

The impact of digital skills, human centric culture, employee wellbeing, and HR analytics on talent management in the Sultanate of Oman: A quantitative study



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ABSTRACT

Talent management is of utmost significance in contemporary organizations striving to navigate the challenges of the current environment effectively. This research aims to explore the perspectives of talent management development practices in the Sultanate of Oman and assess the influence of digital skills, human centric culture, employee wellbeing, and HR analytics on shaping talent management in the region. Employing a quantitative approach, the study was conducted across various organizations in the Sultanate. The findings are based on data collected from a sample of 207 respondents comprising human resource managers from diverse sectors in the Sultanate of Oman, obtained through an online questionnaire using nonprobability sampling. The study substantiates that variables such as digital skills, employee wellbeing, human centric culture, and HR analytics exhibit a significant positive association with talent management, thereby bolstering the mechanisms of talent management within companies in the Sultanate of Oman. These results have immediate implications for talent management practices, ensuring efficient discovery, attraction, development, evaluation, and retention of talented personnel within organizations. As a recommendation, this study proposes that all organizations in the Sultanate of Oman devise a comprehensive list of processes and HR activities to address talent management challenges in the post-COVID era, ultimately enhancing work efficiency and adeptly responding to emerging trends.

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1. Introduction

The current business landscape is undergoing rapid transformation due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, imposing formidable challenges on human resource managers (Gigauri, 2020). In the context of profound global changes brought about by the pandemic, organizations are compelled to respond, adapt, and strategically manage their workforce accordingly (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020). In the present scenario, the paramount objectives for any organization encompass survival, well-being, and effective management of their human workforce, elevating the significance of Human Resources during this pandemic era. Moreover, human capital assumes heightened importance at all levels within

organizations seeking to enhance their competitiveness, both on the global and local stage, given the intricate, dynamic, highly competitive, and exceedingly volatile global environment in which they operate (Dayel et al., 2020). The significance of talent management in the current business landscape cannot be overstated, as numerous organizations grapple with the implementation of effective talent management practices to thrive amidst prevailing challenges (Nangia and Mohsin, 2020). Despite the growing awareness of the value of skilled employees, a primary hurdle confronting most organizations is the scarcity of managerial and professional talent. The dearth of such talent poses a significant impediment to many companies' efforts to execute their global strategies successfully. As the demand for fundamental and advanced skill sets continues to escalate, the concept of talent management has garnered substantial attention in the literature, highlighting the pivotal role of human capital as an initial step toward attaining and sustaining a competitive advantage on the global stage (Dayel et al., 2020).

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2. Literature review

The prominence of talent management can be traced to around the start of the year 2000. This is the period when a management consulting firm, 'McKinsey' reported that employers face a 'war for talents' characterized by difficulties in the recruitment of employees due to the tight labor market (Froese et al., 2020). Workforces around the world have become larger, increasingly diverse, more educated, and more mobile (Briscoe et al., 2009). There need to develop and promote talent has become an important feature in the contemporary business environment (Garg and Rani, 2014). Based on the increased need for basic skills and advanced skills level, talent management has emerged in many works of literature that emphasize the importance of human capital as a first step in gaining and sustaining a global competitive advantage (Dayel et al., 2020). Talent management is concerned with the systematic identification of positions that are key to the organization's competitive advantage sustainably over time. Talent management is of the essence because organizations can successfully attract and maintain necessary talent (Al Haziazi, 2021).

The first perspective on talent management focuses primarily on the "collection of typical HRM practices, functions, or activities". Talent management can be distinguished from traditional HRM by being more strategic and future-oriented, as well as in line with the overall corporate strategic goals (Collings, 2014). The second perspective on talent management views talented employees as having high potential which needs to be sought after, irrespective of the specific needs of an organization. Talent Management is a set of processes designed to ensure an adequate flow of employees into jobs throughout the organization (Hatun, 2016). The third perspective on talent management, which concentrates on the job flow of employees within an organization, is also known as "succession or human resource planning" (Rezaei and Beyerlein, 2018). This approach focuses on the internal rather than the external labor market and typically starts with the identification and mobilization of internal talent pools (Boštjančič and Slana, 2018). The fourth perspective emphasizes the identification of key positions that have the potential to have an impact on the competitive advantage of an organization. This perspective argues that talent management should start with the identification of pivotal positions rather than with talented employees (Collings et al., 2015). Cappelli and Keller (2014) suggested that talent management should apply to all workers. All employees of an organization are seen as possessing strengths that can potentially create added value for the organization. Talent management is understood as a sum of activities to support the corporate strategy explicitly (Schuler et al., 2011). The higher the company's attention to talent management, so to get highly talented

employees, you can look for it from outside as well as from training and regeneration (Busro, 2018).

3. Purpose of the study

This paper is the continuation of the previous work (Al Haziazi, 2021) which focuses on developing a framework that will strive to guide the talent management practices within the companies. The framework is designed based on the literature and the current global context faced by the organization which consists of four parts such as digital skills, human centric culture, human resource analytics, and employee wellbeing. This study will try to examine the perspectives of talent management development practices in the Sultanate of Oman and investigate the impact of digital skills, human centric culture, employee wellbeing, and HR analytics on shaping talent management. The study will suggest strategies for shaping talent management in the Post COVID-19 World.

4. Methodology

The focus of this research is to measure the impact of digital skills, human centric culture, employee wellbeing, and HR analytics on shaping talent management. The study adopted quantitative research, and it was applied to various organizations across the Sultanate. The data collection procedure was collected through a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was submitted to the experts in the field of Human Resources for getting feedback. Based on their feedback minor changes have been made to the questionnaire and distributed to a few sample populations for the pilot study and the reliability was calculated with the help of Cronbach alpha. Cronbach Alpha value was calculated, and it was found to be 0.853 and the total number of questions was 25. The values were found to be in the range of 0.60 and 0.90, hence it might be suggested that all the scales met the reliability condition. Employing a non-probability sampling technique, HR executives, and HR managers of various organizations were contacted for collecting data. 207 samples were collected from various sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. A five-point Likert scale was applied to measure the four independent variables such as digital skills, human centric culture, employee wellbeing, and HR analytics on shaping talent management. Here, talent management was considered a dependent variable. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS software version 26.0.

5. Research results

The objective of the questionnaire survey was to examine the influence of digital skills, human centric culture, employee wellbeing, and HR analytics on the configuration of talent management within organizations operating in the Sultanate of Oman. The survey yielded significant findings that shed

light on several key aspects. These findings provide insights into how HR managers perceive the prevailing conditions linked to COVID-19 and talent management, as well as the pandemic's impact on talent management practices within the organizations.

The analysis from Table 1 reveals that the majority of the respondents 59.4% were male and the remaining 40.6% were female. With respect to the age of the respondents, 33.8% of them fall between the age bar of 31 to 35, and the next high frequency is 29.5 % between 26 to 31 years. It also shows that 19.3% of respondents were in the age bar of 36 to 40 years.

Table 1: Demographical data

Description		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	123	59.4
	Female	84	40.6
Age	21 – 25	29	14.0
	26 – 30	61	29.5
	31 – 35	70	33.8
	36 – 40	40	19.3
	Above 41	7	3.4
	Up to 5 years	62	30.0
Work experience	6- 10 years	105	50.7
	11 – 15 years	31	15.0
	16 years and above	9	4.3
Type of sector	Petroleum and Gas	22	10.6
	Trading	55	26.6
	Service	71	34.3
	Manufacturing	23	11.1
	Construction	17	8.2
	Engineering	14	6.8
	Mining	5	2.4

In the analysis of work experiences based on the categorization presented in Table 1, it was observed that 50.7% of the respondents possessed work experience ranging from 6 to 10 years. Furthermore, 30% of the respondents reported having work experience of up to 5 years, while 15% indicated work experience falling within the range of 11 to 15 years.

Regarding the sectors to which the respondents belong, Table 1 illustrates the distribution, revealing that 34.3% of the sampled respondents were from the Service sector, 26.6% from the Trading sector,

11.1% from the Manufacturing sector, and 10.6% from the Oil and Gas sector. Only a minority of respondents represented the Construction, Engineering, and Mining sectors.

5.1. Friedman’s test

The Friedman test is used to test differences between groups when the dependent variable being measured is ordinal. The Friedman test compares the mean ranks between the related groups and indicates how the groups differed, and it is included for this reason.

Table 2 provides the test statistic (χ^2) value ("Chi-square") 32.869, degrees of freedom ("df") is 3, and the significance level ("Asymptotic significance is .000"), which is all we need to report the result of the Friedman test. From the analysis, we can see that there is an overall statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the related groups. Digital skills, Employee wellbeing, human centric culture, HR analytics).

Table 2: Friedman test

	Mean rank
Digital skills	2.80
Employee wellbeing	3.11
Human centric culture	3.21
HR analytics	2.80
Test statistics	
N	207
Chi-square	32.869
df	3
Asymptotic significance	.000

5.2. Chi-square test

A Chi-Square test was performed to investigate the presence of significant associations between the dependent variable, talent management, and all the independent variables, namely digital skills, employee wellbeing, HR centric culture, and HR analytics. The results of the Chi-Square test, as shown in Table 3, indicate that the P-value for all the independent variables is 0.000, signifying a statistically significant association between talent management and digital skills, employee wellbeing, hr centric culture, and HR analytics.

Table 3: Chi-square test

	Pearson Chi-square value	No. of valid cases	df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Digital skills	131.237(a)	207	3	.000
Employee wellbeing	81.638(b)	207	3	.000
HR centric culture	80.130(b)	207	3	.000
HR analytics	76.884(b)	207	3	.000

a: 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 41.4; b: 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 51.8

5.3. ANOVA test

The ANOVA Test was used to find the significant differences between the means of experience with digital skills, employee wellbeing, human centric culture, and HR analytics.

Table 4 lists the ANOVA test between the experience and all the talent management variables.

From Table 5 the P value is not less than 0.05. Accept HO. There are no significant differences between the means of experience and all the talent management variables such as digital skills, employee wellbeing, human centric culture, and HR analytics. It shows that experience is not having a big impact on the variables of talent management.

Table 4: ANOVA test

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F
Digital skills	Between groups	1.733	3	.578	.824
	Within groups	142.335	203	.701	
	Total	144.068	206		
Employee wellbeing	Between groups	4.292	3	1.431	2.476
	Within groups	117.312	203	.578	
	Total	121.604	206		
Human centric culture	Between groups	2.846	3	.949	1.545
	Within groups	124.632	203	.614	
	Total	127.478	206		
HR analytics	Between groups	3.109	3	1.036	1.657
	Within groups	126.959	203	.625	
	Total	130.068	206		

Table 5: Homogeneous subsets

	Experience	N	Subset for alpha=0.05	
			1	2
Digital skills				
Tukey HSD ^{a,b}	16 years and above	9	3.5556	
	11 - 15 years	31	3.8710	
	6- 10 years	105	3.8857	
	Up to 5 years	62	4.0000	
	Sig.		.264	
Employee wellbeing				
Experience				
Tukey HSD ^{a,b}	16 years and above	9	3.5556	4.0381
	11 - 15 years	105	4.0381	4.0381
	6- 10 years	31	4.0645	4.0645
	Up to 5 years	62	4.0645	4.2419
	Sig.		.101	.793
Human centric culture				
Experience				
Tukey HSD ^{a,b}	16 years and above	9	3.6667	
	11 - 15 years	31	4.0645	
	6- 10 years	105	4.1238	
	Up to 5 years	62	4.2419	
	Sig.		.059	
HR analytics				
Experience				
Tukey HSD ^{a,b}	16 years and above	9	3.5556	
	11 - 15 years	105	3.8286	
	6- 10 years	31	3.9677	
	Up to 5 years	62	4.0484	
	Sig.		.143	

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed; a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 23.666; b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic meaning of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed

5.4. Inter-correlation of research variables

Descriptive statistics were run for the independent and dependent variables. Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations for the descriptive statistics of the variables that were used. A correlation analysis was conducted between talent management (Dependent Variable) and the independent variables of digital skills, employee wellbeing, human centric culture, and HR analytics.

The test of correlation was performed for every independent variable with the dependent variables. Table 6 shows the output of the Pearson correlation tests of all the variables identified as digital skills, employee wellbeing, human centric culture, and HR analytics. All the variables are inter-correlated. Findings show that there were positive and strong relationships between the dimension of talent management with the four dimensions such as digital skills, employee wellbeing, human centric culture, and HR analytics.

6. Discussion and implications

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted the global economy, leading to a multitude of challenges, such as business continuity, diminished employee motivation, remote work arrangements, and workforce reductions. In the current scenario, the paramount objectives for organizations are to ensure their survival, prioritize employee well-being, and effectively manage their human resources. Consequently, Human Resources assumes a pivotal role in navigating this pandemic era (Nangia and Mohsin, 2020). The Sultanate of Oman, as a rapidly developing country, is currently experiencing a significant transformation that relies heavily on a skilled and educated workforce to drive its economic growth. The Oman Vision 2040 underscores the importance of advancing with confidence in all sectors, with a particular focus on harnessing human talents (Al Haziati, 2019). However, in the prevailing scenario, a notable

discrepancy arises: the quality of talent within companies has improved, whereas the availability of

high-quality skills in the job market has declined (Rana, 2017).

Table 6: Inter-correlation test

		Correlations			
		DS	EW	HCC	HRA
Digital skills	Pearson correlation	1	.639**	.617**	.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	207	207	207	207
Employee wellbeing	Pearson correlation	.639**	1	.713**	.665**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	207	207	207	207
Human centric culture	Pearson correlation	.617**	.713**	1	.595**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	207	207	207	207
HR analytics	Pearson correlation	.724**	.665**	.595**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	207	207	207	207
Talent management	Pearson correlation	.671**	.719**	.657**	.690**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	207	207	207	207

** : Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The findings of the present study establish a significant, positive, and robust association between talent management and the identified variables, namely digital skills, employee wellbeing, human centric culture, and HR analytics. This association is expected to enhance the talent management mechanisms within companies operating in the Sultanate of Oman. It is imperative to acknowledge that digital transformation is an ongoing process, and companies will continuously need to adapt, reconsider, and reshape their strategies to keep pace with this evolving landscape (Muthuraman, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the importance of digitalizing activities and processes, leading to an unprecedented shortage of digital skills in the current job market. Employees must now frequently update their skills to remain pertinent in this rapidly changing digital environment (Schuler et al., 2011). Digital skills represent the most pragmatic and measurable application of specific knowledge and competencies in digital usage (Iordache et al., 2017). The study's findings emphasize the significance of transitioning from task-centric to human centric workplaces in the post-COVID new normal. In this transformed setting, the role of employees is anticipated to expand, resulting in optimized production performance. The allocation of tasks aligns with the specific skills, experiences, and attributes of each employee, and a human centric system facilitates the enhancement of employee knowledge and capabilities, irrespective of age or position. The advantages of shifting from a task-centric organizational approach to a human centric factory are groundbreaking. Consequently, there is a paramount need to define new socially sustainable workplaces that prioritize the human dimension as a key cornerstone (May et al., 2015).

The present study emphasizes the significance of introducing employee wellbeing at work within

organizations, particularly during the ongoing pandemic situation when many employees are returning to physical workplaces. Implementing employee wellbeing initiatives can foster a change in the organizational climate, accommodating innovative practices that yield positive organizational outcomes (Guest, 2017). Employee wellbeing at work offers several advantages to organizations, such as maintaining a healthy workforce (Hesketh and Cooper, 2019). Despite the heightened importance of employee wellbeing in the minds of managers, there remains limited evidence regarding the explicit link between employee wellbeing and performance (Guest, 2017).

The study findings emphasize that HR Analytics constitutes a knowledge schema that portrays the neural network of HR operations within an organization. In the post-COVID new normal, it is imperative for every organization to prioritize HR Analytics, which involves leveraging technology to make informed decisions about HR processes and procedures (Jain and Jain, 2020). The utilization of analytics streamlines the collection, documentation, and retrieval of diverse performance data from multiple sources, both external and internal. This equips managers with more comprehensive information to assess employee performance in terms of both outcomes and behaviors (Sharma and Sharma, 2017). HR analytics, as an evidence-based approach, aims to enhance individual and organizational performance by facilitating better decisions pertaining to the human resources aspect of the business (Marler and Boudreau, 2017).

The study findings bear direct implications for talent management practices, ensuring the recruitment of suitable individuals who effectively contribute to the organization. As a result of implementing this talent management strategy, notable changes have been observed at the

individual level. These changes include statistically significant increases in job satisfaction, performance motivation, and commitment, alongside heightened trust in leaders. This outcome can be attributed to employees being provided with career and development perspectives and goals that align with their competencies and levels of engagement (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011). The organization must also exercise careful management of its employees and foster their willingness to work towards achieving the organizational goals (Muthuraman and Al-Haziizi, 2017). Talent management practices that demonstrate a robust emphasis on aligning with the corporate strategy and overall organizational objectives exhibit a statistically significant and higher impact on corporate profit compared to other focal areas of talent management practices (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011).

Despite yielding promising results, this study suggests several implications for future research. Firstly, this research encompassed all sectors in the Sultanate of Oman, yet no specific impact has been identified concerning these sectors. Subsequent investigations could focus on exploring talent management differences between the private and public sectors. Additionally, the generalization of research findings could be extended to include other countries within the Middle East region, facilitating comparisons and generating further insights.

Moreover, certain limitations exist within this study. Notably, the sample size comprised only 207 participants, and it is recognized that larger sample sizes tend to yield more representative results. Furthermore, the study solely investigated four independent variables related to talent management; however, there may be additional variables worth exploring in future research to gain deeper insights. Additionally, data collection relied solely on surveys from HR executives and managers, and for improved accuracy, future studies may incorporate data from all workforce levels to comprehensively understand the effects of talent management.

7. Conclusion

Based on an extensive literature review and consultations with HR experts in the field, it is evident that managers can adopt a new approach toward talent management practices in the post-COVID era. Consequently, the study recommends that all organizations in the Sultanate of Oman formulate a comprehensive list of processes and HR activities that could impact talent management in the post-COVID context, resulting in enhanced work efficiency. In the post-COVID environment, the new norm mandates organizations to consistently invest in talent management practices to effectively identify talent needs and proficiently engage in talent discovery, attraction, development, evaluation, and retention. This proactive approach is crucial for effectively addressing challenges and adapting to

new emerging trends in the dynamic landscape post-pandemic.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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