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# **TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND ACQUISITION IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS: THE CASE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES IN SOUTH SUDAN**

ALFRED MUSUKUTWA, THEBETH R. MASUNDA AND MANASE K. CHIWESHE<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

The article explored the identification and acquisition of talent in international humanitarian organisations in South Sudan. The study is premised on the argument that superior talent identification and acquisition strategies are vital to achieve competitive advantage in South Sudan. This is fundamental to satisfy both donor and host government and community requirements. The study aimed to establish methods of talent identification and acquisition in South Sudan. The competence conceptual framework was used to guide the study. The study utilised a qualitative methodology towards the direction of a case study design. It used a population of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) employees for this study. To understand talent identification and acquisition in South Sudan, a sample of 13 supervisors was used. The study used thematic data analysis to analyse the data findings. It was found that for humanitarian organisations use the referral method due to the lack of talent in South Sudan because of talent exodus. The findings indicated that employer branding and employee value proposition are key factors in talent identification and acquisition in IFRC in South Sudan. The study revealed that good remuneration and manpower development are also other talent acquisition methods. The study concludes that methods used for talent identification and acquisition in South Sudan are more linked to internal organisational policies. The study

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recommends a policy-based framework for talent acquisition and identification.

**Keywords:** competitiveness, international reputation, remuneration, manpower development, policy-based framework.

## INTRODUCTION

The ground-breaking work by the McKinsey consultants who coined the expression ‘war for talent’ has resulted in significant interest in Talent Management (TM) from both academics and practitioners (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013). These consultants posited that a fundamental belief in the importance of talent is needed to achieve organisational excellence (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). Proper talent management is considered a critical determinant of organisational success, and imperative for the livelihood and sustainability of organisations (Lawler, 2008; Chuai, & Preece, 2010).

The talent identification and acquisition is a critical phase of the TM process as it focuses on attracting and selecting high-potential candidates who possess the skills, knowledge, and cultural fit necessary for success within the organisation (Pruis, 2011). It involves strategic workforce planning, targeted recruitment campaigns, and effective selection processes that assess candidates' competencies and potential. By leveraging various channels, such as job boards, social media, and networking events, organisations can cast a wide net and attract diverse and qualified talent. It involves strategic planning, job analysis, and creating compelling job descriptions. By identifying the skills and competencies required for each role, organisations can effectively target and attract individuals who possess the desired qualities. The acquisition phase also includes sourcing candidates through various channels, such as job boards, social media, and professional networks.

A well-executed talent identification and acquisition strategy ensures that the organisation has a pool of qualified candidates to choose from. Managed talent relationships contribute significantly to talent acquisition and recruitment efforts. By building strong relationships with potential candidates, HR professionals can cultivate a talent pool of qualified individuals who align with the organisation's values and culture. These



relationships enable organisations to tap into passive candidates, enhance candidate experience, and expedite the recruitment process (Deloitte, 2019).

Inclusive sourcing and recruitment practices focus on attracting a diverse pool of candidates from various backgrounds and underrepresented groups. This may involve implementing strategies such as targeted job postings, partnering with diverse professional organisations, using diverse recruitment channels, and implementing blind hiring techniques to reduce bias. It also the Implementation of strategies to attract a diverse pool of candidates, such as targeted job postings, partnerships with diverse professional organisations, and using diverse recruitment channels.

In summary, talent identification and acquisition relate to recruiting, selecting, and socializing top talent in the organisation. Examples include opportunistic hiring practices, collaborative sourcing, employee value proposition practices, and employee-raiding practices. Effective attraction-based talent systems are able to attract applicants with the competences needed to perform a wide variety of strategic or critical jobs. One way this can be achieved is by sending applicants signals such as being “employer of choice” and the “most admired company to work for.” The objective here is to build a talent-management reputation that can attract the best people and then select them for positions rather than trying to select specific people for specific positions (Tarique and Schuler, 2010).

Organisations should align employees with the company's vision, fostering long-term collaboration and preserving organisational knowledge (Vural et al., 2012). With heightened Human Resource competition, career planning is now essential, accompanied by innovative tools like talent management (Erdogan, 1996). Growth-focused companies prioritise human capital, realising the significance of investing in, developing, and retaining employees adaptable to diverse cultures and geographies (Vural et al., 2012). Unfortunately, talent management often neglects core organisational functions, with identification perceptions confined to market-oriented structures, particularly strategic work units, rather than basic skills (Dale, 1996).

It is inevitable that organisations focus on final products, but this must be complemented by focusing seriously on basic skills. Organisations should not be seen as just portfolios of products or services, but also portfolios of skills (Vural *et al.*, 2012). Vural *et al.* (*ibid.*) define talent as the qualification to understand something or fulfil a task or the innate power in organism to capably adapt to situations. Erdogan (1996) defines talent as the sum of a person’s mental abilities such as to understand relations, to analyse and

conclude physical features and to get facts. Humanitarian disasters are constantly in the news, anything from earthquakes and tsunamis to war and famine (Rajakurana *et al.*, 2017). The international community reacts to these disasters by providing aid in one form or another, shelter, food and clothing being usually top priority. Once the requirements are known, the supply chain kicks in and the reaction becomes an exercise in humanitarian logistics (Rajakurana *et al.*, 2017).

One school of thought argues that skills and competencies are essentially the same both denoting an individual's ability to successfully perform specific activities through training and experience (Airia *et al.*, 2014). Amir and Imran (2013) posit that skills are specific learned activities, and they range widely in terms of complexity. By identifying the skills required to perform a specific function, an organisation can identify the individual to carry out that function (Rajakurana *et al.*, 2017). Competencies, on the other hand, are the methods of translating skills into the ability of an individual to perform the job requirements competently (*ibid.*). Artificial intelligence (AI) stands as a disruptive innovation ready to unleash the next wave of organisational digital transformation, driven by rapid advancements over the last decade (Queiroz *et al.*, 2019).

AI is reshaping human resources management in organisations, defined as imbuing machines with intelligent behaviours akin of human actions (Pillai and Sivathanu, 2020). In talent acquisition, some organisations integrate AI to assist human resource managers in select and acquire the best and talented individuals (Muduli and Trivedi, 2020). Engaging in humanitarian work is associated with high risks of trauma and exposure to chronic stress (Strohmeier, 2019). Although some humanitarian workers manage crises without developing mental health issues (McKay, 2011), common problems like post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, burnout and alcohol abuse prevail (Ager *et al.*, 2012). It is against this backdrop that the article seeks to understand how humanitarian organisations choose people who can handle the stress and pressure from the humanitarian work.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The study relies on the competency framework employed in the humanitarian sector as its conceptual framework. This framework serves as a key instrument in human resource management and talent management within humanitarian aid organisations. Essentially the competency

framework or model aids in identifying the skills, knowledge, personal characteristics and behaviours necessary for effective performance within the organisation. By achieving effective performance, individuals contribute to the organisation meeting its predetermined strategic objective (Tuomala, 2021). Thus, a competency framework is often seen as a link between human resource development and organisational strategy (Le Deist and Winterton, 2005).

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) incorporate the quality outcome into their definition of a competency model asserting that it is an integrated set of competencies crucial for excellent performance within a specific organisational context. A competency framework serves as a broad framework for integrating organising and aligning various competency models for reflective of the organisation's strategy and vision (Campion 2011). Competency models are collections of competencies that are relevant for performance in a particular job, functional area or job family (Campion 2011). According to Hall and Briscoe (1999), competency frameworks guide hiring and promotion decisions, offering insights into development needs. Additionally, they identify valuable learning experience for future leaders. The basis for developing competency frameworks varies from a research-based approach to a value-based one (Tuomala 2021).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section presents the literature review that shaped the discourse of this study, providing guidance through existing literature. Kunz and Reiner (2017) contend that there has been a dearth of research into human resource management in humanitarian recruitment. The literature was reviewed along the lines of definition of talent management and talent management in humanitarian organisation talent identification and acquisition in humanitarian organisations.

## **DEFINITION OF TALENT MANAGEMENT**

multiplicity plethora of Talent Management definitions exists, with Gallardo *et al* (2015) asserting that the definition by Collings and Mellahi's (2009: 304) has gained widespread adoption. According to Collings and Mellahi (2009:304) TM involves the systematic identification of key positions that differentially contribute to the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage. It encompasses developing of a talent pool of high-potential and high-performing individuals for establishing these roles, establishing a

differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent individuals and to ensuring their continued commitment to the organisation (Collings and Mellahi 2009). The term talent has its origins in the ancient Greek word “*talanton*” and “*talenta*” in Latin that used the word for unit weight or money (Tansley 2011). Later the word adopted other meanings and the 14<sup>th</sup> century it began to stand for a special natural ability or aptitude (Meyers *et al.*, 2013). Meyers *et al.* (2013) posit that the meaning of the word can be viewed metaphorically whether talent is used to describe monetary units or natural abilities the subtext is value, talent should not be wasted. Collings and Mellahi (2009) asserts that the organisation’s strategy and related competitive advantage should be the foundation for the defining talent. They argue that individuals filling the roles that contributing to an organisation’s sustainable competitive advantage should be deemed talented or high potential.

In defining the discourse of talent management Lewis and Hamilton (2006) asserts that pinpointing the precise meaning of talent management proves challenging due to authors using terms like talent management, talent strategy, succession management and human resource planning interchangeably. Despite the proliferation of articles, books, and practitioners in talent management, Lewis and Hamilton (2006) argue that a review of literature reveals a disturbing lack of clarity regarding scope and overall goals. Dries (2013) argues that the talent management literature’s tendency to veer into vague but appealing rhetoric raises questions about whether talent management is not just a management fashion. Management fashions are characterised by conceptual ambiguity and a sense of urgency set by fashion setters (consultants business schools management gurus) lack legitimisation through sound evidence and robust theory (Dries 2013).

The above definition is fundamental for this research study for the following reasons. It emphasizes key positions as the point of departure for any TM system. These key positions are defined by their pivotal importance to organisational strategy, their rarity (generally 10–20% of positions in any organisation) and the fact that increasing the quality (quality pivotal) or quantity (quantity pivotal) of people in these positions is likely to generate a disproportionate return to the organisation (Becker and Huselid, 2006; Boudreau and Ramstad, 2007; Cascio and Boudreau, 2016; Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Once these positions are identified, the talent-pool strategy

focuses on recognising high-potential and high performing employees to fill those critical roles, advocating for proactive recruitment rather than demand-led recruitment (Sparrow, 2007). Additionally, mitigating, managing and optimising human capital risk is a central aspect to any talent pool strategy (Cascio and Boudreau, 2011, 2012). Lastly, the definition acknowledges the importance of tailoring HR practices based on the varying potential of pivotal roles to generate value. This marks the departure from historical approaches to HR approaches that applied, relatively standardised policies and processes to all employees, regardless of their positions or levels in an organisation.

### **TALENT MANAGEMENT**

It can be argued that talent management has become a critical competitive tool for organisations globally (Beechler and Woodward 2009). However, even if talent management is strategically important for organisations research on the topic has been growing at a slow pace (Kontoghiorghes 2016). A lack of clarity and consensus concerning the definition and practices of talent management seems to still prevail in the academic discussion and debate even if the research area as such is considered to have moved from infancy to adolescence (Mellahi and Collings 2010, Collings, Scullion and Vaiman 2011). The transformation from infancy to adolescence can be attributed to many US based researcher that in turn as presented raised the question of applicability and adequacy of current concepts and approaches in talent management related to US-based private and humanitarian organisations and small and medium enterprises (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013).

Collings *et al.* (2011) acknowledged significant distinctions from the North American thinking and research highlighting variations in organisation and structure between North American and European organisations. The formertends to place more emphasis on the formalisation of structures and processes while the European counterparts emphasise socialisation that in turn can be argued to require different approaches to talent management. Demographically, European organisations are influenced by factors such as the retirement of the baby boom generation, resulting in a loss of capacity and knowledge, as well as global talent gaps (Tuomala, 2021). (Another generation of significance mentioned by Collings *et al.* (2011) is the millennials born after 1980, known for their emphasis on cooperate social responsibility and a strong focus on training and development as key work-

related attitudes. For talent management and human resources management in general, this means that organisations need to understand leveraging employer branding or cooperate branding more broadly to attract and retain millennials (Tuomala 2021). Equally important is understanding how to engage and motivate this generation (Collings *et al.*, 2011). Vaiman, Scullion and Collings (2012) argue that millennials consider the reputation of a socially responsible company as important in talent management and retention. Corporate social responsibility can be used to enhance employees' perception of intrinsic rewards instead of being extensively dependent on increasing financial compensation.

McGinnis Johnson and Ng (2015) argue that millennials seek meaningful work more than other generations. Public and non-profit sectors, including NGOs and humanitarian aid organisations are arguably positioned to offer interesting work through their missions. Meyers *et al.* (2014) posits that millennials are targeted by talent management activities due to the ongoing retirement of baby boomers and the current influx of millennials into workforce. Millennials emphasised different values and attitudes and career decisions. Younger millennials in particular, desire for interesting and meaningful work, personal growth and developing new skills (McGinnis *et al.* 2015).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Sometimes methodology is called the philosophy of methods and can be defined broadly and schematically that is quantitatively and qualitatively or narrowly and precisely that is grounded theory case study (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008). The study used qualitative methodology with a bias towards the case study research design. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and consist of a set of interpretive practices that make the world visible the practices transform the world. The study used in-depth interviews to craft the discourse of talent identification and acquisition in South Sudan in humanitarian organisations. The study used a sample of 15 officers from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) operating in South Sudan. The participants were chosen using purposive sampling. The study used thematic data analysis to analyse the findings as observed by Hungwe (2011) who posits that thematic data analysis must follow cataloguing, coding reading, rereading and writing. The study observed the ethical considerations of informed consent, respect of privacy

and confidentiality as posited by Creswell (2016) that research must respect and adhere to ethical principles and encourage fair treatment of participants. The study answers the question that how talent is identified in South Sudanese humanitarian organisations and how is talent acquired in South Sudan. IFRC has been present in South Sudan since independence in 2011 and it supports the National Society in the areas of disaster risk reduction, response to protracted crisis and its efforts towards humanitarian aid provision (IFRC 2023).

## **RESULTS**

The section presents the findings of the study as the findings emerged from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recruitment officers operating in South Sudan responded to the questions of talent identification and acquisition in their organisation.

### **EMPLOYER BRANDING**

The article aimed to understand talent acquisition in the IFRC, an international humanitarian organisation in South Sudan and employer branding emerged as one of the strategies deployed for talent acquisition. One Participant indicated that:

“For the acquisition of superior talent, employer branding and employee value proposition are fundamental due to the fierce competition on the labour market. The organisation should focus on developing its brand name as well as take a keen interest on the employees it already has through talent development and management of that talent.”

The study revealed that for talent management, employer branding plays a vital role as how the brand name of the organisation is perceived by potential talent influences how talent is acquired. Another participant noted that:

“Employer branding is a strategy for talent acquisition that is used at IFRC to lure, acquire and recruit young talent. The organisation strives to maintain an international status on its brand to acquire top-tier talent and this works through how the brand is perceived by potential recruits.”

The findings of the study indicated that how the organisation is perceived by potential recruits has a bearing on the acquisition of talent. IFRC as an employer and a brand strives to focus on the available talent and developing internal talent. One participant said:

“The organisation as a brand must be perceived by potential recruits as an organisation that allows for the growth of talent by creating a conducive environment for a successful career journey. At the moment, IFRC as a brand is

weaker compared to other international humanitarian organisations such as Save The Children, International Refugee Council and Norwegian Refugee Council”.

In one of the first works to address employer branding, Ambler and Barrow (1996) argue that one of the key aims of employer branding was to help attract the “best applicants” and employ the “best people.” One can reasonably translate “best” applicants and people to the idea of “talented” applicants and people; thus, one of the key aims of employer branding is to attract and retain talented employees.

Edwards (2012) argues that one of the reasons for the growth in employer branding as a field is the growing pressure to compete in the “war for talent.” Arguably, having a strong, attractive employer brand should help organisations ensure they attract and retain talented people (Collings *et al.*, 2017). In defining employer branding, some scholars argue that attracting talent is a central aim. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007:3) argues that a successful employer brand will be one that appeals to “people who thrive and perform to their best in its culture” (2007: 3). Crucially, Edwards (2014:71) defines employer branding as “an HR activity which involves the systematic management of how an organisation is perceived as an employer; specifically, to potential new recruits as well as current employees”. The management of an organisation’s employer brand is increasingly considered a core activity on which strategic HR functions need to be focusing their energies.

Looking at employer branding from the perspective of talent management, a successful employment brand would be one that helps to attract and retain talented employees who perform to their full potential and thrive in the organisation’s culture. The branding of an organisation as ‘employer of choice’ and ‘best company to work for’ is important in supporting talent management initiatives, as the organisation will have a reputation of being a great place to work for (Gatherer & Craig, 2010). Li and Bryan (2010) emphasised that in the quest to become employer of choice, organisations need to create and sustain a workplace which brings a deeper understanding of elements contributing to the workplace climate.

Importantly, an effective employer brand should do two fundamental things. First, a strong and effective employer brand should ensure that potential and actual job applicants (as potential recruits) find the organisation, its



employer brand, and the potential unique employment experience, highly attractive. Associated with this, potential recruits should have a desire to work at the organisation and concrete intentions to apply for a job at the organisation. Second, a positive and strong employer brand should mean that existing employees will want to continue working at the organisation; they should also be committed to the organisation, have a higher degree of organisational identification, and be willing to put themselves out for the good of the organisation (Collings *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, IFRC should revamp its employer brand to enhance the identification and acquisition of talent in South Sudan.

### **ORGANISATION'S POSITIVE REPUTATION**

The study aims to explore talent identification and acquisition in South Sudan by the IFRC. The findings revealed that the organisation reputation as a humanitarian entity significantly aids in both talent identification and acquisition. The study indicates that the organisation's esteemed reputation attracts competent candidates' reputation attracts competent candidates with strong qualifications to apply for jobs within the organisation. Employee value proposition (EVP) emerges as an important component in talent attraction aligning closely with employer branding. EVP directly influence corporate reputation, talent management and employee engagement agendas. One participant said:

“The IFRC as a humanitarian organisation has a reputation here in South Sudan such that young brilliant and competent individuals apply, and the organisation identifies the competent and talented and acquire them through promising them experience gaining and social mobility.”

The study indicated that the reputation of the organisation plays a pivotal role in the identification of talent in South Sudan as the IFRC has a reputation of working with international organisation. Participants indicated that young graduates with the hope of social mobility and migrating to work outside the country apply hence the company identifies and acquires talent. One participant said:

“The IFRC is one of the biggest humanitarian organisations in South Sudan and it has a reputation due to its partnerships with organisations such as the European union and United Nations. Most young competent and talented minds apply to the organisation with the hopes of one day leaving this country to work with one of the organisations that the Society partners with. It is this reputation that makes IFRC identify and acquire talent.”

The study revealed that most of the talent is identified by the organisation through the reputation of the organisation as it partners with most of the

humanitarian organisations that have international links. The findings revealed that it is due to this reputation of working with international organisation that help the organisation identify talent and acquire it as young people apply with the organisation in the hopes of an exodus from the conflict-ridden country.

The results of the study revealed that Employee Value Proposition (EVP) plays a crucial role in talent identification and acquisition. Armstrong and Taylor (2017:233) point out that an organisation's EVP "consists of what it offers to prospective or existing employees that they will value and that will persuade them to join or remain with the business". EVP describes the mix of characteristics, benefits, and ways of working in an organisation. EVP is the deal struck between an organisation and employee in return for their contribution and performance. This deal characterizes an employer and differentiates it from its competition. Collings (2014) asserted that employees who create and contribute value to the organisation should get value back from their organisation in the form of employee value proposition. Bell (2005) views the Employee Value Proposition as a key differentiator of success for organisations competing to recruit, develop, inspire and retain talented people. The best practice is to develop a convincing, credible and competitive Employee Value Proposition that can be responsive to the expectations of talent.

#### **EMPLOYEES REFERRAL AS TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND ACQUISITION STRATEGY**

The study sought to understand how talent is identified at the IFRC in South Sudan the recruitment officers were asked on how talent was identified and acquired at the humanitarian organisation. Participants indicated that the identification of talent was done by employee referral mostly through internal employees. In the words of one participant.

"The situation in this country has been volatile with the conflicts always arising and this forced the exodus of qualified young people to move out of the country. To identify talent at the organisation, internal employees refer hiring managers to potential recruits actively or passively looking for jobs."

The findings indicated that the IFRC in South Sudan faces a huge challenge of talent identification as there is an acute shortage of qualified personnel due to the conflicts in the country since independence. One participant said:

"The organisation has been struggling on the market for qualified talent as people leave the country in search of peace as this country has never known peace since independence hence the need for humanitarian workers. To identify talent is a big challenge and referrals are extremely helpful as the market is volatile."

The humanitarian organisations in South Sudan identify talent through the employees that are already employed in the organisations as there is a lack of qualified people as most of the educated people are migrating out of the country in search of peace while running away from the conflict. The use of the employees in the talent identification was indicated by the one of the participants as one of the most useful ways of talent identification and acquisition. In the participant's words:

“These are humanitarian organisations with a limited funding and advertising for a recruitment can be costly and it can lead to the employment of unqualified personnel due to the workers union's pressure on employing the youths therefore, the use of employee referral to identify and acquire talent becomes important.”

An employee referral program is a recruiting strategy in which employers encourage current employees, through rewards, to refer qualified candidates for jobs in their organisations (Bidwell, 2011). It is a popular strategy because recruiters have long known what research confirms: Employee-referred new hires tend to be better performers than nonemployee-referred new hires and to stay with their organisations longer. Employee referral programs are also more cost-effective than other recruiting strategies and often are the fastest way to find external talent. Referral programs play a significant role in talent management. It involves getting new people in and about building your reputation. This is done to attract new employees or to leverage your employees to expand your customer base. By encouraging employees to refer qualified candidates, organisations tap into their networks and attract individuals who are more likely to be a good fit for the company culture. Referrals often result in higher-quality candidates and can significantly reduce recruitment costs. Moreover, employees who refer candidates feel more engaged and connected to the organisation and employees who are referred usually on-board faster, perform better and are less likely to leave prematurely. Bidwell (2011) argues that professionals who are hired from the outside through an executive search firm or an employment agency perform worse than those who are promoted from the inside or come from the outside through employee referrals.

#### **COMPETITIVE SALARIES AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAINING**

The study set out to answer the question of how humanitarian organisations in South Sudan acquire talent and competent workforce. The findings revealed that the organisation offers employees lucrative salaries and staff development to promote career growth. The participants indicated that that

humanitarian organisations offer a way out to the struggling youths by providing a salary and upwards mobility. One participant indicated that:

“The organisation offers a good salary with many allowances in foreign currency to the youths that are mostly struggling to build their careers and the organisation also offers upward mobility to the young talented people and this is a pool factor for the talent.”

The study indicated that the acquisition of talent at the IFRC is enabled by the lucrative remunerations offered to the employees or recruits by the organisation and the manpower development training offered by the organisation. One participant indicated that:

“Most of the young talented employees that come to work for this organisation are mostly interested in the manpower development training and experience as most of the humanitarian jobs need experience for career advancement.”

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings from the study revealed many strategies for talent identification used by the IFRC in South Sudan. The findings indicated that employer branding is one of the crucial strategies of talent acquisition used by the IFRC in South Sudan to acquire good and top-tier talent. The study revealed that for talent to be acquired there is a need for the brand to be perceived as the best employer for talent to be acquired. In support of these findings are Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013) that observe that employer branding aims to attract and retain the best people. Lawler (2011) aligns with the study's findings, emphasizing that an employer brand serves to identify shared employment experiences. This communication is vital for potential recruits and current employees, portraying the organisation as a positive brand that supports career mobility.

The findings indicated that the organisation uses employee referral for the identification and acquisition of the talent as most of the qualified individuals favour migrating to neighbouring countries in search of peace stability and better standards of living. The findings revealed that employees within the organisation identifies local talent and refer the talented potential employees to the organisation and the study showed that most of the employees at the organisation are referral workers referred to the organisation by someone within the organisation. The showed that in South Sudan talent identification is only possible through employee's referrals as the pool of the talent is very slim due to the political volatility of the country most of the young competitive graduates leave the country in search of peace and stability. Concurrent, with these findings is Zhang (2017) who

observed that talent identification through internal employees has become a strategy in the middle-income countries to identify and acquire talent.

The study's findings underscore that the organisation's reputation for collaborating with international humanitarian entities facilitates talent identification and acquisition. Competent individuals apply with the aspiration of securing positions that offer international assignments, serving as an escape from poverty and conflict. The IFRC's partnerships with the European Union and the UN emerge as a pivotal factor in talent identification and acquisition, drawing interest from individuals keen on international work. Kagunyi (2009) supports these findings, highlighting that a positive international organisational reputation significantly influences recruitment practices, providing locals with an avenue to escape poverty and political instability in South Sudan.

The study revealed that the organisation acquires talent through offering lucrative salaries and manpower development courses that offer social mobility to the young and competent talented personnel. Consistent with the findings is Kagunyi (2009) who observes that pay attractiveness plays a pivotal role in humanitarian talent acquisition in low-and-middle-income countries as qualified staff are always looking for a remuneration that can alleviate their poverty. In support of these findings Molefi (2015) who observed that continued training as part of talent development improves job security and lures new talent as it offers hope for upwards social mobility to the young potential employees. Consistent with the findings are Dhanpat *et al.* (2019) that observe that acquisition factors such as predictors of job security associated with training and manpower development being offered by organisations lure employees.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above findings, it is concluded that talent identification and acquisition plays a crucial role in the successful performance of IFRC. in South Sudan. The organisation employs various strategies to enhance the talent identification and acquisition process such as employer branding, employee value proposition, and employee referral programs. These strategies are anchored on organisational policies. Chief among the organisational policy that acts as a factor for talent acquisition is the ability of the humanitarian organisations to offer manpower development to the potential employees and this presents a ladder towards social mobility for

the young workers to gain experience. Organisational commitment towards employee development was found to be one of the chief talent acquisition anchors in the South Sudanese humanitarian organisations. Organisational reputation as being international was also found as the pool factor for talent acquisition as it gives hope to the talented employees. The reputation of the company gives hope to the employees as they hope to escape the politically volatile situation in South Sudan. The findings indicated that South Sudan has not known peace since independence, and this has been the catalyst for talent identification and acquisition as the youths hope to escape the violence and endless wars through a connection to international humanitarian organisation. There is need for competence-based talent acquisition. There is a need for the increase in the funding of the humanitarian organisations in South Sudan to acquire competent talent. There is a need for more manpower development policies to lure talented graduates. There is a need for provision of accommodation and other provisions to increase the acquisition of talent.

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