

KÖNYVSZEMLE / BOOK REVIEWS

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Pelser, A. M. – Nagy, Sz. – Thondlana, J. – Oosthuizen, I. J. (eds.) (2023): *The necessities for Talent & Skills Enhancement in the workplace*. Global Innovative Forefront Talent Management (GIFT) Research and publications book series (vol.3). Axiom Academic Publishers, Potchefstroom, South Africa. ISBN: 978-1-991239-21-1

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In the rapidly changing organizational world, the necessity for innovations in the human resource management has a high priority. The book tries to summarize empirical and practical studies to help enterprises to optimise their human capitals. One of the significant factors is talent management, which has significant importance in this book. This recent book is an international collaboration of many authors (all together 21) to present the recent processes in this field. It is a niche scientific work, which gives an overview of talent management and the role of soft factors in HRM.

The book has a sum of 359 pages, from which – not considering literature and the introduction of authors and editors – the 11 chapters cover 281 pages. After a brief introduction, we get insights into the factors of successful enterprises from the side of the human resources.

In Chapter 1, Johannes L van der Walt, deals with the question how neoliberal work environment affects the workers of the Global South. It starts from the history of the two colonization waves and applies the method of interpretivism-constructivism for analysing the topic. The interpretivism part gathers information regarding the two waves of colonialism with special regards on potential impacts, while constructivist part is dedicated for solutions for the described problem. The chapter argues that the first wave of colonisation (which began in the 1490s and lasted up to the middle of the 1960s) was characterized by colonial mercantilism. The second wave on the contrary, started from the 1940s with neoliberalism and free-market issues, was affected with some world economic problems (like collapse of the Bretton-Woods system, or the Soviet Union), and globalization played an important role in spreading capital and trade globally. It affected the workers of the Global South as actors of a new consumer market, and results anxiety among workers. The author describes after that the traditional elements of the life in the Global South, like the workers as members of collectives, where the needs of the worker group and the business come first, often ahead of the interests of the individual worker. The impacts of globalization and neoliberal turn have resulted a change in it, the author lists some problems like environmental problems, social tensions or violence, where the traditional values are vulnerable. The transnational corporations are distributing business mindset also to the Global South and the “individualistic and self-centric moral approach” can be detrimental for the workers of that area. The chapter ends with some possible solutions, like the cooperative ethical orientation of the working environment, collective responsibility and trust, or creating training seminars, with a deeper understanding of how a neoliberal work environment works.

The authors of chapter 2 (Kezell Klinck, Renelwe Sechoaro, Deborah Mokgojwa, Ajhan Laloo) examine the relationship between meaningful work, talent management, and turnover intentions, as they see highly skilled workers bring significant value to any company. They have formulated a conceptual framework model, which describes the relationship among the factors analysed. First, the theory of talent management, and the circle of it is introduced, describing the phases of recruitment, coaching and mentoring, talent retention, and employee engagement. They suppose

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that organizations that invest in their employees' development can reduce turnover intentions. Then we go further with linking meaningfulness, occupational talent management and turnover intentions into a complex model, checking the relations of the given factors in the form of four independent hypothesis. These deal with the positive link of autonomy, co-worker and supervisor support to meaningfulness, which after minimises turnover intention. To test the hypotheses, a quantitative research methodology was applied with a large sample size (300 employees), and a questionnaire. The results underly that there is a positive correlation between meaningfulness, autonomy, co-worker and supervisor support, and meaningful work minimises turnover intention. However talent management influences the meaningfulness, so the empirical study went beyond the hypothesis. The chapter ends with recommendations from the authors like how to recruit talented workers, what is the role of boss's management, or how to develop hidden talent.

The third chapter (authored by Izak J Oosthuizen, Johannes L van der Walt) starts from the assumption that to a successful business, besides talented workforce there is a need for integrity as a core value. The authors cited the Global Integrity Report of 2022 and stated that lack of integrity has negative consequences for workforce morale. The objectives of the chapter besides explaining how the lack of integrity affects the working environment is that how can be promoted integrity in the business. Most simple they define integrity as the quality to be honest and having strong moral principles which can be further developed by other characters like exemplary behaviour, or wholeness and coherence. The authors argue that integrity can be developed by the organizations by several ways, like building trust, communicating and educating the need for integrity, creating corporate agendas and directives, or applying a strong top-down perspective in leadership, or checking the role of both integrity promoters and whistle-blowers in the organization. This all can lead to increased business success in the long term.

The fourth chapter (Charlotte Jonasson, Emma Nordbäck, Jakob Lauring) analyses the role of digital learning and Artificial Intelligence and starts from the finding that the analysis of talent management in remote working environment has some limitations, and the studies for this topic are rare. That is why they have planned to examine digital learning including the use of artificial intelligence to promote talent management practices in remote work settings. Besides the desk research method (collecting bibliographic data), ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees in multinational companies. The authors emphasize that diverse talent management can be a challenge for the organizations, as all employees have unique values and capabilities, however the managers should differentiate their talent management focus to enhance it further. Another challenge is arising from the transformation of work environment with the improvement of digital technologies or the COVID-19 effects, as here the interpersonal communication becomes harder, however enhances collaboration. A further task is coming from digital learning together with the usage of artificial intelligence with many advantages and risks. The authors found from the interviews that many factors contribute to the challenges of talent management such as culture-related issues, harder communication by remote work, or the possible positive effects of AI on talent management. Besides the talent management the chapter is also focused on the risks and positive effects of remote work (like isolation or harder information sharing, but broader talent pool).

The fifth part of the research (by Nicola Walters, Lerato E Mdaka) deals with the workplace wellness initiatives, as some research noted that South African employees are only engaged in their work at a level of 15%. A survey gives the basis of the analysis to find out, whether employee engagement goes hand in hand with workplace wellness. They see the role of workplace wellness initiatives more than just disease prevention but also as a tool for employee engagement. In the hypothesis they examine whether the yearly utilization of workplace wellness initiatives has an effect onto the workplace engagement. The chapter defines workplace wellness and employee engagement, while also describe the occupational stress situation in South Africa, which is one of the starting points of the research. The authors applied quantitative research methods (statistical tests), and questionnaire in gathering information for the population of South Africa with a sample size of 170 employees. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was adapted to measure

employee engagement. By testing the workplace wellness initiatives on employee engagement, two group of respondents were compared (who had, and who don't have such initiatives at their workplaces), while by the yearly acceptance also other clusters were defined (ranked by the frequent use of initiatives).

Starting from the finding that nowadays' leaders are facing increased stress levels because of the uncertainty and complex nature of work environment, the study of chapter 6 (by Johan Slabbert) explores the role of transpersonal coaching in managing work-related stress and increase well-being of managers. This latter method is adequate for increasing emotional resilience of the managers. The author focuses on the influence of it on leadership behaviour and stress-coping mechanism with many quantitative and qualitative methods. The study was conducted among eleven participants with varied leadership levels and demographics. Together six different tests were applied besides open-ended questions. The author describes the cycle of transgenerational trauma and the socioeconomic environment of South Africa, which gives the background of the research. The research highlights the main phases in the evolution of leadership theories and styles. The study also discusses the broader implications and holistic impacts of transpersonal coaching in leadership and organisational contexts (e.g. shift towards Authentic Servant Leadership), while it also summarizes the contributions to the research field (e.g. novelty, mixed model analysis).

The seventh chapter is a collaboration of five authors (Marian Opoku Appiah, Marian Opoku Appiah, Charles Owusu-Antwi, Christopher Sam, Dadson Awunyo-Vitor). It starts from the statement that the small and medium-sized enterprises are contributing to the economic development in a significant extent by both the developed and developing economies. In their performance the role of employees is high, which should be managed wisely. The applied literature for examining the work-life balance and related activities was the spillover theory, which emphasizes that some experiences are spreading from work to non-work activities. The authors build a framework for the relationship of work-life balance, employee commitment and engagement, and formulate the research along it. Through the analysis besides a questionnaire among the employees of SMEs, also statistical tests were carried out, while for hypothesis test the authors applied different regression models. The study supports the importance of managing work-life balance for enhancing employee commitment.

The employee performance has significant contribution to the effectivity and productivity of the enterprises (states Ntebogang Dinah Moroke in chapter 8), and from this point of view talent management and strategic decision making is critical for them. That is why the study focuses on the link between turnover and employee performance. The research question was analysed by a complex literature review (human capital, social exchange, job embeddedness theories, talent and succession planning) and builds e.g. a framework for work-life balance and employee performance, and a conceptual map based on the interconnections of the above theories indicating also the feedback loops. The chapter identifies factors influencing turnover and performance, aiming to provide insights for effective talent retention strategies (e.g. internal interactions, investing to staff development, maintaining strategies).

As AI (artificial intelligence) is transforming the business, also leadership should adapt these challenges with new skills and capabilities. The ninth chapter by Alexander Samuels, examines what critical competencies are required to adapt the situation, and the transformation strategies. The author emphasizes the advantages of AI adoption in the business, like increased productivity, decision making support, however, highlights also the possible negative consequences for labour market or ethical considerations. The AI is significant also in the different leadership models to foster innovation and economic growth and parallel with it facilitate wise decision-making. The literature review checks leadership theories and analyses which can work as best in the face of AI, and this desk analysis gives the main research method of the chapter.

The corruption (and besides that the lack of ethical and moral sensitivity) is a common and widespread problem in the business of South Africa, based on the authors (Izak J Oosthuizen, Johannes L van der Walt), and the tenth chapter investigates how it can be decreased with the example of the Code of Conduct. The chapter describes the situation in South Africa starting from

the age of Apartheid until nowadays, while also highlighting the possible impact of it on the employees. The authors present the main differences and characteristics of ethics and morality, classifying the main approaches of ethical principles (consequentialism, utilitarianism, casuistic approach, situation ethics, pragmatism, teleology). It emphasizes that a balance between individual and group interests is necessary for moral stability. The main suggestions of the chapter are about the code of conduct which are obligations, procedures, rules and regulations guiding the worker on how to act.

Because of the rapid economic growth and the scarcity of high-skilled workforce, the chapter 11 analyses how to retain the talented people in the labour market of Saudi Arabia. The authors (Abdulaziz Ahmadani, Sanlie Middelberg) stress the role of talent management in globalization and introduces the definition of talent and high-potential employees. In Saudi Arabia the situation is different, as here besides salary and work-life balance, also work conditions and organisational culture are influencing factors in talent retention. In the latter also the role of leadership method is further focused. By questionnaire and deep-interview analysis in an automotive industry enterprise, the authors have developed a framework model for talent retention by five factors. The key factors include among others the influence of direct managers, organizational culture, and career growth opportunities.

The book aims to provide a comprehensive insight into the talent and skill management and improvement challenges by the enterprises. It describes the challenges of the Global South from labour market point of view. The theoretical and practical usefulness of the book is unquestionable. For easier understanding and transparency, the book uses the representation of the relevant literature and creates framework models by self-edited figures, and tables, which gives good overview of the topic. It contains important scientific findings for specialists dealing with human resources. I would recommend it to anyone with an interest in talent management who would like to get further insights into the main character of the Global South's labour market.