. The intent of giving feedback should be to help recipients improve performance. Hence, feedback must be meaningful (Buckingham & Goodall, 2015). Feedback must also be constructive rather than simply passing of judgments (Gregory & Levy, 2015) and should be delivered objectively and measured against results (Cardy & Munjal, 2016). In view of these aspects, although numerical ratings are eliminated, qualitative assessments still exist when evaluating an employee's performance (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). However, it is not meant to label an employee but rather to provide comprehensive information on his / her performance. The qualitative assessment should serve as an opportunity for the manager to coach the employee and for the employee to effectively make sense and use of the advice.

Lastly, the lack of perceived fairness could be resulting from the absence of numerical ratings that could visibly distinguish the levels of performance outcomes (Adler et al., 2016). When people are not familiar with the new no-rating performance management, they tend to question the effectiveness of the system and compare it with the rating system that they are used to.

What can be done in this situation?

In order to aid managers and employees, two interventions may be considered. First, the provision of comprehensive guidance and materials. This is for them to become familiar with purposeful performance meeting and constructive feedback. Such materials could be in the form of various brown bag sessions and online materials which include guidebooks and frequently ask questions (or FAQs) that managers and employees can easily fall back on when needed. Second, to consider the quality of performance assessment to be included in the managers' evaluation. This includes the ability to diagnose and address performance issue (Cardy & Munjal, 2016) as well as to provide constructive and impactful feedback (Adler et al., 2016).

The observable area of success from the proposed interventions would be on the effort and commitment invested in performance discussions. It should be measured by impacts on employees in the areas of receiving improved quality evaluation and the increasing level of trust, empowerment, motivation, and performance. Additionally, the managers' success should be measured by their enhanced understanding of the employee's performance development needs, the quality of their assessment and the increase level of employee engagement.

Conclusions

Although a broader organisational context must be considered in order to have an effective performance management, it is not the main factor contributing to the ineffectiveness of the no-rating system. The readiness of all parties in the process heavily relies on the support system such as the provision of comprehensive guidance and materials. Additionally, it requires commitment and conscious efforts from everyone in the organisation. Lastly, to a certain extent, we must admit that ratings do still exist not in a numerical form but in a qualitative form, which focuses on employee's development.

References

- Adler, S., Campion, M., Colquitt, A., Grubb, A., Murphy, K., Ollander-Krane, R., & Pulakos, E. (2016). Getting Rid of Performance Ratings: Genius or Folly? A Debate. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 9(2), 219–252. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2015.106>
- Buckingham, M., & Goodall, A. (2015). Reinventing Performance Management. *Harvard Business Review*, 93(4), 40–50. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1664428429/>
- Cappelli, P., & Tavis, A. (2016). The Performance Management Revolution. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1827622813/>
- Cardy, R., & Munjal, D. (2016). Beyond Performance Ratings: The Long Road to Effective Performance Management. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 9(2), 322–328. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2016.1>
- Gregory, J. B., & Levy, P. E. (2015). *Fundamentals of consulting psychology book series. Using feedback in organizational consulting*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14619-000>
- Hancock, B., Hioe, E. & Schaninger, B. (2018). *McKinsey the Fairness Factor in Performance Management*. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/the-fairness-factor-in-performance-management>
- Lai, H., & Nazim, J. (2017). What is the impact of eliminating performance ratings? Retrieved [9 May 2020] from Cornell University, ILR School site: <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/student/180>
- Pulakos, E. D., & O’Leary, R. S. (2011). Why is performance management broken? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 4, 146–164.

MANAGING
Corporate Reputation
And
Communication

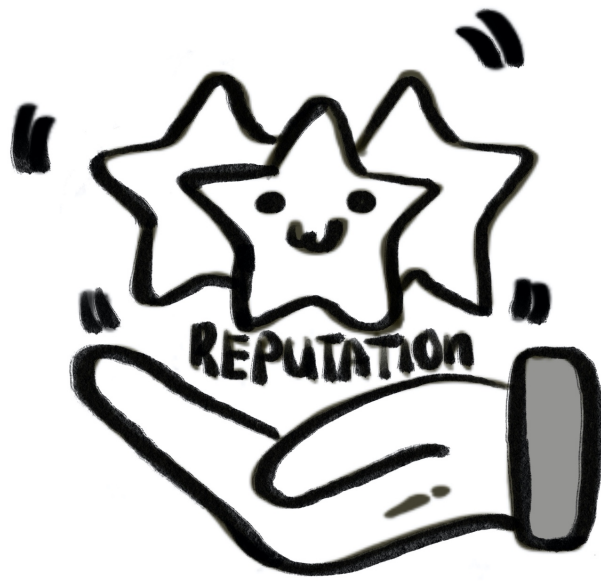


ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

Reputation Matters: Building Internal Trust and Resilience with Effective Communication

YEO SU LIN

Reputation is a crucial driver of business performance. In today's crisis-ridden business environment, this corporate quality has never been more prized in organizations. Research has time and again demonstrated that a favorable reputation offers long-term value for organizations. Reputation impacts everything from financial to relationships represented by public's confidence in brand equity, human capital, earnings and future growth. Reputation-led companies have been shown to set the standard by leading the pack for other businesses to follow, and in times of a crisis, the reputation capital that they have amassed enable them to better recover from economic storms. However, unlike other business assets, corporate reputation painstakingly built and earned over decades, and its potentially transient nature and fragility due to shifting expectations of accountability also makes reputation damage the top global business risk for companies in Asia-Pacific.

A desired quality that sits in the collective thoughts and feelings of multiple stakeholder groups significant to the organization, reputation as defined by scholars is essentially "the sum of all perceptions". It is a social phenomenon and a critical outcome that results from public's judgement and perceived assessment of an organization's accumulated decisions, actions and behaviors. As the coherent view and perceptions across all internal and external stakeholders are formed via interaction with the company's employees, use of products and by commentary and opinions expressed in the public domain, in essence, companies do not own their corporate reputation. Instead, companies carefully nurture this highly desired quality by proactively engaging with its stakeholders so as to build goodwill and trust in the working relationships. The perceived trustworthiness of the organization communicated by strategically employing communication messages and media channels in the exchange of information to generate trust forms the bedrock of reputation.

Once considered the responsibility of the communication or public relations function to communicate and manage expectations with mainly

external stakeholders, corporate reputation today is both an ‘outside in’ as well as an ‘inside out’ challenge that requires the collective effort from all functions in the organization. The days where internal issues, customer blunders, employee unhappiness and ethical lapses are swept under the carpet, and when uncovered and reported by the mainstream media are left to the corporate communication function to manage, are gone. Our hyper-connected digital world of our century where communication knows no boundaries means organizations are under attack 24/7. If organizations hope to protect its reputation from the relentless and unprecedented scrutiny of a myriad of stakeholders in our age of transparency and immediacy, they have to first recognize that the walls which once separated internal from external communication have collapsed.

Many organizations unfortunately are slow to comprehend how internal and external audiences are connected which often result in employees being managed and engaged differently from other stakeholders. Given the evolution of media and changing media consumption patterns, internal and external stakeholders share a common virtual reality today which makes reputation management highly challenging if companies continue to only focus on driving reputation from outside in. To build reputation that is strong enough to withstand the blows and trials in the public court be it online or offline, strategy formation needs to first begin from inside out as employees are organizations’ most trusted sources of information and best advocates in influencing and defending its reputation. As the topic on reputation management cuts across various disciplines, I will focus my discussion on how companies can employ effective communication strategies to engage employees purposefully in the bid to motivate and build sustainable trust in the workplace.

Organizations seeking effective communication strategies to positively impact employees need to evaluate their communication structure setup and process holistically and not merely on individual skills or traits. Human capital is always one of the biggest if not the biggest challenge for companies because employee management demands skillful handling of feeling, thoughts and emotions. Communication plays an important role in this challenge. It is paramount to implement efficient communication practices on a company-wide basis to facilitate understanding and promote collaboration and teamwork among workers in different functional groups. Such a process serves to generate positive

perceptions that boost motivation and foster employee advocacy that will ultimately build and strengthen corporate reputation.

For a start, a corporate level strategy to achieve a best practice would be to put in place a communication highway infrastructure that can maintain a network that provides access to business units and support effective engagement with stakeholders. Given that the digital age does not recognize stakeholder profiles, internal and external communication need to be aggregated and aligned. A central “control communication tower” comprising a team of trained communicators should be formed to work with co-workers to manage messages and exchange of information with all stakeholders. Reporting directly to Chief Executives and a member of the C-suite, the team is depended on to acquire a macro view of corporate decisions, understand internal and external issues and the various efforts undertaken to achieve business objectives or to avert crises. Such a structure integrating communication and business strategies allows the thorough scanning of the environment, and with the empowerment given to the team to provide advice on relationship management across functions, corporate messages can be better tailored for different target audiences with the aim of achieving the same communication objective. The ability to help interpret perceptions held by various stakeholder groups further assist the team to provide assessment “ground-up” so that messages exchanged with various internal (and external) groups can be better crafted, coordinated, timed and persuasively delivered via complementary media channels that align with specific groups’ media consumption behaviors.

To this end, companies working on building corporate reputation from inside out need to realize that internal communication is fundamental to fostering trust and resilience in the workplace. The purpose of internal communication is to provide employees with important information about their jobs, the company and the industry so as to help them make sense of their work environment, and to motivate them to merge their personal ambitions with those of the organization. Ensuring that employees are valued in the construction of this communication highway is important. It is not uncommon to hear employees lament that their views are often not sought or that they are always the last group of people to learn about their own company’s corporate decisions. Complaining that they are never kept in the communication loop, employees frequently find themselves getting news of the company’s plans from mass media or from external parties instead of receiving it directly from their bosses. As a result, many are made

to feel ignored and cannot be trusted enough for management to want to be open and transparent with them especially if corporate decisions have direct impact on the work they do. Such negative perceptions and assessment of management by employees can harm workplace morale and widen the emotional gaps between leaders and their subordinates.

Considering that exchange and sharing of information within an organization flows in four directions – downwards (leaders to lower-level staff), upwards (lower-level staff to leaders), diagonal (cross-functional) and horizontal (peer to peer) which seamlessly also flows outward (to the rest of the world) – adopting two-way symmetrical communication in every direction is highly recommended. Such a communication model makes organization appear more transparent, leverages on ideas and feedback of employees and allows employees to be heard. It further encourages bonding among individuals and groups leading to greater collective alignment which is a key driver of employment engagement. Since relationships grow out of communication, the socialization process in communicating is vital to employees' motivation to achieve quality decision-making and problem-solving outcomes when carrying out their roles. For this reason, communication should be the most dominant activity in the organization. Having an efficient stakeholder engagement mechanism in place can certainly lessen misunderstanding and promote greater appreciation among employees central to creating shared identity that leads to the building of trust and resilience in the workplace.

On the individual level, it is crucial that leadership understands their role as communicators. While leaders may be appointed to chart the company's growth and increase bottom line, they are nevertheless first, communicators. Their primary role, regardless of the expertise they bring to the boardroom, is to win hearts and minds of everyone who takes an interest in the organization. In our technological progressive society, this means literally anyone armed with a mobile phone with access to the internet. Clearly, such a prodigious job has to start at the workplace. The support and trust from employees is vital to influencing external perceptions and business confidence in the organization. Leaders are expected to stand up to internal and public scrutiny as they may even occasionally find themselves in the full glare of the media to address multiple stakeholders whose collective opinion and perceptions can elevate or destroy their careers along with the image of the organization. On this account, it is almost impossible for leaders today to succeed in their

management roles without the complete understanding of relationship building and media use. Keeping in mind that leaders' reputation is tantamount to corporate reputation since they represent the organization, it is necessary for corporate leaders today to demonstrate communication competency media management and social media presence.

As such, earning employees' trust with effective communication that positively impact internal engagement is imperative for leaders. It is a must-have capability that all leaders should be equipped with before accepting the responsibility. This ability, however, goes beyond being able to write and speak fluently. As communication resides in context, leaders also need to have the implicit cultural knowledge to go about interpreting, responding, behaving and carrying out the two-way communication between themselves and employees. For the reason that leadership shapes corporate culture, and that culture and communication reciprocally influence each other, effective communication is key. The two-way flow in active engagement makes it possible for leaders to build cultures that enable employees to calibrate their personal beliefs with organization's values, ultimately empowering them to achieve the organization's mission and business goals.

Today's workforce is highly diverse and multi-ethnic, making internal communication incredibly important and also more challenging than ever before. While many leaders have no lack of awareness that strong leadership holds the key to shaping corporate culture, few are cognizant of the role of communication. Truth is, internal communication in our interconnected world looks more like intercultural communication. Leaders' adeptness in recognizing the differences and similarities among cultural groups is necessary to improve communication capable of helping to cultivate a favorable corporate culture invaluable to building internal trust and resilience among employees.

For decades, scholars and managers across different business fields have suggested a long list of reputation drivers. They include corporate capabilities, strategic management, innovation, talent management, and ethical organizational behaviors. Strategic communication efforts to manage the media and increase market presence in order to improve external stakeholders' perceptions of the organization have also been a prerequisite for reputation. Quality stakeholder relationships, after all, have long been established and documented to contribute to a favorable

corporate reputation. That said, it is also as clear as day that our digital age has redefined the role of the media, and media use has dramatically changed human interaction and behaviors. Such a social phenomenon inevitably alters the building of relationships between organization and its stakeholders by desegregating internal from external audiences. As a result, it brings into question as to whether the same strategic communication strategies that are employed to drive reputation from outside in should also be the same as those that drive it from inside out.

Technology can be considered the best or the worst gift to humanity but it is here to stay and our highly wired universe will only continue to transform the way humans interact. The speed at which technology lets people superficially connect and form perceptions is astounding in view of how perceptions influence attitudes and behaviors. Collective perceptions, facilitated by media consumption patterns, inevitably impact corporate reputation. Building strong stakeholder relationships with effective two-way symmetrical communication to first seek mutual understanding and trust is one of the few efforts that can bolster and protect a company's highly prized intangible asset – reputation. In the face of continuous attack and pressure to be responsive and to meet the needs of polarized stakeholders in a globalized economy, employees are unarguably an organization's most powerful source of advocacy and defense. They are the most accurate barometer of authentic leadership and also the first group of audience whose hearts and minds need to be won over and persuaded of promises of renewed purpose or corporate values. It is only when company's internal audiences are convinced that the company is worth fighting for can the trust and resilience built from within withstand the blows to its reputation in today's crisis business environment.

*Human Resource
And
Marketing Management*



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

Reflections of a Chief Strategy Officer in a Diversified Conglomerate

NIRMALYA KUMAR

After a lifetime as an academic, I was hired as Chief Strategy Officer (“CSO”) at Tata, a colossal \$100 billion group with more than a hundred companies and 650,000 employees worldwide. At first sight, the job of being strategy head for the Tata Group may seem rather different from my academic role, with implementation responsibility and ability being the key difference. But, it did not require much of an adjustment for two reasons.

First, I was not the typical academic. For twenty years, as an external consultant, I had been working with top executives and helping them think through their strategy. This had taken me to around 60 countries working for over 50 Fortune 500 companies as well as many other smaller firms. The only difference was that now all my thought partnership was going to be within one group.

Second, my job was not to be responsible for execution. In fact, that is why Cyrus Mistry, the Chairman, had asked the headhunter to explicitly consider only academics rather than ex-consultants or former corporate executives. An academic, he believed was less likely to be tempted to interfere with the strategy or the running of the independent Tata companies. The latter was the responsibility of the CEOs and the boards of the individual companies. Good corporate governance required us at the Group Centre to ensure that minority rights were not being trampled in any oversight that we had as promoters.

In our strategy discussions, we thought hard about what the role of group centre should be when our stakes in the operating companies was often less than 50%. We finally concluded that in any diversified conglomerate such as Tata, the group centre can add value in essentially three ways:

1. *Optimizing the portfolio* by deciding which companies to fund, which to exit, and which new areas to enter. This was the most important aspect of my role. Supporting Cyrus, and through him the Tata Sons board, on the portfolio decisions to be made over the coming decade was where the greatest value creation potential lay.
2. *Orchestrating greater synergies* between the companies provided the initiatives would be a win-win for all companies since the minority shareholders for the different companies were not identical. While one could spend considerable energies on this at the group centre, the relative upside was limited compared to the effort required. Rather than convincing all companies of the need to participate, the approach we adopted was to go with a coalition of the willing. With success, other companies would join the initiative over time.
3. *Nurturing the companies* was essential as it was how value was added to existing companies on a regular basis. This is what allowed group companies to use the Tata brand as well as access various stakeholders and enter new countries using group resources. Beyond this, because they were part of the Tata group, a company could access assistance from the group centre experts, myself included. Here I adopted a policy of providing advice to group companies only under one of three scenarios: I was on the board of the company as the Tata Sons representative, the CEO requested me to come and help, or if Cyrus asked me to go and see what is happening with the individual company.

Of the three value creation opportunities above, the first was where most of the energies went. To make portfolio choices required developing a strategy for the Tata Group and Tata Sons in concert with the Board of Tata Sons. Cyrus and I spent countless hours developing this strategy, taking feedback from the Board, and then revising it. We had adopted a ten-year horizon with explicit goals for 2025 on what the group should look like. Once the Board of Tata Sons bought into that, then we could examine different paths that would get us there and allow us to pursue a long-term stakeholder value creation approach. In summary, I saw the CSO role at Tata as “thinking” rather than “doing”, or more accurately that “thinking” is “doing” in such a position.

In my role, I did get to observe many of the group CEOs closely and their CSOs. The Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) is a curious position. Some companies have them, while in other companies, such a position does not exist. In the latter, when you enquire why there is no chief strategy officer in the organization, the CEO will dismiss the idea that such a position would add any value. As one CEO observed to me, if there is a Chief Strategy Officer, then what do I do? As a result, many CEOs are ambivalent, and some even downright hostile, to having a CSO.

Can CEOs Develop Strategy?

Most CEOs see, and should see, themselves as having the responsibility for formulating the organization's strategy. In fact, it is central to the role definition. Some CEOs feel that having a strategy head would compromise their position in the eyes of the stakeholders. If a strategy was presented by the Chief Strategy Officer, then observers, especially the board of directors, may question whose strategy is this - the CEO or the CSO?

Many CEOs can think strategically about their industry, critically understand their firm's capabilities, as well as keep on top of the changes unfolding in important related domains such as competitors, technology, environment, and public policy that will impact the firm's future fortunes. Some of these CEOs are also disciplined enough to devote the needed time to developing and updating strategy in between fighting the inevitable daily fires that occur in any organization which demand immediate attention. But after applying these two filters, probably only a minority of CEOs have both the ability and motivation to continuously engage in the time consuming process of formulating strategy and keeping it updated.

On the other hand, by and large, CEOs are great executors. They have consistently delivered results previously since this is how they rose into their current position. But, how much experience they have had in formulating strategy depends on their experience prior to becoming CEO. Did they have to formulate strategy or just execute a given strategy?

Recognizing their limitations, especially with respect to the time available, many CEOs outsource strategy to the thriving profession of strategy consultants. However, can one really outsource making strategy? While accepting that in some circumstances there may not be another good

option, there are at least two reasons why outsourcing strategy making to consultants is a bad idea.

First, strategy is the essential conversation among the top management team (TMT). It is how the TMT develops a shared view of what are the firms' strengths and weaknesses, competitor strategies, where the opportunities and threats exist, and how the social, political, and technological environment is evolving. As reasonable people can, and often do, disagree, strategy making is a messy process. But it is through these intense and continuous conversations that a common understanding emerges within the TMT. The outcome of this should be a strategy that will deploy the organizations resources towards a mutually agreed goal (vision) in a pre-defined pattern.

Second, implementing strategy requires that the TMT "own" the strategy and are the skills for it. To effectively explain, and convince the organization to execute, the strategy, the TMT must believe that it is their strategy or they will not be effective promoters of it. The responsibility for selling the strategy to the entire organization so that each employee understands their role cannot be abdicated.

Being an Effective CSO

Being a CSO is testing for a number of reasons, but primarily because it is hard to demonstrate differential competence vis-à-vis other members of the TMT, especially the CEO. This is in contrast to those who head specialized functions such as finance (CFO), technology (CTO), information (CIO), operations (COO), or even marketing (CMO). Therefore, to be effective, the CSO must bring some unique experiences, skills, opinions, and/or ability to the table. And hopefully, these are acknowledged by the CEO and the other members of the TMT.

As I have often observed the CEO is a lonely position. An effective CSO will have built a reservoir of trust with the CEO. To have this trust, the CSO must be honest broker of information and not be seen as seeking the CEO's job. The CEO must never feel under threat from the CSO.

A major role of the CSO is to be a sparring partner to the CEO with respect to formulating strategy. By contesting the CEO's thinking, the probability of developing a sound organizational strategy increases. My

own observation is that being an effective CSO is challenging for two reasons:

- How do you add value to the organization and the CEO without taking away the limelight from the CEO?
- How to be adequately deferential to the CEO, yet to push the CEO's thinking on strategy?

Failing the above, the CSO ends up simply being an expensive resource making power point slides for the CEO. In which case, it is better to replace the CSO with an Executive Assistant.

*Human Resource
And
Finance*



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

Value Creating Drivers for Effective Human Capital Management

ANG SER KENG

It is common for modern-day corporate leaders and academic writers to make claim that human resources is one of the most important assets in their organization (Guest, 2001). If that were the case, effective management of human capital would be a critical factor in the success of any organization. As an important organizational resource, human capital is expected to generate significant economic benefits from its deployment, development and retention (Flamholtz, 1999). There is widespread evidence that the effective use of human capital can also create durable competitive advantage for an organization (Barney, 1991; Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Lado & Wilson, 1994). Given its importance, the purpose of this article is to highlight the key drivers of value for effective human capital management.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) governing the preparations and reporting of financial information of the firm, prescribes that rental value of the critical human resources (e.g. wages and perquisites arising from the hiring of such resources) are recorded as expenses in income statement. These are matched against the revenue generated as a result of their use. However, GAAP prohibits the inclusion of the sum of future benefits that accrues from the “ownership” of such resources to be captured as assets of the firm. There are two reasons why this is so. First, there is a fair amount of subjectivity with respect to the valuation of human capital. In reality, what objective yardstick can we adopt to measure human capital? In addition, unlike physical assets, human capital cannot be owned by a corporation (Barber & Strack, 2005). In the labor market, there is intense competition for the best talent. Thus, talents can render their services to the highest bidder for their skillsets and abilities.

Such issues are also extended to intangible assets such as brands. Similarly, under GAAP, self-developed brands cannot be booked as assets in the balance sheet. The value of brands can only appear on balance sheets if they are acquired in arms-length market transactions. As a result of this, balance sheets tend to understate the true value of many assets. In practice,

instead of recognizing the value of human capital and other intangible assets in balance sheet as separate items, they are usually bundled under a basket term titled “Goodwill”. This represents a catch-all item when the overall value of the firm exceeds that of the net book value of assets. As a result of the lack of formal recognition of value of such specific assets, there is a tendency that this important asset is neglected when management and investors make corporate and investment decisions, respectively (Likert, 1979).

This neglect can have significant consequences on firm value, as there is evidence of strong positive correlations between investments in human capital development and effectiveness of human resources, in terms of the development of human capital and its impact on financial performance. This in turn translates to better financial and non-financial performance (Marimuthu., Arokiasamy, Ismail., & Development, 2009).

We can easily value human capital when there is a ready market to transact those assets, such as self-developed brands or even human talent (e.g. professional athletes like professional footballers and soccer players) that can be transacted via a market sale. In the area of entrepreneurial finance, this concept is similar to the idea of “sweat equity” which involves external investors (angel investors, venture capital firms etc.) offering to buy part of a new venture at a certain valuation. This is seen as crediting the founders for their effort in creating a promising business venture. For example, a founder of the firm invests \$100,000 of his own capital into the venture. A year later, a VC investor agrees to invest in the new venture valuing the firm at \$800,000. The value we can attribute to sweat capital (effort) in this case is \$700,000 which arise because there is buyer who is willing to pay \$800,000 for the venture. In the context of human capital, the additional value a buyer is willing to pay for superior human resources and management is the value of human capital.

Another technique in valuation relates to the fundamental economic benefit of asset ownership. In finance, two criteria are used when determining whether an object counts as an asset. An asset must not only have value but must also generate return. It is the return generation capacity of an asset that gives the asset its market value. Technically, the market value of an asset is determined by the present value of future cash flows generated by that asset. Two things that valuation methodology handles well that accounting standards do not, are subjectivity and uncertainty. In

deploying valuation technique, it is inevitable that one has to engage in the estimation of several parameters, including future cash flows, growth rates and hurdle rates, both of which are subjective and uncertain. In general, valuation increases with higher cash flows or lower hurdle rates. The latter reflects exposure to risk.

A practical way to ascertain the value of human capital is to value the entire firm with base-line parameters. From literature, there is strong support for several metrics for human resources that are strongly correlated to firm performance and therefore can serve as good drivers of valuation. These include billing potential, employee turnover or retention, revenue per employee and employee absenteeism. These parameters can vary according to the firm's human capital strategy. Thus the deployment of effective human resource strategy, can potentially increase the billing potential of the employees, increase employee productivity (higher revenue per employee) or reduce the rate of absenteeism (Fulmer & Ployhart, 2013). Simply, the differences between the base line valuation (without enhanced human capital management) and the valuation with effective human capital management, would be the estimated value of human capital. The key issue here is the level of base line performance that we use. In this regard, one pragmatic, yet conservative approach to establishing the firm's base line performance for human capital management is the industry average performance. Based on this method, a firm would only achieve a positive value for human capital if it has better human capital performance than their industry peers. Under this method, firms that perform poorly relative to industry average would not have any value of human capital assets.

Furthermore, when investing in extensive Learning and Development (L&D) programs or any other highly significant human capital programs, firms can also adopt similar techniques used in capital budgeting, such as NPV and IRR decision rules, to estimate if the investment in L&D will generate positive outcomes for providers of capital. If this is done consistently, then the benefits of value creation will be reflected in higher valuation of the firm. This would then address the issue of neglect arising from the non-recognition of this asset.

With a clear understanding of the drivers of valuation, human resource professionals will be in a better position to craft human capital strategies that deliver superior financial and non-financial performance, creating value and enhancing the firm's valuation. However, the issue of

valuation of human capital depends on the relevance of these techniques on the firms or industries in question. Problems arising from the valuation of human capital are more pronounced in businesses that rely heavily on human capital, such as consulting, investment banking and software firms. Conversely, they are less relevant to firms in highly capital-intensive industries such as semi-conductor manufacturing.

RELECTIONS
On the
MHCL Learning Journey



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

The Multiple Changing Lens of my MHCL Journey

ANGELINA CHUA

Transformations and digitalisation are rapidly disrupting the industry in today's fast-changing business landscape. Human resource professionals play an essential role in the business. Human resource professionals are the key drivers in any organisation's transformation, partnering stakeholders closely to achieve its transformation goals.

In the current dynamic labour market, where there are changing demands on skills and knowledge, the war for talents has never been so intense. The workforce dynamics have also shifted with the younger generation workforce entering the workforce. For the first time, we have five generations working together, and the characteristics and expectations of each generation are unique. The talent landscape has evolved dynamically, and with many organisations going into digital transformation, there are strong demands for talents with the right skills and knowledge to meet this changing need. Besides this challenge, organisations from the same industry are also competing for talents within the same space. The strong need to attract talents in the competitive labour market will continue to intensify.

A New Beginning

*"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."
– Martin Luther King, Jr.*

In 2018, a study trip to the United States sparked my interests to pursue a higher degree in human resource. As leaders, to be able to guide and coach our teams effectively, we need to continually update ourselves with the latest and future human resource trends and practices. The Master of Human Capital Leadership presented an opportunity for me to learn and acquire new knowledge. I am grateful to Singapore Management University for awarding the Leadership Scholarship to me, and that was the beginning of a wonderful learning journey in January 2019.

The Balancing Act

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

– Winston Churchill

Investing in a master's degree is not an easy decision, and it was not just the financials one would consider, having to juggle amongst multiple priorities at home, work and studies, was a tantamount challenge. The beauty of this program is that it offered both classes and e-learning, which allowed us to study at our own pace, preferred timing and an opportunity to learn by self-directed learning. The benefit of attending the classes was that the cohort was able to interact face to face and get to know one another better. Many of our classmates have busy schedules and had to cope with family commitments, but they gave their best in class, contributing and sharing generously to the learning of one another. Having a strong support network is of paramount importance. Family, friends, bosses, colleagues, the faculty, program office, course mates – they have all been a great source of inspiration and strength to me, and I am very appreciative and thankful for this.

The Journey

"The more I live, the more I learn. The more I learn, the more I realise, the less I know."

– Michel Legrand

The initial learning can be challenging. For some of us, it had been a while since we went back to school. The professors and program office provided much guidance to help us get started and bought us to speed. Having strong support from classmates was one crucial factor which guided us through to graduation.

We started the program with modules in Human Capital Analytics & Research for Management Insights and Finance. The Human Capital Analytics & Research for Management Insights module is a very relevant subject since HR analytics has been one of the trending subjects at many workplaces. Acquiring knowledge on how to conduct human capital analytics much-added value as we tackled some of the human capital challenges at work. An understanding of Finance is important for HR

professionals. The Finance module was delivered in a blended form, where we attended both physical class and online learning. This was an exciting way of learning Finance through a combination of two learning formats.

For the second term, we had Human Capital & Global Business Strategy and Strategic Management. Human Capital & Global Business Strategy was an interesting module where our professor brought in guests speakers and gave the class opportunities to learn from industry experts. The guest speakers were engaging and enriched our perspectives. The Strategic Management module allowed us to gain great insights on business strategy, and we were given cases to analyse using the frameworks which were taught. This module has equipped us with knowledge on the business strategy, which is very pragmatic and beneficial.

As we moved to term three, the Leading, Managing and Developing People module triggered many interesting discussions in class. We were given a group project on leadership case where the project teams re-enacted some interesting encounters they had before in the project presentation. In this term, we also took the Marketing management module, where we learnt about marketing and completed an interesting project where we analysed 3 chosen brands to conduct analysis. We used several key concepts learned such as Customer Segmentation, Marketing Positioning by Value Curve Analysis, McCarthy's (1964) four Ps: Price, Product, Promotion and Place. Negotiations in an HR Context and Accounting were next in Term 4. The class on negotiations revealed many different styles which our classmates have and the most interesting part for me was the part of salary negotiation. As human resource professionals, we might understand this more from an HR perspective when we negotiate with prospective candidates. It is interesting to see how this can be negotiated using structured negotiation tactics. The Accounting module was a little more challenging for those who were taking this for the first time but still manageable and provided the class with a solid understanding of financial statements.

There is an overseas segment in this master program, and this was the highlight of the course. The cohort was excited about the trip, planning the travel itinerary with classmates and travel overseas together was indeed a memorable experience. The cohort had the opportunity to visit Cornell University, where we learnt about Organizational Change and Human Capital Analytics. These are interesting topics which are highly relevant and practical in today's context. The learning experience at Cornell

University was great as we moved away from our usual learning environment to experience something different overseas. The most unforgettable part was the daily subway rides to the Tata Innovation Center at Cornell University in New York City. We also had the opportunity to visit Johnson and Johnson where they shared about their analytics work. Coupled with the opportunity to travel and sight-see with my wonderful classmates, many fun moments were captured during the trip, and all the learnings gained from the trip were truly memorable.

After the overseas segment, we began Term 5 with the Strategic Rewards Management module and Human Resource Learning and Development module. We had many learnings from the Strategic rewards management module and what we human resource professionals thought may not be the best solutions. It depends as our professor puts it. The Human Resource Learning and Development module ended on a high note as we completed a group project using the different concepts learnt. Our group project involved designing the learning plan and activities to facilitate learning.

We started Term 6 in January 2020 with the Managing Corporate Reputation and Communication module and the Evidence-based Approach to Talent Management module. The Evidence-based Approach to Talent Management module had a simulation game, and we were required to solve a challenge through the simulation game. The game was highly engaging as the teams competed for the best results. Due to the onset of COVID-19, then, there was no better time to take the module on Managing Corporate Reputation and Communication. The class had exciting discussions on managing public relations in a crisis. It was a different learning experience with COVID and a unique one for the cohort. Term 6 was our final term, and we were very much looking forward to completing the term as graduation was so close.

The cohort had to complete an individual capstone project before graduation, and the capstone project required us to make use of all that we have learnt and applied it to a human capital challenge. This mostly captured the essence of the entire program.

The fifteen-month journey has been fulfilling, and I have enjoyed every moment of it.

Insights

"Tell me, and I forget, teach me, and I may remember, involve me, and I learn."

– Benjamin Franklin

There had been many great insights gained from the Master in Human Capital Leadership program. For a gist of the learnings, here, I have extracted two sections from my written assignments on my favourite research area, employer branding, for anyone who might be interested in exploring this further.

An evidence-based approach to Talent Management

In the research paper by Lievens, F., & Slaughter, J. (2016), employer branding or image can be examined from both external branding and internal branding. Symbolic attributes refer to inferred traits or self-expressive attributes, and it is non-product related (Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S. (2003)) while necessary attributes refer to functional attributes that are product-related. Research has found empirical support for instrumental jobs/organisational characteristics to be essential as a determinant to candidates' initial attraction to companies. Additionally, Symbolic attributes form a necessary part of the appeal too. The research recommends that employers should conduct an image audit and focus on creating symbolic meaning as an employer in the marketplace. In another study by Myrden, S. and Kelloway, K. (2015), the findings are that both functional and symbolic attributes of the brand image were related to job seekers' attraction to the firm. This is consistent with the research by Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S. (2003).

Talent Attraction & Employer Branding

For years, there had been considerable interests in understanding how effective marketing strategies influenced consumers' behaviours and purchase of their products (Knox, and Freeman, (2006)). Ambler and Barrow (1996) introduced the possible applications of brand management techniques to human resource management by branding the firm to both employees internally and potential candidates externally. A qualitative study using the research model by Wilden, Gudergan, & Lings (2010) can be conducted to understand the strategic use of employer branding in

attracting talents to join the organisation. Several recommendations were made on how to improve the employer branding to attract more talents to join the organisation as well as ideas on how to attract younger generation workers to the organisation. My research question is to understand the relationship between an organisation's corporate brand, its employer brand and the subsequent impact on job seekers' intention to apply or to consider a career with the organisation.

Key Takeaways

I have benefited much from this program, and the following pretty much summarises my learning journey at Singapore Management University.

From our favourite rewards professor, when evaluating and deciding strategic rewards structure and management, it depends, and it depends on how rewards structures can attract, motivate and retain talents.

There is an evidence-based approach to talent management, and there are robust research data which we could draw upon to make sound human resource decisions.

The strong support which our classmates extended to one another was a great source of encouragement and motivation. The friendships that have been forged and the friends we made will continue in our life journey.

Do what we think will add value to our lives, do not be afraid of the challenges and always believe that we can do it even when it seems impossible.

Pursue our dreams relentlessly.

"Life is full of beauty. Notice it. Notice the bumble bee, the small child, and the smiling faces. Smell the rain, and feel the wind. Live your life to the fullest potential, and fight for your dreams."

– Ashley Smith

References

- Wilhelmy, A., Kleinmann, M., Melchers, K., & Lievens, F. (2019). What Do Consistency and Personableness in the Interview Signal to Applicants? Investigating Indirect Effects on Organisational Attractiveness Through Symbolic Organisational Attributes. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 34(5), 671–684. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-018-9600-7>
- Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S. (2003). THE RELATION OF INSTRUMENTAL and SYMBOLIC ATTRIBUTES TO A COMPANY'S ATTRACTIVENESS AS AN EMPLOYER. *Personnel Psychology*, 56(1), 75–102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2003.tb00144.x>
- Graham, B. and Cascio, W. (2018), "The employer-branding journey: Its relationship with cross-cultural branding, brand reputation, and brand repair", *Management Research*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 363-379. <https://doi-org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1108/MRJIAM-09-2017-0779>
- Drury, P. (2016), "Employer branding: Your not-so-secret weapon in the competition for young workers", *Human Resource Management International Digest*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 29-31. <https://doi-org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1108/HRMID-02-2016-0015>
- Backhaus, K. and Tikoo, S. (2004), "Conceptualising and researching employer branding", *Career Development International*, Vol. 9 No. 5, pp. 501-517. <https://doi-org.libproxy.smu.edu.sg/10.1108/13620430410550754>

Be More analytical: Five (5) points to be more analytical in an Evidence-based Solution

JULIANA BINTE JOHARI

“Everything will work out exactly how and when it is supposed to, regardless of how and when you may want it to. Let your faith in the journey be stronger than your doubts and fears. Be patient with yourself and your growth, knowing that good things always take time. Give yourself time and space to try things and explore different paths. You will get there one day, so don’t forget to enjoy the journey too.” – Nikki Banas

My MHCL story

If you were to ask me “did the MHCL journey turn out to be as I expected?”, I would reply that it was beyond my expectations. In Oct 2018, I was looking for answers to “what’s next in life?” and through some research, MHCL was the answer. I remembered an opening speech by the Academy Director of MHCL that getting a placement into the programme was not the difficult part but getting through it requires determination. It was true! There were many nights spent on projects, assignments, reading articles classes and meetings. I am sure that every full-time working student can relate , to this experience: it took a lot of energy and very good support system from family, colleagues and classmates to push us through those late-nights. It was an honoured to be in a group of like-minded people in the programme who helped each other. My experiences created a meaningful learning journey. This kept my energy at bay till end of the work week in the last 15 months.

Importance of Evidence-Based HR

The one valuable experience gained from this programme was the completion of the Capstone project. The projects were about identifying and solving Human Capital challenges from business perspective. This was one of the key unique value propositions offered by MHCL. As a HR professional, we need to be more analytical in order for HR to be recognized as to play a strategic role in the organization. Based on the research report by CIPD, it was shared that by using people’s insights, it

can provide a powerful way for HR professionals to drive productivity and performance. (Houghton & Miller, 2015) With HR analytics, it allows HR to understand more deeply how people in the organization are helping to drive performance to achieve the business goals. The HR analytics is more pertinent when HR has to adopt the same level of agility as to the business. This means that the HR team functions like the business which focuses on delivering value to the overall business goals such as delivering value to their customers and deprioritize work that does not contribute to the goals. Hence, this transforms teams to work autonomously cross-functional teams and through network rather than a top down bureaucracy. Hence, HR needs to reinvent the way we support the business by thinking like a business partner to the organization. (Denning, 2018)

Five Points to be More Analytical in an Evidence-Based Solution

For me, it was an intriguing journey to study the digital learning environment and understanding the trends, and what it takes to ensure continuous intentions. The digital learning is one of the learning strategies that is highly adopted in most organization especially, in today's business climate where majority of the workforce are working remotely. When the organization undergoes digital transformation, it also changes the way we work and learn. As a Learning and Development practitioner, it was very important to me to find ways to understand if digital learning is well adopted in the organization. This knowledge enabled me to address barriers to learning so that an evidence-based recommendation can be implemented. Through my Capstone project, I discovered five (5) points that has helped me to be more analytical in an evidence-based solution.



1. **Identify a substantial HC challenges from the business perspective.** This process requires many iterations and discussions with management to ensure that the problem statements are able to solve the business challenge and achieve the expected outcomes i.e. hypothesis established. It is also critical as you can identify the suitable research methods to collect the information to test the hypothesis.



2. **Always check-in with the bosses on the progress.**

It is important to have continuous communication with management and update on the project status so that they are able to help keep your project relevant.



3. **Read a lot.** It is important to do a lot of research and read lots of prior research articles on similar studies. I have a greater appreciation for other researchers and their findings as it provided available insights. It is beneficial to learn from their work before implementing any new policies or processes.



4. **Appreciate the usefulness of the different statistical data.**

Instead of just using basic data analysis, for example, the percentage of people who does digital learning, I challenge myself to use more meaningful analysis with deep insights such as using the Cronbach Alpha, Correlations and P-values to validate the relationship between variables. This will result to higher confidence in your studies.



5. **Consolidate your research.** This includes consolidating the data collected from the selected research method and derive insights. Personally, I felt the most fulfilling at this stage as you will start to see if the data supports or don't support the hypothesis and allows you to provide recommendation based on the insights.

Overall, it was about growth. As shared in the quote above, it was about continuous effort to give yourself time and space to try things and explore different paths. Take one day at a time and you will get there but importantly, remember to enjoy the journey.

All the best!

References

Houghton, E., & Miller, J. (2015). Evolution of HR Analytics : Perspectives from Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia. CIPD.

Denning, S. (2018, Mar 11). Can HR Become Agile? Retrieved from Forbes:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2018/03/11/can-hr-become-agile/#7ab5f0a94ae3>

Personal Reflections of my MHCL Journey in SMU

LEE WEI MIN

“Reflection, in the context of learning, is a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities which individuals engage to explore their experiences, in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations. It may take place in isolation or in association with others” (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985.)

The learning journey in the past 16 months in the Singapore Management University has been amazing. As I reflected upon the time there, I am greatly humbled not only by the amount of learning through the lectures, but also the offline sharing and intense discussions with the professors, distinguished guest speakers as well as fellow course mates. In this article, I seek to share some learnings and takeaways about the programme. These are uniquely mine and I hope by reading it, it triggers you to reflect your own learning experience and recreate wonderful memories of your own journey in the programme.

Role of Human Resources (“HR”) has dramatically changed

The role of HR has evolved tremendously. HR is no longer about managing administrative matters. It is more complex and it demands that HR practitioners adopt a more encompassing perspective and holistic approach towards the concept of “HR” and consequently play a bigger role in an organisation. In *Strategic Management, Managing Organisation Change* and *Human Capital and Business Strategy* modules, we acquired knowledge about the strategic considerations at the organisational level. We understood how having a clear vision, purpose and values, coupled with a sound action plan formulated against the backdrop of a good PESTEL⁵ analysis, will be the key differentiator for the organisation. The concept of Human Capital (“HC”) is not coined for the purpose to push the HR agenda, but the actualisation of how HC is now playing a critical role in making

⁵ PESTEL is an acronym that refers to Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors

these strategic decisions for the organisation. We, as HC practitioners, can and will contribute to the success of our organisation.

People is a Person, not a Number

The mantra in my organisation for HC goes: “Take care of the people, and they will take care of the mission for you”. We have heard many times that people are our greatest assets. Yet, they are most often neglected. In my view, there is no substitute for good people practices. We were staunchly reminded on the importance in *Evidence-based approach towards Talent Management, Learning and Talent Development, and Strategic Rewards Management* modules. We developed a critical understanding on talent management: Every aspect and process in recruitment, selection, training, development, assessment, retention and even exit must be meticulously planned for it to contribute to an organisation’s competitive advantage. However, there will not be a “sure-win” approach as we decide on policies and strategies to improve organisation performance and morale. Trade-offs will be needed as we balance short-term gains and long-term goals. This was evident in the business game that we played. Therefore, as we adapt our business strategies constantly to meet the demands of the changing environment, developing a growth mindset among employees is central to a successful implementation. To reinforce our business strategy and this growth culture, compensation strategy needs to be considered carefully. Personally, I was most intrigued by the learnings here which I believe best exemplified the challenges faced by a typical HC practitioner. Remarks such as (1) Everyone is different, people require different things at different stages of their life. There is thus, never a “holy grail” for compensation; (2) People take compensation with emotions even if we always explain with logic; and (3) Compensation demotivates when done wrong, but hardly motivates when done right, were all brilliant “Aha” moments for me.

It starts from ourselves – Leadership by Example

As a HC practitioner, we should never shy away from the challenges of managing people, even the difficult ones. This is also the very reason why I chose to focus on HC in my job. To achieve mastery in managing people, we must first understand our behaviour as an individual, team member or as a leader. The reflection activities conducted in *Leading, Managing and Developing People* module gave us great insights about

ourselves. The discussions during classes revealed the intricacies and complexities in human relationships, which demonstrated the challenges of a HC practitioner. Additionally, as a leader, we will encounter difficult situations where we need to make tough decisions that may be unfavourable to people. It is paramount that we are guided by moral principles and make these decisions without any fear or favour. We must equip ourselves with a repertoire of management skills to be ready to manage them. In good times, we nurture our people and ensure they develop.

As a leader, we must also be confident and willing to move out of our comfort zones. One action plan I set for myself after the module was to learn to embrace and manage diversity. There will be a natural inclination and bias to find commonalities. We will need to surround ourselves with people who are different, to avoid bias and group thinking, as well as watch out for our blind spots and provide new perspective in thinking. Creative tension is appreciated. This can only improve us and make the team and organisation stronger.

Make Evidence-Based Decisions

The anchoring theme for the MHCL programme has been to make evidence-based recommendations in our workplace. To reinforce this notion, we were introduced to business fundamentals modules such as *Financing* and *Accounting* which provided us the knowledge to deal with financial statements. In a world today where technology is indispensable, coupled our increased reliance on data, evidence-based practices will become compelling. *HR analytic* modules thus became so relevant to help us appreciate the importance of analytics (descriptive, predictive and prescriptive). Making sense of these data, using basic processing tools such as SPSS, will support us in making strategic decisions. As a leader / HC practitioner, we must embrace technology, leverage data and make evidence-based decisions.

Communications are key

To achieve effective communications, it is important to understand your target audience. This is where our marketing, negotiation and communication modules become valuable. We learned about achieving customer satisfaction through an integrated marketing mix in our marketing module. The negotiation module taught us the importance of bringing value

to target audience in any proposal. We learned interesting acronyms like BATNA, ZOPA and MESO that will shape my negotiations tactics in future. We also learned in these modules that while we should vary in the way we communicate to our audiences, speed and honest communication as well as consistent messaging are the essence to gold standard communications. Ultimately, we remember that the success of our communications is not achieved by how convincing we pitch our message, but rather founded on trustworthiness. Building rapport and maintaining the relationship as well as attaining good reputation will be intangible assets which serve as the ‘reservoir of goodwill’ to enhance our communications with our target audience.

“I disagree” but “it depends”

I have certainly grown much (*No, contrary to popular belief, I have not grown in size*) as an individual. The MHCL programme brought many controversial discussions and perspectives, widened my horizon and enhanced my critical thinking. Not all said is 100% applicable or correct in every circumstance. There were many occasions I disagreed with the viewpoints. Certainly, I disagree that a certain bluish soft drink is better than the red one. Years down the road, my course mates may probably remember me for my “*I disagree!*” moment in class. The differences in viewpoint is probably due to the different experiences everyone brings to the class. Thankfully, the class came to a consensus that the A-grade or model answer to any question is “*It depends*”. Indeed, as the answer is always it depends, the programme has taught me in work to apply the right concepts and solutions depending on the requirements.

My biggest takeaway - Friendship

Lastly, as I look back on the journey, I am most glad to have formed great friendship and camaraderie in the class. They are the ones who made these classes so fun and interesting. Despite them held on Friday nights, Saturdays and even during the COVID-19 situation, I truly looked forward to attending them. We generously shared information and tips about exams, helping each other along the way only with one objective in mind: We pass our modules, together. However, grades matter not. For sure, I won’t remember them. In fact, I will probably forget most of the contents taught. What I will not forget is the time spent in NY together, the birthday/lo-hei celebrations, the times when we worked together on project presentations

late into the nights, refusing to give up in achieving perfection. At the end of this journey, I am assured that help is only a text away if I ever need. I am *never alone*. MHCL is not just about the knowledge we obtained, more importantly, the *friendship and network* that we forge. This will last us forever in our life journey.

I have three young kids. I was crazy to even contemplate a part-time Masters Programme. I am proud to have completed it. Surely, you must either be crazy as me or you have your own good reasons to do so. Regardless, be very proud of your achievements. To my fellow MHCL course mates, I congratulate you on the completion of the course and thank you for the wonderful journey. Together, we did it!

References

Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (1985). Promoting Reflection in Learning: A Model. Reflection: Turning Reflection into Learning. London: Routledge.

Personal Reflections of my MHCL Journey in SMU

CARRIE TAN

A journey to an uncharted land. It can be daunting and excruciating at times, yet fulfilling when it is done and dusted. Postgraduate study is indeed, a journey of self-discovery, and self-improvement. Along this enlightening journey, I have learnt some valuable lessons as well as gained personal insights which I would like to share with you.

Prior enrolment

Before one decides if going to a graduate school is the right choice to make, it is important to understand what your goals and objectives truly are. In my case, I had questions to ask and answers I was long searching for. I eagerly wanted to enhance my knowledge in order to better contribute to my professional career and thus be in a good position to grow together with my organisation. As Group Head of HR, it is fundamental to make wise decisions and come up with good recommendations which are viable for the business. A successful HR practitioner needs to keep abreast with not only the best practices but also be exposed to new trends and developments in the HR sphere. It is necessary to explore beyond the current ways of working and challenge the status quo in order to continuously add value to the business as well as the HR community. Peer learning was another of my key objectives. I look forward to tap on the myriad of experiences from fellow classmates and hope to build good networks as well as relationships, both on the personal and professional front.

Beginning of the journey

I can still vividly recall the butterflies in my stomach when I sat for the programme's time-based enrolment test and face-to-face interview. Despite being a seasoned interviewer, the mixture of apprehension and excitement is still present in me. I was fortunate enough to be awarded a scholarship from SMU and definitely was thrilled to receive the acceptance notice into the course of my choice - Master of Human Capital Leadership (MHCL).

The memories of matriculation day where you can get to meet the rest of your classmates and postgraduate cohort for the first time will always be lasting. These are people who will be with you for the journey. Queuing to collect my student pass, receiving welcome pack prepared for new students, being addressed by the Dean and Faculty, sheepishly looking around for “one of us” wearing lanyard of the same colour symbolising a particular master’s course, striking conversations among new found friends and going on a guided tour on SMU campus were all refreshing to me. As much as I enjoyed my working life very much, I look forward to campus life with a fresh perspective and different mind-set as compared to when I graduated from university almost 10 years ago. My goal is no longer just about chasing grades but rather gaining the experience that counts.

There were countless icebreakers and numerous self-introductions which went by swiftly. As much as it can get a little nerve-wrecking at the beginning for those who are more introverted, it certainly helped people to get to know one another and livened the atmosphere quickly. I particularly enjoyed the culinary team building event where we were randomly assigned into groups to whip up a Pan Asian menu. As I do not usually step into the kitchen, it was almost like a real-life version of ‘Master Chef’. I had as much difficulty in remembering the names of the ingredients as well as the names of my new classmates. Nonetheless, it was a night of great fun that was highly memorable.

During the journey

It took a while for me to get used to putting up my name tent at the front of my desk for Professor (Prof) to remember my name and importantly, for Teaching Assistant (TA) to record my attendance. I struggled with clocking enough class participation points as I wanted to be more relaxed in class with my main objective of learning from Prof and classmates through active listening and small group exchanges or discussions. I reckoned that I wanted to take a back seat in class in contrast to my usual self at the workplace where I had to be more vocal and expressive in order to fulfil my leadership roles. Nonetheless, after I received a few call outs from Prof as well as my first less than desirable grade for class participation, I start to put in more conscious effort in sharing my experience and opinions more openly in class. As days goes on, I recognised that the purpose of ‘class participation’ is to facilitate peer learning, in both directions.

Time in a week suddenly became perceptually shorter, with weekends almost gone in a flash. Every semester was packed with at least 2 to 3 modules, with classes typically held on Friday evenings till late night and continuously half to full days on Saturdays. Sundays and the rest of weekday nights were largely reserved for Insendi, which is SMU's online e-learning platform as well as for the completion of assignments. It dawned upon me that I will have very little personal or leisure time for the next 15 months.

I recalled I had to re-accommodate or in some cases, opt out of business trips where travelling had to take place over the weekends. On the other hand, I had missed classes due to business travelling which cannot be foregone. I have tried writing assignments on the plane in order to fully utilise pockets of free time and to cope with competing priorities and deadlines. I was trying my best to balance between study and work.

Despite the extremely fast pace, I was genuinely impressed and satisfied with the holistic curriculum and structure of the MHCL course. First and foremost, I appreciate the blended learning where students are offered both face-to-face class lectures which facilitates intelligent conversations and exchanges as well as e-learning which supported learning at a suitable time and/or venue since most of us are working full time. Second, I valued the fact that half of the modules taken over the span of 15 months were non HR related although it was a specialised master in human capital leadership. Some of these modules included finance, accounting, strategy, marketing, negotiations as well as corporate reputation and communication. It is a practical first step for HR professionals to get close to the business by gaining knowledge to better understand cross functions. Third, I enjoyed the variety of learning methods. I was not limited to lecture styles as there were plenty of group projects with different missions and objectives. I not only had to conduct literature review, research and observations, but was also exposed to interviews and interactions with real-life business leaders. There were business games, counter point arguments as well as presentations in various forms. It was truly insightful and eye-opening to pick up new content and creative delivery mode. As a result, I have since adopted the use of Prezi over PowerPoint for some of my business presentation which require a higher level of storytelling.

Another highlight of my MHCL journey was the study trip to United States where I get to immerse in the Ivy League Cornell University, completing the modules on organisational change management and human capital analytics. The travel experience with my classmates which began with an 18-hour long flight from Singapore to New York was definitely memorable. From commuting to school together via the unfamiliar New York subway, rushing projects and assignments in a foreign land, to squeezing pockets of time to explore the city despite our tight class schedule will always be a fond memory. If you are in New York, watching games at Yankee Stadium, dining at Red Lobster as well as shopping at Macy's and Outlets are a must do!

End of the journey

As the initial excitement wore off and with energy drained from long periods of studying at night right after work and weekends burnt, serious fatigue started to kick in towards the tail end of the journey. Stress level was escalating with the deadline for completion of the Capstone project drawing near. To make things worse, it coincided with the COVID-19 eruption which turned the world topsy-turvy. Businesses, big or small, were all impacted by the pandemic which resulted in many changes in everyday lives. Company fortunes were on the line as organisation leaders scrambled to navigate the business and sustain the livelihoods of many. As a HR professional, managing employee relations and taking care of their well-being as well as facilitating organisation change in responding to business needs have always been key responsibilities that are pivotal. As such, this period also stood out as one of the busiest and most challenging time for many HR folks. With exceptional attention required in all 3 aspects (work, school and family) concurrently made my plate much fuller than expected for the last mile. I realised that the general tiredness and pressure did make me less composed and more impatient, which was not my usual self. I was thankful to be conscious of this change and managed to persevere through this difficult period to complete my course successfully with great support from my family, friends, employer and colleagues.

My key learnings

1. You miss 100% of the shots you don't take

Truly, I am thankful that I took a leap of faith to embark on my postgraduate journey. The experience has been amazing and I have not regretted a single

day even when I was most stretched. This journey has not only made me gained newfound knowledge, but also new friends for life. I realised it is normal to have fears and apprehension especially in the face of new experiences or life-changing decisions, and it is important not to let these insecurities and uncertainties hinder your progress.

2. You are often stronger than you think

Graduate school is never easy with the challenging materials, fast pace and tight deadlines to meet. There were many opportunities that pushed me out of my comfort zone which I embraced and ultimately overcame my limitations. Many of us have courage deep down inside us that just needs to be mastered and the first step is to accept that it is fine to feel uncomfortable at the beginning and you will change, but for the better.

3. Be kind to yourself

It is important to give yourself some pockets of personal time and indulge in the little enjoyment of life when you need to. You deserve to give yourself some credit for the hard work put in and cut yourself some slack sometimes, in order to recharge and sustain a longer journey. Learn to relax at times and let go of the unnecessary guilt for small personal pleasures but not at the expense of procrastinating.

4. No one size fits all

There is no one specific style or model that can best fit an organisation. It is important to understand the context of the organisation with thorough considerations in order to find the best solution that works. From shaping the best organisation culture, building the most suitable organisation structure to devising the most sought-after compensation plans, there is no one right answer. It is crucial to know not only the methodology, but also importantly to apply to suit the organisation's needs and execute with a rigorous implementation plan.

My advice to you if you are considering postgraduate studies

1. Solid goals and clear objectives

Having strong goals and sound objectives will definitely help to keep you grounded and see you through the postgraduate journey which is nothing short of a challenge. If your goal is like mine, which is to improve knowledge to enhance professionalism, then whenever you are overwhelmed with pressure and feels like giving up, the thought of how much you have already learnt at some point of the journey will help to give you the purpose and motivation to forge on.

2. Strong resolve and persistency

You need to be mentally prepared that juggling between work, family and school is going to take a toll on your physical and psychological well-being if you do not have the ability to self-regulate and cope with stress. You need to have a fairly strong determination and perseverance to not give up easily on the postgraduate journey when confronted with difficulties.

3. Have an open mind

You need to be willing to adapt as demands of graduate school can be quite different from the undergraduate curriculum and even more so from the working life. Getting used to a new regime especially in the earlier phase and sharing of viewpoints and experiences openly in class to facilitate peer learning can only work if you are willing to embrace the change. As experienced working professionals, we often bring with us certain preconceived ideas or beliefs based on our personal experience. It is pivotal to keep an open mind in order to reflect upon the new theories or perspectives that were shared in class.

4. Shrewd time management skills

I cannot emphasize enough on the importance of time management particularly so, if you are considering a postgraduate journey while working full time. Allocating your time with a good plan and executing it with discipline will help you to manage the graduate school journey a lot better, with less need to burn midnight oil and therefore avoiding unnecessary stress.

5. Healthy family and work support

Last but not least, it is extremely important for full-time employees to seek understanding and support from family members as well as employer in

order to have a smooth-sailing postgraduate journey. It seems unavoidable to have a need for some accommodations in work schedule at some point in time within the 15 months of study. I am fortunate to have a very supportive boss and employer that provided me with study leave to prepare for exams and the flexibility with workarounds. Likewise, I have also sacrificed a lot of personal and family time due to the hectic demands. I am extremely thankful to my husband, Brian Poh, whom have supported me unconditionally throughout this amazing journey.

Ending words

Given a choice again, I will still pursue my postgraduate studies without a doubt. It has been a wonderful journey for me. At mentioned in the beginning, one of my main reasons for pursuing the MHCL course was to fulfil the desire in seeking the answer for a few questions which I had. At the end of the journey, I have not been given the fish but I have learnt to become a more skilful fisherman. As Mahatma Gandhi once famously said, “Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever”. Never be afraid to try something new, live life to the fullest, and keep learning.

List of Contributors

Ang Ser Keng has been actively teaching, undergraduate, executive and post graduate programs since 2003. He has also been training private bankers and their clients in Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia. In addition to teaching, Ser-Keng is also highly experienced in designing, structuring and directing executive and private banking programs for private banks and their clients. In 2018, he was awarded the Specialist Adult Educator (Curriculum Development) by SkillFuture Singapore. In 2019, he won an MBA Teaching Excellence Award.

Prior to his academic appointment at SMU, Ser-Keng was an investment banker. He spent nine years in London and Hong Kong, where he was involved in the origination and execution of a number of cross-border transactions in the Asia Pacific region at international banks, such as Deutsche Bank, ABN AMRO and Flemings, especially in mergers & acquisitions and capital markets. At Deutsche Bank, he was responsible for an acquisition in the US, amounting to US\$5.5 billion, for a Japanese MNC. As a Senior Vice President at ABN AMRO, he was also responsible for cross-selling a broader range of products, to corporate clients.

Ser-Keng also started a family business with his siblings and has been involved in its operations since 1988. He has also been actively involved in advising small businesses via his directorship at the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute since 2006.

Ser-Keng received his Ph.D. in Finance from UNSW Business School, MBA from London Business School (LBS), Master in Business Research from UWA, and Bachelor of Accountancy (BAcc) from National University of Singapore (NUS). He is qualified for both CA and ACIS.

Devasheesh P. Bhave is an Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Human Resources at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University. He received his Ph.D. from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. His research interests include work design, emotional labor and customer service, and the psychology of workplace technology. His research has been published in the Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Management, Personnel Psychology, and other outlets.

Chia Wai Jyy is currently the HR Director of an international fashion brand with over 700 stores and 7,000 direct/indirect employees globally. She serves the group of companies for over 10 years along with 9 years of prior experience in semiconductor, healthcare outsourcing, and retail. Evangelist of change and meaningful careers to drive organization growth, she believes people are the invaluable core competency that transcend others to differentiate businesses and create its competitive edge. Leverage on organization research, multivariate people analytics and interventions to reinforce organization performance; she transformed a traditional HR to strategic practices instrumental to sustain business results and growth. As part of the stakeholder management, she makes a difference by turning pessimism into optimism. She is a strong advocate of finding pleasure amidst pressure as a catalyst to revolutionize workplace stress and cultural dynamics. She graduated with a Bachelor of Human Resource Management and currently completing her Master of Human Capital Leadership from Singapore Management University. She is an avid swimmer, dog lover and contributes to fighting against animal cruelty and violence.

Email: chiawaijyy@gmail.com

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chiawaijyy1602>

CHONG TACK CHUN served as editor of *Human Capital Leadership Insights*, a book publishing project in partnership with Singapore Management University. Tack Chun volunteers as career development coach with Singapore Computer Society and Singapore Management University. He is the author of the book *Winning over Decision-makers* published by Singapore Institute of Management.

Email: tcchong.2019@mhcl.smu.edu.sg

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/in/tack-chun-chong/

ANGELINA CHUA is a Global Fellow of The Wharton School, a Certified Global Talent Management Leader, a Senior Professional with the Institute for Human Resource Professionals and a recipient of Leadership Scholarship from Singapore Management University where she graduated with a Master of Human Capital Leadership. She has two decades of dedicated Human Resources experience, managing human resources in the Asia Pacific region, US and Europe.

She is a firm believer of giving back to the community and currently serves as a mentor in The Mentoring Pinnacle, an alumni-to-alumni mentoring programme which is a track under SMU Alumni Mentoring.

Linkedin: linkedin.com/in/angelinachua

FERMIN DIEZ has more than 35 years of experience in human resources, which includes corporate, consulting and academic roles in 40 countries across all continents. He has been Regional Head of HR for PepsiCo and Freescale Semiconductor in Asia Pacific and in Latin America. He has also held senior leadership roles at Mercer and Willis Towers Watson. Currently, he is Deputy CEO at the National Council for Social Service, where he addresses strategic people issues in this sector.

Dr. Diez is an Adjunct Faculty at Singapore Management University (SMU), where he teaches courses in HR strategy, HR Analytics, and Remuneration at the Undergraduate, Graduate and Executive levels. He has written three books to date: “Human Capital and Global Business Strategy”, “Remuneration Handbook” and “Fundamentals of HR

Analytics”. His current area of research is the effectiveness of executive pay schemes.

Dr. Diez obtained his PhD in General Management from Singapore Management University, his MBA from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, and his BA in Psychology from the University of Michigan. He is a Certified Compensation Professional (CCP) and a Senior Professional of Human Resources (SPHR). He is also a Fellow of the Singapore Institute of Directors and a Master Professional from the Institute of HR Professionals (IHRP-MP).

Linkedin: <http://linkedin.com/in/diezfermin>

GERARD GEORGE is Dean and Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University.

Since the start of his term in 2015, LKCSB achieved global reputation as a leading Asian business school ranked in the Financial Times Global Top 50. LKCSB developed specializations in analytics, entrepreneurship, sustainability, real estate finance, retail and services, and maritime business. To support impactful research, initiatives include creation of the Retail Centre of Excellence, and strengthening of the Institute Innovation and Entrepreneurship, UOB Asian Enterprise Institute, Sim Kee Boon Institute for Financial Economics, and Institute for Service Excellence. As LKCSB turns 20, its research has grown, ranked 33rd in the world (up from 58 in 2014) and 1st in Singapore (UT Dallas Research Ranking, 2019).

Professor George joined SMU from Imperial College London, where he was Deputy Dean of the Business School, Director of the Gandhi Centre, and Academic Director of the London Stock Exchange’s Elite Programme, which supports ambitious private companies through their next stage of growth. Before Imperial, he held tenured positions at London Business School and at University of Wisconsin-Madison. From 2013 to 2016, he was Editor of the Academy of Management Journal, the flagship empirical journal in the field of management.

An award-winning researcher and teacher, Professor George has published over 100 articles with 30,000 citations. In 2019, he received the Web of Science “Highly Cited Researcher” distinction for Cross-Field Impact. His areas of research are in innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability and tackling grand challenges in society. He was awarded a prestigious Professorial Fellowship from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council to work on socially inclusive innovation in natural resources, healthcare, and energy. His co-authored works are Handbook of Inclusive Innovation (Edward Elgar, 2019), Managing Natural Resources (Edward Elgar, 2018), The Business Model Book (Pearson, 2018), Implausible Opportunities (Cambridge Press, 2012), and Inventing Entrepreneurs (Pearson, 2009). His next project is on how businesses can implement sustainable development goals as part of their core purpose.

George serves on the Board of AACSB International. Established in 1916, AACSB provides quality assurance, business education intelligence, and professional development services to over 800 accredited business schools worldwide. He helped create BML Munjal University, a university near New Delhi and serves on its Board of Governors. He is a member of the Management Committee of Global Compact Network Singapore, which facilitates the progress of companies that are committed to aligning their operations with UN Global Compact’s principles in human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. He was member of the Corporate Governance Council of Monetary Authority of Singapore tasked to redraft the 2018 Corporate Governance Code. From 2010-2014, he was a non-executive director of India Infrastructure Finance Company (UK) Limited, a Government of India enterprise subsidiary. IIFC(UK) provides dollar denominated financing for capital equipment in large Indian infrastructure projects.

For his contribution to further education, Professor George was awarded Fellowship of the City & Guilds of London Institute. He is Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in economics from the University of St. Gallen for intellectual contributions to the fields of strategic management, innovation and entrepreneurship. He is a visiting professor at Imperial College London. In 2019, he completed the Executive Certificate in Directorship from SMU and Singapore Institute of Directors.

Twitter: [@profgerrygeorge](https://twitter.com/profgerrygeorge)

Email: ggeorge@smu.edu.sg

Faculty's webpage:

<https://www.smu.edu.sg/faculty/profile/118836/Gerard-GEORGE>

CHRISTOPH N. HERDE is currently working as a Research Fellow at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business of Singapore Management University. His main interests deal with personnel selection with special attention to modular approaches of selection methods and simulation-based methods, such as Multiple Speed Assessments, Situational Judgment Tests, or Assessment Centers. Further interests are within-person variability in behavior and performance as well as how this variability can be captured and used to assess constructs like (interpersonal) adaptability, learning agility, or stress resilience. Other research interests are research methods and statistical modeling.

YANTI TIURMA IDA has over 15 years of working experience and started her career as an executive search consultant before embarking on her in-house HR career. Resulting from her accumulated years of experience her expertise includes HR business partnering, talent management, employer branding, and organizational change. She is known as a genuine HR business partner with passion to do the right thing for both the business and people, even if it requires her to challenge the status quo. Due to her natural inquisitive mind she often persists for logical explanations by drawing insights from data analysis to resolve occurring issues or prevent issues from recurring.

With immense passion in aligning human capital with business strategy, her interests are mostly around improving and sustaining superior business performance through leadership, talent management, organization culture,

and diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies. She believes that inclusive culture, effective leaders and motivated teams lead to greater success of an organization.

She is currently a Regional HR Business Partner (Asia Pacific) at one of a US-based global companies in Singapore.

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/yantitida>

JULIANA BINTE JOHARI is currently a Learning and Development professional with 10 years of working experience in both public and private sector. She is passionate in Human Resource work, especially in facilitating and developing people to realize their potentials. She also acquired many other meaningful experiences in Talent Acquisition, Talent Management and Staff Welfare.

Today, her interests are in technologies that enhanced learning, such as exploring the use of digital platforms, and facilitate employees to embrace the new ways of working and learning.

Email: julianaj.2019@mhcl.smue.edu.sg

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/juliana-johari-14b405144>

NIRMALYA KUMAR is a Lee Kong Chian Professor of Marketing at Singapore Management University & Distinguished Fellow at INSEAD Emerging Markets Institute. He was previously Member of the GEC (Group Executive Council) at Tata Sons, responsible for strategy and reporting to the Chairman. His latest book, Thinking Smart: How to Master Work, Life and Everything in Between, was published by Harper Collins India.

Email: nirmalyak@smu.edu.sg

Faculty's webpage:

<https://www.smue.edu.sg/faculty/profile/149166/Nirmalya-KUMAR>

LEE WEI MIN is an Army Officer in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), and read Business Administration in National University of Singapore,

where he graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in 2002 and Master of Business Administration in 2012. In his 21 years in the SAF, Wei Min has held various command and staff appointments. His HR related appointments included unit manpower officer, section head in career management. He is currently a branch head holding the appointment of Head Personnel Management in SAF Volunteer Corps.

Wei Min has a deep passion for learning. As part of the Continuing Education Programme offered by his organisation, Wei Min took up the Master of Human Capital Leadership in Singapore Management University to enrich himself.

Wei Min feels energised each time he is able to help people. When he sees that he can make a difference to someone's life, he gets a sense of fulfilment, happiness and a sense of purpose. This is also why he has pursued primarily HR related appointments in his time.

Wei Min is married with two daughters and a son. In his free time, he enjoys running and watching soccer.

Email: weimin.lee.2019@mhcl.smu.edu.sg

FILIP LIEVENS is a is Lee Kong Chian Professor of Human Resources at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business of Singapore Management University. He is also an Honorary Professor at the University of Cape Town and a visiting professor at Ghent University, Belgium.

His main interests deal with talent acquisition, talent assessment, and adaptability. As an internationally recognized scholar, he has published over 50 papers in top-tier journals, including the Annual Review of Psychology, Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Journal of Management, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Intelligence, and Organizational Research Methods.

He serves in the editorial board of Journal of Applied Psychology and Personnel Psychology. He was a winner of the Distinguished Early Career Award of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. He is also a winner of the Jeanneret Award and the Douglas Bray and Ann Howard Award. He was a recipient of the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel-

Forschungspreis of the Alexander von Humboldt- Foundation and is laureate of the Royal Flemish Academy of Sciences and Arts. He is a fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP), the American Psychological Association (APA), the Association for Psychological Science (APS), and the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP).

Website: www.filiplievens.com

ESTHER LIM: “Stay hungry, stay foolish” - Steve Job. Esther is a firm believer of knowledge and live by this proverb. She aspires to touch lives through learning and propel organisation through the institutionalisation of a Learning Organisation. She is a seasoned Learning and Organisation Development management who can connect, convey and convince multi-tier stakeholders with influence and political savviness in cross organisational and regional projects. Her success is attributed to her passion for building people and strengthening the organisation through strategic enhancement of core competencies and skill sets. Esther holds a Master of Human Capital Leadership from Singapore Management University, Post Graduate Diploma in Service Leadership from the University of Warwick, Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of South Australia, HR WSQ Specialist diploma in Human Capital Management and WSQ certified HR Professional in Talent Management. Esther is certified in the following credentials: ACTA, Hogan Assessment, Lominger Leadership Architect and Ron Kaufman Up Your Service course leader.

Email: hweeche.lim.2019@mhcl.smu.edu.sg

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/esther-lim-bb4aa0a/>

LOUIS LOW is the Head of Regions, at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. In this role, he leads the development and implementation of student recruitment strategies across different regional markets (ASEAN, South Asia, North Asia, Europe, UK, Americas and Africa) aimed at recruitment of good quality and diverse community of students for the School’s master degree programs. He also manages the recruitment team to ensure that the student recruitment activities, including targeted partners engagement, media advocacy and other marketing efforts across different regions are aligned to achieve the international student goals for the School.

Louis comes with extensive experience in the education industry. He has worked with the Nanyang Business School at Nanyang Technological University, managing the School's Executive MBA program.

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/louislow/>

DON MAK was born and raised in Hong Kong, is a seasoned HR Business Partner with 15 years of experience in world-class luxury retail and hotel groups, including Four Seasons Hotel, Salvatore Ferragamo and Richemont. He has extensive experience in talent acquisition and performance management. Since 2017, Don has relocated to Singapore and been working for Richemont as Senior Human Resources Manager for the corporate office in South Asia. A father of 2 daughters, Don is also a football lover.

Email: don.mak@hotmail.com

NG RUN QIAN supports the implementation of company strategies as the HR Business Partner for Manufacturing Excellence, Finance, IT, New Product Development, New Product Innovation and Operations in a European MNC. She is a curious and conscientious leader who can quickly gain trust from stakeholders and become an effective go-to professional.

Run Qian graduated from Raffles Junior College, and completed her Bachelor's Degree in Arts (Psychology) at the National University of Singapore. Aside from being an avid runner and cyclist, she is also a certified rock climber, diver and canoeist. Run Qian has a keen interest in community affairs, and she has been volunteering actively over the last 10 years with various charitable organisations, including Lions Befrienders Service Association and YMCA. Currently, Run Qian is actively training and guiding new volunteers.

JIMMY ONG has had a diverse career portfolio which encompasses technical consulting, sales & marketing and management roles in leading MNC for nearly 25 years. Jimmy's unique talent is in communication and

leadership and being able to factor the essential human element in building teams.

In his 20 years in Hewlett Packard, Jimmy has held various senior leadership positions including Country Manager for Taiwan, Chief of Staff for MD office in Southeast Asia and Sale Director of Asia Pacific's business unit.

Walking the talk, Jimmy's avowed lifelong passion of helping people raise to their fullest potential and giving back to the community has manifested itself in his volunteer work. At the age of 15, he started volunteering in the People's Association and later on served in the Parent Support group of the school his children attended.

In 2019, Jimmy left HP to pursue new challenges and reinvent himself for the next exciting stage of life. Currently, he is an adult educator in SkillsFuture leadership programs, a trainer and consultant catering to SMEs, as well as a career coach and mentor for undergraduate students. Jimmy is married with two children. In his free time, he practices mindfulness and enjoys exploring new hiking places around Singapore.

Email: onggimguan@gmail.com

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jimmy-ong-hp/>

ANGELING OOI is a Sociable, Motivated, Inspiring, Loving and Energetic (SMILE) person who love what she does. She is passionate in leading, influencing, and driving change. Her journey from a HR Representative, Regional HR Advisor, Regional Talent Program Lead to a HR Manager entails developing a penchant for orchestrating mutually beneficial solutions via open and transparent discussions.

She loves hiking as she believes perseverance is the key to success. Keep going and enjoy the journey. You will reach the destination eventually. =)

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/angeling-ooi-a8862844>

POH TECK KENG, ALVIS is a strong believer that everyone has hidden strengths and potential to excel in all that they put their mind into. Of course, I believe that the most important asset of a company or any

organization is their people. Therefore, at my personal time, I took up coaching courses to meet my passion developing others.

With a Degree of Engineering from Nanyang Technological University, then a Masters in Human Capital Leadership, the shift of my interest begins when I was an Air Force Officer with the Republic of Singapore Air Force (Ministry of Defence). That role triggered my interest in people management due to its complexity in achieving maximum performance while optimizing and aligning intangible but yet critical various factors of human behavior and psychology.

As a proud husband, I enjoy supporting my wife as her unofficial adviser and seeing her making daily breakthrough in achieving her entrepreneur dream. As the father of two daughters, I enjoy telling stories and playing sports with them to inculcate values and develop personalities to prepare them for future challenges amidst of having fun. Because of them, I am secretly inspired to be a children book writer as my next personal project!

Email: alvispoh@gmail.com

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alvispoh/>

JOCHEN REB is Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour & Human Resources as well as the founding Director of the Mindfulness Initiative @ SMU at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University (SMU). His research focuses on two main areas: judgment and decision making in organizations, and the role of mindfulness in organizational contexts such as leadership and performance. He is the author of numerous articles published in leading academic journals as well as several case studies on decision making and mindfulness in organizations.

Email: jreb@smu.edu.sg

Faculty's webpage:

<https://www.smu.edu.sg/faculty/profile/9527/Jochen-REB>

RIAZ SAIYED is an established Human Resources professional with over 20 years of work experience in HR leadership roles in India, South East Asia, and the Middle East. He has sailed through many diverse

conglomerates in the sectors of Oil & Gas, Engineering Procurement and Constructions Projects, Manufacturing, Chemical, and the Pharmaceutical sectors. His work traverses not only in regular HR functions but also covers policy-making roles in corporate functions. Riaz has completed a Master's Degree in Personnel Management from the University of Pune and has also completed his second Master's Degree in Human Capital Leadership from the Singapore Management University along with obtaining a CIPD Level – 7 Certification.

Riaz was also the recipient of the Leadership Scholarship awarded by Singapore Management University, which aimed to recognise leadership qualities in individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership capabilities and potential in their professional and personal endeavours.

Riaz is an active and sociable individual who believes in sharing his time for social development causes, enjoys meeting new people, travelling, adventure sports, hiking, try new cuisines and is highly empathetic towards the needs and requirements of different cultures. He ensures to travel to new countries every year along with his family and one of the main items in his bucket list is to pen his experience and facts about his various travel experiences.

Email: riaz.saiyed@gmail.com

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/riaz-saiyed-56a74120/>

GESA KATRINA QUEJA SALVADOR is an Organization Development Professional who is enthusiastic in implementing and managing a range of human capital initiatives and thriving to be a catalyst of change for organizational transformation. She has a strong commitment in driving people development project that aligns corporate culture and values to be embedded in the organization's business daily operation. A professional who believed in cultivating the "People-First" approach and prioritize developing employee's strength to improve operational efficiency and to create a strong customer-centric approach mindset that gains the organization's competitive advantage. An HR business partner that fused passion and authentic approach to continually improves human capital support through all stages of the employee's lifecycle in the company.

Her key interest involves conducting a study in the workforce of the future, design thinking, innovation, sustainability and application of technology to improve individuals' capability, team and organization's performance. She believed in solving significant problems to address "what" the problem is and the "why" stakeholders seeking to solve it. She promote workplace activities that cultivates employee's creativity and to challenge the operational norms to contributes various ways of improvement from breakthrough discoveries.

Email: gesakatrina@gmail.com

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/gesakatrinasalvador>

YAMINI SINGH has 10 years of experience in Brand management and marketing. She has worked in Paris, Singapore and India in the FMCG industry. During this time, she has worked on luxury hair and skin Brands, starting as a management trainee and working her way to being Brand manager where she was in charge of marketing, sales and training. She currently works as an University Lecturer in Singapore.

Yamini made a career switch to HR to work on employee value proposition projects and revamp campus recruitment strategies. She also wanted to gain experience in HR in order to pursue HR Analytics. Being a Graduate in mathematics, she has a liking for numbers and a curiosity for analytics. Her decision to pursue Masters in Human Capital management was inspired by her aspiration to do HR Analytics.

Yamini is a certified Yoga teacher and dedicated to bringing this mind, body and breath connection into her life and the lives of her students. She likes to doodle and draw. It's her way of entertaining her son and inculcating a love for art in him. It's also a way for her to cultivate silence.

Email: singh.yamini@gmail.com

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/in/singhyamini

PHILLIPP SCHÄPERS is currently working as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business of Singapore Management University. His research is situated in the field of personnel selection and psychological assessment. He is interested in the underlying

working mechanisms of selection and testing procedures and his work seeks to improve the theoretical and practical understanding of selection tools. For instance, his PhD thesis revolved around the question of how situations in Situational Judgment Tests affect their psychometric properties. He has published in several scientific journals, including Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, and Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology. Further interests are diversity management, digitalization, and employer branding.

Website: www.philippschaepers.com

RICHARD RAYMOND SMITH is a Professor of Strategic Management and Deputy Dean for Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University. Over the last six years, he has been active in growing the portfolio of business programmes at SMU. Prior to academic roles, Rick served as a Partner and Managing Director at Accenture in the USA, Hong Kong, and Singapore. He also served as the CEO and Chairman of SSI Asia Pacific Limited in Hong Kong for several years. Today he serves on the boards of the Singapore Government Civil Service College, QUEST- the global leadership institute for women leaders, and the International Consortium for Executive Development and Research. Rick is a co-author of Rethinking the Business Models of Business Schools: A critical review and change agenda for the future (Emerald, 2018).

Rick's research and teaching interests are centered on strategic leadership and human capital as a resource of the firm. He is co-author of Human Capital and Global Business Strategy and numerous other publications. He teaches postgraduate programs on business model innovation, human capital strategy, organizational leadership, and strategy execution. He often sought for his insight by media such as Channel News Asia, CNBC, Business Times, and others. His recent research on cross border leadership provided significant media attention in Asia where he has been featured as guest on CNBC's 'Squawk box.' Rick is the proud recipient of numerous teaching awards and serves as an elected representative in the Strategic Management Society Teaching Committee.

Email: rsmith@smu.edu.sg

Faculty's webpage:

<https://www.smu.edu.sg/faculty/profile/77199/Richard-Raymond-SMITH>

SRINIDHI VILANGADU SRINIVASAN is a versatile HR professional with 12 years of progressive experience. She is currently Head of HR at Wego, an online travel marketplace, where she has been responsible to set up the HR function and drive the people strategy.

Prior to this, she has worked across exciting tech companies like Twitter and Ubisoft supporting a diverse workforce in a high-growth environment. She enjoys creating and facilitating HR programs that nurture talent and lead to positive business outcomes.

She has completed her Masters in Human Capital Leadership at SMU where she was the recipient of Leadership Scholarship and Dean's List Awardee for academic excellence.

Email: vs.srinidhi@yahoo.com

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/srinidhi-srinivasan-47949814

GABRIEL TAN is a multi-disciplined graduate in human resources and biochemistry fields. He has accumulated more than ten years of industrial work experience as a Human Resources Business Partner and Learning and Development Practitioner with small-middle enterprises and multi-national corporations in the executive search, education, renewable energy, and manufacturing industry. Before his human resources career, he was in the biomedical sector for seven years, doing scientific research work in the area of cell therapy and viral vaccine development. His current passion is to pursue mastery and contribute to the learning and development arena.

Email: gtanej@gmail.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/gtanej/>

AERIN TAN has spent over a decade in human resources roles in the areas of workforce planning, talent acquisition, talent management, performance management, succession planning, budgeting, compensation & benefits and employee relations. She is a hands-on human resource professional with strong cross-cultural exposure and has had the privilege of leading diverse teams on HR projects in the Asia Pacific. With more than 9 years of experience in American and European MNCs, she has implemented HR

strategies and spearheading HR projects in the Asia Pacific to achieve business objectives.

Currently, Aerin is holding the role of HR Manager for Singapore, Indonesia, Korea and the rest of Southeast Asia in an European MNC. She is the champion for the region and works with the Country/Asia Region business leadership. She is involved in the global HR projects and works with the team in Europe and Americas. She plays an integral stakeholder in the regional HR leadership team and instrumental in driving global and regional alignment of initiatives to meet the overall global corporate goals.

Linkedin: <https://sg.linkedin.com/in/aerin-tan>

CARRIE TAN was appointed as Rigel Technology's Group Director, Corporate Development & Human Resources in 2016. She is currently responsible for and oversees the human resource, corporate communications and public relations functions of Rigel Group which owns 8 subsidiaries across Asia.

Prior to joining Rigel, Carrie was employed under the umbrella of SGX-listed HRnetGroup from 2010 to 2015 as a Principal Consultant specializing in recruitment, talent management and HR business partnering. She graduated with a Bachelor of Business (Management) (Distinction) from RMIT University in 2010. As a keen advocate for continuous learning, Carrie has recently completed the Master of Human Capital Leadership with Singapore Management University Lee Kong Chian School of Business.

Carrie was also the recipient of Women in Business Scholarship awarded by Singapore Management University, which aimed to recognise exceptional women who have demonstrated outstanding leadership capabilities or potential in their professional or personal endeavours.

She was previously a guest speaker and panellist for Workforce Engagement Forum 2018, organised by Workforce Advancement Federation (WAF). She was also invited to speak at the Global Ready Talent Programme Launch, an initiative led by Enterprise Singapore as well as a guest speaker for SMU panel session on “How to get more women in boardrooms in Asia”.

Email: carrie_986@hotmail.com

KARYN THYE is a compensation geek who believes that purpose, mastery & autonomy are the true drivers of motivation at work.

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/karynthye/>

ABHIJEET K. VADERA is an Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Resources at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University (SMU). He received his Ph.D. in Business Administration from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and was previously affiliated with the Indian School of Business for five years.

At SMU, Abhijeet teaches Negotiations to post-graduate students in the Master of Human Capital Leadership, MBA, and MSc. in Management programs. He received the MBA Most Outstanding Professor award in 2018 and has been on the Dean’s Teaching Honors List every year from 2015. He also teaches Ethics to undergraduates at SMU. He has conducted multiple executive development workshops on Negotiations and Influence in India, Singapore, and the US.

Abhijeet’s research focuses on constructive (e.g., creativity) and destructive (e.g., ethics) deviance in the workplace. He has published in leading periodicals such as Academy of Management Journal, Organization Science, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Management and Harvard Business Review.

Prior to joining academia, Abhijeet was a manager of Human Resources at his family's construction firm. He received a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering from VJTI, University of Mumbai, and his PGP (equivalent to MBA) from the Indian School of Business.

Email: abhijeetv@smu.edu.sg

Faculty's webpage:

<https://www.smu.edu.sg/faculty/profile/130436/Abhijeet-K-VADERA>

SARANYA VENKAT is a people-person and loves meeting new people, learn about their lives and their backgrounds. She is passionate about her work, because she loves what she does and particularly enjoys working as a part of the team. She is a passionate learner with someone having high expectations for her results throughout the journey of over 5.2 years of post-MBA professional experience in Human Resource Management across multiple organizations and industries in India. She is confident in her ability to produce and while preparing for the worst, she does the necessary work to tilt the odds for the best to happen.

She enjoys a fast-paced, team-oriented environment for her to seek out learning opportunities, as she is not afraid to fail and struggle as a part of learning with a steady source of motivation that drives her to do the best daily by learning new skills, being communicative, result-driven, meticulous, persistent, flexible and a team player. She thrives on challenges and constantly sets goals for herself, so she has something to strive towards. She can almost always find common ground with strangers and likes making people feel comfortable with her presence. She is a firm believer in building trust through empathy.

Email: saranyav.2019@mhcl.smu.edu.sg

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/saranyavenkat88>

WONG CIXIAN is a civil servant with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), currently seconded to Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) as a Senior Assistant Director looking after advisory services and customer support for foreign workers. Prior to the secondment to TADM, I was in the field of industrial relations, where I conciliated industrial disputes between trade unions and companies. In between my employment

with MOM, I was also seconded to National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) for two years from 2015 to 2017 to help the workers, understand the labour movement and appreciate the tripartism in Singapore. Before I became a civil servant in 2010, I started off my career in Human Resources with the Singapore Airlines for 2.5 years, dealing with recruitment first, followed by industrial relations and then staff benefits.

Email: cixian@gmail.com

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/wong-cixian-aa6888193>

YEO SU LIN is Assistant Professor of Communication Management (Practice), and also Director for the Singapore Management University-Institute of Public Relations USA Alliance (Southeast Asia). A Nanyang scholar, she joined SMU in July 2014 and teaches a range of full credit communication modules from undergraduate to postgraduate and executive seminar programmes. Her primary research interests include Corporate Reputation, Crisis Communication, and Public Policy Communication. She received the prestigious Robert Heath Award Top Faculty Paper for Public Relations in San Diego (USA) in 2017, and sits on national boards that drive stakeholder engagement on health communication and public policy campaigns in Singapore. Prior to pursuing an academic career, Su Lin spent 12 years managing corporate communication and investor relations for several conglomerates in the banking and financial services sectors. She was instrumental in developing successful communication strategies and reputation enhancing initiatives that drove business outcomes for her organisations in Asia.

Email: sulinyeo@smu.edu.sg

Faculty's webpage:

<https://www.smu.edu.sg/faculty/profile/108271/YEO-Su-Lin>

JESYLN YONG possess interest in people engagement and human development. With an inquisitive analytical mind and structural but creative thinking, I am an individual seeking for workable and feasible ideas and pragmatic approaches.

Constantly challenge myself in taking new assignments and yearning additional skills. I will consistently reflect views and comments in seeking improvements.

As a leader, I am prompt and task-oriented, excel in time management and hitting deadlines. I believe no one is a failure but with strength to be defined and opportunities to shine.

As an individual contributor and a team player, I am reliable, adaptable with accommodating personality. I believe in providing sustainable solutions and ideas via focusing goals that can be accomplished in span of years.

Email: jesyong7@gmail.com

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/in/jeslyn-yong-9aa0264a

PHILINE YONG professional experiences in HR span across the Internet and Media industries in companies such as Twitter and Thomson Reuters. Simplifying and demystifying HR to all is what she firmly believes in and advocates for. With five years (and counting) of regional work experiences behind her belt, Philine is conversant with HR practices across the Asia Pacific region. She keeps abreast of the latest trends in HR through her educational pursuits and aspires to become a strategic HR leader. Driven to make a difference through the work she does, Philine was also recognised as a Young HR Talent of the Year finalist in the HR Excellence Awards 2019.

Email: philineyong.2019@mhcl.smu.edu.sg

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/in/philine-yong

“Clearly the post-COVID world of work presents a golden opportunity for the science of HR to earn its rightful place as an equal partner to the art of HR. This book showcases how an evidence-based scientific approach to making judgements on employment issues can help move the HR profession forward in these uncertain times. I applaud SMU for supporting this endeavour and the 2019 MHCL Cohort for an excellent collection of studies on a wide range of HR practices. I am confident that our sustained efforts to deliver evidence-based messages to the HR community will result in more productive workplaces and happier workers in time to come.”

– *Mayank Parekh, CEO, Institute for Human Resource Professionals*



*“Championing
Evidence-based Human
Capital Management
practices in Industry”
– Graduate Cohort 2020*

“HR leaders are unanimous in their views that the function will evolve, especially in a post Covid world, where the broad role HR will play and the deliverables expected of HR leaders will be one of a multifaceted function. These insights as presented by the students of SMU reflects the rigor of their research and presents to the reader a view on what is to happen in the coming years. The insights are beyond academic textbooks and talks about how current and future HR leaders can also learn and adopt some of the key points made.”

– *Alvin Goh, Executive Director, Singapore Human Resources Institute*

