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A Study of the Role of Human Resource Functions in Talent Development Contributing to an Organization's Business Growth in Today's Knowledge and Innovation based Economy

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Summary- This report aims at analysing the role of Human Resource functions in talent development contributing to an organization's business growth in today's knowledge and innovation based economy. For this purpose to be fully satisfied, the report focused on the following three human resource functions: selection, training and development, and job design and analysis which were then linked to talent management processes to analyse and evaluate their respective degree of significance vis-à-vis the company's business growth. In order to provide practical examples and illustrations, the Cameroonian leading commercial bank, BICEC (International Bank of Cameroon for Savings and Credit) was designated as the report main case study together with other examples from other European companies as well. The results of the paper indicated that if company HR strategies (Selection, training and development, and job analysis and design) are in line with its talent management programme, it definitely impacts significantly on the company's performance and growth.

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Summary- This report aims at analysing the role of Human Resource functions in talent development contributing to an organization's business growth in today's knowledge and innovation based economy. For this purpose to be fully satisfied, the report focused on the following three human resource functions: selection, training and development, and job design and analysis which were then linked to talent management processes to analyse and evaluate their respective degree of significance vis-à-vis the company's business growth. In order to provide practical examples and illustrations, the Cameroonian leading commercial bank, BICEC (International Bank of Cameroon for Savings and Credit) was designated as the report main case study together with other examples from other European companies as well. The results of the paper indicated that if company HR strategies (Selection, training and development, and job analysis and design) are in line with its talent management programme, it definitely impacts significantly on the company's performance and growth.

I. Introduction

Human Resource management can be defined as a strategic, integrated and coherent approach to the employment, development and well-being of the people working in organizations. According to Boxall and Purcell (2003: 1), it refers to "those activities associated with the management of employment relationships in the firm." More recently, Watson (2010: 919) defined Human Resource management as "the managerial utilization of the efforts, knowledge, capabilities and committed behaviours which people contribute to an authoritatively co-ordinated human enterprise as part of an employment exchange (or more temporary contractual arrangement) to carry out work tasks in a way which enables the enterprise to continue into the future.

It is in the same line of views that the goals of HRM (Human Resource Management) have been established by Armstrong & Taylor in their book "Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practices" 13th Edition, 2014, pp. 6 as follows:

- To help the company attain its goals by designing and implementing Human resource strategies which are in accordance with the organization's strategy, known as strategic human resource management.
- To enrich the development of high performance culture.
- To make sure that the company attracts the talented, skilled, and engaged people it needs.
- To establish a conducive employment relationship between management and employees together with a mutual trust climate.

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a) What is Talent Management?

Answering this question will enable the research to be focused on how to link the organization's Human resource strategies towards its talent management scheme and assess its effects on the business growth.

For any company that sees it as an exceptional one to remain on track for the future, it should be turned towards innovation; this is the reason why today, organizations need to focus on accumulating and retaining talented and skilled individuals. This is where the concept of talent management comes into the picture. In today's economic climate dominated by slow global growth, competition made firms to put selection and retention of highly talented and skilled workers their priority. In as much as the business environment is so competitive and tough, Human resource Departments are shifting away from only focusing on recruitment and development to more important processes that stay in line with both managing workforce and organizational goals. According to Lockwood (2006), "talent management is the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining, and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitudes to meet current and future business needs".

"The International Journal of Business and Economic Research, Vol. 7(1), 2016, pp.504-520 asserts that according to Mehta (2011), the preceding core components are considered fundamental for a business to be successful in retaining its talents. Below is a set of processed which when integrated, from the foundation of a thorough talent management system.

Mehta developed a range of components underlined under talent management and the core components are stated below:

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- *Strategic Workforce Planning:* The first stage in talent management that addresses the needs and goals of the organization.
- *Total Talent Acquisition:* Employee accumulation is linked to the utilization of applicant tracking system designed to hire full-time people. However, effective talent management comes from concentrating on total talent acquisition and integrating it.
- *Employee Development:* Integrating employee development with talent acquisition provides a clear gain. Organizations must understand each person's ability as it relates to the core competencies identified in strategic planning.
- *Performance Management:* Linking employee development activities and goals to performance management makes sense. Motivating managers to conduct performance management in a thoughtful and deliberate manner is essential.
- *Succession Planning:* Every organization has key people and positions which are important for the success and attainment of its goals. Talent management ardently identify key people in the organization and develops a plan to manage people and positions. In respect to it, employing a technology solution can ease this process and will mitigate obstacles; and having a system that links to the other components vastly increase organizational commitment to succession planning and streamlines the process. Managing a great talent management program will optimize organizational performance.

For quite some time now, talent management emerged, as well as the development and sophisticating nature of the human resource discipline to be integrated into the objectives of companies.

Perrine (2005) developed that talent management has moved away from being an administrative process to a continuous organizational practice with a strategic focal point that drives organizational outcomes. "Therefore, based on the above definition, for a company to succeed, its success is linked directly to the talent force it can access". (Hejasé, et.al; "Talent Management Challenges: An Explanatory Assessment from Lebanon, 2016).

This report will provide additional information and explanations related to the subject matter which is to illustrate the degree to which Human Resource functions linked to talent management contribute to the company's business growth. For a better understanding, as a case, BICEC (International Bank of Cameroon for Savings and Credit), one of the top five largest commercial banks in Cameroon was studied. Especially its selection, training and development and job analysis and design were chosen as the Human resource functions to focus on.

II. Organization Background

As stated above, the report studied the selection process, training programmes and job design and analysis of BICEC Cameroon, considered as one of the leading institutions of the banking sector of Cameroon.

a) BICEC's Background

Banque Internationale du Cameroun pour l'Epargne et le Credit (BICEC) was set up on March 14, 1997 following the liquidation of BICIC (Banque Internationale du Cameroun pour l'Industrie et le Commerce) that took place under particularly challenging economic circumstances. It was indeed necessary to restructure BICIC given that economic crisis of the 80's and 90's did not spare it. Therefore, in March 1997, the Board of Directors of BICIC decided to establish BICEC. Its management was entrusted to Groupe Banque Populaire, a French banking group that accomplished its mission namely: making the bank profitable and paving the way for its privatization in 3 years. In 2000, BICEC became a subsidiary of Groupe Banque Populaire. Since 2011, BICEC has continued benefiting from the extensive experience brought about by the merging of the Banques Populaires and Caisses d'Epargne (BPCE) Groups. Today, BICEC is the major stakeholder in the Cameroonian banking sector with a solid overall performance.

In BICEC's organizational structure, the Human resource Department is headed by Mr. Benoit BONGA BONGA, who leads the HR team and makes sure the HR functions and strategies are fused with the bank's objectives towards growth. In the subsequent lines, it will be discussed how the bank addresses selection processes, training and development programs and job analysis and design in order to attract, retain and upgrade its talented workforce.

III. HR Functions

According to the Human Resource Encyclopedia, a decent Human Capital Department is basic to an employee oriented, productive workplace in which employees are energized and locked in. In co-ordination with different supervisors, HR leads the way in management development, performance management, succession planning, career paths and other aspects of talent management. Furthermore, HR is responsible for the overall recruiting of a superior workforce. However, Human resource cannot do it alone, but must provide support to hiring managers who are also responsible for recruiting a superior workforce. Human Resource must provide leadership, training, schedule assistance, a systematic hiring process, recruitment planning processes, interview expertise, selection monitoring and more. And finally, HR is responsible for recommending and instituting strategies

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for people and the organization that further the attainment of the organization's strategic goals to maintain growth. If a company changes direction, develop new products, changes mission, vision or goals, HR department must lead the way with employees programs and processes.

The first HR function to be discussed is recruitment and selection.

a) Selection

Recruitment and selection as indicated by Armstrong (2014), is the procedure of finding and connecting with the general population the organization needs and selection is that part of the recruitment procedure worried with choosing which candidates or applicants ought to be appointment to employments. At the end of the day, recruitment can be characterized as the practice of requesting and effectively looking for applicants to fill as of late cleared or recently made positions utilizing an assortment of strategies, for example, inner employment postings, promoting in daily papers, or electronic occupation sheets or destinations, using search firms, or posting positions with exchange and expert affiliations (HR Encyclopedia).

At BICEC Cameroon, the recruitment and selection process is conducted as follows:

- Reception of required application documents (CVs, application letter, motivation letter)
- Candidate selection is based on the level of education (GCA A/L + 2 minimum) and age (at most 32) and their specialization.
- Reply to the job applications received: confirmation letters are sent to applicants whose applications have been retained and letters of regret to those not retained.
- Screening of CVs based on the Human resource requirements, validation of preselected CVs by HR committee.
- Invitation of applicants with corresponding profiles for psycho-analytical test.
- Anonymity of copies by HR Manager following a code that changes with each session.
- Marking of copies by group chosen according to a well-defined pattern.
- Marks of the anonymous copies and codes are then reconciled on the candidate identification sheets in preparation for deliberations.
- The intermediate phase is the group interview where each applicant writes a 30min dissertation, makes a 5min presentation and then discusses it with the other applicants in 10min. at least two members of the executive committee take part in this interview.
- The selection interview is the last stage of the process. It is chaired by the General Manager in person, accompanied by members of the Senior Management Committee and the HR Manager.

Source: www.bicec.com

That is how BICEC conducts its recruitment and selection.

In the same vision, still under attracting or accumulating talented employees, below is how LinkedIn proceeded when new people acquisition have been needed.

The Harvard Business Review "The LinkedIn and modern recruitment" (June 01, 2015; product HR414-PDF-ENG), in 2015, LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network, was experiencing an explosive growth and the need for hiring the very best people quickly to support that growth was being felt. To satisfy that need, the organization utilized its own online recruitment products, for example, LinkedIn Talent Solutions, to amass and hold talents. In the meantime, the organization was making new recruitment models that put it at the cutting edge of modern enrolling. LinkedIn had done as such far in purchasing in top talents. Its particular strategies utilized by LinkedIn recruitment team of more than 100 individuals incorporate:

- Replacing cold calling potential candidates with finding "warm connections" to them through their LinkedIn networks.
- Using a data-driven approach to identify the best candidates to pursue and,
- Developing personalized online relationships with top candidates.

For external hiring, it focused heavily on recruiting passive candidates, that is people who were already gainfully employed and not necessarily looking for new job.

b) Training

Lado and Wilson (1994) suggested that specified sets of human resource practices can be to build unique firm competencies which will drive firm performance and provide sources of sustained competitive advantage. Furthermore, Schuler and Jackson in 1987 identified five major HR practices among which training is found in as a competitive strategy.

The Harvard Business School Press (12/04/2002) reported that while many companies consider workers training a good investment, others question how the organization benefits employees training, that is why several cost effective methods of doing it while retaining the most competent individuals.

BICEC Cameroon invests a lot in its employees training programs. They are divided into three main types of training including internal training, diploma training and other training programs.

The first type of training that that the bank develops for its workforce is internal training. As the name suggests, it is done internally by BICEC's employees with proven knowledge and competencies in

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a specific domain of banking. This can be assimilated to on-the-job training as well.

Secondly, BICEC has this type of training called Diploma training for Graduate Diploma in Banking. This is a type of off-the-job training which is gratified by the issuance of a Professional Certificate or Diploma in Banking from the Technical Banking Institute of Paris France.

Third and last type of training the bank offers to its employees are training programs that are scheduled and validated within the framework of the bank's annual training plan. These are generally training programs that meet specific needs expressed by a unit either through a manager's request or in fulfillment of regulatory or legal requirements. They are aimed at building the capacities of employees trained in a domain where deficiencies and shortcomings have been identified or noticed. Other forms of training include conferences and workshops, coaching, and e-learning.

Usually after training is conducted, its outcome needs to be evaluated and assessed. The process of evaluating has been defined by Hambling (1974) as "any attempt to obtain information or feedback on the effects of a training program and to assess the value of the training in the light of that information". After evaluating, control has to be done by evaluating the reaction of those who were trained, by determining the degree of reception of training objectives, by assessing the degree of behavioral change as opposed to what was expected when participants return to their jobs and finally by evaluating the results by applying a cost-benefit analysis to see if added value was gained or not.

It ought to be noticed that if in any ways, an individual was not keen on the training he or she took an interest; the outcome might be generally as terrible as it was before the training program that is the reason BICEC carefully plan training programs for the right individuals so that the organization execution and development are kept at an expanding rate.

c) Job Design

All designed job encourages well being and engagement commitment (Bakker and Demerouti, 2013; Hackman and Oldham, 1980, Parker and Wall, 1998).

To be more précised, job design describes the particular jobs, tasks, and roles structure (Grant & Parker, 2009, pp. 5). It is usually approached as a top down way in which the organization creates jobs, and it turn, selects people with the right knowledge, skills, and abilities for these jobs. According to Tims and Bakker "job and employee engagement" (n.d), the way a job is designed strongly influences how employees perceive their job and in turn, how they perform their tasks. Managers and researchers started to focus their attention on the influence of job design on employees' behaviors and attitudes when it was found that changes in the work environment were accompanied with changes in employees' attitude and motivation.

From researchers' previous works, it has been found that a simpler and more specific job design and characteristics is more likely to increase employees engagement and performance, thus increasing the overall company performance towards sustainability and growth.

BICEC Cameroon's job design system is quite specific and explicit, below are two examples for two different positions a Chief Teller and HR Manager.

A BICEC Cameroon Chief Teller is expected to perform the following duties and tasks:

- Ensure the management and organization of the counters.
- Olan and organize cash desk audits.
- Ensure the FCFA (Cameroon currency) and foreign currency holdings are kept secured.
- Monitor counter service and sales.
- In the same bank, the HR Manager is required to:
- Ensure effective implementation of the HR strategic plan while complying with the values and guiding principles of the global strategy of the bank.
- Ensure proper follow up of payroll within the framework of a targeted compensation policy and ensure its compliance with the budget allocation.
- Maintain the social climate and cohesion by the development of a sustained, regular and institutionalized social dialogue with the personnel.
- Enhance overall working conditions and ensure proper implementation of the labor legislation.
- Animate, direct and manage the department.

Source: www.bicec.com

In this in the same line that Aroosiya & Ali (journal of Management, Vol. III N°1 concluded in their study of the impact of job design on employees' performance that it is more likely that an improvement of quality of job description of employees results in improvements of employee's performance.

IV. Conclusion

The topic of this report was to set up a relationship between HR works that connected with talent management significantly affected the organization's business development. Taking into account appropriate audit of diaries, articles, research papers and books, it has been found that through talent management rehearses, a firm which lead powerful recruitment and selection, builds up an extremely practical and very much outlined training program, and streamlines and elucidates the way it plans it job description and specifications will probably drive itself towards business development. Amber (2008) supported that when surveying organizations applying talent management, it got to be clear that their employees are more devoted and focused on their jobs

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and organizations contrasted with different workers whose organizations don't have any talent management program.

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