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Contribution of talent analytics in change management within project management organizations The case of the French aerospace sector

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Abstract

Big data analytics is emerging as an important tool that has the capability to transform the way firms conduct talent management (TM) into the so-called talent analytics. Drawing on the talent management literature, a model of work in organizations project management and a case study conducted in the French aerospace industry, this paper aims to explore the potential benefits of talent analytics in the context of change management within project management organizations. Our findings, implications and future research directions are presented and discussed.

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Keywords: Talent management, talent analytics, case study, aerospace

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1. Introduction

In the current business environment, which is characterized by increased market competition, globalization, change in governmental regulations, rapid growth, an increased demand for certification, and advances in technology and information systems, acquiring and managing organizational strategic assets are considered as critical to achieve competitive advantage. Indeed, in this changing environment, firms across the globe are trying to get the most successful individuals, the best people to gain a competitive advantage, and thus putting in place TM practices. Recently, big data analytics (BDA), which is defined as “a holistic process that involves [the] 5Vs (volume, velocity, variety, value, and veracity) in terms of collection, analysis, use, and interpretation of data for various functional divisions, with a view to gaining actionable insights, creating business value, and establishing competitive advantages”(p. 235) [1]”, has emerged as a new strategic tool that can further the transformation of TM practices. Indeed, big data analytics in talent management or human resources, which is called Talent Analytics (TA) or People Analytics (PA) [2], offers many benefits.

Analysts estimated that on about “160 million workers in the US alone, and most company’s largest expense is payroll. In fact in most businesses payroll is 40% or more of total revenue, meaning that total US payroll expense is many billions of dollars” (p. 1) [2]. TA may help firms move from using HR management tools that support decisions based on “gut feel, personal experience, and corporate belief systems” toward a more data-driven approach [2]. Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess potential talent analytics-related benefits in the context of change management within project management organizations. The research question is set out as follows: what is the potential impact of talent analytics on change management within project management organizations?

After the introduction, Section 2 presents the literature review. Section 3 outlines our research methodology, while the results of the study are outlined in Section 4. Our conclusion, limitations and directions for future research are discussed in Section 5.

2. Literature review

TM is considered as “the systematic utilization of the Human Resource Management (HRM) activities to attract, identify, develop and retain individuals who are considered to be talented” [3]. In practice, the word “talented” often means the high potential employees, the “A players”, the strategically important employees or employees in key positions, who represent 20% of the workforce and receive more valued resources and career opportunities from the organization than the others: the “B players” [4]. They contribute significantly to the successful organizational performance [5], especially because they possess some valuable skills which can contribute to the organization's core competencies; such skills are sometimes unique because they are difficult to replace [6], according to the resource-based view of the firm (RBV) [7], thus highlighting an exclusive TM approach [8]. The inclusive TM approach means that all people can have talent and not only the “A players”: employee and organizational strategies goals can best be achieved by focusing on the positive qualities or the talents residing in every individual [9]. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, having an effective talent pipeline in place is the foundation for every successful organization and finding the right person for a job makes businesses, economies and societies stronger [10]. Organizations recognize the interest to have talent in intense competition, putting in place processes such as TM practices in order to attain this goal [11]. TM involves many steps including: talent identification, talent selection, attract talent, develop talent and retain talent (Table 1).

TA adds more value to TM, as it has the potential to change the way companies are organizing, operating and managing talent to create value (Mayhew, Saleh & Williams, 2016), one of the means being to propose solution information to appoint the right employees to the right jobs, in the right time and in the right way by answering a set of specific questions (Table 1). More broadly, [12] stated that TA can facilitate the creation of the so-called “‘perfect’ employee model” in which a given organization can assess “what makes an employee successful in a role and build a model or qualifications template for hiring”. [12] argued that the resulting models can be used to assess potential candidates, and thus helping organizations to take decisions based on “data, not just intuition”. For [12], once firms have the “right people” at the “right positions”, they can now develop robust promotion strategies, and therefore, be able to make improved decisions related to the management of their workforce and create a working environment that

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