**STRATEGIC TALENT MANAGEMENT IN EMERGING MARKETS**

**GUEST EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION**

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Since a group of McKinsey consultants coined the phrase the “War for Talent” in 1997 (Axelrod, Handfield-Jones, & Michaels, 2002), academic and practitioner interest in strategic talent management continues to grow and business leaders consider the search for talented people as the single most important managerial preoccupation for this decade (Deloitte, 2010; Guthridge, Komm, & Lawson, 2008). *Strategic talent management* is defined as ‘activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation’ (Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p.304). Strategic talent management offers a distinct approach to the management of human resources and a response to the changes occurring in a turbulent operating environment, a means of improving firm performance (Joyce and Slocum, 2012), reducing employee turnover (Ballinger, Craig, Cross and Gray, 2011) and achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Iles, Priest and Chuai, 2010; Chatman, O’Reilly and Chang, 2005).

While the interest in talent management is growing (see for example Oltra and Lopez, 2013; Minbaeva and Collings, 2013; Joyce and Slocum, 2012; Guerci and Solari, 2012), the current assumptions and concepts in the strategic talent management literature are strongly embedded in the context of multinational, private, and US-based organizations, and may not be appropriate for describing and examining talent management in organizations operating in emerging market contexts (Collings et al., 2011). The growing importance of emerging economies has led to an upsurge of strategy research on the topic (Wright, Filatotchev, Hoskisson, & Peng, 2005); however, research on strategic talent management has not kept pace with the research on multinational companies (MNCs) from emerging economies. While there has been an accelerated interest in emerging markets and emerging market MNCs studies in recent special issues in international business/management journals focus on internationalization, market entry strategy, and location choice aspects (Luo & Tung, 2007; Aulakh, 2007). It is widely agreed that the motivations behind emerging market MNC’ international operations, particularly in developed markets, are related to capability building. Strategic talent management, therefore, can play a crucial role in building absorptive capacity, which helps firms develop ability to recognize the value of new information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends. In addition, strategic talent management may facilitate reverse knowledge transfer to emerging market multinationals’ other subsidiaries and play crucial role in the success of the firm in diverse cultural environments.

The purpose of this special issue is therefore to generate a collection of papers on how emerging market companies understand the concept of talent management and how they plan and execute strategic talent management initiatives. The first article in the special issue, by Wenjia Cui, Zaheer Khan and Shlomo Y. Tarba, examines how strategic talent management (STM) is defined and understood by Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and of the talent management and retention strategies Chinese SMEs use in the service sector. The case study of four Chinese service SMEs reveals that managers have different views about talent: according to some, STM means simply having a right candidate in the right job category. The findings also indicate that work environment, career advancement opportunities, and a good compensation package are acknowledged as a best strategy for attracting talent. The findings further suggest that Chinese SMEs use similar approaches to those used by firms in developed markets, but Chinese SMEs pay more attention to the compensation package and job roles. Overall, the findings indicate that SMEs take both a universalist and a selective performance–oriented approach when it comes to talent management in China.

This is followed by the article by Sunanda Nayak, Jyotsna Bhatnagar and Pawan Budhwar highlighting how social networking has been strategically utilized as an effective tool by organizations for employer branding and innovative talent acquisition strategies in India. Qualitative data from 78 semi-structured interviews with human resources (HR) professionals of information technology (IT), information technology–enabled services (ITeS), and talent acquisition organizations confirm the growing utilization of social networking sites (SNSs) as part of the organizational HR strategy for employer branding and talent sourcing, acquisition and retention, and reinforcing stronger relationship with their employees. The study contributes to the fields of talent management and social networks and has several key implications for practitioners regarding the usefulness of SNSs to organizational branding, talent management, and retention.

The third article, by Carole Tansley and Susan Kirk, demonstrates how organizational talent engage in framing processes to negotiate their social order when organizational mobility requirements are invoked. Emerging from this study is a typology of four talent mobility frame positions: acceptance, adaptation, avoidance, and abdication. The article contributes by illustrating the role that framing plays in global talent management mobility practices, extending contemporary studies on global talent mobility by demonstrating how individual choices are enacted through frame positions, and showing how having a flexible approach to managing global talent can facilitate not only the management of existing operations, but also enable expansion into new and emerging markets.

The fourth article, by Judith Ambrosius, analyzes the relationship between different strategic talent management practices and employees’ intention to leave Brazilian multinational corporations (MNCs). Drawing on the resource-based view, eight research hypotheses are developed and tested using a sample of 61 employees from Brazilian MNCs. Linear regression modeling reveals that organizational support and perceived career opportunity are negatively related to Brazilian employees’ intention to leave, while training and development is positively related. Furthermore, it is found that perceived career opportunity moderates these relationships. This study derives important implications for strategic talent management in Brazilian MNCs and contributes to the more general literature on human resource management in emerging-market multinationals.

The fifth article, by Marina O. Latukha, aims to prove the influence of talent management (TM) practices on competitive advantage (CA) in internationalized Russian firms. This article explores the peculiarities of TM practices in Russian companies and empirically proves a positive relationship between TM practices and CA in the emerging-market context. The article identifies a number of specific TM practices that influence CA. The article argue that succession planning and career development have the greatest impact on CA in Russian firms.

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