

Working Paper: Abstract

Why mimicking competitors doesn't plug the leaky talent pipeline

Globalization causes multinational enterprises (MNEs) to compete for talent on both a national and a global level (Scullion & Collings, 2011) and increasingly leads to the strategic importance of Global Talent Management (GTM) (Meyskens, Von Glinow, Werther, & Clarke, 2009; Khilij, Tarique, & Schuler, 2015). The need to acquire and develop diverse groups with a wide variety of career expectations in different labor market segments challenges MNEs. They have to manage a complexity of contextual factors, such as different labor markets, cultures and gender role stereotypes (Böhmer & Schinnenburg, 2016). In this environment, GTM should create sustainable competitive advantages for MNEs (Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011). One promising approach on country level would be the inclusion of women in the labor market (Aguirre, Hoteit, & Sabbagh, 2012), which the majority of countries have not succeeded in (WEF, 2016). Simultaneously, companies still struggle to fill talent pipelines. Instead of moving up through the ranks into top hierarchical levels especially female talent frequently drops out and withdraws from the labor market.

Currently the focus of GTM is on the perspective of companies and MNEs appear to mimic competitors (Iles, Preece, & Chuai, 2010). At the same time more self-directed, independent employees (Briscoe & Hall, 2006), the increasing relevance of self-initiated expatriates (SIE) (Vance & McNulty, 2014) on the one hand and resistance of employees to relocate globally (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013) on the other hand enhances a perceived power shift from companies to scarce knowledge workers with unique competencies and experiences. The latest research also recognizes the interests and career decisions of the employees. Not only do talented employees try to maximize their objective career success (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). The striving for subjective career success, such as a feeling of accomplishment, leads to a more relational decision making especially by women (Maineiro & Sullivan, 2005).

Our research aims at a more clear-cut concept of today's knowledge workers' career decisions over a life span and the meaning of family-related work decisions (FRWD) (Powell & Greenhaus, 2012) to contribute to the development of state of the art GTM. This leads to the following questions: Which factors from their private and professional lives have an impact on career decisions? Which of these factors stay stable and which underlie changes over their life span? Which impacts do gender, cultural and institutional differences have?

These questions were the basis for fifty biographic narrative interviews with male and female internationally experienced knowledge workers from two regional backgrounds were held from

March 2016 until September 2017. The sample is limited to two cultural contexts due to the impact of context factors on career orientation (Böhmer & Schinnenburg, 2016). To avoid a bias on western, developed countries two contextually diverse settings were investigated: India as an emerging economy and underresearched context in career literature (Mishra & Budhwar, 2012), and Germany as a Western industrialized country.

The outcomes might include context specific impact factors on male and female knowledge workers' career decisions. Deriving from already existing research and our empirical findings a new more coherent and current career typology might be a contribution to the field of career management and add to the frame of gender sensitive GTM. This would be relevant for scholars as well as practitioners. Implications for GTM and individual career planning based on the findings are expected. MNEs could improve the fit of their GTM to talent's needs by applying a broader and perhaps more realistic view - both context specific and globally - and therefore more easily retain and attract talented knowledge workers.

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Key words

Career management, global talent management, Germany, India, gender, knowledge worker