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## Evaluating talent management in emerging market economies: societal, firm and individual perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

This special issue aims to advance our understanding of talent management in emerging market economies. The uniqueness of this special issue was that it invited and accepted contributions on talent management in emerging countries at multiple levels. At the macro level, i.e. from a country level perspective, given the prevalence of state intervention in emerging economies, we were interested in understanding the impact of state ownership/intervention on talent management in those markets. From a meso level, i.e. from a firm level perspective, we were interested in empirical evidence, as to how talent management contributes to performance in emerging markets. Finally, at a micro level, i.e. from an individual level, we were interested in empirical work on research topics such as the career expectations of talent in emerging markets, and the factors that determine the attractiveness of employers for employees in emerging markets. The papers that represented contextual data from lesser-represented emerging countries, were included in this special issue. More specifically, these papers contextually represented the emerging countries namely Nepal, Russia, The United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Poland, Iraq and the last study included a collection of data from 19 African countries. We contribute through this editorial piece by comparing the seven papers included in this special issue to both, previous work in the last two decades or so (2000–2022), globally and within International Journal of Human Resource Management, and identify meaningful future research directions.

### KEYWORDS

Talent Management;  
Emerging Market  
Economies; Society;  
Firms; Individuals

### Introduction

The objective of this special issue is to advance our understanding of talent management in emerging market economies. We follow the

definition of emerging economies, as “those countries that have experienced, and are attempting to maintain, significant and sustained technological and economic catch-up with the advanced economies” (Anand et al., 2021, p. 546). They are increasingly important players in the global economy (Pereira et al., 2019). Nevertheless, while there is considerable diversity across these economies, there is little doubt that they are often quite different to the mature economies where we witness development of many of the key theories underpinning talent management. This special issue thus set out to consider key questions at societal, firm and individual levels in the emerging market context.

On the one hand, a significant number of emerging economies experience a low level of material well-being and incomes, but on the other hand, they are also undergoing rapid growth and infrastructural development. However, the relationship between macro-economic policy prescriptions and growth remains uncertain, probably due to the impact of micro-economic and related factors, and at times, ideology trumping facts on the ground (Edwards, 1993; Popov, 2018). From 2004 to 2014, outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) from emerging market economies (EME) increased by 317% when compared to the preceding decade (Luo & Zhang, 2016). A key characteristic of EMEs is institutional fluidity, which means businesses may rely more intensively on a relational-based strategy and invest heavily in developing relationships and business networks (Meyer & Peng, 2016; Luo & Zhang, 2016; Wood & Frynas, 2006).

Many emerging market multinational enterprises (EMNE) have distinct characteristics when compared to their developed country counterparts (Pereira & Malik, 2018), most notably in terms of their dynamism, relations with home country governments, the need and desire to rapidly build capabilities, and, again, their rapid expansion. Over the last two decades, we have witnessed the rise of newer globally renowned and established EMNEs such as Huawei, Lenovo, Cemex, and Tata, which have become global blue chip organizations (Munjal et al., 2018). There is increasing recognition that the success of these global EMNEs is largely dependent on their talent pool, reflecting their human capital and the quality of human resources management. However, little is known about how talent is managed at different levels, i.e. at macro (country level), meso (industry level) and micro (organisation level), within emerging economies.

The nature of labour markets is also distinct in emerging markets (see contributions in Vaiman et al., 2018). In the Gulf countries in the Middle East, for example, governments invested heavily in nurturing local talent, but for demographic and cultural reasons labour markets in the private sector remain overly reliant on self-initiated expatriate

talent at both the higher and lower end of the economy. As is the case in many other emerging markets, social networks remain central to accessing employment opportunities (see Budhwar et al., 2018). Many emerging economies furthermore suffer from brain drain, as the best and brightest employees often migrate to developed economies in search of opportunities (Cooke, 2018). In countries ranging from China to Malaysia, employers often rely on external labour markets, as opposed to internal development, for talent and high levels of talent, leading to poaching between firms, discouraging the latter from investing in talent (Cooke et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2007).

These trends highlight the importance of understanding talent management at the societal, firm and individual levels (Collings et al., 2019) in the context of emerging markets. Indeed, there is already recognition that talent management challenges are more acute and more complex in the emerging markets (Cooke, 2018; Yeung et al., 2008). There is an increasing recognition of talent management as an important management tool globally (Cappelli, 2008; Collings et al., 2011). Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggest effective talent management involves the systematic identification of the critical positions that have the greatest impact on competitive advantage, developing talent pools of high performing and high potential individuals that can fill these positions and then utilising a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate the identification, motivation, development and overall management of these talent. While this has become the most widely adopted definition to talent management, it is interesting to consider how applicable this definition might be in the context of emerging markets.

Based on the above discussion, this special issue therefore encouraged and solicited submissions from a broad range of perspectives at individual, firm and country level of analysis that would address questions around talent management in the context of emerging markets. We also welcomed submissions from a range of methodological perspective, particularly encouraging multi-level analyses.

For example, from a country level perspective, given the prevalence of state intervention in emerging economies, we were interested in understanding the impact of state ownership/intervention on talent management in those markets. Again, we were interested in knowing more as to relative convergence versus divergence of talent management practices in emerging markets (see for example, Froese et al., 2020) and the enduring influence of local labour market conditions. Additionally, also at country level, there is a need for more research on how immigration policies affect talent availability in emerging markets, transnational talent mobility, and on how educational systems are evolving in response to talent requirements at firm level (see Horak et al., 2019).

From a firm level perspective, we were interested in empirical evidence, as to how talent management contributes to performance in emerging markets. In addition, how do EMNEs balance global standardization versus local implementation of talent management? Once, more a question arises as to how emerging market firms adapt to trends in the global talent market. Another interesting area to pursue research here is how emerging market firms engage with key stakeholders in building talent capability in the local context. From a firm level perspective, we were interested in finding out more on the ethical issues and organizational responsibilities in managing talent in emerging markets.

Finally, from an individual level, we were interested in empirical work on research topics such as the career expectations of talent in emerging markets, and the factors that determine the attractiveness of employers for employees in emerging markets. Additionally, how we can understand the motivations of high talent diaspora in returning to their home countries was a question of interest.

We received a high number of submissions and worked collectively as guest editors to manage the review process and select seven papers, which contributed strongly and were a good fit to our call for papers, to be finally included in this special issue on this interesting and timely topic. We also chose papers that represented contextual data from lesser-represented emerging countries. More specifically, these papers contextually represented the emerging countries namely Nepal, Russia, The United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Poland, Iraq and the last study included a collection of data from 19 African countries.

In this editorial, we first, systematically, review the existing literature on the topic and then map, and identify where we stand on it. Next, we position the key contributions within IJHRM vis-à-vis the broad literature in the last two decades. We then discuss the seven contributions in this special issue and identify future research directions.

### **Rationale and data (strategic map) of TM research in emerging market**

Based on the existing body of research on talent management in emerging economies, we present a summary, through the medium of a 'strategic map', as a means of charting the landscape of research in this context. We retrieved the relevant data from Scopus using the relevant keywords that appear in the article title, abstracts and keywords fields. These included the terms 'talent management, talent development, talent acquisition, talent retention, emerging economies, emerging market, developing market, and developing countries', as the key terms. This

initial search string yielded 695 research documents. We further limited this search to ‘business management’ and ‘psychology’ subject areas, and the number of research documents then reduced to 302. Next, we screened only papers published in English language, when it came to documents type and source of documents and this only included research papers, review papers and book chapters. This screening process further reduced the number of articles to 258. Finally, we incorporated a time period criterion (i.e. year 2002–2022), coinciding and taking McKinsey’s ‘War for Talent’ concept coined in their 2001 report. This yielded a final tally of 250 publications. We analysed this research stock of 250 publications to develop the knowledge map of the scholarly output on the topic of talent management in emerging economies. The bibliometric metadata of these papers were analysed using Bibliometrix R package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). [Table 1](#) offers the description of this research base.

The 250 retrieved research documents, published from 2002 to 2022, include 157 sources (journals and books). The average citation per document is 17.08 by 531 authors, with a collaboration index of 2.53. The annual publication growth in the field is 3%. These articles mainly appeared in the International Journal of Human Resource Management, Harvard Business Review, Human Resource Management International Digest, International Journal of Emerging Markets, to name a few. We portray the list of papers published in IJHRM in [Table 2](#).

### Strategic map/diagram

As detailed above, to understand the underlying structure and pattern of our research field, we constituted a strategic map, using bibliometric

**Table 1.** Main information about data.

Description	Results
Timespan (year)	2002:2022
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	157
Total documents	250
Average citations per documents	17.08
Average citations per year per document	2.04
References	13357
<i>Document types</i>	
Article	193
book chapter	34
Review	23
<i>Document contents</i>	
Author's Keywords (DE)	757
<i>Authors</i>	
Authors	531
Authors of single-authored documents	50
Authors of multi-authored documents	481
Collaboration Index	2.53

Source: Author's analysis of 250 research documents retrieved from Scopus.



**Table 2.** Relevant papers published in *IJHRM* between 2000 and 2022.

Sl.No	Authors	Title	Yop	Abstract
1	Ghosh V., Sengupta T., Narayanamurthy G., Ishizaka A.	Examining collective creative self-efficacy as a competency indicator of group talent management: a study of SMEs in an emerging economy	2021	In this article, we examine how collective creative self-efficacy (CCSE) of a team can act as a competency indicator for team creativity output (TCO) in knowledge-intensive SMEs. As a team's creative efficacy shape the collective mental model about its social context, team climate of creativity is considered as a mediator in the relationship between CCSE and TCO. Through faultline-strength analysis, we investigate how team members' compositional attributes (age and job tenure) moderate the relationship between CCSE and team climate. A High sub-group separation (age and job tenure attributes) of team members is beneficial in a high CCSE team, whereas a homogeneity in age and tenure is desirable when a team's CCSE is low. Our results show group faultline-strength can significantly strengthen or dampen the existing team climate and team creativity output within SMEs, thus creating a strong basis for firm owners or managers to align teams for improved team output. Moreover, HRs in such firms can design interventions to measure and enhance teams' collective creative self-efficacy of a team that serve two purposes—(a) act as a competency indicator that guides a team to become self-directed, and, (b) strengthen the team creativity climate for producing creative deliverables. The impact of human resource management (HRM) practices on talent development and innovative work behaviour (IWB) has attracted considerable research attention in recent times, with the advent of knowledge economies. Drawing from the resource-based view of the firm, the aim of this research is to explore themes associated with talent development climate (TDC) and to test its role in promoting innovative work behaviour amongst managerial employees. The results of this research are based on three studies. Study 1 was qualitative that used an inductive approach, to explore the dimensions of TDC. Based on the themes that emerged from the qualitative study, we conducted studies 2 and 3 using quantitative methods on managers ( $N = 307$ in first phase and $N = 403$ in second phase), drawn from 11 large global and Indian MNCs operating in India. The findings indicate two dimensions of TDC and highlight the mediating role of TDC in the relationship between HRM practices and IWB. The study contributes to the growing field of talent management with evidence from an emerging market economy—India. It provides a compelling argument for extending the scope of HRM practices and supervisory support in creating a talent development climate to achieve greater success in fostering innovation in organizations.
2	Datta S., Budhwar P., Agarwal U.A., Bhargava S.	Impact of HRM practices on innovative behaviour: mediating role of talent development climate in Indian firms	2021	The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between motivational cultural intelligence and cultural adjustment of expatriate talent through the lens of cultural distance. The rapid development of MNCs from emerging markets and the corresponding increase in the need for expatriates makes it imperative that scholars examine this subject from numerous critical angles. Drawing on data from 242 Chinese expatriates based in 25 different countries/regions, we employ multilevel analyses to test the research hypotheses related to expatriate talent management. The results of this exploratory study confirm that motivational cultural intelligence has a positive and significant effect on cultural adjustment: work adjustment, general adjustment and interaction adjustment respectively, and cultural distance has a negatively moderating role between motivational cultural intelligence and work adjustment of expatriate talent. This paper helps to expand our understanding of the field of global talent management and the importance of motivational cultural intelligence and cultural distance on expatriate talent
3	Song H., Varma A., Zhang Zhang Y.	Motivational cultural intelligence and expatriate talent adjustment: an exploratory study of the moderation effects of cultural distance	2021	(Continued)

**Table 2.** Continued.

Sl.No	Authors	Title	Yop	Abstract
4	Singh Dubey R., Paul J., Tewari V.	The soft skills gap: a bottleneck in the talent supply in emerging economies	2021	The purpose of this study is to identify the soft skills, relevant to the future talent pool in the information technology (IT) sector. Further, the study aims to investigate soft skills gaps among students which are hampering the availability of talent. Soft skills traits were first identified through a literature review. Then, using a structured questionnaire, we surveyed 269 IT professionals working in five IT companies and 329 students pursuing degrees in the IT/CS from 12 technical institutes. The analysis was performed using principal component analysis and an independent t test. We examined important soft skills such as personal traits, leadership, interpersonal skills, team skills, enterprising skills, and organizational skills. The independent t test results showed a perception gap between professionals and students regarding the importance of soft skills. This study contributes to the literature by adding to the understanding of critical soft skills in IT sector. It underlines the partnership between educational institutions and the IT industry to address this gap. This partnership will benefit all stakeholders. We argue that although talent management is dealt with at the industry level, academia play an important role in making this process easier and effective by developing the desired skills in students
5	Meyer K.E., Xin K.R.	Managing talent in emerging economy multinationals: integrating strategic management and human resource management	2018	Having established their first overseas operation, the next big challenge for many emerging economy multinational enterprises (EMNEs) is to align their HRs with their strategic ambition. Their lack of internationally experienced talent has become a major obstacle to strategy implementation: they need to fill leadership roles with international responsibility based abroad and at home, and they need to develop talent for future international leadership roles. The key challenge for catch-up strategies thus is to attract, develop, and retain talents who can lead international operations. In this paper, we develop a research agenda on strategic management and HRM in EMNEs that aims to explain the obstacles EMNEs face and facilitates the development of better talent management practice. In particular, we propose to integrate strategic management and HRM perspectives not only to advance theories but to enhance the relevance of both lines of scholarship to practice
6	Held K., Bader B.	The influence of images on organizational attractiveness: comparing Chinese, Russian and US companies in Germany	2018	In developed markets, Emerging Market Multinational Enterprises' (EMNEs) organizational attractiveness may crucially depend on applicants' country and corporate character images (CCIs). Applying image and signalling theory, this study compares the influence of these images on the organizational attractiveness of Chinese, Russian and US companies in Germany. Employing data from 287 German business students, findings show that applicants prefer the United States over Chinese and Russian companies as future employers, confirming the existence of the liability of emergingness. Moreover, findings indicate gender differences in applicants' attraction towards EMNEs. In particular, female applicants are less attracted to EMNEs with a bad CCI than male applicants are.
7	Amankwah-Amoah J., Nyuur R.B., Ifere S.	A question of top talent? The effects of lateral hiring in two emerging economies	2017	On the basis of a qualitative study in two emerging economies, we advance the literature on lateral hiring by developing an integrated phase model to explain how the effects of lateral hiring unfold to affect the originating firm and its employees. Our work uncovered two types of effects on the originating firm, i.e. first-order and second-order effects. Our stage model elucidates how the psychological and emotional effects are manifest to affect the existing employees. Personnel poaching appear to have triggered the quest for meaning and attempts by the existing employees to enhance their visibility, career adaptability and marketability. We discuss implications for practice, theory and research on lateral hiring

(Continued)



**Table 2.** Continued.

Sl.No	Authors	Title	Yop	Abstract
8	Wood G., Dibben P., Meira J.	Knowledge transfer within strategic partnerships: the case of HRM in the Brazilian motor industry supply chain	2016	This paper investigates knowledge transfer (KT) of human resource management (HRM) across strategic partnerships in the Brazilian automotive industry, and the contextual factors impacting on KT within the supply chain. Case-study research in automotive companies and suppliers in Brazil is used to illustrate how in automotive industries, relationships with suppliers have traditionally been viewed as close, strategic partnerships, but over time, there has been a move towards more attenuated, supply chains, involving a shift towards more remote suppliers for basic components, and arms length relationships with them. In turn, this has impacted on how knowledge on HR has been transferred from manufacturers to suppliers. Both strategic partnerships and KT have been affected by internal drives towards cost cutting and talent retention, and external factors such as global competition through cheap imports, legislation, taxes, and unions. Evidence on the sometimes contradictory attitudes towards KT contributes towards the broader literatures on international HRM and KT in emerging economies, while the gradual unwinding of relationships has implications for policy and practice. © 2016 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
9	Stokes P., Liu Y., Smith S., Leidner S., Moore N., Rowland C.	Managing talent across advanced and emerging economies: HR issues and challenges in a Sino-German strategic collaboration	2016	The human resource (HR) practices involved in global talent management continue to advance and evolve. A majority of talent management commentary is from multinational corporation (MNC) perspectives. However, the less commented small-to-medium-sized enterprise (SME) also confronts challenges grounded in economic (i.e. resources, finance), organisational (i.e. size, scope and structure) and consequent behavioural rationales (i.e. mindsets and stances). This paper establishes and examines a number of propositions which consider how these factors impact on an advanced economy SME's talent management in emerging economy collaborations. An interpretive qualitative methodology is employed using interviews conducted within two cases – SME and an MNC comparator case. The SME case is used as the driving force of the paper and its theoretical focus and findings. The MNC is used to develop issues as a comparator case. The findings show SME economic and organisational drivers producing behavioural dynamics in relation to mimesis of planned actions yet informal serendipitous responses in reality; a predilection for the proximate and familiar; design configurations of short-term expatriate visits and inpatriates; cumulating in ongoing inpatriate acculturation and re-acculturation oscillation. Consequently, the implication is that the SME needs a HR practices encompassing resignation to the situation, flexibility and resilience in order to survive and progress

(Continued)

**Table 2.** Continued.

S/No	Authors	Title	Yop	Abstract
10	Ma S., Silva M.G., Callan V.J., Trigo V.	Control and commitment HR practices, job satisfaction and turnover intentions: a comparison between local and multinational firms in China	2016	There is a growing body of literature and debate around control versus commitment human resource management (HRM) systems and their impacts on employees. However, the impacts of these constructs have not been widely examined in more emerging economies. Taking a specific sample of educated professionals working for multinational and local firms in China, this study investigated employee perceptions of control and commitment HR practices, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. A total of 311 respondents completed a structured survey questionnaire. Results revealed that those working for multinational firms reported more positive perceptions of their employers' control and commitment HR practices. In multinational firms, the use of commitment HR practices predicted lower intentions to leave. However, in domestic firms a lack of control HR practices predicted higher turnover intentions. Theoretically, the study adds to discussions about the nature and roles of these constructs, their impacts on HR outcomes and how institutional mechanisms might shape the degree of HRM homogeneity and hybridity across organizations in China. Practically, the study provides guidance to international and local firms on how to improve their HRM effectiveness to achieve a higher retention of their most talented professionals
11	Srinivasan V., Chandwani R.	HRM innovations in rapid growth contexts: The healthcare sector in India	2014	Human resource management (HRM) researchers have shown that rapid-growth organizations face HR challenges that vastly differ from their low-growth counterparts. These include acquiring and retaining key talent, and adapting the mind-set of the employees as the organization expands in size and scope. However, there is a paucity of research that examines the HRM challenges faced by rapidly growing organizations in dynamically growing sectors in emerging economies, particularly healthcare. In this study, we attempt to fill this gap by examining the HR challenges faced by rapid-growth organizations in the healthcare sector in India. Through interviews with 23-key top managers in healthcare organizations, the study identifies the specific challenges arising out of the privatization and corporatization of healthcare facilities, and the new emerging business models being used in healthcare delivery. Some of the challenges are at the sectoral level requiring policy interventions by government, such as stepping up educational curriculums to keep pace with the rapid growth in the need for healthcare workers. Others are at the firm level demanding hybridized approaches to HR both as a function and as a strategy, specifically encouraging companies to innovate to fill the voids rather than waiting for crisis to appear
12	Al Ariss A.	Voicing experiences and perceptions of local managers: Expatriation in the Arab Gulf	2014	This paper addresses the inadequacy of the literature of International Human Resource Management (IHRM) explaining expatriation in developing countries and, in particular, in the Arab Gulf. The workforce in most of the Arab Gulf countries consists mainly of expatriates while locals remain a minority in their own country. Despite its 'international' dimension, IHRM literature gives little voice to the locals working alongside expatriates when seeking an understanding of expatriation. Instead, a dominant assumption is that local citizens have little role in shaping the career choices and outcomes of expatriates. This paper addresses this research gap by examining expatriation from the point of view of the local managers who work with expatriates. Twenty-eight qualitative interviews were conducted with Emirati top and middle managers in the United Arab Emirates, all of whom have either managed or worked with expatriates. The cases of two key companies, NBK Capital and Strata, were also included. The research made enquiry into the talent management of locals and expatriates in these companies. Results point to key assumptions typically made in the IHRM literature that are not always true in the context of expatriation in the Arab Gulf countries.

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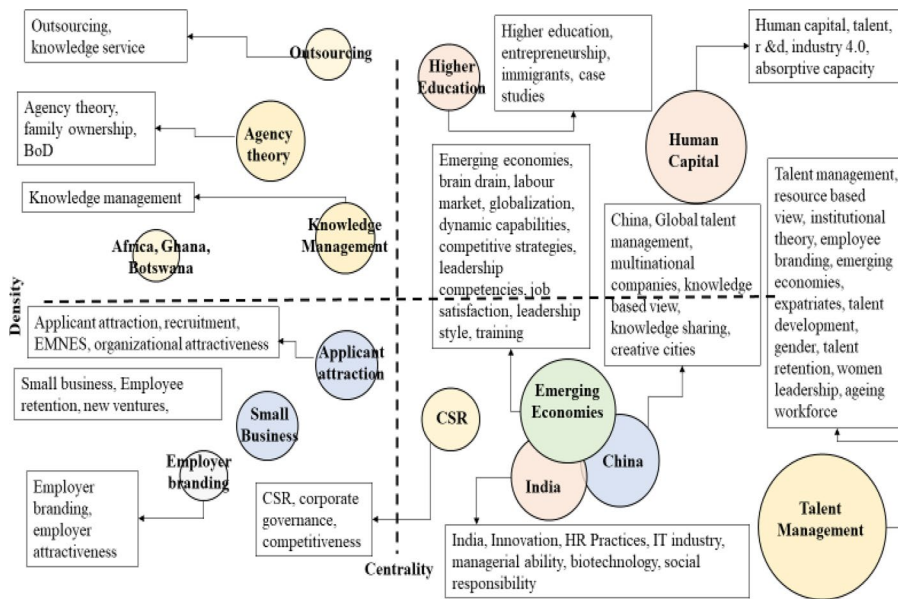
Table 2. Continued.

Sl.No	Authors	Title	Yop	Abstract
13	Marmenout K., Lirio P.	Local female talent retention in the Gulf: Emirati women bending with the wind	2014	While the Arab Middle East reflects a diversity of business contexts, many countries in the region still fall short in women's workforce participation. The Gulf countries in particular rank well in educational achievements, but these achievements are not yet transferring to the workplace. With the increasing need to cultivate talent worldwide, it is imperative to understand the challenges related to retaining women in the workforce in emerging market countries such as the UAE. Based on qualitative data gathered from focus groups, the present study examines how local Emirati women navigate workforce participation. We identify four main challenges to remain in the workforce, and uncover four key strategies used to address these challenges. Findings are emblematic of what women have experienced universally, albeit cloaked in a gendered subtext which reveals the uniquely Emirati experience. Our findings contribute to the elaboration of an emerging AME HR model by examining external realities relevant for working women in the resource-rich countries of the Gulf and by proposing HR practices that could promote the retention of women in the workplace
14	Skuza A., Scullion H., McDonnell A.	An analysis of the talent management challenges in a post-communist country: The case of Poland	2013	There is a dearth of empirical studies on talent management (TM) in the emerging markets, and in particular a lack of research on TM in the countries of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. Our empirical study in 58 organisations in Poland, a major economy in the CEE region, is one of the first studies to examine TM in this context. Our study highlights the particular nature of the TM challenges facing organisations in Poland and shows that there is little evidence to suggest that Polish practice is converging with Western models. Our paper suggests that TM is likely to challenge many traditional management practices and attitudes which continue to dominate Polish culture in the period of transition to a market economy
15	Amankwah-Amoaha J., Debrah Y.A.	Competing for scarce talent in a liberalised environment: Evidence from the aviation industry in Africa	2011	Although the last few years have witnessed a burgeoning stream of research on interfirm mobility of employees, the extant research has remained relatively silent on both its dynamics and effects on the performance of firms domiciled in emerging economies. Using a qualitative case study approach, this article attempts to illuminate our understanding of both issues. It places particular emphasis on the examination of the dynamics of employees' interfirm mobility in the airline industry in Africa. The findings reveal the diverse ways in which the liberalisation in the industry has created a new competitive landscape with far-reaching consequences for firms. Essentially, firms now have to compete intensely for the scarce human capital. The theoretical and managerial implications of these findings are discussed

(Continued)

**Table 2.** Continued.

Sl.No	Authors	Title	Yop	Abstract
16	Vo A.N.	Career development for host country nationals: A case of American and Japanese multinational companies in Vietnam	2009	This paper focuses on how multinational companies (MNCs) localize human resources within their subsidiaries in the context of developing countries. It uses a qualitative research method and looks at a US and a Japanese automotive MNC operating in Vietnam. This paper identifies both home and host countries as significant moderating factors on MNCs' global staffing policies. An ethnocentric global staffing approach is evident in the Japanese MNC, while a polycentric one prevails in the US MNC. These global staffing approaches dictate possible career paths for local managers. Early selection of high potential staff and fast track systems to move them quickly through organizational ladders are evident in the US MNC. Meanwhile, in the Japanese MNC, identification of talent is primarily based on a 'wait and see' tactic. Local managers advance through a single ladder system and their promotion possibilities are strictly limited within the subsidiary. The paper suggests that while a developing host country possesses few formal constraint mechanisms relating to the implementation of staffing practices, informal constraint mechanisms present a complex and challenging situation for MNC operations and require from them a very high level of flexibility when implementing transferred managerial practices
17	Tung R.L.	The human resource challenge to outward foreign direct investment aspirations from emerging economies: The case of China	2007	The continued influx of foreign investment into China and the growing desire by indigenous Chinese companies to invest abroad have created an unprecedented demand for people who possess competencies to compete successfully in a global economy. Without this pool of human talent, China's economic growth will slow and its outward foreign direct investment aspirations will be thwarted. This paper presents two inter-related studies that can shed light on China's ability to meet this human resource challenge in the years ahead. The first study pertains to the intention of a sample of Chinese university students in Canada to return to work in China upon graduation. Most Chinese students were receptive to the idea of returning to China. The second study examines the willingness of non-Chinese university students to work for Chinese firms overseas or in China. In general, non-Chinese students were more willing to work in the North American operations of Chinese companies and less so in relocating to China. These two surveys are supplemented by in-depth interviews with Chinese who have returned to work in China and those who chose to remain overseas. The implications of these findings, both theoretical and practical, are discussed



**Figure 1.** Strategic map of relevant research on 'Talent Management in Emerging Countries'.

metadata (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). A strategic map of a research field helps in understanding the state and evolution of the domain. For constructing the strategic diagram, 500 authors' keywords were analysed using bibliometrix in R software.

Typically, a strategic diagram displays a quadrant and represents four types of themes, characterized by centrality and density (Cobo et al., 2015). These quadrants are named as motor (upper right quadrant), peripheral (upper left quadrant), emerging or disappearing (lower left quadrant) and transversal, general or basic themes (lower right quadrant).

Figure 1 depicts that our current research domain has two motor themes (namely, human capital and higher education); five base themes (namely, talent management, emerging economies, China, India and CSR); four peripheral themes (namely, outsourcing, agency theory, knowledge management and African continent) and three emerging themes (namely, applicant attraction, small business and employer branding).

### **Motor themes**

In our motor quadrant, we identify two themes i.e., human capital and higher education. The theme human capital includes research topics such as human capital management, talent, R&D, industry 4.0 and absorptive capacity. Comparatively, the theme higher education includes research topics such as higher education, entrepreneurship, immigrants and cases studies. Both these themes are very generic in nature.

### ***Base themes***

In our base quadrant, we identify five themes, wherein talent management is the largest. This theme includes research topics such as talent management, RBV, institutional theory, emerging economies, talent development, gender, talent retention, women leadership and aging workforce etc. The second theme in this quadrant is 'emerging economies', and this theme includes research mainly around topics such as emerging economies, brain drain, labour market, globalization, dynamic capabilities, competitive strategies, leadership competencies, job satisfaction, leadership style, and training. The next theme is 'China' (which is a contextual theme) wherein the focus has been on global talent management (GTM), MNCs, knowledge-based view, knowledge sharing and creative cities. The fourth theme emerging in our base quadrant is 'India' (also as a contextual theme), and within this research theme the focus has been on topics such innovation, HR practices, IT industries, managerial ability, biotechnology and social responsibility, to name the key. The smallest theme in this quadrant is CSR, and includes topics such as CSR, corporate governance, competitiveness, etc.

### ***Peripheral themes***

In our peripheral quadrant, we identify four themes and the largest one among them is agency theory, wherein this theme includes research topics such as agency theory, family ownership and board of directors. Agency theory is often used to explain HQ-subsidary dynamics in the management of talent in emerging economies and the circumstances under which family firms invest, or not, in talent management. The second theme, we identify in this quadrant, is outsourcing and this theme includes keywords such as outsourcing and knowledge service. This perhaps a reflection of the significance of the IT outsourcing industries in some emerging economies such as India. The third theme, we identify in this quadrant, expectedly is knowledge management, and the fourth theme we identify here mainly includes research from African countries such as Ghana, South Africa and Botswana reflecting the growing research on talent management in Africa.

### ***Emerging themes***

We identify three emerging themes within our strategic map. The largest theme identified is 'small business' research. This reflects the importance of small businesses as a prime driver of emerging economies. This theme includes research topics such as small business, employee

retention and new venture. The second theme we identify is ‘applicant attraction’ and includes topics such as applicant attraction, recruitment, EMNEs, organizational attractiveness, etc., reflecting the challenges faced by organizations operating in emerging economies in attracting and retaining the right talent. The third theme identified under emerging themes is ‘employer branding’ and this includes research topics such as employer branding, employer attractiveness, etc. This underscores the importance of organizational image in attracting talent in emerging economies.

We now turn to the contributions to our special issue.

### ***Contributions in this special issue***

The first paper in this special issue “Understanding Talent Management for Sports Organizations-Evidence from an Emerging Country” (Sethi et al., 2022) considers the context of Nepal. The author’s address the question of what constitutes ‘talent’ in sports and how it can be strategically managed is a matter of concern, which expands the knowledge, and understanding of Talent Management practices in a unique and rapidly developing sector. The study draws on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Human Capital Theory (HCT) to understand talent management practices and demonstrates how differing natures of socio-economic exchange, across actors and stages of TM in the business of sports. This study further contributes to theory building in talent management by analysing the rationale underpinning the distinctive TM approaches and advances the knowledge and understanding of TM in professional sports organizations in the emerging market context of Nepal.

The second paper in this special issue is based on the Russian context and is titled “From brain drain to brain gain: The agenda for talent management in overcoming talent migration from emerging markets” (Latukha et al., 2022). This paper focuses on the exogenous challenges within the GTM framework, caused by the complexity of the external environment. More specifically, this paper identifies the talent shortage and brain drain, by discussing the role of GTM in managing talent flows leveraging the importance of firm-level talent management practices. The authors thus contribute to the GTM theory and extend the framework for global talent challenges and GTM initiatives by implementing it for the analysis of human capital retention mechanisms through TM practices from the individual perspective. Overall, this paper also contributes to the talent migration theory by providing evidence on talent migration determinants relevant to the emerging market context, specifically Russia.

The third paper in this special issue is based on data from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and is titled “Talent Management in the Public

Sector: Empirical Evidence from the Emerging Economy of Dubai” (Darwish et al., 2022). Although, there has been some research in the past on the Middle East, TM has remained underexplored there, particularly, in the public sector context, which this research aims to fill the gap. This study thus delivers new insights on the role of governments to addresses demographic and educational challenges by nurturing local talent (referred to as Emiratisation or localisation). Further, the authors found that although technical education seems to have been enhanced, vocational and generic tertiary educational skills remains limited. Theoretically, this paper has important implications for institutional theory, as their findings show that when it comes to talent acquisition and development, *Wasta* plays an important role. Given the complexity of TM practices in the public sector, the authors posit that logics could play an important role in better understanding how to implement TM in this sector and region.

The fourth paper in this special issue is on the Vietnamese context and is titled “Value” flows between talent and their networks: A case study of international graduates working in Vietnam’s emerging economy” (Pham & Dang, 2022). This paper explores talent management in Vietnam’s emerging market economy, with a focus on knowledge transfer and linkage effects between individual talent, firms, and broader economic sectors. The paper develops an analytical framework of talent as “value” flows between employees and their networks. It draws on the overlapping and intersection of individual, organizational and national factors in enabling and deploying talent. Contextually, the authors argue that in light of Vietnam’s highly networked society and multifunctional businesses, the values-based approach to talent management offered in this paper is useful as the country diversifies into more services and knowledge-based economies.

The fifth paper featuring in this special issue portrays Poland, as an Eastern European emerging country and is titled ‘Tensions in talent identification: a multi-level stakeholder perspective’ (McDonnell et al., 2022). The authors argue that there is limited research on how organizations identify talent and a lack of understanding of how key stakeholders make sense of and give meaning to it in practice. To address this gap, the authors contribute by examining the talent definitions held by multiple organizational stakeholders and the criteria used in the practice of identification, in a Polish context. The authors rightly point out that recent research highlights the rapid political, economic, and social transformation of CEE countries such as Poland, and suggests that perspectives of talent and talent practices in the CEE region may not conform to the Anglo-Saxon models. Thus, it is timely they contend that businesses in such volatile market contexts are faced with



significantly different challenges in the transformation process (e.g., radical strategic and organizational changes) compared to those in developed economies and cultural differences potentially have a significant impact on the practice of talent management and how talent is conceived. Thus, this paper is a welcoming contribution to overcome the gaps identified above.

The sixth and penultimate paper featuring in this special issue portrays Iraq, and titled “I am “better” than you! The Influence of Upward Social Comparison on the Intention to Work Abroad among Doctors in Iraq: The Mediating Mechanism of Attitude towards Leaving” (Ho Jo et al., 2022). The primary objective of the study was to verify the possibility that social comparisons occurred between the highly skilled individuals (i.e. doctors) in their country of origin to similar others in different hospitals, healthcare systems, and countries. This paper also examined whether these social comparisons resulted in the intention to work abroad among the remaining highly skilled individuals who remained in the home country. More specifically, in this study, the authors examined the suggestions put forth by Rosenblatt & Sheaffer (2001) in their theoretical framework. This formed the basis of social-behavioural processes of BD leavers and extended this theoretical framework further by including the attitude towards leaving of the remaining doctors as a mediator. Contextually, they conducted this study on doctors working in public hospitals in Iraq.

The seventh and last paper featuring in this special issue portrays several African countries titled, “Entrepreneurial intentions and high-status seeking in career expectations: a portrait of talents in emerging countries” (Orlando et al., 2022). This study explores the career expectations of individuals in emerging countries, which supplements earlier antecedent studies focused on expectations and motivations of talents living in developed countries. The authors argue that these earlier researchers implicitly assumed that people living in other regions would behave similarly, regardless of cultural, politic, economic, or religious difference, and hence these studies failed to capture heterogeneity of expectations due to geographical factors. The African countries (Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Libya, Madagascar, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia), were included in this study, drawn data for the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Adult Population Survey (APS). The findings from this study challenge future studies, improving the understanding of similar phenomenon, by extending the sample to other countries, utilizing longitudinal analysis. Additionally, future studies, the authors claim, should compare developed and emerging countries, looking at the impact of culture and belief on career expectation,

investigating what is the effect of education and other demographic factors on career expectations, and exploring the effect of country and firm policies on individual expectations.

### **Conclusions and future research directions**

Comparing and contrasting the seven papers in our special issue, with previous work on talent management in emerging markets more generally and a selection of previous contributions from this journal, for the period 2000–2022 (see [Table 2](#)), we find the following key points emerging.

One, the selection of papers for this special issue, included papers that represented contextual data from lesser-represented emerging countries. More specifically, these papers contextually represented the emerging countries namely Nepal, Russia, The United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Poland, Iraq and the last study included a collection of data from 19 African countries. Thus, when compared to both, previous work in the last two decades or so (2000–2022), both globally (see [Figure 1](#)) and within IJHRM (see [Table 2](#)), the geographical context stands out, and this uniqueness is important to portray.

Two, is that the first four papers in [Table 2](#) were papers dealt with in this special issue, and were transferred to the normal issue, as this special issue was oversubscribed. Thus, we saw an overwhelming interest in our special issue topic and the contributions finally that made it to publication stand out and we envisage these would attract many citations in the future. As portrayed in [Table 2](#), the papers in the list were varied, both in terms of the emerging country context, but were mostly from China and India. Also, there is not a lot done on the topic of talent management in emerging countries, as one would expect.

Three, our final point of comparison, the empirical and research topical context of the seven papers accepted for this special issue also stand out, as compared to previous research within and outside of IJHRM. We thus, identify future research directions based on each seven papers vis-à-vis previous research as depicted in [Figure 1](#) and research within IJHRM in the last two decades.

The first paper (Sethi et al., 2022) considers the global sports industry, wherein research on TM in it is limited. More specifically, this paper addresses this research gap by investigating major challenges in TM faced by organizations in professional sports business, in Nepal. Thus our first future research objective is as follows:

FRD1: Taking a cue from this research, future research should take into consideration smaller emerging countries such as Nepal and also investigate talent management in unique sectors or industries, such as sports business.

The second paper (Latukha et al., 2022) focuses on the exogenous challenges within the GTM framework, caused by the complexity of the external environment, in a Russian context. Thus our second future research objective is as follows:

FRD2: In future, research should identify the talent shortage and brain drain, by discussing the role of GTM in managing talent flows leveraging the importance of firm-level talent management practices.

The third paper (Darwish et al., 2022) investigate TM in Dubai, in the public sector context. More specifically, this paper explores TM in the public sector of the emerging economy of Dubai and provides insights about TM practices and policies in the public sector. Thus our third future research objective is as follows:

FRD3: The Middle East is a largely neglected area, and because the region employs the largest number of migrants, and there is a surge for localization, future research in the context of talent management, should focus on both categories of employees, also both in public and private sectors.

The fourth paper (Pham & Dang, 2022) explores talent management in Vietnam's emerging market economy, with a focus on knowledge transfer and linkage effects between individual talent, firms, and broader economic sectors. Thus our fourth future research objective is as follows:

FRD4: Taking a cue from this study, future studies on talent management in developing countries should further develop similar analytical frameworks of talent as "value" flows between employees and their networks, in an emerging market context.<DQ>

The fifth paper (McDonnell et al., 2022) argues that there is limited research on how organizations identify talent and a lack of understanding of how key stakeholders make sense of and give meaning to it in practice, in an Eastern European i.e., Polish context. Thus our fifth future research objective is as follows:

FRD5: In future, scholars researching talent management in an emerging market context, should investigate the talent definitions held by multiple organizational stakeholders and the criteria used in the practice of identification, as each emerging country or clusters of emerging countries contextually vary from each other.

The sixth paper (Ho Jo et al., 2022) set in an Iraqi context, verifies the possibility that social comparisons occurred between the highly skilled individuals (i.e. doctors) in their country of origin to similar others in different hospitals, healthcare systems, and countries. Thus our fourth future research objective is as follows:

FRD6: Future talent management research should investigate whether social comparisons result in the intention to work abroad among the highly skilled

individuals who remain back in the home country, specifically in an emerging country context.

The last, but not the least, the seventh paper (Orlando et al., 2022) explores the career expectations of individuals in 19 African countries, which supplements earlier antecedent studies focused on expectations and motivations of talents living in developed countries. More specifically, in this paper, the authors argue that earlier studies implicitly assumed that people living in other regions would behave similarly, regardless of cultural, politic, economic, or religious differences. Thus our seventh future research objective is as follows:

FRD7: In the past studies failed to capture heterogeneity of expectations due to geographical factors, as stated above and in future these aspects need to be taken into consideration.

In conclusion, this article provides an overview as to what we know about talent management in emerging economies. It is evident that although there is a critical mass of knowledge, much is unknown in terms of broadening the geographical and sectoral scope of studies, and in terms of the development of theory. Too often, there has been a tendency to present emerging economies primarily in terms of challenges and problems, which firms seek to overcome, rather than seeking to understand how such contexts may also provide both significant resources and opportunities to broaden the skills, knowledge and experiential base of firms.

Clearly many emerging economies remain challenging environments in which to do business. However, despite limits in coverage, often institutions may work quite well in specific areas. Again, despite limitations in national training and development systems, certain emerging economies may have areas of real strength, in terms of technical or generic tertiary training for example, even if access may remain limited.

Once more, the revival of interest in indigenous knowledge may challenge our understanding of talent, and how, indeed, what types of talent may make a difference in specific settings. Indeed, a comparative analysis of vocational educational, infrastructural and social development between, say, the United States and a number of leading emerging markets, challenges the easy notion of clear divides between emerging and mature economies. Given this, it would be incorrect to assume that firms in mature markets have nothing to learn from the experience of talent in emerging markets. At a theoretical level, the literature is undeniably heterogeneous, and the field remains phenomena driven; however, the applied insights afforded by this collection may help in future deductive theorizing, working towards more rigorous theorizing on, rather than the application of theory to, talent management.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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