



Global Talent Management in Multinational Corporations: Challenges and Strategies: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Global Talent Management (GTM) in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) is a critical aspect of contemporary business strategies, playing a pivotal role in sustaining competitive advantages in the global marketplace. This review presents a systematic review that synthesizes the challenges and strategies associated with GTM in MNCs. The review identifies a plethora of challenges faced by MNCs in managing talent on a global scale. These challenges encompass cultural diversity, varying legal frameworks, language barriers, and the complexities of aligning HR practices with diverse local contexts. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological advancements introduces challenges related to the identification and retention of top talent with the necessary skills for the digital age. The findings emphasize the need for a nuanced understanding of the contextual factors influencing GTM challenges to formulate effective strategies. In response to these challenges, the review explores a range of strategies adopted by MNCs to enhance their global talent management practices. These strategies include the development of cross-cultural training programs, the establishment of global leadership pipelines, the use of advanced technologies for talent analytics, and the creation of flexible HR policies that can be adapted to diverse local conditions. Furthermore, the review highlights the significance of fostering a global mindset among employees and leaders to navigate the complexities of international talent management successfully. The synthesis of literature presented in this review contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics surrounding GTM in MNCs. The identified challenges and strategies offer valuable insights for practitioners and scholars alike, providing a foundation for informed decision-making and the development of effective global talent management frameworks in the ever-evolving landscape of multinational business operations.

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1. Introduction

Global Talent Management (GTM) in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) is a critical area of focus due to the challenges faced by global companies (Stahl *et al.*, 2016). GTM involves the development of effective talent management processes and practices, which are essential for the success of MNCs (Stahl *et al.*, 2016). The importance of GTM in MNCs is underscored by the recognition of the value of outstanding talent in the knowledge economy (Iles *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, GTM is crucial for increasing organizational cumulative expertise, supporting human capital growth, securing the renewal of organizational business processes, and enhancing organizational performance, especially during crises (Chen *et al.*, 2021).

The purpose of the systematic review is to explore the challenges and opportunities for integrating global mobility and talent, as well as to outline future research directions in this area (Collings, 2014). Additionally, the review aims to examine the relationship between GTM and the organizational resilience of MNE subsidiaries during crises, a topic that has received limited attention in existing literature (Lee *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the review seeks to develop a framework for GTM in the global context, which can help organizations face challenges in talent management in competitive environments (Haziati, 2021).

The scope of the systematic review encompasses empirical research on talent, talent management, and talent management practices published between 1990 and 2019 in academic journals and books (Sandeepanie *et al.*, 2021). It covers various sectors, including global manufacturing industries such as cement manufacturing, steel case manufacturing, coal and mining, energy, automotive, and service sectors like healthcare, hospitality, fast food service, banking, education, telecommunication, and IT services, which operate numerous talent management practices (Sandeepanie *et al.*, 2021). The review also addresses the challenges posed by the rise of economic nationalism and the COVID-19 pandemic for the mobility of professionals and the GTM strategy of MNCs (Thite *et al.*, 2021).

However, the review has limitations, including the need for further research on the key decisions and challenges facing the corporate human resource function in the talent management area, as well as the emergence of new corporate HR roles in response to the complex challenges of GTM (Vaiman *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, the review acknowledges the scarcity of global talent as a significant challenge faced by MNCs globally (Dalayga *et al.*, 2017). It also recognizes the challenges, such as huge financial costs, high turnover rates among global talents, localization difficulties, corporate culture, and adjustment problems of expatriate spouses, which can undermine the effectiveness of GTM practices and programs (Anlesinya *et al.*, 2019).

In conclusion, the systematic review on GTM in MNCs aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies associated with GTM, with a focus on integrating global mobility, organizational resilience during crises, and the development of a framework for GTM in the global context. The review acknowledges the limitations and challenges faced by MNCs in managing global talent, emphasizing the need for further research and the development of effective practices to address these challenges.

2. Global talent management in Multinational Corporation

Global talent management in multinational corporations is a critical area of focus for organizations aiming to attract, develop, and retain top talent on a global scale. The challenges and opportunities in this field have been extensively explored in academic literature. Stahl *et al.* (2016) outlined six principles of effective global talent management, emphasizing the importance of aligning talent management with business strategy. Collings (2014) highlighted the need to integrate global mobility and talent management, emphasizing the strategic opportunities that arise from aligning these two areas of practice. Furthermore, Vaiman *et al.* (2012) stressed the necessity for further

research on the key decisions and challenges facing the corporate human resource function in the talent management area, particularly in response to the complex challenges of global talent management.

The concept of talent management has gained increasing popularity due to the global war for talent, as highlighted by Nilsson and Ellström (2012). McDonnell *et al.* (2011) emphasized the importance of global talent management as workforces have increased in size, diversity, education standards, and mobility. Bonneton *et al.* (2019) proposed a conceptual framework linking global talent management practices and talent retention in multinational corporations, focusing on the role of individual careers. Showkat *et al.* (2022) discussed the implications of the "New Normal" for global talent in the wake of economic nationalism and slowdown, addressing the challenges multinational organizations face in managing global talent effectively.

The impact of integrated talent management on the competitive advantage in multinational corporations was explored by (Ibrahim & Zayed, 2018), who found a significant and positive relationship between the two. Additionally, Anlesinya *et al.* (2019) revealed that global talent management can enhance multinational companies' global mobility outcomes, employer attractiveness, competitiveness, and performance. Furthermore, interest in talent management has proliferated over the last decade, with the global shortage of leadership talent being a major concern for multinational corporations (Björkman *et al.*, 2017).

In conclusion, global talent management in multinational corporations is a multifaceted and critical area that requires strategic alignment with business objectives, integration with global mobility, and a focus on talent retention. The challenges and opportunities in this field have been extensively researched, emphasizing the need for effective talent management practices to enhance organizational performance and competitiveness on a global scale.

2.1 Literature Review

Global talent management in multinational corporations is a critical area of study due to its impact on organizational success. The concept of global talent management encompasses various components and has evolved over time to address the challenges posed by cultural diversity, legal and regulatory variations, language barriers, technological advancements, and alignment with local contexts. Stahl *et al.* (2016) emphasize the importance of effective global talent management, highlighting the success of renowned companies like GE in setting best practice standards. McDonnell *et al.* (2017) and Farndale *et al.* (2010) discuss the dominant literature streams in talent management, focusing on the management of high performers, strategic positions, and the shortage of leadership talent. These studies provide a comprehensive overview of the definition, components, and evolution of global talent management.

Challenges in global talent management, such as cultural diversity, legal and regulatory variations, and language barriers, have been extensively discussed in the literature. Collings (2014) highlights the decoupling of global mobility and talent management in multinational enterprises, shedding light on the challenges in integrating these areas. Additionally, Golik & Blanco (2022) emphasize the critical role of talent identification strategies in the success of multinational enterprises, particularly in Latin American

contexts. Furthermore, Park *et al.* (2022) underscore the challenges for macro talent management in mature emerging markets like South Korea, emphasizing the necessity of addressing talent management for corporate survival and growth. The literature also delves into the impact of global talent management on specific regions and industries. For instance, Latukha (2014) explores talent management in Russian companies, while Kajwang (2022) discusses the challenges facing multinational insurance companies in managing global talents. These studies provide insights into the diverse contexts in which global talent management operates.

Moreover, the literature addresses the strategies and frameworks for effective global talent management. Haziazi (2021) presents a framework for talent management in the global context, emphasizing its applicability in understanding unique challenges in multinational environments. Anlesinya *et al.* (2019) highlight the potential of global talent management in enhancing multinational companies' global mobility outcomes, employer attractiveness, competitiveness, and performance.

In conclusion, the literature on global talent management in multinational corporations offers a comprehensive understanding of its definition, components, evolution, challenges, and strategies. By synthesizing these diverse perspectives, organizations can develop effective approaches to address the complexities of talent management in a global context.

2.2. Challenges in global talent management

Global talent management faces various challenges. Cultural diversity impacts recruitment and selection, requiring organizations to consider cultural nuances in talent acquisition (Kim & McLean, 2012). Cross-cultural training programs are essential to equip employees with the skills to navigate diverse work environments (Tafti *et al.*, 2017). Legal and regulatory variations pose challenges in navigating international employment laws and ensuring compliance, especially for multinational enterprises (MNEs) operating across different jurisdictions (McDonnell *et al.*, 2011). Language barriers create communication challenges, necessitating language training initiatives to facilitate effective global collaboration (Wong & Sixl-Daniell, 2017). Technological advancements impact talent identification and skill requirements, requiring organizations to adapt to the digital talent landscape (Thomas, 2020). Alignment with local contexts demands flexibility in HR practices to accommodate diverse cultural and regulatory environments (Akagha *et al.*, 2023; Caligiuri *et al.*, 2020). These challenges are further compounded by the need to address talent shortages and turnover rates in a global context (Anlesinya *et al.*, 2019).

Global talent management is complex, requiring organizations to navigate cultural, legal, linguistic, and technological challenges while aligning with local contexts to effectively manage talent on a global scale.

Globalization has transformed the business landscape, compelling organizations to navigate an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. Managing talent on a global scale introduces a myriad of challenges, necessitating a scientific examination of the complexities involved. This essay scrutinizes the scientific aspects of global talent management challenges across five critical dimensions.

The intricate interplay between cultural diversity and recruitment processes demands a nuanced understanding. Scientifically evaluating the impact of diverse cultural backgrounds on candidate selection criteria is essential for organizations to ensure fair and unbiased hiring practices. Scientifically designed cross-cultural training programs are imperative to enhance cultural intelligence among employees. This section explores the scientific foundations of effective training methodologies, addressing cognitive and behavioral aspects that contribute to successful cross-cultural adaptation. Scientifically navigating the complex web of international employment laws requires a comprehensive analysis of jurisdictional differences. This section delves into the intricacies of legal frameworks, exploring methodologies for developing organizational expertise in compliance with diverse legal landscapes (Akagha and Epie, 2022).

Scientifically evaluating compliance mechanisms involves continuous monitoring of global regulatory changes. This study scrutinizes risk mitigation strategies, emphasizing the scientific approach to implementing robust compliance measures in the face of evolving legal environments. Scientifically addressing communication challenges arising from linguistic diversity involves examining the cognitive processes influencing intercultural communication. This section explores methodologies for fostering effective communication in multilingual work environments.

Scientifically designing language training initiatives involves understanding the cognitive and behavioral aspects of language acquisition. This section investigates the efficacy of language training programs, incorporating technological advancements in language learning methodologies. Scientifically identifying digital talent requires an examination of evolving skillsets in the digital age. This section explores methodologies for talent identification, considering the cognitive and technological aspects influencing the recruitment of digital professionals.

Scientifically evaluating the impact of technological advancements on skill requirements involves an in-depth analysis of the evolving demands of the global job market. This section examines the cognitive and educational aspects of continuous learning and adaptability in the face of technological disruptions.

Scientifically aligning HR practices with local contexts requires a comprehensive understanding of cultural norms and values. This section explores the cognitive and organizational aspects influencing the adaptation of compensation, performance management, and employee engagement strategies to local expectations.

In conclusion, this scientific essay provides a rigorous examination of the challenges inherent in global talent management. By scientifically analyzing cultural, legal, linguistic, and technological dimensions, organizations can develop informed strategies to navigate the complexities of managing a diverse global workforce.

2.3 Strategies in global talent management

Strategies in global talent management encompass various aspects such as cross-cultural training programs, global leadership pipelines, technology-driven talent analytics, flexible HR policies, and fostering a global mindset. Cross-cultural training programs are crucial for preparing employees to work effectively in diverse cultural settings. Research by emphasizes the importance of designing

effective cross-cultural training programs to improve the performance of expatriate managers (Morris & Robie, 2001). It highlights the need for specific strategies tailored to the unique challenges faced by expatriates. Additionally, 's study supports the implementation of interpersonal types of cross-cultural training, which have been found to be more effective in changing attitudes towards foreign cultures compared to conventional didactic programs (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005; Uzougbo *et al.*, 2023).

Global leadership pipelines are essential for identifying and nurturing leadership talent and succession planning. The study by demonstrates that expatriates given cross-cultural training had a lower failure rate compared with those without such training, emphasizing the positive impact of cross-cultural training on leadership talent development and retention (Chenyi & Baruch, 2010; Njemanze *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, the research by highlights the reciprocal benefits of cross-cultural mentoring, indicating that leadership support and mentoring relationships benefit both protégés and mentors, contributing to the development of a robust leadership pipeline (Kim & Egan, 2011).

Technology-driven talent analytics, particularly predictive analytics in talent management, is gaining prominence. discuss the validity of personality and cognitive ability assessments in predicting cross-cultural training performance, underscoring the significance of leveraging technology-driven tools for talent assessment and development (Lievens *et al.*, 2003). This aligns with the need for organizations to adopt advanced tools and platforms for talent analytics, as emphasized by, to enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural training and talent management initiatives (Tarique & Caligiuri, 2009).

Flexible HR policies play a pivotal role in balancing global consistency and local adaptation. The study by highlights the importance of formal cross-cultural care training in graduate medical education, indicating the need for adaptable HR policies to address the diverse cultural care needs of a global workforce (Singh *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the research by emphasizes the evaluation of military cross-cultural training programs, reflecting the significance of flexible HR policies in the context of multinational military cooperation and cultural interoperability (Abbe, 2021).

Fostering a global mindset through training and development initiatives has a profound impact on employee engagement and performance. 's study demonstrates that expatriates tend to prefer post-arrival cross-cultural training, especially for longer foreign assignments, underscoring the need for continuous training and development initiatives to foster a global mindset and enhance employee performance (Wang & Tran, 2012). Additionally, 's research emphasizes the experiential gap between learning about another culture from afar and active engagement in another cultural context, highlighting the importance of immersive training programs to foster a global mindset (Heppner & Wang, 2014).

2.4 Future outlook and emerging trends

Global talent management in multinational corporations (MNCs) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor for organizational success (Collings, 2014). The challenges faced by MNCs in developing effective talent management processes and practices have become more pressing due to the increasing importance and complexity of talent demands (Stahl *et al.*, 2016; McDonnell *et al.*, 2011). These challenges

include the need to translate corporate talent management strategies into subsidiaries, manage talented employees in emerging economies, and identify and retain talent (Napathorn, 2020; Tlaiss *et al.*, 2017; Niya *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the "new normal" implications, economic nationalism, and the COVID-19 pandemic pose additional challenges for the mobility of professionals and the global talent management strategy of MNCs (Showkat *et al.*, 2022; Thite *et al.*, 2021).

The centrality of global talent management to the achievement of MNEs' strategic objectives has been widely acknowledged (Collings, 2014). It is evident that global talent management can enhance MNCs' global mobility outcomes, employer attractiveness, competitiveness, and performance (Anlesinya *et al.*, 2019). However, MNCs continue to struggle to identify and develop strategies to retain talent, indicating the ongoing complexity of this issue (Tlaiss *et al.*, 2017). The scarcity of global talent is a significant challenge faced by MNCs globally (Dalayga *et al.*, 2017).

In response to these challenges, there is a need for further research on the key decisions and challenges facing the corporate human resource function in the talent management area, as well as on how new corporate HR roles are emerging in response to the complex challenges of global talent management (Uzougbo *et al.*, 2023; Vaiman *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, there is a call for the development of a conceptual framework linking global talent management practices and talent retention in MNCs, exploring the role of individual careers through knowing-whom career capital and career success (Bonneton *et al.*, 2019).

The future of MNCs' competitiveness in the global market is contingent on their ability to strategically adapt their resources to the nuances of the broadening global playing field (Caligiuri & Çolakoğlu, 2007). As organizational boundaries are molded by changes in the reality of national boundaries, global talent management as an area of practice and research will likely face new challenges going forward (Horak *et al.*, 2017).

In conclusion, the future outlook of global talent management in MNCs is characterized by the increasing complexity of talent demands, the impact of economic nationalism and the "new normal," and the ongoing challenges of talent identification, retention, and development. Addressing these challenges will require a strategic and integrated approach to talent management that considers the evolving global landscape and the unique demands of MNCs.

3. Recommendation and Conclusion

The systematic review of Global Talent Management (GTM) in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) has revealed a multitude of challenges and corresponding strategies. Cultural diversity emerged as a significant hurdle impacting recruitment, selection, and the need for effective cross-cultural training programs. Legal and regulatory variations presented challenges in navigating international employment laws, calling for heightened awareness and compliance measures. Language barriers posed communication challenges and underscored the importance of language training initiatives. Technological advancements revealed the critical need to identify and nurture digital talent while addressing evolving skill requirements. Alignment with local contexts demanded adaptability in HR practices to ensure global consistency and local relevance.

This systematic review contributes significantly to the field of Global Talent Management by synthesizing existing literature and providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies involved. It identifies gaps in current research, offering a roadmap for future investigations. The nuanced exploration of cultural, legal, linguistic, and technological dimensions adds depth to the understanding of GTM dynamics in MNCs. By consolidating key findings, this review serves as a valuable resource for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers aiming to navigate the complexities of managing talent on a global scale.

For practitioners, it is recommended to integrate cross-cultural training programs into talent management strategies, emphasizing the development of cultural intelligence among employees and leadership. Continuous monitoring of international employment laws is crucial, necessitating a proactive approach to compliance. Addressing language barriers should involve the implementation of effective communication strategies and language training initiatives. Identifying and cultivating digital talent should be a priority, coupled with strategies for continuous learning to meet evolving skill requirements. Adapting HR practices to local contexts requires a balanced approach that ensures global consistency while respecting cultural nuances.

For scholars, there is a need for further research to explore emerging challenges in GTM, especially in the context of rapidly evolving technologies and the post-pandemic work environment. Comparative studies across industries and regions can provide deeper insights into contextual variations. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the effectiveness of specific GTM strategies can contribute to evidence-based practices.

In conclusion, this systematic review highlights the intricate landscape of Global Talent Management in Multinational Corporations. The challenges identified underscore the need for adaptive and innovative strategies to harness the potential of a diverse global workforce. By understanding and addressing these challenges, organizations can position themselves for success in an ever-evolving global business environment. This review invites a continued dialogue among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to collaboratively shape the future of Global Talent Management, ensuring sustained competitiveness and organizational resilience.

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