Leadership Management & Talent Development

(Chapter 4 of 5)

MIND THE GAP

Bridging Theory and Practice in a Post-Covid Era

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Contents

Leadership Management & Talent Development

Introduction

This stream comprised a cross section of research from a wide range of contexts – both place and sectors. In this section nine abstracts/papers are presented which highlighted findings to help inform, shape, or evaluate leadership, management or talent management practices.   The first paper paid attention to Line Managers' Involvement in Talent Management. Presented as a single case study of a Malawian Bank the research provided practical guidance for devising appropriate ways for professionalising line managers leadership skills to effectively develop talent throughout the organisation by proposing an inclusive talent management strategy. The research brought value by presenting deep insight and coverage of line manager practices in the creation of talent management practices in a single case study example.

The second paper investigates the impact of Covid-19 institutional measures within a private Lebanese University upon employee engagement. Specifically, the availability of institutional strategies and policies for working away from the office, communication hot-lines, and the availability of IT and human resources to deal with personnel-related issues. Quantitative analysis of the responses of 60 employees and academics support the causality between institutional measures to cope with COVID-19 and leadership attitude and employees' engagement.

The third paper explored the challenges of leading remotely. Through a qualitative study of 40 research participants the study examined how leaders were navigating team dynamics and team engagement whilst working remotely. The main goal of this study centred the research around developing relevant leadership competencies, practices, and techniques that can contribute to overcoming the challenges that may arise in remote teams' settings and contributes to the body of knowledge about remote working during Covid-19.

The fourth paper shined a spotlight on the attractiveness of internship advertisement to prospective applicants through the lens of employer branding. The study used a mixed methods design employing a concurrent triangulation strategy. Content analysis of 94 internship listings published in the largest Russian job portal, HeadHunter, and collected surveys from 274 prospective interns were examined. The study showed a mismatch between employer branding strategies and prospective interns' perceptions of employer attractiveness. The results call for HRD professionals to help companies bring learning and professional development to the forefront of internships and to re-calibrate their advertisements, hence strengthening their recruiting messages and attractiveness of their employer brand to potential interns. The study contributes to HRD by applying the employer branding theory to an understudied population of interns, hence providing new insights into internships as a collaboration between universities and companies.

The fifth paper written by Dr Alexandra Anderson and I presents an outline abstract of an impact case study situated in an SME context. The abstract sets out an approach to the development of a multi-dimensional Impact Case Study. The sample informing the case study will be 120 SME Business Owners from the Sheffield City Region who undertook a government funded Leadership Development intervention delivered by Sheffield Hallam University from March 2020 to July 2021. In addition to the 120 Business Owners the research scope will include other stakeholder groups including the CABs and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Impact Case Study will deploy a mixed method design. The proposed results will provide workplace learning and development practitioners with insight in which they can have some influence when working with Leaders from SME contexts. It will provide CABs and

the LEP additional insight into Business Growth strategies deployed during a period of crisis. Additionally, it will provide in-depth understanding of how to navigate the role of leadership during and in a time of crisis.

The sixth paper still on the theme of organisational leadership in a time of crisis drew on secondary sources to inform recommendations for leadership practice. Focusing on the discourse of transformational leadership the authors presented five factors the authors highlighted the importance of effective communication to increase trust and minimize stress and anxiety; leaders should share information with empathy and optimism; leaders should use credibility and trustworthiness to build trust; leaders should share facts quickly, be transparent and act with consistency.

The seventh paper uses a system thinking approach to increase leadership capacity. The authors propose that exploring leadership through a systems thinking lens facilitates agility and flexibility. Linking to complexity theory the authors explore and conceptualize the need for a system thinking approach, which they argue can balance employee well-being whilst maintaining business continuity. The conceptual paper also examines the systems thinking approach to help increase leadership capacity.

The eighth paper provides insights into leadership and management in the voluntary sector, paying attention to the skills required in this context. With the significant increase in the UK of volunteers with a significant movement to the delivery of the social justice agenda little attention has been paid about the quality of leadership and management in a voluntary context. The research based on 16 in depth interviews from across 9 organisations presented themes around experiences of leading and managing and where and how participants have developed relevant skills, both formally and informally to lead and manage in a voluntary setting.

The nineth and final paper in this stream focused on a school's culture and its impact on teacher retention in a pandemic environment. The research investigated a school's culture in relation to teacher retention. Utilising the lens of culture, influenced in part by school leaders, the research shone a spot light on the impact of school culture on teacher retention. The research project went some way to addressing the research question in the context of a worldwide pandemic by using cultural theoretical perspectives and analysing relevant literature.

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Line Managers' Involvement in Talent Management: The Case of a Malawian Bank

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Abstract #10

Purpose - Line Managers (LMs) are a critical stakeholder in the success of talent management (TM) activities due to the frequent and close interactions that they have with employees (Blanco and Golik 2021; Cooke et al., 2014:226; Blass and Maxwell 2012:256). However, little is known about how LMs are involved in TM. This paper aims to examine the involvement of LMs in TM at a Case Study Organisation.

Design/methodology/approach - Our findings draw on an embedded single case study using 47 in-depth semi-structured interviews with multi-stakeholders (e.g., LMs, Human Resources Department (HRD) staff, senior management, supervisors, officers, and the Staff Representative Council). The interviews were supported by the analysis of secondary data, for example, documentation.

Findings - The study found that the Case Study Organisation managed its talent using a hybrid TM philosophy comprising an exclusive strategic position TM philosophy and an inclusive self-initiated talent development TM philosophy. Consistent with the hybrid TM philosophy, LMs initiated TM processes, proposed TM decisions, implemented TM decisions, and acquired TM expertise. In terms of coverage, LMs were more involved in TM since they performed several operational tasks (e.g., initiating TM processes and implementing TM decisions) in several TM practices such as talent acquisition and identification, talent development, performance management, and merit pay. In terms of depth, the involvement of LMs in TM was moderate because their involvement was limited to proposing decisions across TM practices. This was supported by a moderate acquisition of TM expertise as the LMs' TM training had mixed reviews.

Limitation - The findings are limited to the Case Study Organisation as the study adopted a single case study.

Originality/value - Theoretical - We respond to calls by several scholars for an in-depth study on LMs' involvement in TM within different national and industrial contexts (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen 2016; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti et al., 2022). We attained this by providing insight on the coverage and depth of LMs' involvement in TM in a Case Study Organisation.

Methodology – By drawing our findings on an embedded single case study, we respond to the call by Cooke (2018:11) and Cooke et al., (2022) for in-depth human-centered qualitative research. Finally, we respond to the call by Gallardo-Gallardo et al., (2020:463) for multi-stakeholders perspectives studies on LMs' involvement in TM.

Relevance to the conference stream

The study provided guidance for devising appropriate ways for capacitating LMs leadership skills which in turn could among others, help them develop talent effectively thereby enabling the bank to overcome talent challenges emanating from changes in the environment. Thus, the study relates well with research stream "Leadership, Management and Talent Development

Paper – Line Managers' Involvement in Talent Management: The Case of a Malawian Bank

WORKING PAPER

TOPIC

Line Managers' Involvement in Talent Management: The Case of a Malawian Bank

2.0   Introduction

TM research is increasingly focused on talent shortages (Vaiman et al 2012), the conceptualisation of TM (Scullion and Collings 2011), the correlation between TM and performance (Sheehan 2012), and more recently, the impact of COVID-19 (Cascio 2020). While recognising the progress made in TM research, several authors have called for more in-depth empirical studies to contextualise the TM research agenda in line with LMs involvement within different national and industrial contexts (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen 2016; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020; Kravariti *et al.*, 2022; Cooke 2018). For example, there is a lack of knowledge around LMs' involvement in various TM elements via HRM (e.g. Gollan *et al.*, 2015), their involvement in single TM practice, e.g. - talent identification (e.g. Blanco and Golik 2021; Kotlyar 2018; García-Carbonell *et al.*, 2015), and how they mediate talent performance (e.g. Kravariti *et al.*, 2022). In addition, there is limited research on TM in the banking sector (e.g. Alruwaili, 2018), or TM in the Malawian context (e.g. Jamu, 2017; Dzimbiri and Molefakgotla 2021). Studies that have been conducted do not provide a holistic understanding of the topic, mainly due to, (1) their focus on LMs' involvement in HRM decentralisation (Gollan *et al.,* 2015), and (2) their focus on a single TM practice (e.g. talent identification) which limits our insight on whether the extent of involvement is the same across TM practices or varies from one practice to another (Blanco and Golik 2021). Excluding the work of Hirsh (2015), who attempted to account for the extent of LMs' involvement in TM, prominent research lacks in examining the extent to which LMs are involved in TM (CIPD 2016; Voxted 2019; Bratton and Watson 2018). This is because relevant research on TM in the banking sector has focused on other aspects than LMs (Racolța-Paina and Bucur 2019), coupled with the majority of research studies conducted in Europe, Asia, and limited parts of Africa, all contextually different from Malawi. Thus, following Jamu's (2017) work on TM in Malawian universities and Dzimbiri and Molefakgotla's (2021) on the Malawian health sector, this study explores the involvement of LMs in TM in the banking sector, looking specifically at the Case Study Organisation. To attain the aim, the study is guided by the following two research questions, (1) how is talent understood and managed through the lenses of TM philosophy? (2) How are LMs involved in TM?

3.0   The Case Study Organisation's context

The Case Study Organisation is a non-profit, state-owned organisation entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the price and financial stability of the country. Like other state-owned banks around the world, pursuing their mandate includes supervising the banking sector which is one of the most demanding and challenging sectors (RBM2018). Unlike manufacturing and other service sectors, the banking sector is very challenging due to the fierce competition that forces banks to continually engage in ICT enabled innovation to create differentiated products (e.g. digital banking). This ultimately intensifies the dynamism of the sector (Soto 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2014:133; Copper *et al.,* 2019; Kirsch and Wailes 2012; Mofokeng 2018:453; Wang *et al.,* 2014;133). Consequently, the sector experiences an ever-increasing demand for resilient, trustworthy, agile, and adaptable talent who can leverage technology to adapt banks to the sector's dynamics (Cooke *et al.,* 2019; NBGL 2018:2; Mofokeng 2018:453). Yet, due to the intense competition for skilled workers and coupled with the lack of talent in the industry, talent is very difficult to attract and retain (NBGL 2018; Mutasa 2019:2). The situation is exasperated with state-owned banks like the Case Study Organisation whose nature of the jobs demands unique talents, for instance, financial-supervision talents that are not locally available and may not be attracted by available remuneration (Mendzela 2009:7). Thus, understanding how LMs are involved in TM would be important to address the challenges as LMs are one of the key TM stakeholders in the Case Study Organisation.

4.0   Literature review

4.1.   Understanding the term talent

A notable shortfall of talent is a lack of clarity (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013:290). This is evidenced by the existence of multiple definitions with different connotations. (Berger and Berger 2011:4; Iles 2013). While some scholars have bemoaned the lack of a universal definition of talent, others nevertheless failed to recognise the need for a clear and consistent definition (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Williams 2000:34), as the lack of a universal definition of talent provides an opportunity to organization to formulate their meaning of what talent is rather than accepting universal or prescribed definitions (Tansley 2011:270). Therefore, different organisations define talent differently since the term is heavily influenced by the nature of its business, industry, and context (CIPD 2007; Tansley 2011:270). Yet, the way talent is understood determines the TM approach adopted by organisations (Turner *et al.,* 2016:58). Thus, the subsequent section provides an understanding of the TM approach.

4.1.1   Understanding the term talent management (TM)

TM refers to a "systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of 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 employees and to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation" (Collings and Mellahi 2009:304). While the definition is discredited for its failure to consider environmental labour changes, nonetheless, it is strategically focused and comprehensive (Cappelli 1999; Cascio and Boudreau 2016). This is because it builds on earlier influential TM perspectives/approaches developed by prominent scholars (Collings and Mellahi 2009:305; Lewis and Heckman 2006; Boudreau and Ramstad:2005).

First, Lewis and Heckman (2006) through a wide-ranging review of some TM definitions, identified three TM perspectives that organisations used to manage talent. The first perspective equated TM to traditional HRM in which all employees were considered talented and managed the same (Cooke *et al.*, 2014). While the perspective is well known for promoting fairness and equality among employees, nonetheless, the perspective is discredited for its failure to distinguish itself from traditional HRM (Iles *et al.,* 2010:127). In contrast, the second perspective regards TM as a talent pool that "focuses on projecting employee/staffing needs and managing the progression of employees through positions" (Lewis and Heckman, 2006:140). The perspective assumes that the organisation is aware of its future needs and all it ought to do is to devise a plan that guides the provision of those needs (Cooke *et al.,* 2014:256). The third perspective focuses on talented people where "high performers, high potential employees, average and underperformers are classified into A, B and C players" categories, respectively (Lewis and Heckman 2006:141; Sparrow *et al.,* 2014).

Boudreau and Ramstad (2005:129) further identified talent as "talent pools (e.g jobs, roles or competencies) whose availability would make the biggest difference to the organisation's success". Thus, to improve the definition, Collings and Mellahi (2009) came up with a fourth perspective for TM known as the identification of critical positions. The perspective involves the systematic identification of critical positions, followed by the identification of potential people to fill the positions and the deployment of differentiated management practices designed to attract, retain, and develop them (Huselid *et al.*, 2005; Sparrow and Makram 2015:253; Mellahi and Collings 2010:145). While the perspective is discredited for creating inequality among employees, nonetheless, it is credited for its ability to contribute to organisational competitive advantage (Huselid *et al.*, 2005:2; Mellahi and Collings 2010:145). Yet, literature claim that there is another TM approach called the hybrid TM approach which combines exclusive and inclusive TM approaches (Stahl *et al.,*2012; Turner *et al.*, 2016).

4.2   Line managers' involvement in TM

According to CIPD (2019:1), LMs are defined as "those managers to whom individual employees or teams directly report and who have the responsibility to a higher level of management for those employees or teams." LMs are involved in TM through the following practices, talent acquisition and identification, talent development, performance management, merit payment, and TM expertise (Kotlyar 2018; García- Carbonell *et al.*, 2015; Cascon-Pereira *et al.*, 2006; Cascon-Pereira and

Valverde 2014; Lopez-Cotarelo 2018; Gautam and Davis; 2007; Brewster *et al.*, 2015; Budhwar 2000a; Hutchinson and Purcell 2010:364).

4.2.1. Talent acquisition and identification

Regarding talent acquisition practice, the literature indicates that LMs were involved in operational tasks such as formulating job descriptions and shortlisting applicants (Hutchinson and Purcell 2010:364). In addition, LMs continuously monitored employees' performance and appraised employees whose results provided input to the talent identification process (Bratton and Watson 2018:65; Adebola 2017:178; Yarnall, 2011:516). Yet some studies found that LMs had primary responsibility for talent acquisition and identification decision-making process (Lopez-Cotarelo 2018:266; Gautam and Davis; 2007:20; Brewster *et al.*, 2015:586; Budhwar 2000b:293; Hutchinson and Purcell 2010:364). In contrast, some studies found that LMs jointly shared talent acquisition decisions with HRM specialists but LMs held primary responsibility in decision making (Budhwar 2000b:293; Gautam and Davis 2007:20; Hall and Torrington 1998:49). Other studies found that LMs jointly shared talent acquisition decisions with HRM specialists, however, primary responsibility was held by HRM specialists (Watson et al 2007; Hall and Torrington 1998:49; Gautam and Davis 2007:20; Budhwar 2000b:293). Last, some studies found that LMs were completely left out of talent acquisition decisions (Gautam and Davis 2007:20; Budhwar 2000b:293; Hall and Torrington 1998:49). In light of the above, it can be deduced that there are mixed results on LMs' involvement in talent acquisition and identification.

4.2.2. Talent development

Regarding talent development practice, literature revealed that LMs' involvement in talent development was limited to tasks and responsibilities, and decision making (Cascon-Pereira *et al* 2006). About the former, LMs' undertook training needs analysis (TNA), supported learning and development through facilitating sharing of knowledge amongst employees, facilitated job rotation to enhance employees' work experience, undertook secondment, initiated talent development policies, and coached staff (Macneil 2001; Šiugždinienė 2008:34; Fitzgerald 2014; CIPD 2007; Gibb 2003:283; Hutchinson and Purcell 2010:364; CIPD 2019:4). Concerning the latter, LMs' had sole responsibility for talent development decision-making (Budhwar 2000b:293; Hall and Torrington 1998:49; Staunton 2014:94). In contrast, other studies found that LMs' jointly shared talent development decision-making with HRM specialists but held primary responsibility in decision making (Gautam and Davis 2007:20; Torrington and Hall 1998:49; Budhwar 2000b:293). Some studies found that LMs jointly shared responsibility with HRM specialists in talent development decisions making but the primary responsibility for decision-making was held by HRM specialists (Budhwar 2000b:293; Gautam and Davis 2007:20). Finally, LMs never participated in talent development (Budhwar 2000b:293; Hall and Torrington 1998:49). Overall, the review uncovered mixed findings on the involvement of LMs in talent development.

4.2.3. Performance Management

The literature presents mixed results of LMs' involvement in performance management. The first set of studies found that the involvement of LMs in performance management was limited to performance management tasks and responsibilities levels (Cascon-Pereira *et al.,* 2006; Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014). For instance, LMs were involved in setting performance targets, continuously monitoring employees' performance progress, and providing performance feedback to employees (Bratton and Watson 2018:65; Hutchinson and Purcell 2010:364; CIPD 2019:4). In contrast, some studies found that LMs undertook performance appraisals and had primary responsibility for performance appraisals' decisions (Hall and Torrington 1998:49; Mansor *et al.*, 2011:2342). Some studies found that LMs jointly shared decision making on performance appraisals with HRM specialists but LMs had primary responsibility for decision making (Watson et al 2007; Keegan *et al.,* 2012). In contrast, some studies found that LMs jointly shared performance appraisals' decision-making with HRM, but HRM held primary responsibility (Valverde et al 2006:627; Hall and Torrington 1998:49). Overall, the review uncovered mixed findings on the involvement of LMs in performance management.

4.2.4.   TM expertise

Studies revealed that LMs encountered capacity challenges to perform TM tasks effectively (Trullen *et al.,* 2020). Consistent with the claim Mansor et al (2011:2350) suggested that such problems could be overcome by capacitating LMs with TM expertise as evidenced by the claim in his study that LMs training empowered them to undertake talent development responsibilities effectively. Several studies established LMs' involvement in the acquisition of TM expertise (Golik *et al.,* 2018; Trullen *et al.*, 2016:456). Yet, the progress on LMs' involvement in the acquisition of TM expertise has not been promising as typified by research findings that LMs were either provided with inadequate TM training or were completely denied the opportunity of TM training (Hutchinson and Purcell 2010:367; Cunningham *et al.*, 2004;284; Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014).

4.2.5. Merit payment

The literature presents mixed results of LMs' involvement in merit payment. Budhwar (2000b:293) found that LMs had sole responsibility for reward decisions in 14.3% of the sampled companies. In contrast, some studies found that LMs shared decision-making responsibility with other stakeholders such as HRM specialists, yet primary responsibility was held by HRM specialists (Nik Mat 2014:117; Hutchinson and Purcell 2010:363; Budhwar 2000b:293). Yet, some studies found that LMs were completely left out of the merit-payment decision-making process (Evans 2015:466; Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014:155; Budhwar 2000b:293). Finally, Budhwar (2000:293) found that LMs shared decision-making responsibility on rewards with HRM specialists, yet LMs held primary responsibility for decision-making in 11% of the sampled companies.

4.3.   Literature review summary and gap

The literature review exercise looked at talent definitions and TM perspectives. In addition, the review unearthed mixed findings on LMs' involvement in TM practices. The first set of studies found that LMs were involved in the operational tasks of TM practices. In terms of coverage, the results indicate that LMs were more involved since they performed several operational tasks in several TM practices. Yet, in terms of depth, LMs were less involved since their involvement was limited to operational rather than decision-making (Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014; Cascon-Pereira et al 2006; Budhwar 2000b). The second set of studies found that LMs alone made decisions in TM. In terms of depth, this entailed that LMs were heavily involved as they had decision-making authority (Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014; Cascon-Pereira *et al.,* 2006; Budhwar 2000). The third set of studies found that LMs shared decision-making responsibility with HRD, and LMs held primary responsibility for decision-making. In terms of depth of involvement, this entailed that LMs were more involved in TM as they had the final say on TM decisions. The fourth set of studies found that LMs shared decision-making responsibility with HRD in which HRD had primary responsibility in decision making. This entailed that LMs were moderately involved as they were partially involved in the decision-making process through either proposing for decision or being consulted whenever a decision was made (Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014; Cascon-Pereira *et al.*, 2006; Budhwar 2000). Finally, some studies found that LMs were completely left out of the decision-making process. Thus, if one was to map the literature findings on the continuum where at one end the LMs own decision-making and at the other end, the LMs do not own the decision-making and the middle has shared responsibility, one would be tempted to extrapolate that the LMs' involvement across TM practices lagged in as far as owning decision-making in TM practices is concerned as very few studies found LMs making TM decisions alone, or having primary responsibility on decision making where the responsibility was shared with HRD. Most studies found that LMs were involved in operational TM tasks. Nevertheless, such a deduction would be premature and susceptible to criticism as it is based on an incomplete examination of the whole phenomenon. First, this is because the findings were derived mostly from studies that focused purely on HRM which was guided by egalitarian principles, and not TM which is guided mostly by the doctrine of exclusivity. Second, most of the relevant TM studies focused on single TM practice thereby making it difficult to appreciate whether their level of involvement could be the same across the practices or vary from one practice to another. Third, most studies were conducted in the USA, Europe, and Asia, the Middle East, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa and focused on private and multinational organisations, and very few on Africa and the banking sector (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen 2016:40; Thunnissen *et al.,* 2013:1745; Anlesinya *et al.*, 2019). Third, most TM studies are conceptual (Thunnissen *et al.,* 2013:1748). Thus, TM research has lagged in offering TM solutions to organizations, especially within different national and industrial contexts (Thunissen 2016:57; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2020). Consistent with the above observations and cognisant of the fact that "TM is not a one size fits all" issue, scholars called for more empirical contextualised research specifically focusing on the LMs' involvement in TM in a state-owned organisation in Africa (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen 2016; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2020; Kravariti *et al.,* 2022; Anlesinya et al 2019). Thus, the

study intends to fill the gap in question. Three key research questions guided the study, (1) how is talent understood and managed through TM philosophy lenses? (2) How are LMs involved in TM?

5.0   Research Methodology

Consistent with the nature of the study whose central research questions are "how" and "which" aimed for an in-depth examination of LMs' involvement in TM, the study followed a pragmatic research philosophy (Saunders *et al.,* 2016; Bonneton *et al.,* 2020; Samuelson and Martea 2020). The study adopted an *embedded single* case study because of its capability to facilitate an in-depth examination of the LMs' involvement in TM by analysing sub-units of analysis (e.g., varied levels of employees - LMs, Senior Management, HRD staff, other staff, and Staff Representative Council) within the main analysis unit - the Case Study Organisation (Bonneton *et al.,* 2020; Whelan *et al.,* 2010; Robson and McCartan 2016). While acknowledging the criticisms of an embedded single case study for lack of generalisation and breadth, (Renwick 2003; MacLeod and Pennell, 1993: 536; Crowe *et al.,* 2011; Stake 1995), it should be emphasized that the present study was not aimed at attaining generalisation or breadth, rather, it was aimed for an in-depth understanding of key stakeholders understanding of TM implementation through the lenses of LMs within their particular context-the Case Study Organisation context. (Yin 2014, Gustafsson 2017; Bryman 2004; Renwick 2003; Kelliher, 2005: 123; Evans 2017; Tyskobo 2019). The study thus responds to the call by Cooke (2018:11) for single case studies on HRM. Besides, in response to the request by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, (2020:463) on multi-stakeholder perspectives studies of LMs' involvement in TM, qualitative data was collected through in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews with forty-seven (47) key stakeholders at varying levels who were sampled using non-probability and quota sampling techniques (Whysall *et al.,* 2019:120; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Using the NVIVO software, the collected data were subjected to a reflexive thematic analysis process (Braun and Clarke 2021:4; Creswell 2009:186; Rossman and Rallis 2017:450; Bryman 2012:68; Maguire and Delahunt 2017:3354). Based on the research questions, two themes were generated namely, (1) management of talents using hybrid TM philosophy, and (2) LMs' initiated, proposed, implemented TM decisions and acquired TM expertise. The subsequent sections provide research findings by unwrapping the themes.

4.0   Findings

4.1   Theme 1: Managing talents using hybrid TM philosophy.

The study unearthed eleven (11) diverse perspectives on talent definition. Yet, further analysis revealed two perspectives on talent definitions namely, (1) talent as attributes staff possessed as stated by participant SP10*"I look at talent as skills and also experience that someone has"* **(**SP10), and (2) talent as elite staff whose performance is exceptional and have potential to excel in higher positions in future as defined in the following excerpts *"those people who really work hard to add significant value to the bank's operations…the way they work and the way they achieve the bank's objectives"* (LM18), and *"talent refers to certain employees that have certain potential"* (SP3).

The study found that the Case Study Organisation managed its talent using a hybrid TM approach comprising an exclusive strategic position and inclusive self-initiated training. The former was manifested in special treatment accorded to employees in the position of supervisor, manager, director, and executive manager vis-à-vis employees below supervisor positions. For instance, the Case Study Organisation managed employees in strategic positions using differentiated TM practices such as (1) 360 degrees performance management system and (2) devoted more resources (e.g. huge salaries, large housing loan entitlements, and free cars) towards retention initiatives and (3) and subjected the employees to specialised supervisory and leadership development programme (LDP) programmes as stated below,

"There are several types of training and there are certain training programmes like supervisory and leadership training programmes. These are intended to train employees on how to manage their staff and its only provided to people who have the responsibility of looking after other staff and like supervisors, managers and executive management" (HRD1)

The latter was manifested in the self-initiated capacity-building programme which supported employees wishing to advance their career aspirations. The programme was open to all employees and was not linked to talent development needs analysis (TNA) results. Yet, employees were only allowed to pursue a course relevant to their work and to pass exams on the first attempt. Thus, the Case Study Organisation provided all the support (e.g. financial and time off to attend classes, etc) until the employee completed the programme. The programme had a significant impact on employees' career aspirations particularly those below supervisory positions as it enabled them to be promoted to pivotal positions. The programme enabled employees to attain relevant qualifications which were one of the promotions eligibility criteria besides experience and performance.

4.2 Theme 2: LMs initiated, proposed, implemented TM decisions, and acquired TM expertise

4.2.1 Talent acquisition and identification

The study found that the Case Study Organisation deployed recruitment and promotion practices to acquire and identify talents from external and internal markets, respectively, to fill its key vacancies. Additionally, the study found that LMs initiated the process by identifying the vacancies as claimed by (SM1),

""Like in my department, line managers are the ones who identifies gaps in their divisions, the gaps that are supposed to be filled" (SMD1),

drawing job description, and formulating interview questions as evidenced in the extract below,

"Thereafter, they are involved in making job descriptions, making interview questions and interviewing the candidates with other people during interviews" (SP13).

Besides initiating talent acquisition, LMs proposed decisions in both talent acquisition and identification. In the former, LMs participated in talent selection interviews and recommended successful candidates for employment as claimed by LM15 "a*s a manager, I was involved in the recruitment process we… participate in the interview"* (LM15). In the latter, LMs recommended employees for promotion into key positions as stated in the extract below,

"most of the promotions in the bank the way they have been done is that recommendations come from the managers, they look at the team and then make recommendations to Director and HR and then HR does promotions, so the role mainly is to make the recommendations" (SP2)

The criteria that guided LMs to identify potential staff for promotion comprised three factors namely, experience in the Case Study Organisation, performance, and relevant qualifications. Yet, the extent of the impact of the factors on the outcome varied from one factor to another with experience having the most impact compared to performance and qualification as observed by LM19 below,

"Very interesting if you may ask me in terms of promotion, what I have seen promotions in the bank are done looking on to the years of service, not necessarily that a person has a higher qualification or the person is a high performer" (SP12).

4.2.2 Talent development

The Case Study Organisation developed its talent using a hybrid talent development approach consisting of inclusive and exclusive key role talent development approaches. Consistent with the hybrid talent development approach, the study found that LMs initiated the process by undertaking TNA for inclusive short-term specialised, inclusive generic, and exclusive long-term talent development programmes as evidenced by OF1,

"So, in that process the departmental managers assist us with finding the areas that need to be trained. So, line managers actually check on individual basis what their needs are and helping each one according to his training need (OF1).

Additionally, LMs endorsed applications for an inclusive self-initiated talent development programme for staff wishing to advance their careers through pursuing professional studies under the Case Study Organisation' full sponsorship,

"Ok, I remember when I wanted to start my advanced diploma programme, I wrote a memo to the director of HR requesting for the bank's support and my manager had to endorse it before it was submitted to the DHR. The manager did his own assessment like if the programme I wanted to do will benefit our currency management department and in my case he was convinced that the programme would assist the department." (OF2).

Guided by *"the results of the training needs analysis, the manager recommends the list of names for training to the director"* (OF4). Yet, for inclusive short-term specialised, some LMs deviated from the

policy as they nominated staff to travel and not to address a training need. This was attributed to a limited talent development budget which led HRD directing departments to prioritise training needs for people who had never attended training in the previous year. With the allocated budget, not even covering the critical training needs, some LMs used the budget to motivate people through travel even though they had no training needs.

Besides TNA, seniority and years of service were used to nominate employees for a long-term programme. Yet, seniority had more impact on the outcome compared to the other two factors.

Once approvals were granted, LMs implemented the decisions by ensuring "*that people have attended their training programmes*" (LM18), and *"provide support to officers who would like to advance their career by attending day release programmes using the Banks' self-initiated programme" (SP13).*

Finally, LMs acquired TM expertise through attending a leadership development programme that was exclusively targeted at employees in key positions as one of their roles involved leading. When participants were asked if the Case Study Organisation had any programme that equipped LMs with TM skills, all stakeholders responded,

"Yes, there is a programme that trains supervisors, managers and senior managers on leadership skills and it is called leadership development programme" (LM18)

There were mixed perceptions of the programme's effectiveness. Some participants felt that the programme was inadequate because the Bank had replaced the initial service provider who was considered very knowledgeable with another consultant whom participants were skeptical of his capability.

"Of course I know after Redpoint they tried to engage MIM to continue what Redpoint used to do but they failed… However, comparing Red point and the other one, we miss Redpoint" (LM13)

Yet, some participants felt that the programme was adequate since they observed positive transformations manifested in the way some LMs managed talent after attending the programme.

"It helped so much, I remember one of the managers shared part of the program called emotional intelligence and how you manage it. I actually saw change in this manager" (OF5).

5.0   Discussions and conclusion

The study examined the involvement of LMs in TM in the Case Study Organisation. Consistent with the aim, the study was guided by two research questions, (1) how is talent understood and managed through the lenses of TM philosophy? (2) How are LMs' involved in TM? Concerning the former, the study found twelve diverse perspectives of talent (Sparrow *et al.*, 2011:11), whose further analysis

resulted in two perspectives namely, (1) talent as attributes people possessed (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013:293), and (2) talent as elite people whose performance was outstanding and had potential to work in higher positions (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.,* 2013:295). In addition, the study found that the Case Study Organisation used a hybrid TM philosophy comprising exclusive strategic position TM philosophy and inclusive self-initiated talent development TM philosophy to manage the varied talents. The former TM philosophy relates to the exclusive strategic management of pivotal positions (Collings and Mellahi 3009:305). The latter TM philosophy relates to inclusive TM philosophy (Buckingham and Vosburgh 2001:22; Cooke *et al.,* 2014:230). Finally, the finding confirms several studies that found a hybrid TM philosophy (Stahl *et al.,* 2012:26; Glenn 2012).

Regarding the latter (e.g. how are LMs involved in TM?) the study found that LMs were involved in TM practices such as talent acquisition and identification, talent development, performance management, merit payment, and acquisition of TM expertise. There were three levels of LMs' involvement in these practices. First, LMs' initiated TM processes. For instance, in talent acquisition, LMs initiated the process by identifying vacancies, drawing job descriptions, and formulating interview questions. The finding mirrors Hutchinson and Purcell (2010:364) whose study found the involvement of LMs in similar activities. Equally, in talent development, LMs initiated a talent development programme by undertaking TNA. Thus, the finding confirms work by the CIPD (2019) and Golik *et al.,* (2018:237). Likewise, LMs initiated the self-initiated talent development programme by endorsing applications for the programme (Turner 2018:324; Hirsh 2015:3). Second, LMs implemented TM decisions. For example, in talent development, LMs implemented decisions by ensuring that employees approved for the talent development programme attended the training. Thus, the initiation of TM processes, and implementation of TM decisions, entailed that LMs were more involved in operational tasks and less involved in decision-making as all the tasks mentioned had nothing to do with decision making (Cascon-Pereira *et al.,* 2006; Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014; Budhwar 2000b).

Third, LMs proposed TM decisions. First, in talent acquisition, LMs' participation in selection interviews allowed them to be part of the panel that recommended successful candidates for employment. While the finding conflicts with Brewster (2015:586) whose study found that LMs had decision-making authority on talent acquisition, nonetheless, the finding confirms Blayney *et al.,* (2020:457) who found that LMs participated in the selection interview process with other panelists. Additionally, in talent identification, LMs proposed employees for promotion into key positions. This is in line with several scholars whose studies found that LMs recommended employees into the talent pools (Cadigan *et al.*, 2020:186; Jokhio 2018:195; Adebola 2017:178). Similarly, in talent development, LMs nominated employees for training. Similar findings were reported by CIPD (2019) and Golik *et al.*, (2018:237). Likewise, LMs appraised employees whose scores were submitted to executive management for approval. Finally, LMs proposed merit pay through the performance scores which after being approved were used to determine merit payment. Similarly, Nik Mat (2014:117) found that LMs proposed merit payments for their subordinates. In terms of depth, this entailed that LMs were moderately involved in

TM since they partly participated in decision-making by making recommendations that formed the basis for executive management approval (Cascon-Pereira *et al.,* 2006; Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014; Budhwar 2000).

Finally, LMs acquired TM expertise through attending an LDP. A similar finding was reported by Kotlyar (2018:690) whose study found that LMs were subjected to TM training. While the finding confirms the acquisition of TM expertise through LDP, the extent of LMs acquisition of TM expertise situates between sufficient and insufficient ends of the continuum as there were mixed reviews of its adequacy (Cascon-Pereira et al 2006; Cascon-Pereira and Valverde 2014; Budhwar 2000b).

Overall, in terms of coverage, LMs were more involved in TM practices as they were involved in several TM practices and operational tasks. Additionally, the number of operational tasks per TM practice that LMs were involved in varied from practice to practice with talent development topping the list and merit payment the least. Yet, in terms of depth, LMs' involvement in the entire TM programme was moderate as their involvement was limited to proposing decisions. There was no variation in the level of LMs' involvement across TM practices as their depth of involvement was limited to proposing decisions. This is a very important finding as it responds to calls by several scholars for a study on LMs' involvement in TM (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunissen 2016; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2020; Kravariti *et al*, 2022; Anlesinya et al 2019). By adopting an embedded single case study, and involving multi-stakeholders, the study responds to the call by Cooke (2018:11) and Cooke *et al.,* (2022) for single case studies on HRM, and the call by Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, (2020:463) for multi-stakeholder perspectives studies on LMs involvement in TM, respectively. Yet, the study was carried out in a single case, the Case Study Organisation, thus, the findings are limited to the Case Study Organisation. In the future, studies should look at the impact of low leadership independence on LMs' involvement in a single TM practice (e.g. talent acquisition, talent development).

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Presentation – Line Managers' Involvement in Talent Management: The Case of a Malawian Bank

Included below.

Line Managers' involvement in Talent Management: The case of a Malawian Bank

Charming Nakweya, PhD Candidate, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University

Dr Sarah Pass, Senior Lecturer, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University

Dr Fotios Mitsakis, Senior Lecturer, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University

Dr Valerie Caven, Senior Lecturer, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University

1

Presentation outline

- Literature review and research gap

- Research questions

- Research methodology

- Research findings

- Research contributions and implications

Literature review and research gap

INVOLVEMENT OF LMs IN TM

- ❖ LMs and TM practices via HRM
- ❖ LMs and single TM practices
- ❖ LMs mediate talent performance

- ❖ TM and banking
- ❖ TM and Malawian Context (health and university)
- ❖ Mixed results on LMs involvement in TM

- ❖ Most are HRM studies-egalitarian doctrine not exclusivity doctrine
- ❖ Lacks an in-depth examination of the involvement of LMs in TM Western, Asian contexts dominate TM studies, and few from Africa-Malawi

- ❖ Industry focus - multinationals, health, private, manufacturing and few on banking and government institutions
- ❖ Results do not represent the whole phenomenon

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDIES ON LMS' INVOLVEMENT IN TM

- ❖ Calls for a study on the involvement of LMs in TM in a public organisation in Africa (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen 2016; Anlesinya et al 2019).

- ❖ Calls for an in-depth single case study in HRM (Cooke 2018)
- ❖ Call for multi-level stakeholders in TM studies (Gallardo-Gallardo et al 2020)

3

Research Questions

Research questions

The First Research Question

How is talent understood and managed through the lenses of TM philosophy?

The Second Research Question

How are LMs involved in TM?

NBS Nottingham Business School
Nottingham Trent University

Research methodology

- Management of talents using hybrid TM philosophy
- LMs initiate, propose, implement TM decisions and acquire TM expertise

Guided by research questions

PRAGMATIC RESEARCH

THEMES

Inductive-In-depth understanding of the

Reflexive Thematic Analysis –

DATA ANALYSIS

47 semi-structured interviews-non-probability- purposive and Quota sampling, enhanced by document

DATA COLLECTION

EMBEDDED SINGLE CASE STUDY

Sub-units of analysis -HRD, LMs, SRC, Supervisors, Officers, senior

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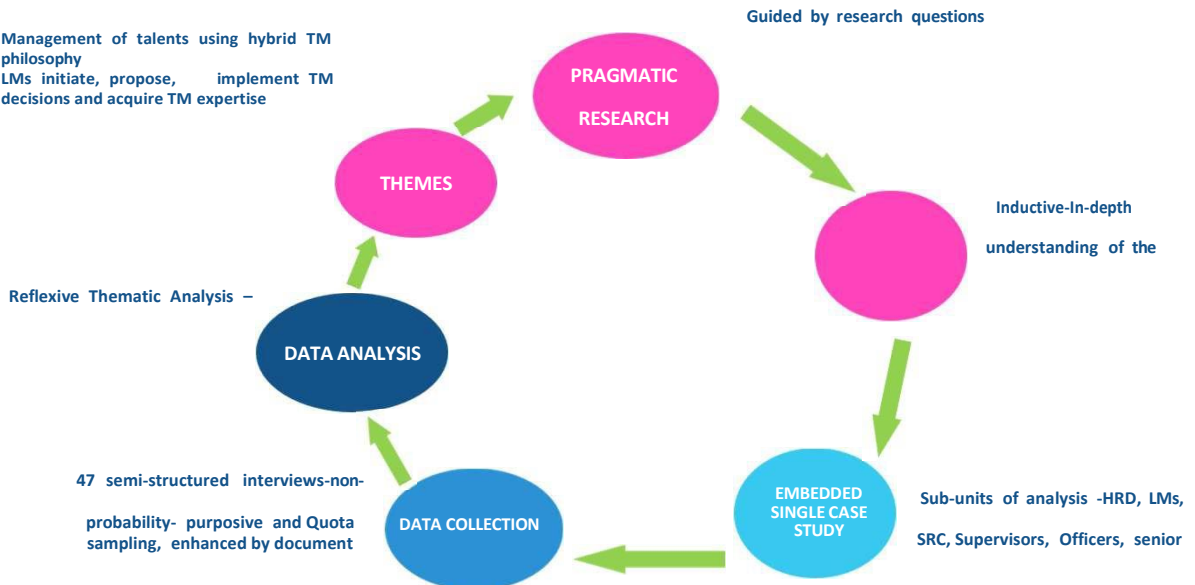
Research findings

RQ1: How is talent understood and managed through the lenses of TM philosophy? (Theme 1: Management of talents using hybrid TM

People with high Performance ❷

Employees ❽

Tech-savvy

COVID-19

Bank

Varied perspectives of talent definition ❶

Leadership Development

Differentiated PMS

Hybrid TM ❹

Exclusive position TM

Differentiated talent

Inclusive Self-initiated talent development programme TM philosophy
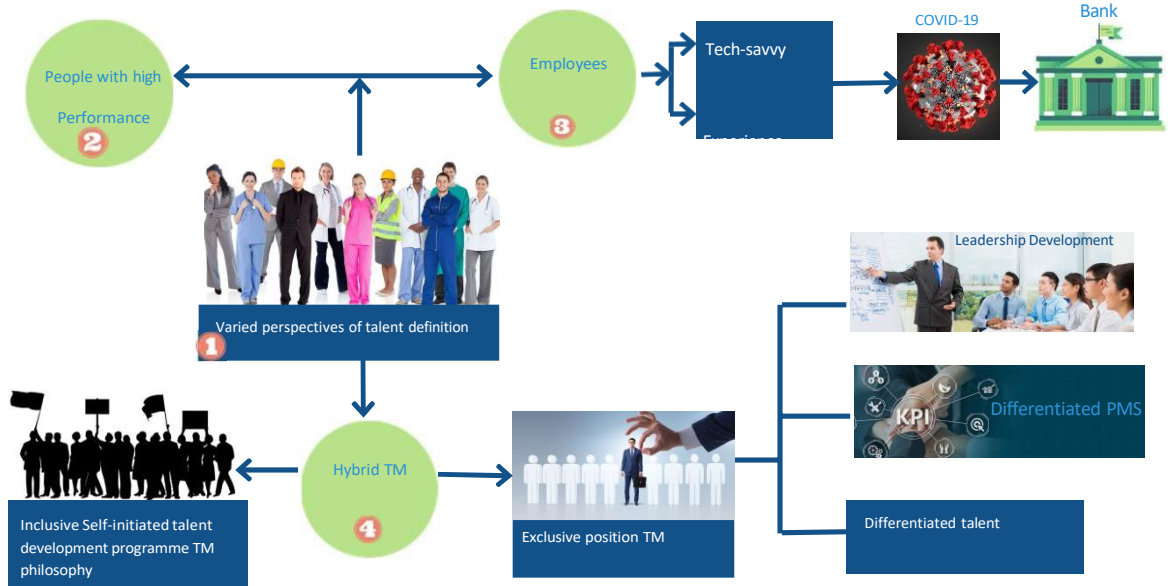
Research findings

RQ2: How are LMs involved in TM? (Theme 2: LMs initiate, propose, implement and acquire TM expertise)

Performance management ← Initiate TM → Talent acquisition and identification / Hybrid talent development

Leadership Development programme ← Acquire TM ← LMS INITIATE, PROPOSE, IMPLEMENT TM DECISION S AND ACQUIRE TM EXPERTISE → Implement TM → Hybrid talent development

Performance management ← Propose TM → Talent acquisition and identification / Hybrid talent development

7

Contributions and implications of the study

Theoretical contributions

- Respond to repeated calls on the involvement of LMs in TM from different national and industrial contexts (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen 2016; Anlesinya et al 2019).

Methodological contributions

- Respond to calls for an in-depth single case study in HRM (Cooke 2018)
- Respond to call for multi-level stakeholders in TM studies (Gallardo-Gallardo et al 2020)

Implications for future research

- Study on the impact of COVID-19 on TM through the lenses of LMs following the vaccination

Practical Implications

- Less participation of LMs in TM programmes review e.g PMS**.**
- Enhance LMs ownership of TM by incorporating TM into PMS

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Nottingham Trent University

Any Questions?

9

Employees' Engagement amid COVID-19: Institutional Measures and Practices with a Private Lebanese University

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PROF. HUSSIN HEJASE
IEEE Senior Member

Abstract #39

Employee engagement has been a highly researched topic in the field of human resources and organizational behavior. Research shows that Employee engagement can successfully predict individuals' loyalty, motivation and job performance. In contemporary studies, employee engagement includes both mental and emotional engagement aspects and thus affecting employees' work progress and intention to leave levels. Moreover, the advent of COVID-19 successive waves and the accompanying institutional measures to work from home have put employee engagement subject to stress testing organizations' ability to achieve performance indicators levels and targets.

The current study examines the impact of COVID-19 institutional measures namely the availability of institutional strategies and policies for working away from the office, communication hot-lines, and the availability of IT and human resources to deal with personnel-related issues. This study examines thus the relationship between employees' engagement and work performance, employees' commitment, and the needed institutional measures to cope with COVID-19 within a sample of employees in the context of a higher education institution in Lebanon. It also aims to discover whether there is a relation between institutional measures, leadership attitude and human resource practices relating to employees' engagement.

Quantitative analysis using a structured questionnaire is the approach used to achieve the objectives of this research. Data were collected from 60 employees and full-time academics working in a newly established private university in Lebanon. The university was selected conveniently. Description statistics and regression analysis were both carried out to analyze the data using the Statistical Product and Services Solutions SPSS, and ascertain the effect of COVID-19, institutional measures and leadership attitude on employees' engagement.

The results from this research and the evidence collected support the causality between institutional measures to cope with COVID-19 and leadership attitude and employees' engagement. Such results help in creating a better understanding for the institutional measures and employee engagement generating thus fruitful recommendations in the form of guidance for university administration especially human resource practices, counseling and employee work/life targeting the enhancement of employees' performance.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Employee loyalty, Employee motivation, Employee performance, Institutional measures, Work from home, Leadership, work-life balance, Covid-19

Key words: Employee engagement, Employee loyalty, Employee motivation, Employee performance, Institutional measures, Work from home, Leadership, work-life balance, Covid-19

Paper

Not applicable.

<u>Presentation</u>

Not applicable.

Overcoming Remote Leadership Challenges: Lessons Learned from Covid-19

DR. DANIEL GANDRITA
Universidade Europeia
DR. ANA GANDRITA
ISCTE-IUL
PROF. DAVID ROSADO
Universidade Europeia

Abstract #65

The purpose of this study is to determine how leaders are overcoming remote work and team management's challenges while navigating the pandemic context that we are now facing. The relevance of this research is based on the approach to theories of leadership articulating them with the theories of remote work and teams' management.

To formulate the research problem, we considered two analytical dimensions, remote leadership and the competencies anchored, which helps to understand how nowadays leaders adapt to remote-work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

A qualitative method was applied, and interviews by questionnaire were conducted to obtain 40 responses. As teams suddenly were pushed into remote work settings, valuable opportunities have arisen to learn more about: (1) which are the most used and intuitive digital tools; (2) which are the main challenges faced by leaders; (3) what do their teams expect from them when facing a crisis.

The results show that remote leadership is crucial while moving forward to Society 5.0 as technology becomes more and more present in our lives (Fukuda, 2020), the existence of three dimensions that need work while promoting work-life balance, and developing the right soft skills to help teams.

The main goal of this study is centered on the research of relevant leadership competencies, practices, and techniques that can contribute to overcoming the challenges that may arise in remote teams' settings and contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject of Covid-19.

References

Fukuda, K. (2020). Science, Technology and Innovation Ecosystem Transformation Toward Society 5.0, International Journal of Production Economics, 220(C), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2019.07.033

Key words: Leadership; Team Management; Remote Work; Covid-19; Human Resources Management.

Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation - Overcoming Remote Leadership Challenges: Lessons Learned from Covid-19 Included below.

U.F.H.R.D. 2022

OVERCOMING REMOTE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES:

Lessons Learned from Covid-19

Bringing theory and practice in the Post-Covid Era

Annual conference 2022

1

Daniel Gandrita

Universidade Europeia

Ana Gandrita

ISCTE-IUL

David Rosado

Academia Militar

RESEARCH TEAM.

Name and affiliation of each member

OUR RESEARCH

The content

PART I

Central Question

CENTRAL QUESTION

How did team leaders adapt to a remote-work setting during the Covid-19 pandemic?

PART II

Theoretical Framework

THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

7

LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

An interpersonal process in which a leader influences his followers (Dansereau, 2013).

A procedure of changing a group of people with several interests, expertise, and foundations into a coordinated and productive work unit (Khattak, 2020).

SARS-COV 2

The Covid-19 is usually spread either through physical contact with an individual (person-to-person), droplets, or less possibly from oral transmission (Baloch, 2020).

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND REMOTE-WORK

The measure administrated to reduce interactions among people (Chen, 2021).

Allows employees to perform their job duties remotely, far from their central workplace (McCloskey et al., 2003).

Human Resources Management

(Re)organize its activities and founding itself with an enormous task which can lead to challenges (Hamouche, 2021).

Overcome and avoid insecurity of all labor mass creating forms of communication throughout the connection of remote work (Mohammed, 2020).

The key to success is to win the trust and confidence of all employees by using the appropriate communication tools (Mohammed, 2020).
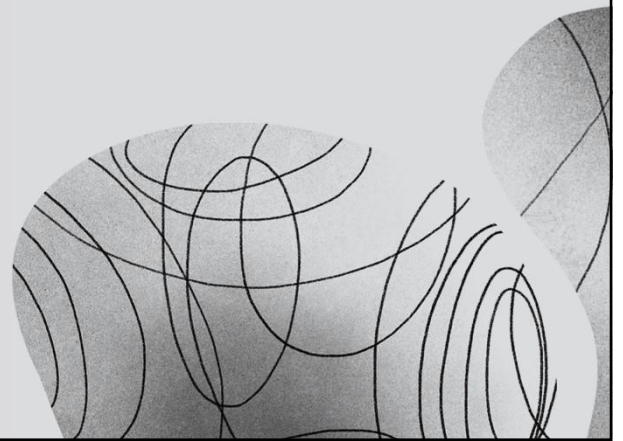
PART III

Methodology

METHODOLOGY

The application of a Qualitative method.

The questionnaire sample covered 40 individuals.

The articles found belong to Web of Science.

After the inclusion and exclusion criteria , 193 articles were applied to this study

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Keyword analysis

PART IV

Framework Analysis

FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Covid-19 Impact on Team's Dynamics and Operations

People and Organizations Embrace Remote-Work as the New Normal

Manage a Remote and/or a Hybrid Team

Main Challenges	Teams and Leaders perspective
Digital Tools for Remote Work	Importance and practical application
Dimensions	Teams and Leaders expectations

PART V

Discussion

DISCUSSION

Leaders must show a higher degree of commitment, elevating, and inspire others (Uslu, 2019).

Social distancing policy administrated to reduce interactions among people (Chen, 2021).

Challenges regarding how they communicate to their teams and how they influence their followers (Dansereau, 2013).

Alignment with organizational objectives with human resources management to provide the optimal conditions for employees to effectively contribute to greater results (Costa, 2019).

Tools like Zoom, MS Teams, and WhatsApp were embraced by some of the participants arguing that people are ready to work remotely to achieve (Sanyal, 2018).

As organizations continue to be challenged into providing services and products to their clients, the human resources management has to create new policies and practices that will enable workers to be motivated (Chansatiporn, 2019).

"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality".

Warren Berris

PART VI

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Zoom and Teams for conferences, webinars, etc.

WhatsApp used for

Challenges for managers: Support, work-life balance, and disengagement.

Difficulties in communication (Explain, provide feedback, and shared information.

3 dimensions: Daily tasks, Soft skills, and Behavior.

Continue to seek for technological tools and that workers have resources to reach organizational goals.

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH

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Internship Advertisements are not Attractive to Prospective Applicants: HRD Help is Needed

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HSE University
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HSE University

Abstract #82

The purpose of this study was to investigate attractiveness of internship advertisements to their prospective applicants through the lens of employer branding. By giving attention to internship attractiveness, universities and companies expand their current collaborations around internship provision to enhance student internship experiences, satisfaction, and employment prospects and to foster long-term sustainability of their internship programs. The study used a mixed methods design employing a concurrent triangulation strategy. We conducted a content analysis of 94 internship listings published in the largest Russian job portal, HeadHunter, and collected surveys from 274 prospective interns. The study shows a mismatch between employer branding strategies and prospective interns' perceptions of employer attractiveness. Companies emphasize economic value and visual identity as well as functional attributes while prospective interns prioritize development value and symbolic attributes. The findings suggest internship advertisements do not appeal to potential applicants. The results call for HRD professionals to help companies bring learning and professional development to the forefront of internships and to re-calibrate their advertisements, hence strengthening their recruiting messages and attractiveness of their employer brand to potential interns. HRD specialists should work closely with university career center advisors and academic program directors as well as company internship coordinators, top management, recruitment specialists, and marketing decision makers to better understand interns' drivers of attraction and audit their internship advertisements. The study contributes to HRD by applying the employer branding theory to an understudied population of interns, hence providing new insights into internships as a collaboration between universities and companies. By focusing on internship positions, which differ from full-time permanent positions across many aspects, including their duration, pay, supervision, and purpose, the study assists in understanding the unique drivers of attraction of interns, which is missing from published research on the topic.

Paper - Internship Advertisements are not Attractive to Prospective Applicants: HRD Help is Needed

Internship Advertisements are not Attractive to Prospective Applicants: HRD Help is Needed

Internships have long been considered beneficial to their three stakeholders: interns, companies, and universities (Narayan et al., 2010). For college students, internships serve as an invaluable opportunity to apply their knowledge to practice, gain some professional

experience in the industry, increase career awareness, and grow personally (Ruhanen et al., 2013; Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021; Zehr & Korte, 2020). For companies, interns represent a unique pool of potential candidates for permanent positions. Recruiting qualified candidates from this pool of educated, talented, and motivated people helps companies enrich their human capital and build a competitive advantage (Alpert et al., 2009; Elving et al., 2013). By providing internships, universities foster student employability and, hence, improve their reputation among prospective students and their parents, various educational agencies, and community organizations (Maertz et al., 2014; Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021).

Because of these and other benefits, internships have been provided by companies and required by university programs in a variety of spheres, including hospitality (Ruhanen et al., 2013; Qu et al., 2021), marketing (Alpert et al., 2009; Gault et al., 2000), computer and information technologies (Chillas et al., 2015), engineering (Zehr & Korte, 2020), and accounting (Henry et al., 1988). Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, companies and universities alike continued to search for new solutions to provide internships (Feldman, 2021). As many companies increased the number of their remote positions, they became hiring more interns than ever for their virtual or hybrid internship programs. Some reported an increase from several dozen to up to 1,400 interns for a few weeks program (Maurer, 2020). Companies in IT, finance, and energy industries, such as NVIDIA, LinkedIn, Uber, and ExxonMobil, were willing to pay up to $8,000 per month to their interns, which is remarkable considering the global economic upset (Fluker, 2021).

The majority of research on internships has focused on two stakeholders - students and universities. These studies have explored intern learning and skill development (Holyoak, 2013; Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021; Zehr & Korte, 2020), expectations and satisfaction (Ruhanen et al., 2013; Sauder et al., 2019; Qu et al., 2021), and impact of internships on student careers and employability (Ebner et al., 2021; Rothman & Sisman, 2016; Kapareliotis et al., 2019; Qu et al., 2021). Surprisingly, researchers have almost neglected understanding internships from the standpoint of the third stakeholder – companies (Alpert et al., 2009; Narayanan et al., 2010), which is evident in very few studies on benefits, roles, or practices of companies as internship providers (e.g., Kroon & Franco, 2021; Lan, 2021; Zhao, 2013). This discrepancy is regretful because a better understanding of internship programs as an employee attraction, recruitment, and talent development practice could assist company recruiters, HRD and employer brand specialists, and university career advisors in making their

efforts more effective. Universities and HRD practitioners could assist companies in understanding drivers of internship attraction among their students, hence increasing person-organization (Backhaus, 2004) and person-job fit (Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021; Zhao, 2013), or degrees of compatibility between an intern and a prospective company and job. By giving attention to internship attractiveness, universities and companies expand their current collaborations around internship provision to enhance student internship experiences, satisfaction, and employment prospects and to foster long-term sustainability of their internship programs. Additionally, this understanding could help companies adjust their internship recruitment strategies and increase the number of quality applicants (Collins & Han, 2004; Turban & Cable, 2003), thus enhancing their chances to succeed in "the war for talent" (Chambers et al., 1998, p. 44) and decrease costs associated with employing unqualified interns.

To address this deficiency, we focused on internship advertisements posted online as means to communicate to and attract the most suitable candidates (Elvig et al., 2013). If internships serve as an "extended interview" (Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021, p. 495) to recruit young talent, then their capacity to attract deserves special attention. A convincing initial presentation of a company is crucial in the early recruitment process because potential candidates, especially students, have very limited knowledge of or experience with the company, so they could be easily discouraged or confused and choose its competitor (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Petry et al., 2021). Additionally, recruiters and prospective job seekers have different perceptions of an organization's image. HR managers typically "have a rosier picture" of how job seekers perceive the company (Knox & Freeman, 2006, p. 17). As a result, job seekers' and HR managers' opinions on what makes an organization attractive often differ, so identifying and communicating company attributes that potential applicants find attractive represent a challenge and a strategic priority.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate attractiveness of internship advertisements to their potential applicants through the lens of employer branding. Using a mixed-method approach, we explored and compared dimensions and attributes of employer attractiveness in internship advertisements used by companies and prioritized by prospective interns. Employer branding refers to a company's efforts to identify and advance its most desirable aspects as an employer to its internal and external stakeholders (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer branding has become a strategic tool for many companies to meet their

demand for talented employees by improving employee retention and recruitment. A strong employer brand can reduce recruitment costs by at least 10% (Burgess, 2016) and turnover by 28% (Randstad, 2019). Branded job descriptions have been shown to be more desired by potential applicants than non-branded ones (Elving et al., 2013), enhance quantity and quality of applicants (Turban & Cable, 2003), and provide a competitive advantage to companies (Love & Singh, 2011; Urbancová & Hudáková, 2017).

Our study makes several contributions to practice and research on provision of internships to today's college students and graduates. First, the study applies the employer branding theory to an understudied population of interns, hence providing new insights into internships as a collaboration between universities and companies. In doing so, the study invites companies and universities to direct their attention to how internship positions are communicated to interns. Second, the majority of prior studies on employer attractiveness focused only on one stakeholder, for example, a company or its potential applicants (Allen et al., 2013; Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Backhaus, 2004; Ito et al., 2013). In contrast, our study evaluated and compared both, internship advertisements posted on a job portal and perceptions of undergraduate students required to take an internship for program completion. Third, our study contributes by focusing on internship positions, which differ from full-time permanent positions across many aspects, including their duration, pay, supervision, and purpose. Therefore, the study assists in understanding the unique drivers of attraction of interns, which is missing from published research on the topic of employer attractiveness that has focused on student recruitment for full-time positions. Finally, from the standpoint of workforce demographics, these students represent a new generation of workers, known as generation Z, entering companies while an older generation of workers, known as baby-boomers, are retiring. Researchers and companies alike have started to explore work- and career-related attributes of this new generation to understand how to effectively integrate them into organizations (Goh & Okumus, 2020; Myrden & Kelloway, 2015). Therefore, our study contributes to this discussion by examining how attractive internship advertisements are to representatives of this generation.

Employer Branding

The concept of employer brand was introduced and defined by Ambler and Barrow (1996) as "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (p. 187). An employer brand is

connected to a company's culture, including its values, behaviors, and policies, that helps in attracting, motivating, and retaining employees, both current and prospective (Ambler and Barrow, 1996). The process of communicating a company's employer brand is known as employer branding. Employer branding refers to creating a unique identity for the employer to stand out among its competitors in the labor market (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). It is about building an image of the company as an attractive employer (Berthon et al., 2005; Ewing et al., 2002; Ito et al., 2013).

Employer Attractiveness

Employer attractiveness could be defined as "the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organisation" (Berthon et al., 2005, p. 156). Employer attractiveness is about perceptions, beliefs, or affect of current or potential employees about a particular company. These perceptions are based on available information, including job advertisements, company's websites, news, social networking sites, or other people. From this perspective, employer branding is about company efforts to communicate the appropriate employer attractiveness message and largely depends on potential applicants' knowledge and understanding of the employer brand (Mangold & Miles, 2007).

Potential employees evaluate company attributes, or value propositions (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), in terms of the capacity to meet their employment needs. These attributes could be identified or described in more than one way. For example, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) applied the instrumental-symbolic framework used in marketing research to recruitment. Symbolic attributes refer to all intangible traits perceived subjectively by potential applicants. These include the company's prestige, mission and values, degree of innovativeness, chic, or power in the community or industry. Instrumental, or functional, attributes (i.e., salary, safety, benefits, growth opportunities, or location) present utilitarian value to potential applicants and are typically specific for different industries. Ambler and Barrow (1996) proposed three groups of benefits employees could receive from their employers: "(1) developmental and/or useful activities (functional); (2) material or monetary rewards (economic); and (3) feelings such as belonging, direction and purpose (psychological)" (p. 189). Building on this research, Berthon et al. (2005) suggested the following five dimensions or "values" (p. 159) of attractiveness in employer branding: interest (i.e., exciting work environment and practices), social (i.e., supportive team environment), economic (i.e., adequate compensation and job security), development (i.e., career and professional growth),

and application (i.e., opportunities to apply one's prior knowledge and skills).

Employer Branding and HRM Practices

The marketing concept of a brand, or branding, became incorporated into HRM research in mid-1990s (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Ito et al., 2013). From this standpoint, employer branding could be understood as "the science of branding applied to HR activities in relation to current and potential employees" (Edwards, 2010, p. 5). HR is charged with promoting attractive attributes of the company among its employees to increase their positive perceptions of and experiences with the company, which leads to their loyalty, commitment, and retention. Additionally, these employees become company advocates or ambassadors who act in the best interests of the company and, hence, assist in communicating its attractive attributes to others (Ewing et al., 2002).

From the recruitment standpoint, employer branding is about creating a great first impression of the potential employer because usually applicants have limited knowledge of the company. Understanding attractive attributes of a potential employer early in the recruitment process helps candidates establish their fit with the company (Backhaus, 2004). The more attractive the company is perceived by job seekers, the easier it is to recruit them (Berthon et al., 2005; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). Effective employer branding increases the number of quality applicants (Collins & Han, 2004; Turban & Cable, 2003). Prospective employees are willing to work for smaller salaries if they perceive a company to be very attractive (Kucherov et al., 2019). Additionally, these attributes serve as a basis for companies to contest in different awards and ratings (e.g., "Employer of choice" or "HR- brand award"), strengthening their employer image and trustworthiness (Braddy et al., 2006).

Employer Attractiveness and Undergraduate Student Recruitment

Undergraduate students represent a unique group of potential applicants because they typically have no or little work experience and, hence, tend to be attracted to employer attributes different from those that attract people with work experience, including graduate students (e.g., Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Myrden & Kelloway, 2015). A few studies have examined the use of employer branding among representatives of this group searching for full-time positions. Both functional and symbolic attributes of a brand have been found to attract undergraduate and graduate students, but students with some work experience give more preference to symbolic attributes (Myrden & Kelloway, 2015). Among the symbolic attributes,

students report to prefer employers that describe themselves as reliable, professional, and organized (Eger et al., 2018). Others are also interested to work for companies that pride themselves for valuing trust and progress and being environmentally and socially responsible (Brusch et al., 2018). Students also prioritize attributes related to learning and career development opportunities, such as company's assistance with career development, prospects for career advancement, job security, and application of their learning and skills on the job; they seek employment in companies that care for employee psychological needs, including self-esteem, confidence, and personal growth (Arachchige & Robertson; 2013; Petry et al., 2021; Sharma & Prasad, 2018; Sivertzen et al., 2013). Many give high importance to social attributes, for example, organizational culture (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014), happy environment (Arachchige & Robertson, 2013), feelings of acceptance and belonging, support from superiors and subordinates, and healthy communication (Eger et al., 2019; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). Findings related to some other attributes are mixed. For example, some students give high (Bejtkovský, 2018; Chhabra & Sharma, 2014; Petry et al., 2021; Sharma & Prasad, 2018) or low (Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Sivertzen et al., 2013) importance to salary and brand name, reputation, or ratings.

Benefits of Internships

Internships first appeared in late 1800s in medical schools (Perrin, 2012) and in early 1900s in business programs (Henry et al., 1988); however, as apprenticeships, they have been common in many trades for centuries (Hurst & Good, 2010). Today, internships refer to temporary paid or unpaid employment of college students, which could turn into a full-time position. Interns complete a specific assignment relevant to their potential careers while being supervised by a faculty member and a company mentor (Narayan et al., 2010; Taylor, 1988). Internships are considered a win-win solution because of the numerous benefits to each stakeholder.

For Students

Internships are created first and foremost to benefit students by enabling them to apply their theoretical knowledge to practice and get professional experience before graduation (Ruhanen et al., 2013). By solving real-life problems, students improve their soft and hard skills, for example, analytical thinking, emotional intelligence, leadership, negotiation, ability to work in teams, and communication (Bayerlein & Jeske, 2018; Ruhanen et al., 2013). By working with colleagues and clients, they learn how to share knowledge,

(Ruhanen et al., 2013), prioritize tasks, or receive and providing feedback (Kapareliotis et al., 2019). They develop transferable skills during internships faster than during their bachelor's or master's programs (Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021). Interns become aware of a potential career in the company and industry with a little investment of resources (Alpert et al., 2009). They learn company corporate culture (Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021), including how the company works, how others work, and how they should work in the company (Chillas et al., 2015; Zehr & Korte, 2020). As a result, interns become more aware of their vocational interests and understanding of the industry and company, which increases their self-confidence and enables them to make informed career decisions (Maertz et al., 2014; Ruhanen et al., 2013). Interns add work experience to the resumes, extend their professional networks, and, in many cases, make some money.

For Universities

Today internships have become a commonly requirement for many undergraduate and graduate programs globally. Provision of internships helps programs and universities improve their reputation and student enrolment (Cook et al., 2015; Maertz et al., 2014; Weible, 2009). They help universities demonstrate their partnerships with and contributions to a variety of stakeholders, including local businesses and communities. These partnerships show universities not only provide quality education but also enable student transition from education to work, increasing student employability. Strong partnerships boost university statistics related to internships and employment of graduates, making their programs more attractive for prospective students and their parents. Internship programs assist universities in meeting various accreditation and state mandates related to student employability (Bender, 2021; Maertz et al., 2014; Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021). Additional indirect benefits could include increased corporate donations and sponsorships, representation of company leaders on various advisory boards and university events, improved rankings, or widened alumni base (Maertz et al., 2014). As a result, internships have become "a quality indicator of the higher education institutions" (Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021, p. 492).

For Companies

Internship programs could bring many short- and long-term benefits to companies. They allow "to test-drive potential employees, enabling firms to gauge a potential employee's fit with the company at relatively low cost and risk" (Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021, p.494). This practice helps minimizing risks of employing unqualified candidates and ensuring person-

job fit if an intern is hired (Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021; Zhao, 2013). A well- designed internship program creates great first impressions that shape interns' positive work attitudes, develop their organizational attachment and commitment, and strengthen their intent to obtain a permanent position in the company (Gault et al., 2000; Zhao, 2013). Not surprisingly, employees who start as interns are more likely to stay longer with the company (Onley, 2006). Companies also benefit because interns apply their knowledge and competencies and share their ideas, work habits, and practices with company employees.

Interns could help with non-urgent projects so that full time employees focus on projects of high priority (Maertz et al., 2014). They also fill many temporary positions in the hospitality industry during high seasons, thus enabling effective operations of hotels, resorts, and restaurants (Qu et al., 2021). Improved project completion and flow of new ideas could boost team productivity and creativity (Narayanan et al., 2010). When hired, former interns quickly adapt to the company and help in maintaining corporate culture, so companies save not only on recruitment and selection but also onboarding of new employees. Additionally, strong partnerships between companies and universities create a favorable corporate image for companies and their visibility in the community (Lan, 2021; Maertz et al., 2014). Virtual internships allow companies to tap into talent nationally and internationally at a lower cost than their face to face counterparts. Additionally, companies could provide virtual internships to students with disabilities, thus widening their recruitment pool while diversifying their workforce (Kraft et al., 2019). Companies that treat internship programs as a source of talent recruitment include internships into their strategic HR plans (Kraft et al., 2019; Lan, 2021).

Research Design

The study used a mixed methods design employing a concurrent triangulation strategy that includes a simultaneous implementation of qualitative and quantitative methods giving equal priority to both (Creswell, 2014). Then, the results of the two methods are integrated during a separate phase of the study. The concurrent triangulation design assists in developing a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, increasing reliability of data collection and analyses and enhancing research efficiency (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

To ensure consistency in qualitative and quantitative phases of the study and to obtain meaningful results, we applied the same criteria for data collection and the same template for data analysis in both phases. First, data collection was guided by two criteria (a) internships in

the field of business and management where internships are typically required and (b) Saint Petersburg, the second largest city in Russia where researchers reside. These criteria were applied to filter internship advertisements and to select respondents. Also, an Employer Brand Attractiveness Template (EBAT) was created by adapting the Employer Attractiveness scale (Berthon et al., 2005) that has been tested, validated, and used in other studies that involved students (e.g., Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Eger et al., 2019; Sivertzen et al., 2013). In line with studies on employer branding and student recruitment, we added three more dimensions: company reputation, company visual identity, and ease value. The template consisted of 24 items grouped under seven dimensions. Data were collected in April 2021 when many undergraduate students in Russia are required to enroll into an internship program.

Qualitative Phase: Content Analysis

A qualitative deductive content analysis was used to explore dimensions and attributes of employer attractiveness used by companies in internship advertisements. This analysis helps in describing and quantifying a phenomenon (Elo et al., 2014). Advertisements were chosen from HeadHunter.ru, the largest Russian job portal that pioneered its "HR- Brand" award in 2006 and remains a leader in online recruitment in the country. A search was conducted using terms "internship" and "intern" as well as "assistant", "coordinator", or "trainee", which are often used in internship descriptions in Russia. Typical internship position titles included "Assistant recruiter/HR-manager (Intern/junior recruiter)" and "Trainee organizer/business assistant/intern." Initially, 137 listings were selected and read; 43 were excluded because they were either duplicates or did not meet the criteria provided in the previous section. Consequently, 94 advertisements were included in the sample.

Each advertisement was analyzed across 24 attributes of EBAT (see Table 1). We started by examining if each of the 24 attributes was included into the advertisement by marking them as "yes" (included) or "no" (not included). Descriptions of such five attributes as logo, corporate design, video/photo materials, remote work, and easy job location/transportation services were easily examined using this strategy. However, descriptions of the remaining 19 attributes varied in many ways so that marking them only as "yes" (included) was uninformative and warranted a further examination. As in many other qualitative studies, our data analysis was emergent (Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015): Our engagement with data illuminated details that prompted an additional data analysis strategy. Therefore, we decided

to examine the extent of detail in those 19 attributes by coding them as "1" if the description was incomplete and less detailed and as "2" if the description was complete and detailed. To receive 2 points, descriptions of 16 of 19 attributes had to satisfy at least two of the following five conditions:

1. description is given in more than one sentence or in a paragraph;

2. emotionally charged words are used;

3. exclamation marks are used;

4. visual emphasis is made by text formatting;

5. examples are provided.

For each of the remaining three of 19 attributes, such as salary, job security, and promotion opportunities, we developed a different criterion. These procedures were carried out simultaneously and independently by two authors to increase their validity and decrease a possible bias (Creswell, 2014). In case of discrepancies, the results were discussed among the three authors to come to an agreement and to increase credibility of observations.

Quantitative Phase: A Survey

A survey was used to identify what dimensions and attributes of employer attractiveness in internship advertisements attract prospective interns. Using a convenience sampling strategy (Patton, 2015), we invited students from undergraduate programs in management and business offered by three largest universities in Saint-Petersburg. The invitations were distributed via personal messages in social networks. We received complete surveys from 274 respondents, 60,9% of who were women and 39,1% were men. Their age ranged from 18 to 24 years. The participants were freshmen (15,7%), sophomore (15,7%), junior (25,2%), and senior (43,4%). Half of them had had some professional experience, including a part-time job, volunteering, or an internship.

The survey asked the respondents to assess how each of the 24 attributes of EBAT was attractive to them while applying for an internship. Following Berthon et al. (2005), we asked students: How attractive are the following to you when considering potential employers for your internship? The evaluation was made on a five-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (not

attractive at all) to 5 (very attractive). Several demographic questions concluded the survey. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Table 1

Employer Attractiveness Attributes: Frequency and Extent of Detail

Dimension	Attribute	Included (%)	Extent of detail (%)	
Interest value				
	Challenging and stimulating job	38	less detailed:	28
			more detailed:	10
	Valued creativity	13	less detailed:	11
			more detailed:	2
	Innovative products and services	48	less detailed:	20
			more detailed:	28
Social value	Supportive colleagues	19	less detailed:	15
			more detailed:	4
	Friendly team	29	less detailed:	26
			more detailed:	3
	Enjoyable work environment	24	less detailed:	15
			more detailed:	9
	Acceptance and belonging	29	less detailed:	17
			more detailed:	12
Economic value	Salary	77	unpaid:	13
			paid:	64
	Job security	37	any form of contract:	9
			official contract:	29
	Promotion opportunities	59	hiring is possible:	54
			hiring is guaranteed:	5
	Perks and benefits	40	less detailed:	29
			more detailed:	11
Development value	Gaining career-enhancing & professional skills	46	less detailed:	34
			more detailed:	12
	Training & mentoring	44	less detailed:	33
			more detailed:	11
	Recognition & feedback from management	20	less detailed:	20
			more detailed:	0
	Springboard for future employment	14	less detailed:	13
			more detailed:	1
Corporate reputation	Established brand in the market	61	less detailed:	33
			more detailed:	28
	Awards and ratings	24	less detailed:	18
			more detailed:	6
	Ethics and CSR	5	less detailed:	2
			more detailed:	3
Visual identity	Logo	98	N/A	N/A
	Corporate design	34	N/A	N/A
	Video/photo materials	23	N/A	N/A
Ease value	Flexible working hours	59	less detailed:	23
			more detailed:	36
	Remote work	24	N/A	N/A
	Easy job locations or transporting service	33	N/A	N/A

Note: Extent of detail is based on 1-2 coding

Integration Phase: Mixing

Finally, we compared and contrasted the results from both phases. The strategy helps align the results side by side and provide reliable and well-justified conclusions about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

Results

Our content analysis showed that out of seven dimensions of employer attractiveness two were used in every other internship advertisement: economic (53%) and visual identity (52%; Figure 1). Less frequently mentioned dimensions were ease (39%), interest (33%), development (31%), and corporate reputation (30%). Only a quarter of the advertisements included the social dimension.

On average employers included 9 out of 24 (38%) attributes of employer attractiveness (Table 1). Five most frequently mentioned attributes were company logo (98%), salary (77%), established brand in the market (61%), flexible working hours (59%), and promotion opportunities (59%). Two of these attributes (i.e., salary and promotion opportunities) represented the economic value dimension while none of the attributes in the social and development value dimensions were included in the short list. Five least frequently mentioned attributes were ethics and CSR (5%), valued creativity (13%), springboard for future employment (14%), supportive colleagues (19%), and recognition and feedback from management (20%).

Out of 24 attributes, 19 varied in terms of the extent of details provided (Table 1). To make sense of this variation, we compared percentages of advertisements with many details to those with fewer details. From this perspective, four attributes with the most details included job security, salary, flexible working hours, and innovative products and services.

Figure 1

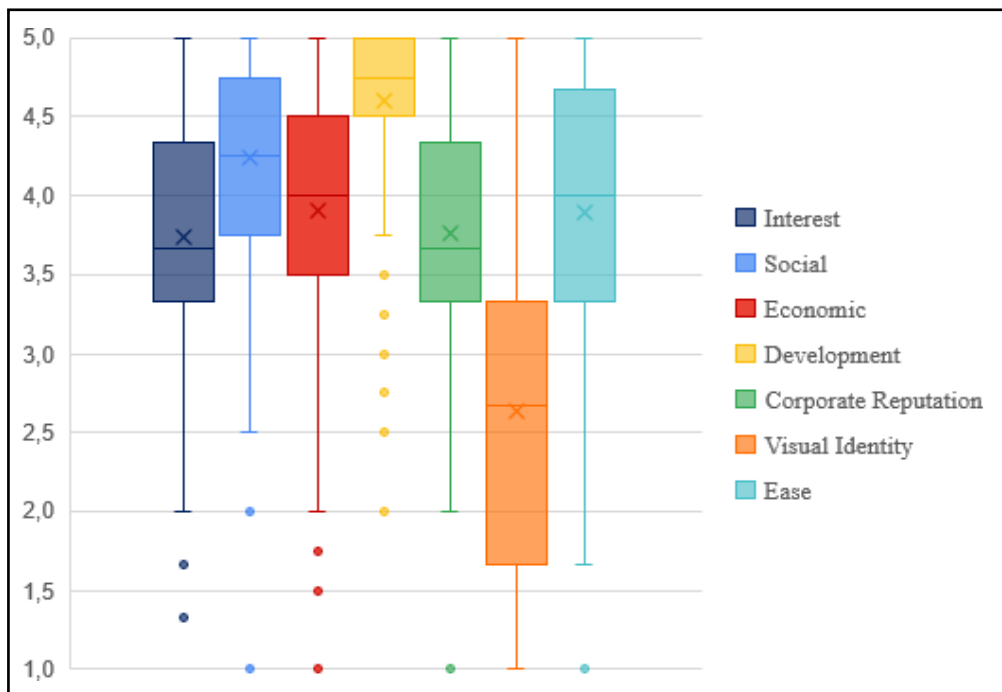*Frequency of Seven Employer Attractiveness Dimensions*
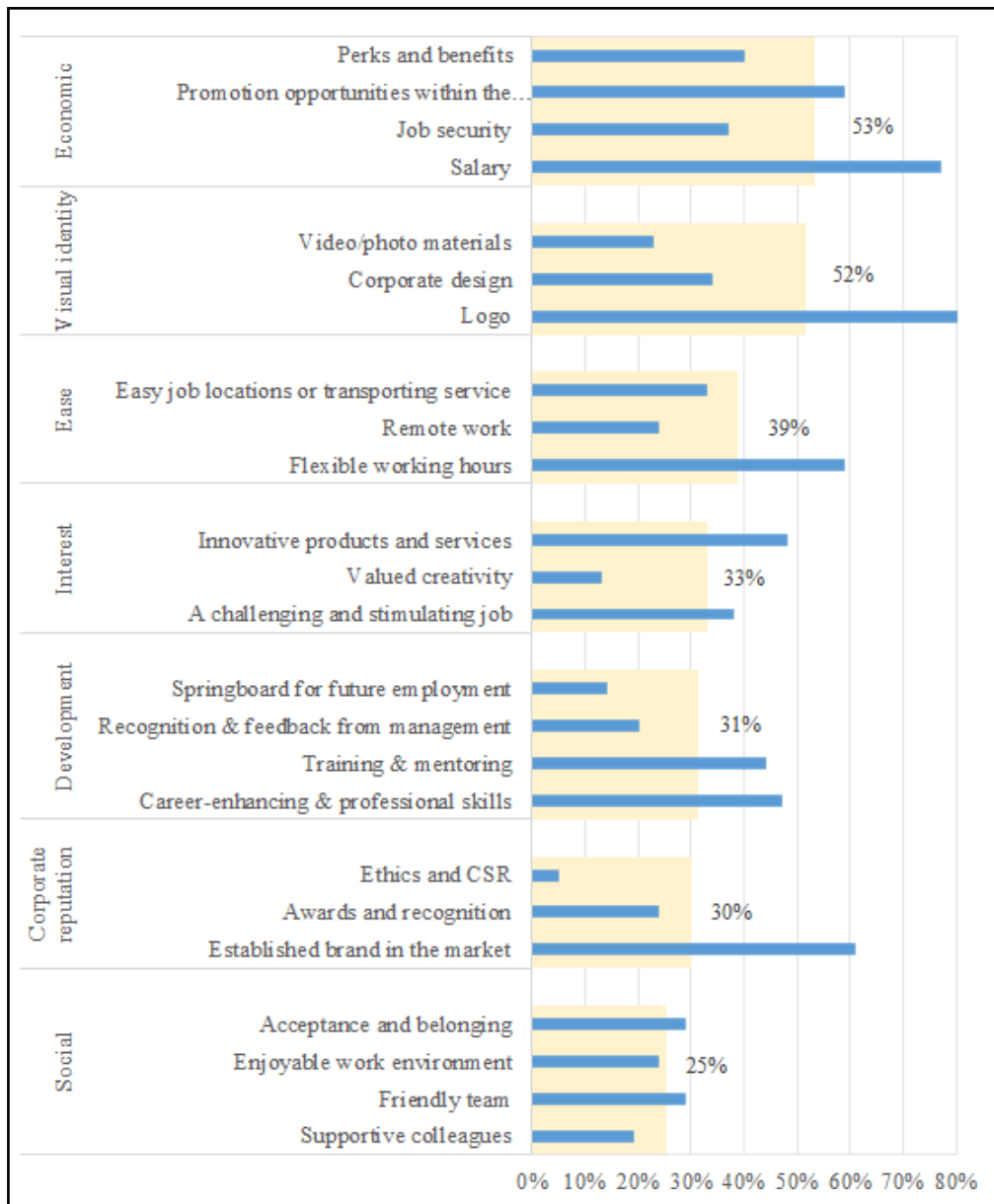
Our examination of prospective interns' perceptions of employer attractiveness by dimension indicated that they chose the development value as the most important (m=4.56; Figure 2). The visual identity dimension was evaluated as the least attractive (m=2.63). Overall, 21 out of 24 attributes were rated as important by prospective interns, with half of the attributes assessed as "important" and "very important" (Figure 3). Top three most important attributes

belong to the development value dimension: "springboard for future employment" (m=4.76), "opportunity to gain career-enhancing work experience and professional skills" (m=4.73), and "training & mentoring" (m=4.54). Such attributes as "perks and benefits" (m=3.28) and "awards and ratings" (m=3.17) showed a somewhat neutral impact on the prospective interns' perceptions of employer attractiveness. The lowest average scores were given to all items related to the visual identity dimension: logo (m=2.7), corporate design (m=2.6), and photo/materials (m=2.59).
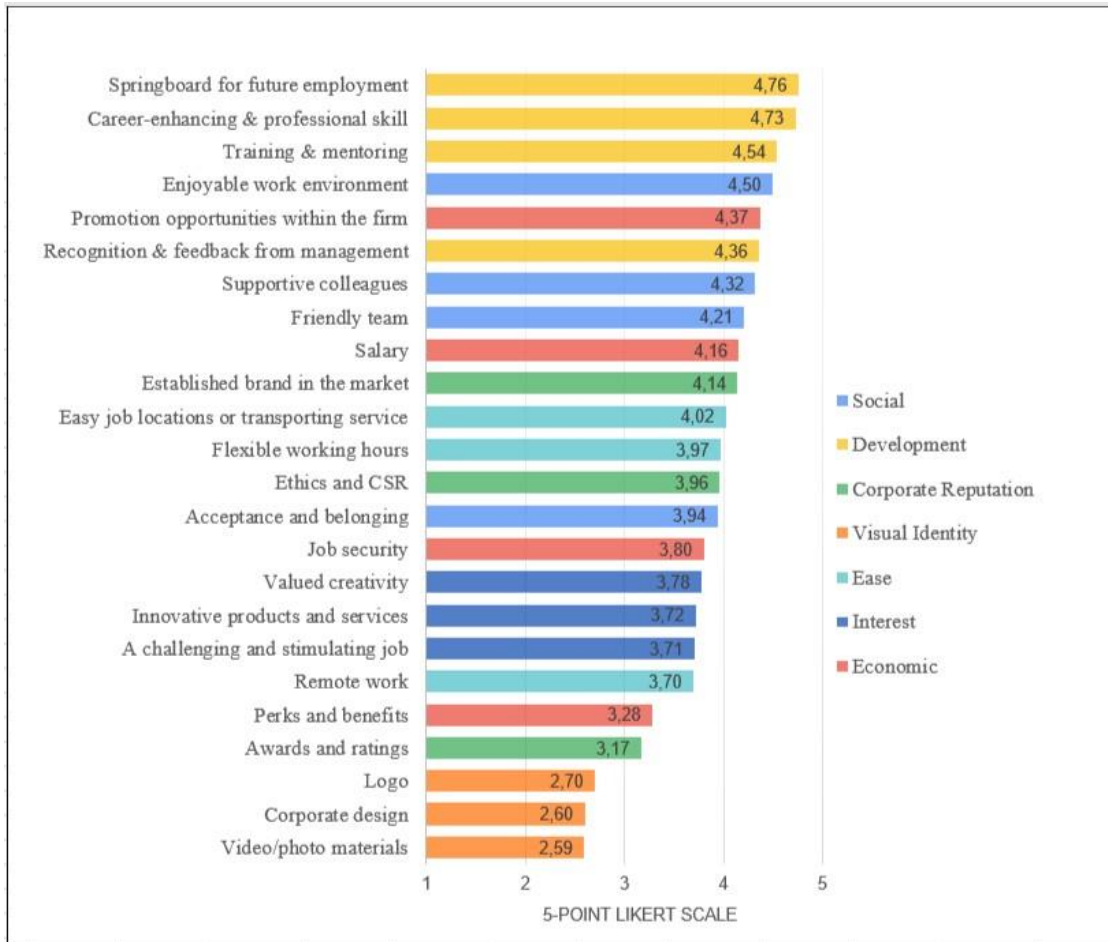
Figure 2

Student Perceptions of Employer Attractiveness by Dimension

Out of seven employer attractiveness dimensions, companies rely mainly on economic and visual identity, whereas prospective interns prioritize development and social values (Table 2).

Figure 3

Student Perceptions of Employer Attractiveness by Attribute

A comparison of top 10 priorities for employer attractiveness by attributes for companies and prospective interns shows a similar discrepancy (Table 3). Of these ten attributes, only five overlap, and only one, "promotion opportunities", received the same fifth place in the ranking for prospective interns and employers. Also, only 14% of the advertisements included information about a "springboard for future employment", which is the most important attribute for prospective interns, and only two out of 94 advertisements specified this attribute in detail.

Table 2

Comparison of Company and Student Priorities for Employer Attractiveness by Dimension

Rank	Student perceptions	Employer practices
1	Development	Economic
2	Social	Visual Identity
3	Economic	Ease
4	Ease	Interest
5	Corporate Reputation	Development
6	Interest	Corporate Reputation
7	Visual Identity	Social

Table 3

Comparison of Company and Student Priorities for Employer Attractiveness by Attribute

Rank	Student perceptions	Employer practices
1	Springboard for future employment	Logotype
2	Gaining career-enhancing & professional skills	Salary
3	Training & mentoring	Established brand in the market
4	Enjoyable work environment	Flexible working hours
5	Promotion opportunities	Promotion opportunities
6	Recognition & feedback from management	Innovative products and services
7	Supportive colleagues	Gaining career-enhancing & professional skills
8	Friendly team	Training & mentoring
9	Salary	Perks and benefits
10	Established brand in the market	A challenging and stimulating job

Discussion

This study sought to investigate attractiveness of internship advertisements to their potential applicants through the lens of employer branding. Using a mixed-method research design, we collected data from internship advertisements posted on the largest Russian online job portal, HeadHunter, and from prospective interns. By comparing and contrasting the results, we made several observations.

Overall, the results indicate companies and prospective interns prioritize different dimensions and attributes of employer attractiveness in internship advertisements. This mismatch

is likely to create a barrier in the early recruitment process because prospective interns cannot see the desired benefits of working for a specific employer, which affects their decision to apply. Specifically, the study found that employers heavily rely on the description of the economic value to attract potential interns. This finding is anticipated but disappointing. Financial gains are expected by job applicants, and welcomed by internship applicants, and, hence, commonly used in job advertisements; however, they do not assist companies in differentiating themselves in the competitive talent market (Schlechter et al., 2015). Additionally, the study showed that prospective interns do not consider the economic value, especially perks and benefits, as their priority. This attitude is probably related to two characteristics of internships. First, in contrast to full-time jobs, internships are typically short and have a set last day. Therefore, interns may simply not expect to be eligible for perks and benefits or worry about job security, especially if internships are part-time. Second, if taking an internship is required by their undergraduate programs, students are more interested in completing internship assignments and receiving a grade to continue with their studies or to graduate than in gaining financially.

While employers emphasize the economic value, prospective interns prioritize the development value and seek for internships that could transform into a permanent position, provide training and mentoring, and help enhancing their career and professional skills. The priority of this dimension for prospective interns is consistent with several prior studies involving students and graduates (e.g., Kavitha & Srinivasan, 2012; Reis & Braga, 2016; Saini et al., 2014). The interest in personal and professional development reflects the main reason for universities to require students to take an internship, which is to learn more by applying their knowledge and skills to complete real-life tasks or projects in a company.
After and during an internship, they often take classes and exams. For undergraduate students, internships represent one of many steps in their career and professional development. The mismatch in priorities is even greater for the visual identity value. Companies include information about this value almost as often as information about the economic value; however, prospective interns are least attracted to this information.

Our close examination of attributes shows that companies emphasize instrumental and more tangible attributes, such as salary, promotion opportunities, and flexible workhours, and pay less attention to the symbolic, or intangible attributes. This reliance on instrumental attributes is quite common (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Elving et al., 2013); however, it is the symbolic attributes that help the most in making the organization unique and different from its competitors (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2010; Reis & Braga,

2016). Additionally, prospective interns seek for symbolic attributes, such as enjoyable work environment, friendly team, and supportive relationships with colleagues, in internship advertisements. Their search for the symbolic attributes relates to the unique characteristics of interns and internships. Because an internship is often the first work experience relevant to their degree, students look for understanding and support from company mentors and the team. This suggests that interns struggle to determine if they are a fit with the company and its values.

Also, the results show that on average internship advertisements contain about one third of possible employer brand attributes. Several issues could explain this result. This result could indicate that employer branding in e-recruitment is not strong in the Russian labor market, despite not being a novelty. It is also possible that benefits of internships are underestimated by companies and, hence, recruitment and branding specialists do not invest time and efforts to examine and improve internship advertisements. Instead, they are likely to replicate patterns of other listings for similar internships or event entry-level job positions and, hence, continue to "distort the information flow on labour markets" (Marchal et al., 2007, p. 3). They could also rely on their own knowledge or perceptions about drivers of prospective interns when crafting advertisements. The inclusion of a limited number of attributes could also indicate companies are selective and careful in directing attention of prospective applicants to just a few and most important characteristics and avoid information overload (Feldman et al., 2006).

Implications for Practice

The results suggest several implications for both universities and companies for making internship advertisements more attractive to prospective applicants, which benefits all three stakeholders. First, HRD practitioners should take a more active role in creating and marketing internship opportunities. Learning represents a unique focus of HRD differentiating the discipline from other related fields (Yorks & Nicolaides, 2006); therefore, HRD professionals should help companies bring learning and professional development to the forefront of internships and to re-calibrate their advertisements to meet interests of potential interns. Second, companies, especially HRD professionals, and universities should collaborate to better understand priorities of prospective interns. Internships differ from full- time jobs, so interns and full-time job seekers search for different attributes in internship and job advertisements. University associates responsible for creating internships, such as career center advisors,

academic program directors, and internship coordinators, should work with company leaders, HRD and marketing decision makers, and recruitment specialists to audit their internship advertisements. Partnerships with educational institutions are particularly useful because universities have access to and a better understanding of their students.

Company and university representatives could conduct additional surveys or focus group interviews to explore the main driving factors of internship attractiveness for students. Third, employers could use the results of the study to strengthen their recruiting messages and, hence, attractiveness of their employer brand to potential interns. Our study should motivate company decision makers to discuss the existing and desired benefits of internship programs to the company and their contribution to corporate and HR strategies. These discussions help evaluate the quality and quantity of efforts put towards the use of internships as a recruitment strategy to enrich the company human capital and build a competitive advantage. For example, budget allotted for internship advertisement could be redistributed from the attributes that are less important for potential interns to the more important ones. Resources allotted for intern salary, perks, and benefits could be reconfigured and used to adjust the design of the internship program and its advertisement content to create a better fit between the company and potential interns. Similarly, companies should reconsider investing into design of the digital advertisements. Using the corporate style design for internship advertisements could be sufficient in increasing brand distinctiveness and brand image familiarity. At the same time, HRD practitioners should provide adequate training to internship mentors so that they become ready to provide sufficient feedback, recognition, and support to interns. Similarly, HRD should raise awareness of employees of company units that welcome interns of the vital role they play in making internships meaningful. Also, HRD should work with marketing managers to identify what company attributes helped attract and retain past interns, especially those who were offered full-time positions in the company.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Generalizability of the findings may be limited because of the non-probability sampling method. The results are limited to business students from specific universities in Russia, so further research is needed to include students with different majors and countries. The study did not survey or interview HRD professionals to understand their role in making internships attractive to future interns, which points to a potentially useful direction in future HRD research. The study is also limited to advertisements on a large online job portal. A

comparative analysis of effectiveness of various communication channels, including personal and social media, for promotion of internships could yield useful results. An analysis of company career webpages would allow HRD researchers to draw more conclusions about the practices of implementing the employer brand because these sources contain more detailed content and forms of communication, including interactive games and virtual office tours. Today company websites use creative approaches in designing internship advertisements, hence this evolving channel of e-recruitment calls for future research. Future research might also consider intern attraction and company attributes conveyed at career fairs as well as later stages in the recruitment process (e.g., company visits and initial interviews). More HRD research is needed to examine differences and similarities in motivational triggers of students and graduates when they apply for internships and full-time jobs. Also, a comparative analysis of internship and job advertisements within a single company could show whether organizations deliver recruiting messages based on the employer value proposition that target specific audiences or use uniform templates and content. This study respondents had to rate attributes of internship advertisements without an opportunity to request any additional information about them, for example, by searching the Internet or corporate websites for additional facts and figures. Future HRD research could use observations and focus group interviews to continue exploring how interns search and select internships and employers.

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Presentation - Internship Advertisements are not Attractive to Prospective Applicants: HRD Help is Needed
Included below.

Internship Advertisements are not Attractive

to Prospective Applicants:
HRD Help is Needed

The University Forum for Human Resource Development Annual Conference 2022,

June 8-10, Sheffield Hallam University, UK (online)

UFHRD, 2022

1

Background

- First appeared in late 1800s in medical schools (Perrin, 2012).
- In early 1900s - in business programs (Henry et al., 1988).
- As apprenticeships - common in many trades for centuries (Hurst & G oo d, 20 1   0).

Today, *internships refer to temporary paid or unpaid employment of college students, which could turn into a full-time position. Interns complete a specific assignment relevant to their potential careers while being supervised by a faculty member and a company mentor* (Narayan et al., 2010; Taylor, 1988).

- Provided by companies and required by university programs in a variety of spheres
  - hiring more interns than ever for their virtual or hybrid internship programs (Maurer, 2020)
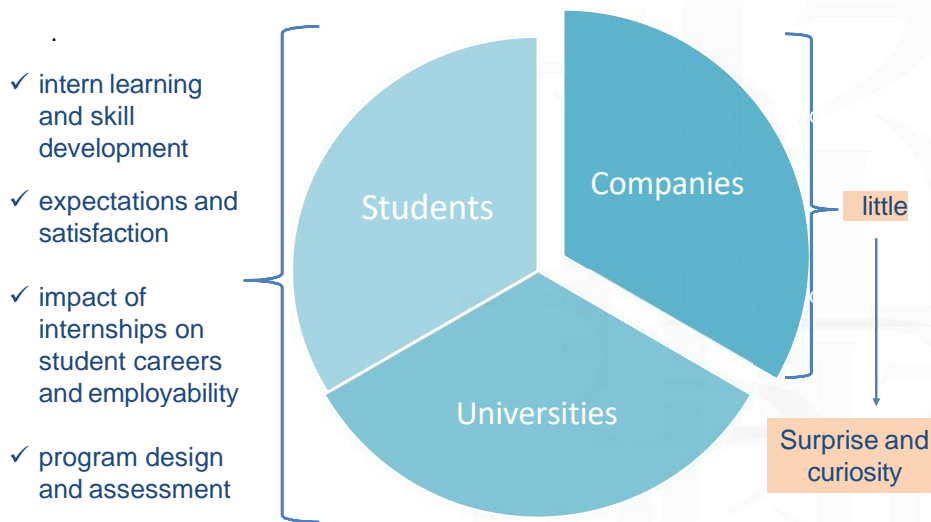
2

"Win-win-win"

Beneficial to their three stakeholders: interns, companies, and universities

Students	Companies	Universities
• an invaluable opportunity to apply their knowledge to practice, • gain some professional experience in the industry, • increase career awareness, and grow personally (Ruhanen et al., 2013; Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021; Zehr &	• represent a unique pool of potential candidates for permanent positions. • Recruiting qualified candidates from this pool of educated, talented, and motivated people helps companies enrich their human capital and build a competitive advantage (Alpert et al., 2009; Elving et al., 2013)	• foster student employability and, hence, • improve their reputation among prospective students and their parents, various educational agencies, and community organizations (Maertz et al.,

3

3

Literature Search and Gap

✓ intern learning and skill development

✓ expectations and satisfaction

✓ impact of internships on student careers and employability

✓ program design and assessment

Students

Companies

Universities

little

Surprise and curiosity

4

From a company perspective

Enhance their chances to succeed in "the war for talent"

(Chambers et al., 1998, p. 44)

An "extended interview" to recruit young talent

(Urquía-Grande & Estébanez, 2021, p. 495)

⬇

attraction deserves special attention

⬇

internship advertisements posted online as means to

communicate to and attract the most suitable candidates

5

Purpose

To investigate attractiveness of internship advertisements to their potential applicants through the lens of employer branding

Employer Branding

a company's efforts to identify and advance its most desirable aspects as an employer to its internal and external stakeholders (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

A strategic tool to improve employee retention and recruitment:

➤ A strong employer brand can reduce recruitment costs by at least 10% (Burgess, 2016) and turnover by 28% (Randstad, 2019).

  ➤ employees are willing to work for smaller salaries if they perceive a company to be very attractive (Kucherov et al., 2019).

➤ Branded job descriptions have been shown to

  ➤ be more desired by potential applicants than non-branded (Elving et al., 2013),
  ➤ enhance quantity and quality of applicants (Turban & Cable, 2003),
  ➤ provide a competitive advantage (Love & Singh, 2011; Urbancová & Hudáková, 2017).
    ➤ different awards and ratings (e.g., "Employer of choice" or "HR-brand award"), strengthening their employer image and trustworthiness (Braddy et al., 2006).

7

7

Research Design

1. Qualitative and quantitative
2. Same criteria - internships in the field of business and management

   where internships are typically required + Saint Petersburg

3. Same template - Employer Brand Attractiveness Template (EBAT)

   was created by adapting the Employer Attractiveness scale (Berthon et al., 2005)

     students (e.g., Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Eger et al., 2019; Sivertzen et al., 2013).

   2. In line with studies on employer branding and student recruitment, we added three more dimensions:
      1. company reputation
      2. company visual identity
      3. work/life balance
   3. The template consisted of 24 items grouped under seven dimensions.
4. Data were collected in April 2021

8

Qualitative – Data Collection

HeadHunter.ru - the largest Russian job portal

Search terms: "internship" and "intern" as well as "assistant", "coordinator", or "trainee"

- 137 listings were selected and read;
- 43 were excluded: duplicates or did not meet the criteria
- 94 advertisements - included in the sample.

9

9

Qualitative – Content Analysis
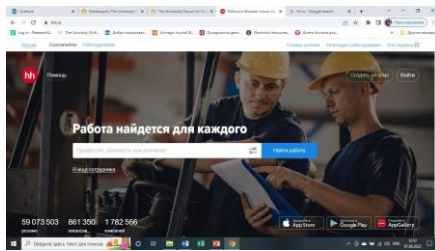
Each of the 24 attributes

- five attributes as logo, corporate design, video/photo materials, remote work, and easy job location/transportation services were easily examined using this strategy.

19 attributes varied in many ways ⟶ warranted a further examination

2. "the extent of detail"

- "1" if the description was incomplete and less detailed
- "2" if the description was complete and detailed

To receive 2 points – additional criteria (e.g., emotionally charged words, examples, more than one sentence)

- Surveys from 274 respondents
- 60,9% -women and 39,1% - men.
- Their age ranged from 18 to 24 years.
- Freshmen (15,7%), sophomore (15,7%), junior (25,2%), senior (43,4%)

Following Berthon et al. (2005), we asked students: *How attractive are the internship?*

- EBAT

- Five-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (not attractive at all) to 5 (very attractive)
- Finally, we compared and contrasted the results from both phases

11

11

Results and Discussion

Comparison by Dimension

Rank	Student perceptions	Employer practices
1	Development	Economic
2	Social	Visual Identity
3	Economic	Ease
4	Ease	Interest
5	Corporate Reputation	Development
6	Interest	Corporate Reputation
7	Visual Identity	Social

Companies and prospective interns prioritize **different** dimensions and attributes of employer attractiveness in internship advertisements:

12

Mismatch is likely to create a barrier in the early recruitment process because prospective interns cannot see the desired benefits of working for a specific employer, which affects their decision to apply.

Employers heavily rely on the description of the economic value:

❖ Does not help in differentiating companies in the competitive talent market (Schlechter et al., 2015)
❖ Not priority for students
❖ Internships are short, temporary, often part-time
  ❖ Why worry about perks or job security?
❖ Tangible – receive a grade

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Comparison by Attribute

Rank	Student perceptions	Employer practices
1	Springboard for future employment	Logotype
2	Career/professional skills	Salary
3	Training & mentoring	Established brand in the market
4	Enjoyable work environment	Flexible working hours
5	Promotion opportunities	Promotion opportunities
6	Recognition & feedback	Innovative products and services
7	Supportive colleagues	Career/professional skills
8	Friendly team	Training & mentoring
9	Salary	Perks and benefits
10	Established brand in the market	A challenging and stimulating job

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Prospective interns prioritize the development value
and seek for internships that

- could transform into a permanent position,
- provide training and mentoring,
- help enhancing their career and professional skills.

Reflect the main reason for universities to require
students to take an internship –

to learn more by applying their knowledge and skills
to complete real-life tasks or projects in a company

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Companies emphasize instrumental and
more tangible attributes

salary,
promotion
opportunities,

flexible
workhours

- is quite common (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Elving et al., 2013)

- Symbolic attributes that help the most in making the
organization unique and different from its competitors
Highhouse, 2003; Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2010; Reis & Braga, 2016).

enjoyable work
environment,
friendly team,
supportive
relationships
with colleagues

Symbolic attributes –

important for prospective interns.

Interns: "*Am I a fit with the company and its values?*"

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Implications for HRD professionals

Should take a more **active role** in creating and marketing internship opportunities:

- *Learning* represents *a unique focus* of HRD differentiating the discipline from other related fields (Yorks & Nicolaides, 2006);

- Should help companies bring learning and professional development to *the forefront of internships* and to re-calibrate their advertisements to meet interests of potential interns.

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Implications for HRD professionals

HRD professionals should **collaborate** with universities (as career center advisors, academic program directors, and internship coordinators) to better **understand priorities of prospective intern**s:

- Clarify the difference between internships and full-time jobs

- Do not copy and paste entry-level full-time positions descriptions when advertising internships

- Conduct additional surveys or focus group interviews to explore the main driving factors of internship attractiveness for students

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Implications for HRD professionals

- Should provide **adequate training to internship mentors** so that they become ready to provide sufficient feedback, recognition, and support to interns.

- **Raise awareness** of employees of company units that welcome interns of the vital **role** they play in making internships meaningful.

- Identify what company attributes helped attract and retain **past interns**, especially those who were offered full-time positions in the company.

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Feedback, please

Thank you!

Questions? Comments?

Our question to the audience:

Can we name our method as a *mixed methods design employing a concurrent triangulation strategy* that includes a simultaneous implementation of qualitative and quantitative methods giving equal priority to both (Creswell, 2014)

If not, how should we call it?

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Thank you
for your attention!

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SME Leadership in a Post Covid Era - Impact Case Study

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Abstract #102

Relevance: Without doubt the pandemic has turned on its head what is means to lead in a post Covid-Era. This is further compounded in the context of a small and medium enterprise (SME). The contribution that SMEs bring to the UK economy is laudable. In 2021 UK SMEs had a combined turnover of £2.3 trillion pounds, with business that had less than ten people working their contributing the most, at £953 billion pounds (Clarke, D, 2021). According to the Small Business Federation at the start of 2021 there were 5.5 million small business (with 0-49 employees), with SME's accounting for 99.9% of the business population, a total of 5.6 million businesses. Therefore, there is nothing 'small' about collective efforts of SME's who are front and centre stage in driving forward business growth and employment opportunity in the UK.

Research Gap: Many commentators have explored SME's through various dimensions including organisational survival (Naidoo, 2010), strategic management capability (Covin, J.G. et all 1999), (Miller,D. 2014) and Mostafiz, M. I. et al (2021), organisational performance (O'Sullivan and Abela, 2007) and organisational learning (Zahra, 2012). Although there has been some great insight, a spotlight at how learning and development interventions, experienced by leaders during a period of crisis during a global pandemic, have impacted on their capacity to lead during a time of crisis have been explored. Nor have these commentators explicitly connected the dimensions of experiencing leadership during Covid in relation to future business growth.

Focus: This abstract is to set out an approach to the development of a multi-dimensional Impact Case Study. The sample informing the case study will be 120 SME Business Owners from the Sheffield City Region who undertook a government funded Leadership Development intervention delivered by Sheffield Hallam University from March 2020 to July 2021. In addition to the 120 Business Owners the research scope will include other stakeholder groups including the CABs and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Methodology / methods: The Impact Case Study will deploy a mixed method design. Quantitative data will be captured via a categorisation tool that will measure the facets of Business Growth across the full SME sample. In-depth qualitative data will be gathered from a smaller sample of 12 Business Owners to understand the leadership personas and styles used to navigate during a period of crisis. Evidence and data from these two sources will make up the third aspect of the research, an Evidence and Evaluation Impact Grid. Outputs from these three sources will form a series of published journal articles and an Impact Case Study.

Expected Results: The results will provide workplace learning and development practitioners with insight in which they can have some influence when working with Leaders from SME contexts. It will provide CABs and the LEP additional insight into Business Growth strategies deployed during a period of crisis. Additionally, it will provide in-depth understanding of how to navigate the role of leadership during and in a post Covid-era.

Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation

Not applicable.

The Effect of COVID-19 on Organizational Leadership: A Formidable Disruptor or a Blessing in Disguise?

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Abstract #105

As the human race faces one of its toughest adversaries to date in the form of COVID-19, the reality of organizational life has changed significantly. COVID-19 has forced organizational leaders to rethink the means through which they can achieve these objectives and ultimately enable employees to be productive, and take good care of the organization's customers and external stakeholders.

Some view COVID-19 as a formidable challenge that needs to be dealt with. Others view it as a long overdue wakeup call that was needed to force organizations desert their traditional take on how their work is done, adopt the preferences of the up-and-coming workforce; and ideally fully embrace and capitalize on the opportunities offered by the advent of digital technologies.

One important consideration among all these challenges is the evolving nature of leadership in times when remote working is the norm, geographically dispersed teams are more than ever commonplace, and a close control of operations can prove quite challenging.

This enquiry is based on secondary sources that are written on the effect of COVID-19 on organizational work and employees.

Based on the enquiry, it can be inferred that COVID-19 was both a formidable challenge and a needed disruptor. It is a formidable challenge because it resulted in a challenged (and sometimes severed) trust between leaders and their followers, it has further blurred the distinction between work and private lives of employees and thrown the work-life balance equation off, and because it has resulted in significant challenges in acquiring talent. It was simultaneously a much-needed disruptor because it has resulted in increased autonomy for employees, it has enabled employees to work from unbound locations, and because it has given rise to a vigorously renewed culture of digital nomadism and by extension has enlarged the talent pool for organizations.

Five factors were determined for leaders to practice in these challenging times: leaders should develop communication skills to increase trust and minimize stress and anxiety; leaders should share information with empathy and optimism; leaders should use credibility and trustworthiness to build trust; leaders should share facts quickly and not hide bad news; and leaders have to behave consistently.

In terms of best practices for effective leadership in a remote setting to succeed in the post-COVID era, the enquiry asserted that effective leadership behaviors and styles should be followed (transformational leadership), leaders should accentuate employee-centered leadership, and leaders should value output of their employees, not their mere physical presence.

COVID-19 has had drastic effects on organizational life, leadership effectiveness and culture, and the lives of employees at large. In order to be successful in this new normal, a lot of responsibility is placed on leaders to enable employees, empower employees and help the organization perform.

Even though there are general recommendations as outlined above, no one solution fits all organizations' needs and that of their employees. Organizational leaders should stay close to their employees and look for ways that best serve all stakeholders' interest and optimal performance.

Paper – The Effect of COVID-19 on Organizational Leadership: A Formidable Disruptor or a Blessing in Disguise?

Introduction

As the human race faces one of its toughest adversaries to date in the form of COVID-19, the reality of organizational life has changed significantly (Carracedo et al., 2021). Executives in organizations, who are the ultimate decision makers in the allocation of organizational resources, are focused on getting their goals and bottom-line objectives met. COVID-19 has forced organizational leaders to rethink the means through which they can achieve these objectives, which include themes like ensuring strategic priorities are clearly communicated to all employees, helping individuals and teams communicate and work together, and ultimately enabling employees to be productive, and take good care of the organization's customers and external stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

With the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the professional lives of many around the world has significantly changed. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics, as cited in Eichenauer et al. (2021) offered, "Since the onset of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the work lives of many have been significantly altered. Millions of workers were furloughed or laid off due to souring economic conditions" (p. 190).

The challenges weren't only professional though. Many had to endure a similar struggle in their personal lives as well. A University of California San Francisco study indicated, "On top of work-related challenges, individuals are also struggling to cope with personal life issues brought on by the pandemic such as loss, anxiety, and social isolation (Eichenauer et al., 2021, p. 190). This additional dimension of the challenges faced by employees exacerbates the gravity of the situation.

From the organizational perspective, similar difficulties can be witnessed – only on a grander scale. According to Coun et al. (2021), "The sudden shift toward homeworking forced many organizations to improvise and to develop new work routines to virtually serve customers and to collaborate with others inside and outside the organization" (p. 2).

Leaders in organizations, as an essential component of the leadership machinery in organizations, have had to pivot and look for better ways to mitigate their leadership challenges: "Due to major work disruptions caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, supervisors in organizations are facing

leadership challenges as they attempt to manage "work from home" arrangements, the health and safety of essential workers, and workforce reduction" (Eichenauer et al., 2021, p. 190).

Some view COVID-19 as a formidable challenge that needs to be dealt with (Boiral et al., 2021). Others view it as a long overdue wakeup call that was needed to force organizations desert their traditional take on how their work is done, adopt the preferences of the up-and-coming workforce; and ideally fully embrace and capitalize on the opportunities offered by the advent of digital technologies.

One important consideration among all these challenges is the evolving nature of leadership in times when remote working is the norm, geographically dispersed teams are more than ever commonplace, and a close control of operations can prove quite challenging. The main problem that this enquiry tires to address is how organizations can enable their leaders to effectively lead in this new normal. The study also aims to look for best practices that are essential to succeed in this new remote and highly digital environment by way of looking at best practices that organizations can emulate.

Purpose of the Study

While there are quite a few studies that focus on the COVID-19 challenge and its disruptive effect on work in general, this paper takes a unique perspective on the leadership challenge and hones in on the new normal that people leaders are facing the world over.

The research questions this study tries to answer are:

1. Is COVID-19 a potent problem or a needed disruptor to change the nature of work and people leadership?
2. What leadership skills are essential to succeed in this unprecedented setting of remote work and dispersed teams?
3. What best practices are there of effective leadership in a remote setting to succeed in the post-COVID era?

Methodology

This enquiry is based on secondary sources that are written on the effect of COVID-19 on organizational work and employees, with a specific emphasis on the leadership challenges and how they can be overcome. To ensure pertinence, in addition to general COVID-19 effects and trends literature, the enquiry has also looked into some best practices and perspectives when it comes to remote work and leading remote teams.

This literature review is based on secondary research including conference presentations, peer-reviewed journal articles, and professional society organization reports. Articles have been searched in Research Gate, Google Scholar and ProQuest and the following hashtags were used:

#COVID19EffectonOrganizations, #COVID19andwork, #Remotework, #RemoteLeadership and #WorkLifeBalance.

Results and Discussion

Evidently, sound leadership is a requirement for an organization to go through crises and come out successful on the other side. According to Chen & Sriphon (2021), in such tumultuous times for organizations, "leaders need to (1) make decisions quickly, e.g., to stop production or work remotely, (2) retain the mission and DNA of organizations, (3) collaborate with ecosystems, customers, and employees, as per Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and people's basic necessities, (4) encounter the uncertainty of the situation personally while directing their team and organizations through it as leaders" (p. 2).

But what does sound leadership look like? What themes can be developed about the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on organizational life – be it positive or otherwise – that can help answer the research questions? What did the organizations who were successful in managing the crisis do to avert the possible side effects of the pandemic?

Based on the enquiry, the following themes were established – Pros and Cons – of the pandemic's effect on organizational life. A weighed balance between the two will tell whether COVID-19 is indeed a formidable disruptor or a blessing in disguise for the betterment of organizational performance while keeping the needs and preferences of employees at heart. In addition to the pros and cons, the enquiry will also look at some success factors that are helpful to leaders to manage the crisis.

COVID-19 and Organizational Leadership: Pros

Autonomy. One essentially positive phenomenon that came along with the advent of COVID-19 and remote work being the modus operandi is that leaders had to entrust a lot of independence and autonomy to employees. Coun et al. (2021) opined that leaders have faced a lot of challenges to engage their employees remotely and provide a supportive work environment. But leaders can turn this around by providing elevated levels of empowerment and authority to their employees. Lorinkova et al. (2013 and Martin et al. (2013) as cited in Coun et al. (2021) opined, "Empowering leaders seek to achieve this through enhancing employees' levels of job autonomy and responsibility by sharing information about the organizational direction and the meaningfulness of the employee's work therein, while involving them in decision making" (p. 3).

Unbound Locations. COVID-19 has opened the door for unlimited, location-independent opportunities for work for employees. Especially for organizations that require specific skills or

highly trained niche talent, the new normal brought about by the advent of COVID-19 has enabled organizations to provide work opportunities that are not bound by any limits on location. In addition, employees who couldn't pursue gainful employment due to their personal or family situations have been able to benefit from the widely available remote work opportunities. These employees are motivated and highly engaged because this opportunity is what they have been waiting for.

Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés (2020) shared the Baruch and Nicolson model of successful telework which states that there are four factors for successful telework / remote work. These are individual (personality, situation), organizational (strategy, culture), job (nature, technology), and home and family as indicated in figure 1 below.

But, Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés (2020) added one factor that they said is essential given the current set of circumstances for success in a teleworking environment. The additional element they added highlighted the need for due consideration of environmental, safety and legal issues in telework as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 1 The Baruch and Nicolson model of successful telework (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020).
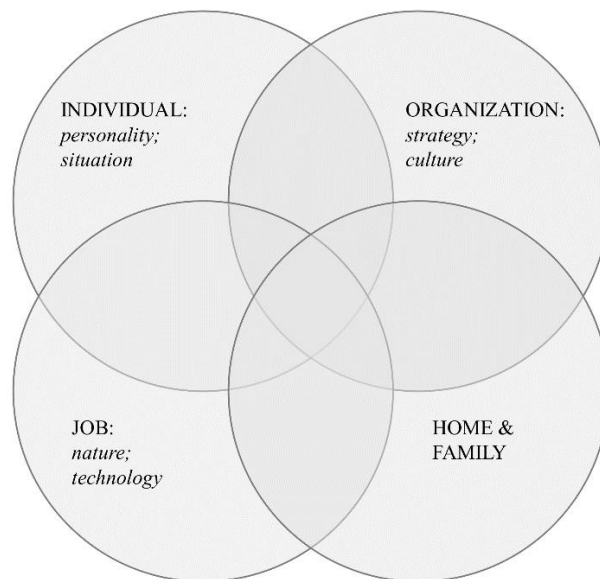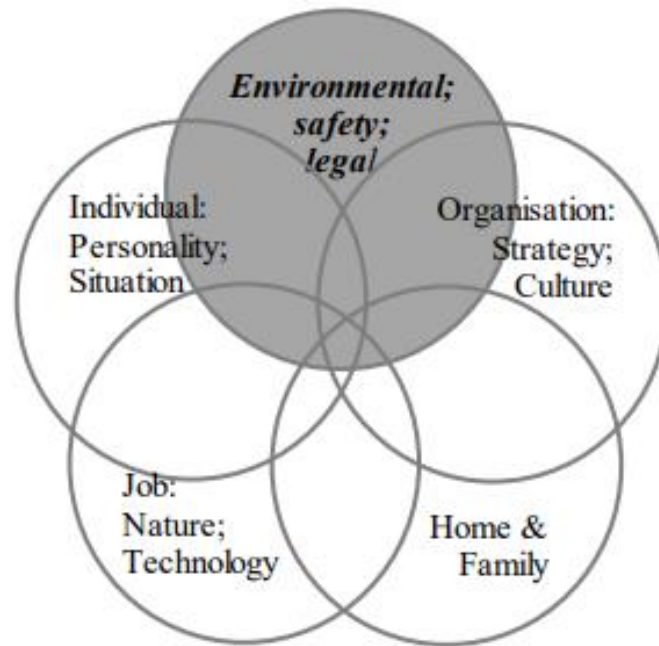

Figure 2 Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés updated model of successful telework (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020).

Digital Nomadism and Enlarged Talent Pool. Befitting the needs of present-day workers (of mainly the millennial and Gen Z generations), COVID-19 has resulted in enlarged opportunities for digital nomadism on the part of employees. More than ever, many employees have realized the opportunity of being able to live and work in far flung places and basically work from anywhere. For organizations, this means they can now opt to have employees be hired from essentially anywhere in the world as long as they have a stable internet connection. This will have economic benefits and it enables organizations to strengthen their diversity and inclusion practices as well.

COVID-19 and Organizational Leadership: Cons

The Challenged Trust Factor. Trust is an important element for professional relationships, especially manager-subordinate relationships to thrive. Chen & Sriphon (2021) wrote, "A lack of trust between managers and employees has occurred due to work from home because managers disagree with having employees work remotely. Thereby, managers try to control and monitor employees more closely than they did before COVID- 19, and this leads employees to feel uncomfortable and have negative feelings about their managers" (p. 2).

In their trial to ensure that they are in command, leaders usually have the tendency to overexercise their control which in turn severs the trust factor, and be extension, the positive working relationship between leaders and their subordinates: "Commanding and controlling leadership without consultation or collaboration damages collaborative working and team relationships. The trust deficiency leads to a negative outcome of organizational performance" (Chen & Sriphon, 2021, p.2). Consequently, the less than stellar trust between leaders and their subordinates in organizations has

affected the potential for a positive relationship between them that could bring about optimal organizational performance.

Work-Life Balance Vs. Work-Life Integration. The important issue of work-life balance has changed its course and some now argue that it should be referred to as work-life integration because the ubiquitous remote work that came because of COVID-19 has more than ever blurred the distinction between work and life. Employees have reported they have lost the distinction between their work and private lives, or their professional and personal lives. This has come out to be a huge disadvantage that came because of the extensive remote work culture that resulted from the strict lock downs and stay-at-home orders issued by local and national governments.

The Talent Acquisition Debacle. Talent Acquisition has been a difficult undertaking in organizations in the post-COVID world. Owing to this being an employees' market where there are several opportunities for employment, and the strong preference by most employees for remote work compared to on-site work has made it difficult to attract, hire and even retain legacy talent for many organizations. The talent pool has significantly shrunk and the demands of employees has multiplied – making it difficult for organizations to get the employees they need for optimal organizational performance.

The COVID-19 Work Environment: Success Factors

Effective Leadership Behaviors and Styles. Leaders play an important role for organizational success. Bajaba et al. (2021) wrote, "Leaders play an important role in the workplace due to their capacity to influence the environment by providing employees with the necessary resources to overcome their job demands or mitigating potential resource loss" (p. 2).

This begs to ask the question – what kind of leadership behaviors enable leaders to lead in crisis situations? What leadership theories best support effective leadership for remote work? There are many researchers who posited different views in this realm.

For instance, a study by Fernet et al. (2015) as cited in Bajaba et al. (2021) found that "transformational leadership is related to fewer follower job demands (e.g., emotional, physical, and cognitive demands) and increased job resources (e.g., quality of relationships, participation in decision-making, and job recognition), which indirectly lead to the followers having positive work attitudes and increased job performance" (p. 2).

Taking a broader view into crisis leadership, Dwiedienawati et al. (2021) offered that transformational leadership has emerged as the style with the highest effectiveness during a crisis. They defined transformational leaders as:

"The transformational leadership is leader who works with team with fostering team identity, creating vision though inspiration and executing the change or the organization and building team commitment. The transformational leadership style is charismatic, delegating, inspires, communicating, encourage innovation. Leaders who have transformational style have four distinct factors; charisma (idealized influence), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, which are known as the four I's of transformational leader" (p. 4).

On their part, Coun et al. (2021) countered, "In line with expectations, we found that empowering leadership during the earlier phases of the COVID-19 pandemic was positively related to innovative work-behavior" (p. 10).

Offstein et al., (2010) as cited in Eichenaur et al. (2021) opined, "Evidence suggests the single best predictor of the success of a telework arrangement is supervisory leadership. The most successful supervisors managing telework arrangements display both agentic behaviors (e.g., clear communication and project management) and communal behaviors (e.g., providing social support and displaying sensitivity" (p. 2).

Chen & Sriphon (2021) further added, "COVID-19 factors have a strong impact on leadership in organizations. In brief, these factors suggest that the organizational leadership during COVID-19 pandemic needs to have trustworthiness/reliability, good communication skills, empathy, willing- ness to help organizational members, inspiring and motivating others, ability to handle change, and ethics" (p. 15).

Employee-Centered Leadership. Another important success factor is the practice of employee-centered leadership. There has been a strong argument that claims that human resources are the most important assets of any organization. As such, employees should be at the center of organizational leadership's intent to lead and be an optimally performing unit. This need is ever more exacerbated during COVID-19 or for that matter any pandemic as people can become more fearful and insecure and be victims of inequalities at work. Beilstein et al. (2021) offered, "In the special circumstances of a pandemic, people become more fearful as the future becomes more unclear and the situation appears increasingly unstable. People feel enormous pressure as their daily lives are significantly disrupted. In addition, the pandemic seems to exacerbate inequalities, with wealthy people coping better with the imposed restrictions than the poor [28]. This additional tension can lead to increased racism, discrimination, and aggression" (p. 409).

Valuing Output, Not Physical Presence. Because of the remote work arrangement and lack of direct visual access to employees, leaders should rely on valuing the output and not just the mere

physical presence of employees. If leaders focus on their attendance checking and time tracking duties as a primary resort to enforce compliance, it will take away from their effectiveness. They should value the employee's output and not their mere physical presence.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked if COVID-19 is a potent problem or a needed disruptor to change the nature of work and people leadership.

Based on the enquiry, it can be inferred that COVID-19 was both a formidable challenge and a needed disruptor. It is a formidable challenge because it resulted in a challenged (and sometimes severed) trust between leaders and their followers, it has further blurred the distinction between work and private lives of employees and thrown the work-life balance equation off, and because it has resulted in significant challenges in acquiring talent. It was simultaneously a much-needed disruptor because it has resulted in increased autonomy for employees, it has enabled employees to work from unbound locations, and because it has given rise to a vigorously renewed culture of digital nomadism and by extension has enlarged the talent pool for organizations.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked what leadership skills are essential to succeed in this unprecedented setting of remote work and dispersed teams.

Chen & Sriphon (2021) offered that "COVID-19 has increased the need to amplify our knowledge on how to build effective leadership in organization sustainability. Managers in times of crisis required a high level of leadership to navigate employees toward an organizational goal" (p. 18). In addition, they offered five factors that leaders should practice in these challenging times as follow: "

- Leaders should develop communication skills to increase trust and minimize stress and anxiety
- Leaders should share information with empathy and optimism
- Leaders should use credibility and trustworthiness to build trust
- Leaders should share facts quickly and not hide bad news, and
- Leaders have to behave consistently" (Chen & Sriphon, 2021, p. 17).

Research Question 3

The third and last research question asked what best practices there are of effective leadership in a remote setting to succeed in the post-COVID era.

- Effective Leadership Behaviors: with respect to effective leadership behaviors in the post-COVID area, transformational and empowering leadership styles would be the best leadership style to emulate for leaders to be successful.

- Employee-Centered Leadership: organizations should enable their leaders to be employee-centered as employees can face a lot of anxiety and stress to be successful in the new normal of remote work and dispersed work locations.

- Valuing Output, Not Physical Presence: relating to autonomy, leaders should learn to value output and not mere physical presence to account for employees' effectiveness.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has had drastic effects on organizational life, leadership effectiveness and culture, and the lives of employees at large. In order to be successful in this new normal, a lot of responsibility is placed on leaders to enable employees, empower employees and help the organization perform.

Even though there are general recommendations as outlined above, no one solution fits all organizations' needs and that of their employees. Organizational leaders should stay close to their employees and look for ways that best serve all stakeholders' interest and optimal performance.

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Presentation - The Effect of COVID-19 on Organizational Leadership: A Formidable Disruptor or a Blessing in Disguise?
Included below.

The effect of COVID-19 on organizational leadership: A formidable disruptor or a blessing in disguise?

Presented at the UFHRD 2022 Conference

Yilekal F. Beyene
Alina M. Waite

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1

Overview

- Leadership opportunities resulting from pandemic
- Leadership challenges brought about by pandemic
- Essential leadership skills to thrive within "new" normal
- Best practices in post COVID-19 era
- Implications for HRD
- Conclusion

COVID-19 Upheaval

- Organizational disruption brought about by pandemic
  - Remote work
  - Dispersed teams
  - Virtual communications
  - Health and safety of essential workers
  - Workforce reduction

Research Questions

- Is COVID-19 a potent problem or a needed disruptor to change the nature of work and people leadership?
- What leadership skills are essential to succeed in this unprecedented setting of remote work and dispersed teams?
- What best practices are effective leadership in a remote setting to succeed in the post COVID-19 era?

Approach

- Cross-sectional review of current literature on the effect of COVID-19 on work and employees, emphasizing leadership challenges and how they may be overcome
  - Consider positive disruption brought about by pandemic
  - Consider successful people leadership principles
  - Inventory best practices in remote work setting
- Subject key word searches and review of secondary research

Findings: Research Question 1

- Leadership opportunities (Pros) resulting from pandemic
  - Autonomy
  - Unbound locations
  - Digital nomadism and enlarged talent pool
- Leadership challenges (Cons) brought about by pandemic
  - The Challenged Trust Factor
  - Work-life balance vs. work-life integration
  - Talent acquisition debacle

Findings: Research Question 2

- Essential leadership skills to thrive within "new" normal
    - Communicating to increase trust and minimize anxiety
    - Sharing information with empathy and optimism
    - Displaying credibility and trustworthiness to build trust
    - Being transparent by sharing facts and revealing bad news
    - Behaving consistently

Findings: Research Question 3

- Best practices in post COVID-19 work environment:
    - Effective leadership behaviors and styles: transformational leadership
    - Employee-centered leadership
    - Valuing output, not physical presence

Implications for HRD

- A 'new normal'
- Further investigation on remote work as its nature has changed
- Intensive remote work effects on business and leadership need to be studied as well.

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Conclusion

- COVID-19 has had drastic effects on organizational life, leadership effectiveness and culture, and the lives of employees at large. In order to be successful in this new normal, a lot of responsibility is placed on leaders to enable employees, empower employees and help the organization perform.

- Even though there are general recommendations as outlined above, no one solution fits all organizations' needs and that of their employees. Organizational leaders should stay close to their employees and look for ways that best serve all stakeholders' interest and optimal performance.

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13

Applying a Systems Thinking Approach to Increase Leadership Capacity

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Abstract #115

Problem

The organization is like a living, breathing organism. To keep this organism thriving, it is crucial to simultaneously meet both employee and organizational needs by treating it as one whole system. Leaders are central to organizational success and thus have a strategic advantage in sustaining the system. As evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations are undergoing a series of changes primarily centered around ensuring employee well-being and maintaining business continuity (Barhate et al., 2021; Dirani et al., 2020).

However, decisions made to ensure employee well-being may not always result in the expected capital gains for the organization; and decisions made to maintain business continuity may have a detrimental impact on employees. A systems thinking approach, thus, becomes an important tool that allows leaders to pay attention to the system as a whole (Frank, 2000; Kim & Senge, 1994; Senge, 1990), especially during an unexpected change event, such as a pandemic (Haley et al., 2021; Zięba, 2021). In particular, systems thinking allows leadership to be flexible and agile to lead sustainable organizational change in this ever-changing world (Mette & Riegel, 2018).

Solution

Leadership capacity is about the leader's ability and willingness to learn and be confident in complex situations (Shaked & Schechter, 2016). Hence, increasing capacity is about expanding those skills to serve the organizational system better. In this paper, we will first explore and conceptualize the need for systems thinking approach, to delicately balance employee well-being and maintain business continuity. Second, we will use this conceptual paper to examine the systems thinking approach to increase leadership capacity. Last, we will propose a conceptual framework that applies the systems thinking approach to enhancing leadership capacity. The research questions guiding this work are:

What is the relationship between systems thinking and leadership capacity?

How can the systems thinking approach enhance leadership capacity?

Contribution to HRD Theory, Research, and Practice

The purpose of this study is to provide leaders with a framework to work within situations of crisis, uncertainty, and change. The conceptual framework emphasizes that the systems thinking approach is the primary leadership competency essential in leading an organization through change. Education and healthcare research has widely linked systems thinking as an essential leadership competency. This paper will contribute to leadership development in human resource development (HRD) by highlighting the importance of looking at the organization as a whole system, especially when

making strategic leadership decisions in the context of change. This paper has further practical implications of utilizing systems thinking to lead the organization to increase leadership capacity.

Stakeholders

The projected stakeholders in this research are: HRD practitioners, researchers, and organizational leaders.

<u>Keywords</u>: systems thinking, leadership capacity, employee well-being, business continuity, COVID-19

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<u>Paper</u>

Not applicable.

<u>Presentation</u>

Not applicable.

Leadership and management in the voluntary sector: what skills do volunteer volunteer managers need?

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Abstract #122

There is a gap in volunteer volunteer management research: how it is carried out, what skills are required and how these can be developed. Existing research usually focuses on staff managing volunteers, not volunteers managing volunteers. There is also a gap in volunteer volunteer leadership research, where the research focus is at Board-level. Additionally leadership and management are predominantly viewed as separate roles and activities. The reality for many volunteer volunteer managers, is that the role is a complex mix of leading volunteers through the ever-changing volunteering landscape alongside managing day-to-day people and service issues. They are so closely linked that divorcing one from the other is not feasible when you are doing the role; why should research into this area try to do so?

This submission is based on research using a variety of voluntary organisations to investigate the relevant skills needed for volunteer volunteer managers/leaders and the multi-faceted challenges involved in addressing the gaps and identifying practical solutions.

In the UK 23% of people volunteer regularly but there is a significant difference in volunteering, how volunteers engage with their organisations and how volunteers are led and managed. With increased reliance on the voluntary sector to support the delivery of the social justice agenda and an ongoing discussion about the quality of leadership and management in business, investigating how to provide effective leadership and management skills to volunteers who lead/manage other volunteers is becoming progressively more important for a sector under an increasing multitude of pressures. Leadership and management theory has been developed in business settings, not volunteer settings; development of these skills can be formal, planned, structured, visible and measurable or the opposite, making a common view difficult to achieve (Claxton and Gold, 2013).

The research questions investigated here are:

1. How are the terms "Leadership and Management" and "Leadership and Management Development" interpreted in the voluntary sector?

2. How are leadership and management skills developed in volunteers and how effective are these approaches?

The approaches used in this research are consistent with leadership/management research in the voluntary sector, where qualitative methods such as interviews are used, allowing for consideration of both culture and social relationships when interviewing leaders in the sector. It recognises that organisations have structures and processes which form an external reality (Bryman and Bell, 2015), that the structures in which volunteers function can be viewed objectively, and that there are a wide variety of influences on these. Finding organisations with volunteer volunteer managers willing to engage in the research was incredibly challenging. Over 30 organisations were approached, resulting in the completion of 16 interviews of 60-75 minutes duration being carried out over 8 months with volunteers from 9 organisations. Common themes were identified and discussed across the different voluntary organisations, focusing on experiences of leading/managing and where and how

participants have developed relevant skills, both formally and informally. Initial findings will be shared in the presentation.

Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation – Leadership and management in the voluntary sector: what skills do volunteer volunteer managers need?
Included below.

Leadership and management in the voluntary sector: what skills do volunteer volunteer managers need?

Nicky Adams

1

Why this topic?

Approach

Middle management level is about balancing leadership and management – most research at BoT level

Key leadership and management themes and theories;

particularly those relevant to the sector

Background to the sector, including leadership and management

How we develop leaders and managers; what is different in the voluntary sector

3

What the literature says…

As noted by Sutherland (2015) most literature/research on management and leadership is focused on business;

Much of the literature/research on developing leaders and managers is focused on business. Hodges and Howieson (2017) identify the gaps in provision of leadership in the voluntary sector

Most literature/research on these topics in the voluntary sector focuses on staff managing volunteers or implies through the language used that staff carry out these roles, such as Jackson, Locke Hogg, Lynch (2019)

The specific contribution of this is that it focuses on the voluntary sector rather than business and on volunteers managing volunteers.

Critical Realist Paradigm

- Organisations have structures and processes which form an external reality (Bryman and Bell, 2015)
- Recognises that the structures in which volunteers function can be viewed objectively, and also that there are a wide variety of influences
- These include consideration of the wider historical context of the organisation and the research participants, an acknowledgement that "facts" are often a subjective view influenced by the participants' lived experience (Dudovskiy, 2018).
- Acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher as a natural part of the creation of knowledge (Grey, 2014)

5

Overall research goal:

Volunteers leading and managing other volunteers ideally at different levels and without any staff management involved

What I wanted…

Where I ended up…

How it went…

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First impressions…

- Most VVMs had prior leadership and management experience
- Broad agreement that leadership is "getting people to do things that need doing" whilst management is how to do this
- Leadership, followership and management are all important
- The specific nature of leading volunteers was acknowledged by many and the amount of emotional labour required to do this
  - *"you need to be a lot nicer, more careful, more nurturing… it's like treading on eggshells"; "like shovelling fog up hill – hard to do"*
- There is a perceived difference in being a volunteer yourself when managing
  - volunteers see *"they are being led by people like us"*

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First impressions…

- VVMs are provided with leadership and management development, often not focused on individual specific needs or delivered in a timely way: *"it was a bit waffly"; "needs to focus on bespoke training for individuals"*
- VVMs are often expected to identify their own needs; ongoing support is not always provided: *"sink or swim, it's up to you"*
- Results so far show
  - Support is not always consistent
  - The effectiveness of the interventions is not always measured
  - An unspoken expectation that volunteers bring the requisite skills with them; lack of formal support in identifying skills needed supports this

Anecdotal Evidence

- Involvement with Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM); conference sessions; conversations with paid VMs, thought leaders, CEOs, Chairs of Trustees, other academics in the field

  — Change in the nature of volunteering will push need for better VVM

  — Increase in interest in engaging lead volunteers BUT…
    - Uncertainty on roles/job substitution; how to create roles and manage them; lack of support and development; where does responsibility lie (not HR!); getting others in the organisation to buy in to it

  — VVMs have a different relationship from paid VMs

  — Managing volunteers IS different from managing staff

  — Charities are "not competing with other charities for volunteer time but with everything else in the person's life"; volunteers have "unsalaried credibility" and offer an "unfiltered view" of the organisation

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Questions, comments, feedback?

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School Culture and its Impact on Teacher Retention in a Pandemic Environment

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DR. AMANDA MUHAMMAD

Indiana State University

Abstract #123

Parenting The COVID-19 pandemic forced employers to consider the extensive exodus of workers, including teachers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 270,000 teachers anticipated leaving their jobs between 2016 and 2026 (Torpey, 2018), with elementary school teachers the most likely to leave the profession. The 2021 State of the U.S. Teacher Survey revealed about 25 percent of teachers surveyed were considering leaving the profession by the end of the 2020-2021 school year (Steiner & Woo, 2021). Furthermore, from August 2021 to December 2021, approximately 283,000 employees left the educational services industry (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Irrespective of where teachers go, school leaders are confronted with nurturing a culture in light of attrition amid a global crisis.

Against this backdrop, it becomes imperative to study contributing factors to teacher attrition–emphasizing the part school culture plays. Barth (2002) defined school culture as "how things are done around here." There are different types of school culture: collaborative, fragmented, and toxic. The collaborative school culture is theoretically the ideal school culture. It is characterized by high student achievement, a supportive environment, transparency, and promotion of professional development for teachers (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). The fragmented school culture lacks direction. Employees basically have their own territory; little professional interaction exists among staff. A spirit of competition thrives with an "every-man-for-himself" dogma (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). In the toxic culture, teachers emphasize that which is negative about the school. Teachers have low expectations of their students. Also, teachers avoid responsibility and do not embrace opportunities for professional development (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

As such, school leadership plays a pivotal role in determining the existing school culture. Norton (1999) noted that 25 percent of teachers quit the profession after one year. Principals' level of involvement with new teachers is impactful (Young, 2007). Leaders who ensure that new teachers have mentors, grade team members' assistance, and engage in the teacher induction process, positively contribute to teacher retention and foster an affirmative culture. Clemons and Lindner (2019) reinforced the importance of support from colleagues and school leaders in contributing to success and longevity at the learning institution. Hence, school cultures where collegiality and collaboration permeate help secure teacher retention. Conversely, cultures having weak peer and leadership support exhibit teachers leaving the profession due to diminished school culture and limited emotional support (Sass et al., 2011).

Consequently, investigating school culture's impact on teacher retention during a crisis is timely to fill the gap in available data. Through the lens of culture, influenced in part by school leaders, the question is what impact does school culture have on teacher retention? This project aims to address the research question in the context of a worldwide pandemic by using these theoretical perspectives and analyzing relevant literature.

Keywords: Culture, Retention, Leadership, Crisis, COVID-19 Pandemic

Paper

Not applicable.

Presentation - Paper School Culture and its Impact on Teacher Retention in a Pandemic Environment Included below.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TEACHER RETENTION IN A PANDEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Presented at the UFHRD 2022 Conference

Verley Lanns-Isaac, M.A., M.S., Doctoral Student

Alina M. Waite, Ph.D.

Amanda J. Muhammad, Ph.D.

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Overview

- Teacher Retention
- School Culture
- Leadership
- Implications for HRD
- Conclusion

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Teacher Retention

- It is a real problem.

For example, the United States, the rate of teachers who leave has increased by 50% (Moore et al., 2018).

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Research question

What influence does school culture have on teacher retention?

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Approach

- Subject key word searches
- Book and journal reviews
- Seminal works with definitions

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School culture, what is it?

- There is no one set definition for culture. In fact, prominent researchers in the field have agreed that culture is a broad and complex concept that can mean an array of things to different people (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Causadias, 2020).

- According to Baith (2002), "A school culture is a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions and myths that are deeply ingrained in the core of the organization. It is the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act."

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School culture, what is it?

- Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) defined it as the " unwritten mission of the school that tells students and staff why they are there."

- To help encapsulate the concept of culture, a series of expressions that are often used in the field were put together. Some of these expressions are the way we do things around here; the patterns of behavior that distinguish us from them; the unwritten rules; and the default mode of behavior (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

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School Culture

Amidst the variety of definitions for school culture, one thing is certain.

EVERY ORGANIZATION HAS A CULTURE

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When there is an assembly of people in a location over a duration of time that is that is extensive, a culture will come into existence. This is because people always take elements of a preexisting culture with them. They are never wholly free of their past experiences and prevailing tendencies (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015)

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Types of school culture

Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) make mention of six (6) types of school cultures. Namely:

- Collaborative
- Comfortable collaborative
- Contrived collegial
- Balkanized
- Fragmented
- Toxic

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Collaborative

In theory, it is the best culture. It is the type that schools should aim to have.

Some of the features of this type of culture are high students' achievement; intentional support of those therein; transparency; emphasis on professional development for teachers; and comradery (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

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Toxic

The teachers in that type of school stress on the aspects of the school's way of doing things. They tend to use the faults of the school to justify poor performance. The teachers' expectations of their students are low. The teachers use these low expectations as the basis upon which they establish ties with each other. Since professional advancement is not prioritized, they fail to embrace opportunities for professional development. In fact, shirking responsibility is the order of the day for these teachers (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

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Fragmented

There is no direction. Employees essentially all have their own space, and there is minimal professional interaction taking place among staff. In that school culture, the spirit that dominates is an 'every man for himself' one (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

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Comfortable - collaborative

Workers in that culture are civil to each other, but they are very superficial – fake. They tend to have a fixed mindset, and their attitude prevents growth and improvement (Greunert & Whitaker, 2015).

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Contrived - collegial

In that type of school culture, the school leader plays a major role in the behavior of the staff. In school leaders' endeavor to force the process of improving the school, they utilize techniques that involve controlling the workers. By micromanaging employees, the school leader contributes to loss of autonomy among staff (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

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Balkanized school culture

It is a culture of separate groups competing against each other as they try to strive for superiority – one in a higher position that the others (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

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Role of the leader in shaping school culture and in teacher retention

- The leader plays a main role in the creation of a strong school culture in part through effective management skills (Atasoy, 2020).

- According to Fiegener and Adams (2022), as a consequence of the school leader's organization of the instructional environment, this affected teachers' welfare, and their propensity to be retained at the school.

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Role of the leader in shaping school culture and in teacher retention

- As the leader uses techniques to engage teachers in decision-making, this communicates to them that they have a 'say' that matters. Such increased psychological empowerment that result builds towards a school

  culture that encourage teacher retention (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019).

- The school leader is positioned to put mentoring programs in place, and to create professional development opportunities for staff that help foster a spirit and culture of collaboration (Jones, 2012)

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Role of leader's link in the engagement and retention of workers

- In harmony with the information on the previous slide, according to the statement made by McHugh (2001) as cited in Mendes and Standers (2011) that positive organizational behavior is important for the encouragement of employee engagement. It increases the commitment of employees, and simultaneously decreases the risk of lost of talent. The empowering behavior of the leader therefore influences psychological empowerment, work engagement, and turnover intention.

- By work engagement, we refer to "a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002) as cited in (Mendes & Standers, 2011).

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Role of leader's link in the engagement and retention of workers

- Reynolds (2019) posited that employees frequently go to work in order to enjoy the experiences that result from the relationships they developed with co-workers, mentors, teammates or, and supervisors. Also, workers have the need to feel a sense of belonging to the organizations they work in, and they need to know that the work they perform is meaningful and purposeful. Hence, should leaders help to create a culture that helps in workers satisfying these needs, there subsequently is a higher likelihood that such engagement will lead to retention of the workforce.

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Primary Findings

Leaders are uniquely positioned to influence the culture of their organizations to ensure that the ideal culture that fosters employees' engagement will greatly contribute to curbing the incline in attrition rates.

Mentoring

Proper use of veteran teachers

Prevent toxic cultures from taking root early

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