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TALENT ACQUISITION AS A STRATEGIC TOOL OF BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

K. G. Ganga Sajeewani Karunathilaka

National School of Business Management (NSBM) Green University, Colombo, Sri Lanka
ganga.k@nsbm.lk

Abstract

The business performance has been closely tied with the talent management strategies in the hyper-competitive and increasingly complex global economy in order to attain growth and sustain. The company which excelled in talent acquisition experienced which leads to leap up the business performance. Regardless of the size and nature of the business, all the organizations face war for talent. Hence, acquisition of right talent and making a talent pool can be the biggest challenge. This study moves forward theory of talent acquisition strategies (TAS) through the practical implication of private sector organizations in Sri Lanka. The talent acquisition strategies comprise with talent mapping (TM), talent identification (TI), talent onboarding (TO). The foremost intention of this study is to scrutinize the effect of talent acquisition strategies on business performance. The questionnaire survey was conducted for 195 HR professionals in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. In order to analyze data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to test for its normality, and person correlation test was used for measuring the relationship between variables and multiple regression analysis was applied for determining the effect of variables. The results indicate that even though talent acquisition strategies are significant predictors of business performance public sector, contribution of talent acquisition to the business performance is minimal. Internal alignment between talent management strategies

and Business Strategy are suggested for future research as crucial to trump organizational performance.

Keywords

Talent Management, Talent Acquisition, Talent Mapping, Talent Identification, Talent Onboarding, Business Performance

1. Introduction

Talent Management has been playing a pivotal role in enabling organizations to gain competitive advantage for last few decades. Irrespective the nature and size of the business, organizations have recognized the importance of achieving excellence in talent management. Nevertheless, the imminent HR leaders shall need to take appropriate strategy to sustain in business world wherein organizations need to preserve ample talent pool in order to be excelled in a business. Future talent pool needs to counter disruptions from talent mobility, technological changes, downsizing and critical changes and be capable to promise. Since, talent pool has become powerful source of competitive advantage and sustainability, business world face enormous competition in finding talented people to the organization (Marwat, Qureshi, t. M., and Ramay M. I., 2006). It is vital for the organization to take a proactive role in recognizing and nurturing their pool of employees who have required competencies and prospects.

Talent management (TM) is a strategic and systematic approach to acquiring, nurturing and retention of potential talents to meet expected level of business performance by facing global challengers effectively. The initial and crucial function of talent management process is the acquisition of knowledgeable and skilled individuals in terms of long-term achievement of the organization. Moreover, Anwar, A. et. Al (2014) identified that talent acquisition is the most critical fundamentals of talent management process. Even if an organization fails to recognize its talented individuals, it will badly affect to the right positioning and right development opportunities for their future talents in order to achieve the overall objective of the organization (Ingham, J. 2006; Anila Naveed Muhammad Nadim, 2017).

Sri Lanka has demonstrated constant progress over the last decade although key macroeconomic tasks and challenges remained. Sri Lanka is a middle-income country with a GDP per capita of USD 4,102 (2018) and a total population of 21.7 million people. After 30 years of civil war that culminated in 2009, Sri Lanka's economy grew up at an average 5.6

percent during the period of 2010-2018. However, growth decelerated in the last few years due to many reasons. The country economy is shifting from a predominantly rural-based economy towards a more urbanized economy while focusing more manufacturing and service-oriented business. Social indicators rank among the highest in South Asia and compare favorably with those in middle-income countries. Economic growth has translated into shared prosperity with the national poverty headcount ratio declining from 15.3 percent in 2006/07 to 4.1 percent in 2016 (world Bank Report, 2019).

Sri Lankan business organizations comprise with two main sectors, such as public sector and private sector, that split is based on numerous critical considerations such as, ownership, operations, structure, goals & objectives and so on (Amunugama, 2014) Public sector organizations are considered as the backbone of Sri Lankan economy which offers numerous important services to the public wellbeing. In which main services: health, education and security are provided in free of charge. In addition to the transport, agriculture, insurance, bank, administration etc are provided at a lower rate (Kelegama, 2011).

As a developing and middle- income country, a fundamental commitment of the public sector is to sustainable development of Sri Lanka which comprises with economic, social and cultural development. Thus, advancement of this vital sector is very important to wellbeing of the country. However, this sector does not seem to be dynamic and performing well in achieving their expected goals which compares to the private sector and public-sector organizations of peer countries such as China, Singapore and Malaysia in Asian region (Karunathilaka, 2018).

Many organizations seem to have lack of efficiency and effectiveness. Most of the organizations are highly influenced by the political parties of the country. The policies and procedures have changed based on the political agenda. New technological innovations and adaptations are lacking behind. Hence, existing employees are dissatisfied due to inadequacy of proper strategies to overcome these obstacles. Numerous HR professionals and practitioners stated that organizational performance heavily depends on employees' performance no matter size, nature or the ownership of the business (Kelegama, 2011). As some experts of this sector argued, one of the main reasons for the high rate of inefficiency is due to its lack of attention on the talent management strategies in their organizations (Dharmasiri, 2008; Karunathilaka,2018). In which talent acquisition strategies (TAS) are utmost important. Hence, the core objective of

this research is to examine the effect of talent acquisition strategies (TAS) on business performance (BP) of public sector in Si Lanka.

2. Talent Management (TM)

Talent management is a subset of HRM discipline in order to process the business performance (Stahl et al., 2012; Collings et al., 2009). It is a bundle of practices and procedures that are executed in organizations (CIPD, 2011; McDonnell et al., 2017) which comprises with attraction, selection, development and managing talents in an integrated and strategic way (Collings, 2014). TM scholars acknowledged that strategic integration of TM practices while emphasizing three fundamental TM strategies: talent acquisition, talent developing, and talent retention. Talent acquisition represents a vital component of the overall talent management process (Isrealite, L., 2010; Cappelli, 2009). Talent acquisition is a process of talent mapping, talent identification and talent onboarding in order to achieve organizational long-term success (karunathiaka, 2015). While it is viable for business organizations to engage in a talent strategy that focuses on talent acquisition from the internal or external labor market, such a strategy is unlikely to be effective in the long term (Garavan, 2012; Eva Nicolas Carole Serhan, 2018).

Since this study scrutinizes effect of talent acquisition strategies (TAS) on business performance (BP) in Sri Lankan public sector organizations, following section accentuates talent acquisition strategies which encompasses talent mapping, talent identification and talent on boarding.

2.1 Talent Mapping (TM)

The purpose of Talent mapping is to forecast, assess, evaluate, and review of organizations' existing staff so they can be more ready for the future goals and objectives (Karunathilaka, 2018; Joseph & Sridevi, 2015). Talent mapping is a sophisticated mechanism which charts individuals' knowledge, skills and abilities, assesses their current performance and future potential, and matches them with human resource planning strategies to balance an organization's talent and needs. Furthermore, talent mapping enables an organization to determine talent acquisition strategies for future talent identification, talent on boarding including internal promotions and transferring policies and procedures, likely short- and long-term hiring needs, and development of existing talent to meet future staffing needs (Thomas 2009).

The talent mapping is the most significant practice of contemporary HRM because it looks beyond the current staffing and organizational structure to envision what will be required at many future actions. In order to be ready to encounter future challenges and uncertainties, the type of assessment provided by talent mapping is vigorous. When talent mapping is applied, training, transferring, promotion, job rotation and mentoring or coaching programs and procedures can be instituted and modified for the future benefit of the organization, so that when the needs actually materialize, staff has developed the required knowledge, skills and capabilities to meet those requirements (Karunathilaka, 2018).

Talent mapping is a systematic process which should be aligned with business strategy and goals. This indicates that it's a unique and sophisticated method of talent planning. Talent management professionals ought to focus their talent efforts on aligning talent management with overall strategic planning to realize greater value in talent mapping. Nevertheless, Ingham (2006) states that creating a strategic and inclusive talent map or rather talent plan is not a straightforward task which requires a lot of research and smarts. Karunathilaka (2016) introduced that three typical steps in talent mapping. First: Conceptualize the talent strategy of the business which means identify the business strategies aligned with talent needs over the next three to five years. Second: Assess and select the best talent from the existing staff which also includes succession planning and individual development plans into the talent assessment. Third step is to develop talent mapping methods and implementation in order to achieve the talent pool and business success.

2.2 Talent Identification (TI)

Talent identification is the second key function of ongoing talent management process. The identification of workforce talent aims to detect, capture, select and promote the employee who has the skills and competencies and thus the potential to ensure, as far as possible, the achievement of competitive success of both individual and business. Talent identification is measured by the success rate of business. Hence, various researchers have indicated that it can be classified into two main phases. First phase: internal talent identification and second phase: external talent identification would need to be carried from the labor market (Karunathilaka, 2018).

Identifying talent strategies internally may include competence/skill inventory, skill audit, performance appraisal and human resource planning. External talent identification strategies

refer to outsourcing of work, forming of joint alliance, retaining consultants, maintaining relationships and different selection methods such as, assessment centers, psychometric tests etc. Even though Sri Lankan private sector organizations practice more innovative and interactive talent identification mechanisms instead of usual methods, public sector organizations are lacking behind in innovative strategies. The recruitment and hiring processes are strict to the public policy framework and it cannot go beyond the scheme of recruitment (SOR) which is implemented by public policy makers (Dharmasiri, 2010; Karunathilaka, 2018).

2.3 Talent Onboarding (TO)

Talent onboarding is a process that introduces new talented employees to an organization and its culture. Onboarding helps them integrate and gain the right knowledge and skills to carry out their new tasks and responsibilities. Strategies to help a worker become acclimated include orientation, training, mentoring and employee social events (Joseph & Sridevi, 2015). Bauer (2015) described the talent onboarding is as a systematic and comprehensive practice to integrating a new worker with an organization and its cultural environment. A successful onboarding process supports new employees to be succeeded for a foreseeable future and sets them up for business success. The faster they adjust to their new duties and responsibilities, the sooner they can start to contribute value to the business. Davis (2007) claimed that a well-designed, systematic and engaging on boarding strategy has an appreciably greater effect on employee engagement and retention when compared to the old-school mentality of one-day orientation.

3. Hypotheses Development

The focal aim of this paper is to identify the effect of talent acquisition strategies on business performance in Sri Lanka. According to the literature survey, it confirmed that TAS and BP have positive relationship. Nevertheless, TM is as an emerging field of HRM, strenuous to find local researches. Thus, a research framework is designed by taking into consideration of impact of main variables. Thus, three variables are identified in the research framework: talent acquisition strategies as independent variables and business performance as a dependent variable. Talent acquisition strategies comprise with three sub variables: talent mapping (Tm), talent identification (TI) and talent onboarding (TO). Based on the theoretical framework, three hypotheses are developed. Such as, H1: Talent mapping has a positive impact on business

performance.H2: talent identification has a positive impact on positive performance.H3: talent onboarding has a positive impact on business performance.

4. Methodology

To investigate the hypotheses, a questionnaire survey was conducted for the respondents of HR professionals. The questionnaire which comprises of three segments, such as demographic profile of the sampled respondents, talent acquisition measurements (Tm, TI and TO) and business performance measurements. Furthermore, the survey instrument was designed using a Likert five scale models with the options from strongly satisfactory to strongly dissatisfactory. Each option was scaled: 5= strongly satisfactory; 4= satisfactory; 3= neutral; 2= dissatisfactory and 1= strongly dissatisfactory. The questionnaire survey was conducted from 23/03/2019 to 16/09/2019. There are 294 public sector organizations that are registered under Ministry of Planning (Ministry of Planning, 2018). The google form was developed to collect the data and respondents have been guaranteed of complete confidentiality and honest opinions were encouraged. In total, 294 questionnaires were sent by the researcher and 215 questionnaires returned. However, only 195 questionnaires, equal to 66 per cent, were considered for data analysis. The remaining 20 questionnaires were not taken into data collection because questionnaires were not properly completed by the respondents. According to Survey Monkey (2009), a response rate of above 66% represents a very good response rate in a survey using questionnaires considering the difficulties involved in making a follow up of questionnaire survey.

5. Data Analysis and Results

Data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Four statistical techniques were employed with different purposes. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts in this field of HRM, in addition to testing of reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. To analyze the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to test for its normality, Pearson correlation test was used for measuring the relationship between variables and regression analysis was applied for determining the effect of variables.

5.1 Reliability

Reliability is a scientific investigation which measures stability and repeatability of measures, or the ability of a test to produce the same results under the same conditions. Saunders et al., (2012) stated that a reliability test of research instruments is one that consistently produces the expected results. Kothari (2004) indicated that instrument reliability refers to the level of internal consistency or the stability of the measuring devices.

For testing of reliability of the instrument of the present study, Cronbach's alpha was used and those values of four variables are [Tm (0.922), TI (0.846), TO (0.854) and BP (0.897)] more than 0.7. Further the internal consistency reliability of the measures employed in this analysis can be considered as good for talent acquisition and business performance measures

5.2 Demographic Profile

Consistent with a male-controlled sector under research, most (65 per cent) of the participations are males. This is the nature of human resource management field in Sri Lanka. However, over the past decade contributions from female HR managers have increased dramatically. In addition to another feature of the public-sector population was introduced by this research; around 84 per cent of the HR professionals are above the age of 40 years which were considered as experienced workers. Moreover, their education levels are above the degree (around 60 per cent) and in middle and senior level (around 95 per cent) position of the employment. At present HR managers are in top level of the organization. In demographic data on organizational side, 60 per cent of companies consist of more than 1000 employees. From the above discussion it can be concluded that the sample of this research does not deviate much from the general population of HR managers at public sector organizations. Hence, it is considered as representative of the population of interest.

5.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	N
Business Performance (BP)	3.832	.5239	-.846	.029	195
Talent Mapping (Tm)	3.372	.7342	-.164	-.613	195
Talent Identification (TI)	3.169	.6982	-.483	-.072	195
Talent Onboarding (TO)	3.334	.5883	.233	-.258	195

Source: Research data

Descriptive analysis was conducted to decide the mean scores and standard Deviations for the variables which was illustrated in Table 01. The 195 valid data was observed for three independent variables; Tm, TI, TO and one dependent variable; BP. Seemingly, the mean scores for all four variables are more than 3 and BP (3.83±0.52) is the highest and three independent variables have similar mean values (Tm: 3.37±0.73, TI: 3.16±0.69 and TO: 3.33±0.58). It means that, even though business performance of the sampled organizations is high, quite similar influence is demonstrated by Tm, TI and TO for their performance. The findings are consistent with literature of Collings and Mellahi (2010), Rodriguez (2010), Armstrong (2012) and Cook (2011) who found that talent acquisitions are critical in talent management for organizational performance and growth.

Since the mean, median and mode values are very close to each other, perhaps the data is symmetrical. The skewness values are fallen within ±1. Hence, the data can be assumed to be symmetrical.

Table 2: Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis

	Hypotheses	r	B value	Std. Error	VIF	R2	Pvalue	Results
H1	Tm has significant positive impact on BP	0.403	0.168	0.042	1.107	0.193	0.012	Supported
H2	TI has significant positive impact on BP	0.378	0.148	0.078	1.66		0.018	supported
H3	TO has significant positive impact on BP	0.330	0.065	0.112	1.822		0.397	Not supported

Source: Research data

The result of the correlation analysis also was illustrated in Table 2, which evidenced that there is a significant and moderate positive correlation between talent acquisition strategies and business performance [Tm:r=0.403, TI:r=0.378, TO:r=0.330] in public sector organization, which are more than 0.3. In social sciences, based on Cohen's criterion, correlation values of more than 0.3 are considered as sizable level of association (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2013; (Chinna & Yuen, 2009).

5.4 Hypotheses Testing

Multiple regressions were used to test the hypotheses (H1, H2 and H3) and results are presented in Table 02. The results of the multiple regressions proved that, BP depends on TAS (Tm, TI & TO). The R-squared value was 0.193, which means 19.3% of the variation in BP is explained by Tm, TI and TO. The p-value from the ANOVA table is less than 0.001, which means that at least one of the three variables: Tm, TI and TO can be used to model BP. The equation: $BP = 2.561 + 0.168 (Tm) + 0.148 (TI) + 0.065(TO)$. Thus, for every unit increase in Tm, BP is expected to increase by 0.168 units provided other variable remain unchanged and for every unit increase in TI, BP is expected to increase by 0.148 units provided other variable remain unchanged. Furthermore, for every unit increase in TO, BP is expected to increase by 0.065 units provided other variable remain unchanged. P-value of only Tm and TI are less than 0.05. Hence, Tm and TI are the significant predictors of BP and TO is not the significant predictor of BP. Based on the standardized Beta coefficients; the effect of Tm (0.235), TI (0.197) and TO (0.073). The VIF values are less than 5. Hence, there is no problem of multicollinearity. In the residual plot, all the points are falling within ± 3 and the points are at random. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality on the residuals gives a p-value of 0.058, which is more than 0.05. It means that residuals are normally distributed, and it is symmetrical. Thus, the assumption of normality of the residual terms is met. Hence, data are supported to accept the H1 and H2 only and H3 is not supported by the data.

6. Discussion and Implementation

Finally, study revealed that significant understandings of the effects of TAS (Tm, TI and TO) on BP of public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Even though talent acquisition strategies are significant predictors of public sector business performance, its contribution to the business performance is minimal. Consistent with the present study, Arachige and Robertson (2015)

stated, the effect of high-performance work practices such as recruitment, selection and hiring on financial performance of Sri Lankan organizations were not substantial. Along with Abeyssekara (2007) confirmed that realistic job information also was not significant. The findings of the talent management studies of Beheshtifar & Nekoie.Moghadam (2012) and Ashton & Morton (2006) almost equivalent to the present study. Hence, they conclude that talent identification was vital in organizational growth since in order to successfully nurture and manage talent, organizations ought to be able to discover the right talent and furnish a favorable work environment.

Thenuwara (2018) emphasized that there was a positive significant relationship between talent identification and organizational success. Mangusho, et.al (2015) stressed that even though talent identification is a critical factor of the organization, it leads to the high performance of the business. Marwat, Qureshi, & Ramay (2006) and Saddam & Mansor (2015) stated that talent acquisition strategies are the initial step of traditional HRM process which supports in identifying and locating of talented people for the appropriate job in order to boost the business performance. Arif & Uddin (2016) and McGee (2006) studied the staffing and selection process which involves recruitment procedures & policies, cost & time constraints, selection practices & criteria were significant causes of the employees and organizational performance (effectiveness, organizational image, efficiency and innovativeness) of the micro finance institutions in Kigali.

The study can be concluded that talent acquisition has significant positive impact on business performance. Moreover, the study advocated that organizations can move forward their betterment through different aspect of talent acquisition like employer branding and giving guaranteed of providing benefit for their existing and potential staff. This suggestion could be considered by the policy makers especially of public sector organizations in Sri Lanka to enhance their performance. From the above discussions there are two things to be addressed; the first is limitations of this study and the second is comments for future research. The prevailing literature on TAS in this review does not detect the variables related to the internal alignments between TAS and BP. Hence this study shows moderate association between independent and dependent variables. TAS studies used in this review are also lacking in testing of relationship between demographic variables and TAS in order to achieve the organizational success. In addition to current study involved public sector organizations. Hence, researches in other sectors might yield different results, in this regard; replicating this study in different settings would be

worthwhile to establish the validity and generalizability of the present findings across different contexts. In terms of further research, above factors can be considered and must remember that the time of TM is changing rapidly.

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