

International Experience of Personnel Selection in the Conditions of the Digital Environment, War and Sustainable Development: Social and Corporate Responsibility of Employers for the Non-Transparent Hiring Process

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Abstracts

The article represents an attempt to outline and systematize peculiarities of landscape and practices of personnel selection in the conditions of BANI-environment with the influence of continuous digital transformation, war conflicts, and sustainable development. General scientific methods of analysis, synthesis and generalization constituted the methodological base of research. It was revealed that one of the most successful vectors of personnel selection within sustainable HRM today is talent marketplaces.

Keywords: personnel selection, sustainable HRM, BANI, non-linearity, talent marketplace.

1. Introduction

At the moment, the world is at the stage of creating a new society, with the development of new businesses at the intersection of traditional areas and information technology. The main characteristic of the new world is change. Under these conditions, the existence of an organization is impossible without constant development and change. The driver of these changes is the HR sector. In turn, the evolution of the areas of activity of personnel management specialists, changes in the functional filling of positions in the field of HR occur under the influence of global technological and socio-economic challenges. Among the main imperatives for transforming the status, role, and functions of HR specialists, one can consider the acceleration of the pace of digitalization, the rapid increase in the scale of the gig economy and new forms of employment, changing characteristics of the business environment and organizational model, the rapid spread of flexible office systems and a change in the paradigm of employee management (Gavkalova et al., 2022a; Gavkalova et al., 2022b; Gavkalova et al., 2023).

In the conditions of the digital transformation of modern organizations, which affects all their business processes, there are qualitative changes in the personnel management system, one of the main subsystems of which is the recruitment and selection of personnel. In the recruiting process, which has various varieties, traditional methods are used, which are already widely applied in practice, additional ones, as well as digital tools, that are still in their infancy. The study of these methods, their advantages and disadvantages, as well as prospects for development and improvement is a current direction in the systemic digital transformation of an organization's human resources. In addition, aspects of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility in personnel selection processes are becoming increasingly important, more and more determine the success of the selection, hiring, and subsequent onboarding process.

However, the greatest driver of conceptual and even paradigmatic changes in personnel selection practices is the BANI-environment.

For almost 20 years we have lived in a VUCA world - unstable, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. But things have changed too much and this model can no longer describe what is happening. Our new reality is the BANI world. At world forums, the creator of Theory U, Otto Scharmer, often takes a cross-section of the social field: he asks participants how they would characterize what the world is currently experiencing. In recent years, such survey results have increasingly featured the terms "global transformation," "major change", and "shift" (Da Silva & Santos, 2022). This is exactly what accurately reflects reality, what we can trace in different areas and at different levels. Recently, a society experienced phenomena that have changed a lot: a pandemic, an epidemic of stress, burnout and mental disorders, increased digitalization of the world, as well as military conflicts, the transition from local hybrid wars to "hot" confrontation. In such conditions, effective recruitment and alignment of HR strategies with dynamic business strategies of companies with a short planning horizon is becoming an increasingly complex task requiring flexibility and continuous improvement - a kind of new version of Lean, based on exceptional flexibility, continuous digital transformation, sustainable development and social responsibility.

2. Research methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the research was made up of key methodological developments and theoretical provisions of both the science of personnel (HR) management itself and a number of scientific disciplines and theories at the intersection of which this science arose, in particular sociological theories. In the process of research, a set of general scientific and specific scientific research methods was used, including general logical ones: analysis, synthesis, induction, generalization, formalization, comparison, description.

3. Results

The BANI concept, which describes the modern recruitment landscape, does not guarantee an understanding of what is happening and does not insure against wrong decisions. But, starting from it, one can see what models of thinking will limit us in the new reality. At first glance, it seems that the governments of the countries are in good control of the situation, they have a strategy, and they are leading their people “to a brighter future.” But if we rely on the new BANI model, we will understand that it does not work like that - everyone just reacts to the situation and tries to adapt.

The world as we knew it is coming to an end. What comes to the fore is not the ability to understand and make forecasts and plans that will come true, but the ability to quickly sense what is happening and adapt to it. These qualities are inherent in people with a flexible picture of the world, those who can change their mental models and adapt to the complex processes that are unfolding today.

What was previously Ambiguity has now become Incomprehensible. Information overload arose. “More information is no longer a guarantee of better understanding. More data can be counterproductive, overwhelming our ability to understand the world” (Suri et al., 2023). The number of factors that need to be taken into account today exceeds the capacity of consciousness.

Thus, increasing complexity has inevitably led humanity in general and business in particular into a world of brittleness (fragility), anxiety, non-linearity, and incomprehensibility. Today, leaders must learn to work at the edge of possibility with the risk of failure, to make mistakes and slow down - prepare for the fact that mistakes will happen, and be ready to correct them (Gupta et al., 2024). And they must also build “their own internal system of attitude towards disagreements and failures, build a system that will allow to quickly process negative experiences - reduce, as far as possible, the duration of the reaction in order to move on, remaining aware, receptive, analyzing the situation, and acting proactively” (Da Silva & Santos, 2022).

The level of uncertainty is increasing. As a matter of fact, our life has ceased to be stable quite a long time ago (Ortina et al., 2023). However, starting in 2020, both the level and pace of change are growing faster and faster, and the coming years will bring increasingly more changes. The concept of BANI-world describes the modern world as fragile, disturbing, non-linear and incomprehensible. In this new environment, several challenges are at the forefront for the HR community (Wood et al., 2022):

- Understand how employees feel about change and the uncertainty that accompanies it,
- Understand how uncertainty affects them,
- Understand how to maintain their effectiveness in such difficult conditions.

Military conflicts also create a situation of uncertainty and turbulence in the labor market. In conditions of military conflict, businesses are forced to adapt operational and strategic activities to new military and economic realities. This applies, of course, primarily to companies whose employees work in a country that is party to the conflict, but at the same time it also has an impact on the selection of personnel for distributed teams whose members physically reside in such countries.

Years of sustained turmoil and bloodshed have especially harmed Syria's labor economy. Prior to the crisis, the Syrian economy was mainly focused on oil and gas production, agriculture, and tourism. However, the violence has significantly reduced economic activity, resulting in substantial job losses and labor relocation. With the exodus of millions of Syrians to surrounding and non-neighboring countries, Syria has suffered a lack of professional and unskilled labor in a variety of fields. Women have been particularly hard hit, with many suffering increasing impediments to employment as a result of the conflict, cultural and societal standards, and disruptions to public services and infrastructure.

In reaction to the crisis, the informal sector has expanded, with many Syrians obliged to work in it as a means of survival due to a lack of social protection. While there is a shortage of statistics on informal employment in Syria, projections from 2021 indicate that 92% of the country's MSMEs engage in this sector. Syria's terrible economic and labor market position has been exacerbated by the deadly 7.8-magnitude earthquake that rocked Turkey and Syria early on Monday, February 6, 2023, and the subsequent aftershocks. Five governorates have been significantly affected: Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, Latakia, and Tartous. These governorates are projected to house 43.4 percent of Syria's total population; around 7.1 million people are of working age (15 and older), with an estimated 2.7 million employed. Women accounted for 22.8% of total employment in the five impacted governorates (*The Impact of the February 2023 Earthquakes on Employment, 2023*). Naturally, all of these disruptions have an influence on the human selection landscape, putting organizations in a state of volatility and poor predictability, compelling them to quickly implement Agile techniques and scalable solutions.

The example of Ukraine is also very indicative. Ukrainian HR managers have to cope with the consequences of the war in the country:

- Outflow of talent due to relocation and additional competition with foreign companies that are ready to officially employ Ukrainians at higher salaries compared to the Ukrainian labor market
- Compromises and financial constraints due to rising costs of HR operations, the emergence of new war-related expenses, and at the same time investments in personnel development and training

- Changing the expectations of employees who want to work in a company with an active social position regarding the war, additional support and an expanded social package in connection with relocation and mobilization and the most flexible working conditions.

At the same time, Western companies in which Ukrainian specialists work as part of distributed teams also encountered difficulties. A very large percentage of employees need a flexible work policy, as well as psychological support. Also, due to war, the likelihood of force majeure circumstances for a remote employee increases, due to which he would not be able to fully perform his duties for some time - be it several hours, or a day, or several days. However, Ukrainian specialists are valued by Western companies due to their high professionalism and at the same time the lack of over-expectations regarding salaries, so companies prefer to find a way out by modifying the concept and processes of recruiting, rather than refusing to hire Ukrainian specialists.

As Anna Datsenko notes in an article published in Forbes, in a military conflict, companies critically need the following (Datsenko, 2023):

- Strategic business resilience (sustainability) – the company’s ability to quickly adapt to potentially disruptive situations while maintaining continuous operations, protecting people, assets, and overall brand equity
- Employer-centric HR approach – a principle of working with personnel that puts the needs of employees at the focus of the company’s operating activities
- New productivity standards for company employees.

Datsenko (2023) also emphasizes that expecting pre-war (or even pre-Covid) productivity from employees during an eight-hour working day is now utopian. The stress of the military environment reduces a person’s productivity and affects his psychological state. There is also the concept of vicarious trauma - the central nervous system of people observing acts of violence through the media is also affected. They often exhibit the same symptoms as those who are direct targets of terror (dos Santos et al., 2020). Much depends on the mental stability and personality type of an individual, his defense mechanisms. But there are general trends that managers should consider when making tactical and strategic decisions when recruiting. To address the new norms of productivity, it is necessary to develop or embed human-centric leaders who build authentic, empathic and adaptive leadership with their teams.

Another factor, which at first glance is not directly related to the BANI paradigm, is the widespread ongoing digital transformation. Meanwhile, this trend is fully consistent with such a parameter of the BANI environment as nonlinearity. The introduction of digital communications and technology into all areas of life over decades has led to fundamental changes in the HR field. Now we can already talk about the transition of the field of personnel management to a new level - Digital HR. Nowadays, it is impossible to imagine performing any function of an HR specialist without the use of digital tools that can significantly optimize all processes related to personnel management. Modern employees live in a world where there is an app on a smartphone to solve almost any task.

The digital globalization of the economy has resulted in the emergence and rapid expansion of the gig economy (Cantoni & Mangia, 2020; Zhang & Chen, 2023). The main condition for its existence is the implementation of work activities via the Internet. Among the features of the gig economy, there are the following: the spread of new types of part-time employment (freelancing, gig work (work on request, etc.)); the ability to simultaneously work in different companies located anywhere in the world through electronic services; a rapid increase in the share of project employment, short-term employment contracts instead of long-term employment relationships with the employer on the basis of full-time employment. Accordingly, one can talk about a change in the value perception of work: the main request (especially among young people) is flexibility and autonomy of work (Gilch & Sieweke, 2021). Failure to take this feature into account in the personnel selection process significantly increases the likelihood of ineffective selection.

The next factor that requires special attention from HR managers and company executives when recruiting personnel is the trend of sustainable development, ESG, and CSR. According to surveys, 58% of employees value the ESG contribution of a potential employer (Chams & Garcia-Blandon, 2019). Seequent, a global leader in geoanalysis, modeling and collaborative technologies, has released a white paper entitled “Industrial Mining. Moving the needle on the ESG scale in mining - from threat to opportunity,” which reveals the impact of ESG on attracting the next generation of talent. The paper highlights that future generations of innovators, thinkers, and engineers are increasingly focused on the sector's environmental impact and are keen to learn about ESG initiatives before they decide to join the industry. Mining companies must now not only be able to demonstrate responsibility and transparency in their ESG activities, but they also need to weave this into their culture and recruitment efforts to attract the skills needed by the industry (Seequent emphasizes the critical role of environmental issues, social responsibility and corporate governance, 2021).

Recently, the phenomenon of green HRM (GHRM) emerged. Human Resource Management Institute sees GHRM as a manifesto that helps to develop a green workforce that can comprehend and respect green culture in an organization (Yusliza & Renwick, 2024). Such a green program may retain its green aims throughout the HRM process, including recruitment, hiring, and training, as well as rewarding, developing, and growing the firm's human resource. A company's Human Resources Department may play an important role in developing a sustainable culture inside the organization. HR procedures have a crucial role in turning Green HR policy into reality; hence, human capital and its management are instrumental to the achievement of EM objectives (Papalexandris, 2022).

Figure 1 shows that green recruitment and selection represent the most important element, launching the very cycle of green HRM. Recruitment procedures may promote good environmental management by ensuring that new entrants are familiar with an organization's environmental culture and capable of upholding its environmental ideals (Paille, 2022).



Figure 1. Green HRM and Green Recruitment/Selection element

Today, employer brand is one of the tools for business transformation. And if companies use it wisely, they save on attracting and retaining talent, increase employee engagement and, accordingly, profits. One can build an employer brand in different ways, the main thing is to take into account the needs of the target audience, their interests and not ignore the context in which we now live, in particular, the sustainable development and ESG agendas, that form the basis of today's understanding of CSR. Environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) issues have been on the agenda for some time, but are now more central to an organization's culture than ever before and are among the key factors in attracting the skills that today's companies need.

4. Discussion

In response to the parameters and trends of the BANI environment described above, companies are beginning to form internal talent marketplaces. They contribute to the transformation of the organizational structure, from hierarchical to creative and sustainable - one that allows employees to work on multiple projects at once, switch from one role to another, improve skills and learn on the job. The schematic concept of talent marketplace is depicted in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Talent marketplace concept and benefits (Blokdyk, 2021).

Today, companies compete fiercely for talent as skills shortages grow and employee expectations for career advancement and mobility change dramatically. Companies that support internal mobility and help employees develop and grow are best prepared to meet this challenge. HR tools and technologies that make internal mobility easier by providing people with opportunities for career growth and professional development. This means supporting employees as they seek new opportunities to advance based on their skills and experience. In addition, employers and managers are constantly looking for the most talented employees within the company to attract them to the most important projects and tasks.

Thanks to modern technologies, HR services have received a new tool - the “talent marketplace”, where, on the one hand, up-to-date information about the capabilities and ambitions of all employees is collected, and on the other hand, a platform is provided where companies can demonstrate to applicants and employees their commitment to the principles of personnel career development.

Internal Talent Marketplace (ITM) is a relatively new concept in HR. The purpose of ITM is to more effectively use existing talent within an organization by matching the skills, experience and career aspirations of employees with the internal needs of the organization. Simply put, this is an internal job site that a company customizes to suit its needs.

- Employees who access the marketplace get a comprehensive view of opportunities that are recommended to them based on their abilities, experience, and interests. They gain control over planning their professional development and career growth. For example, they have the following options:
- Specialized short-term assignments or projects that match their interests and goals.
- Internships to develop new skills, ideas, and perspectives.
- Courses or training to develop skills, including retraining and upskilling.
- Role recommendations reflecting possible career paths.

- Supervision and mentoring programs that accelerate personal development.
- Participation in temporary teams, which improves team relationships, helps to act in concert and influence project results.
- Work on temporary or project-based tasks to practice skills that employees are developing.
- Enhancing of skills by communicating with experts in specific fields.

An ideal talent marketplace covers all employees, including information about their skills and competencies, as well as their interests, work and learning styles. It contains information not only about what people can do, but also about what they want and how they prefer to act. The talent marketplace offers employees opportunities for growth and success by providing organizations with insights to prepare their workforce for future challenges. A talent marketplace focuses on employee skills rather than just their job responsibilities. This allows for a more flexible and adaptive system where employees can be redistributed according to the current needs of the company. Thanks to integration with existing HR systems, the implementation of such platforms becomes even easier. Modern platforms are also heavily leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve the selection and matching process, making it more accurate and efficient.

At the same time, talent marketplaces, the functioning mechanism of which is usually based on Big Data, artificial intelligence and machine learning, are also fraught with pitfalls - in particular, bias and stereotypes, strictly algorithmic profiling that does not take into account the individual characteristics of the applicant. Figure 3 shows the data obtained by Pew Research Center in the survey aimed to comprehend Americans' views on use of AI in hiring.

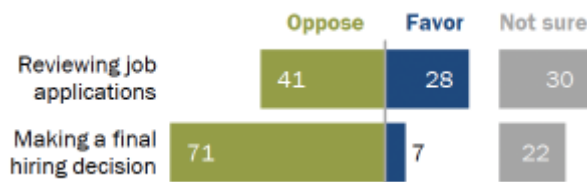


Figure 3. Using AI to make final call on hiring: data of Pew Research Center for the U.S. sample (Rainie et al., 2023).

The authors give a special place in the research to the perception of digital solutions based on artificial intelligence, noting that applicants are the least loyal to those that are the least transparent and understandable, or generally act on the “black box” principle. Gonzalez M.F. et al. (2022) studied the perception of applicants of digital tools, grouped based on human participation in the personnel selection process into three types: the first - completely controlled by a person, the second - autonomously functioning on the basis of artificial intelligence (machine learning), and the third - combined, in which artificial intelligence and man are attracted. As a result of the experiment, it was found that participants had the least positive perception of the second type of digital tools that do not involve human participation. The reasons

for this perception are the opaqueness of the algorithms, which do not allow one to understand by what criteria a decision is made and to assess its possible bias.

Test takers' reactions to combined types of digital tools depended primarily on their level of awareness of artificial intelligence technologies. Schick et al. (2021) examined job seekers' opinions towards AI-powered digital recruitment tools using criteria such as complexity, transparency, and trustworthiness. As a result, it was naturally established that applicants react most positively to those tools that they perceive as the least complex, understandable and reliable.

The study concluded that bias, or bias, is one of the main disadvantages associated with the use of digital solutions based on artificial intelligence. The lack of transparency of the latter is the main reason for their negative perception by users, which is precisely due to fears of making biased decisions (Rezzani et al., 2020). These fears are indeed not unfounded, as is confirmed by practical examples. Thus, in 2018, Amazon developed an automated recruiting solution based on artificial intelligence, trained on a database of resumes of the best employees, which was collected over 10 years. The latter contained mainly information about male employees, and therefore the trained algorithm subsequently automatically filtered out female resumes. After the public discovered this critical flaw, the company was forced to withdraw this digital solution from the market. Such errors are due to the fact that artificial intelligence algorithms are designed using incorrect, one-sided or unrepresentative data sets, as noted by Hinkle (2021). This author is also categorically against the use of machine learning-based technologies in personnel decision-making that process various categories of biometric data, including voice recognition systems, facial expressions and eye movements, in order to assess personal qualities or make predictions about a candidate's success. Hinkle substantiates his point of view with the results of an analysis of more than four hundred scientific sources and notes that the current level of knowledge about the relationship between physiological reactions and emotions or psychological characteristics is categorically insufficient for their application in solving real problems, especially such critical ones as personnel selection. The author calls the use of such tools an analytical error and pseudoscience disguised as a good marketing strategy.

Of course, the use of such personnel selection algorithms is a gross violation of the ESG-agenda in its "S" and "G" components. In a certain way, there is also a negative impact on the "E" component, since collecting big data involves using large amounts of energy. Although the word "cloud" sounds intangible, it runs on quite tangible equipment: cables, fans, servers, routers, rare metals and much more. Data centers used for cloud computing require significant amounts of energy to operate and cool, resulting in increased emissions. The paradox is that the new technology, although designed to save both labor and time resources, is very resource-intensive in itself. The process of training and deploying such models consumes enormous amounts of energy and can cause serious harm to the environment.

Meanwhile, in today's global context, where environmental awareness is quickly growing, businesses are increasingly understanding the critical need of incorporating sustainability into all aspects of their operations. Talent Acquisition is a critical issue that has received increased attention in the sustainability field. Within this arena, organizations are enthusiastically adopting the ideals of the "Green Recruiting" movement. This strategic strategy goes beyond the

traditional employment process, combining eco-friendly techniques to not only establish a sustainable staff but also obtain a competitive advantage in a dynamic and changing market. Anticipating and actively directing the direction of the Green Recruiting Movement is critical for companies dedicated to long-term sustainability. For example, Axiom's goal to plant 15 trees for each candidate placed demonstrates a concrete and meaningful commitment to environmental responsibility.

The solution to the problems described above is precisely talent marketplaces – both external and internal marketplaces. A talent marketplace powered by AI can bring together a deep awareness of the talent in the organization with the firm's demands in real time. It can handle the discovery, recruiting, onboarding, and transition of employees from one job to another. It offers an internal platform for career management, networking, and recruiting all in one location. The Talent Marketplace enables firms to prioritize individuals and their abilities, resulting in improved business outcomes, adherence to the ESG agenda, and the development of a solid CSR platform. According to a recent Deloitte research, 80% of corporate leaders believe that recruiting, salary, promotions, succession, and deployment choices should be based on people's talents rather than their employment history, tenure, or network (Beamery, 2022).

According to Deloitte experts (Gantcheva et al., 2020), the internal talent marketplace may provide a wide variety of benefits including talent acquisition, mobility, and management, as well as reshape the workforce and improve organizational agility. It can boost worker performance and productivity, allow for the formation of more Agile teams, and improve workforce skills. It may also empower employees by providing individualized learning and development opportunities, as well as promoting greater openness, diversity, equity, and inclusivity. A recent study discovered that respondents view the talent marketplace as delivering three top benefits among a range of other potential benefits: as a source of worker empowerment; as an enabler for internal talent mobility as business needs change, especially during uncertain times; and as a tool for cultural change, in particular for developing a greater entrepreneurial spirit (Bersin, 2019). The marketplace provides real-time insight into talent supply, including available talents, so managers don't have to worry about not being able to meet demands. In reality, they stand to profit since the marketplace allows them to possibly improve their employees' hard and soft skills, quickly form project teams to increase bandwidth, and have a bigger effect on strategic productivity. AI and ML here serve not as a 'thing in itself', but as tools in the overall talent recruitment and selection eco-system.

According to one poll (Li et al., 2023), more than half of employees would refuse to work for a firm that does not have robust policies addressing social or environmental sustainability. Furthermore, 74% of employees stated their jobs are more meaningful when they have the opportunity to positively affect social and environmental challenges, and 70% said they would be more committed to a firm that allows them to contribute to solutions. The ecosystem of integrated (external and internal) talent marketplace allows including of CSR and ESG in companies' recruitment strategy: highlight ESG initiatives in job descriptions, train recruiters and hiring managers on ESG initiatives, communicate updates on ESG initiatives on a regular basis, such as in team meetings or all-company updates, encourage leadership to display day-to-

day behaviors that align with goals, add ESG-related performance goals, recognize employees for ESG-related contributions, etc.

Researchers have recently seen an upsurge in numerous previously unnoticed protection mechanisms when speaking with firm founders, HR managers, and recruiters. Perfectionists who place a high value on ensuring that everything is done perfectly, right down to the last detail, frequently experience a sensation of shame, which is produced by powerlessness and a lack of control over the surrounding harsh reality (Yermachenko et al., 2023). Such people are frequently accompanied by excessive sensitivity, and as a result, they are unable to separate professional problems from their bad feelings, which frequently affect their job. People with poorer sensitivity, on the other hand, tend to show no empathy at all. For them, the protective technique is to entirely ignore emotions and focus solely on professional matters. “We are at work, there is no place for emotions here” (How the War in Ukraine Affects HR, 2023).

A lack of knowledge of these defense mechanisms, as well as awareness of their presence, frequently results in poor appraisals of the attitudes of colleagues or applicants. “We frequently make judgments based on whether others have taken the proper approach to conflict, presuming that ours is the best and only acceptable one. Employees frequently exert pressure on organizations to make certain decisions about recruiting and employment practices. During interviews with war-victim applicants, we frequently deny them of agency and decision-making, presuming that it is best not to recruit them now because it is likely a lot more difficult moment for them. In terms of recruiting, it is critical to understand what is happening on the labor market amid the continuing battle. This can assist you in determining the ideal technique to cope with this challenging situation at this particular time” (How the War in Ukraine Affects HR, 2023). Evidently, talent marketplaces are capable of resolving this significant issue, allowing taking into account all the elements of candidate’ profile for a moment – temporal decreased performance, need for special mechanisms of empowerment, emotional balancing.

It is worth understanding what jobseekers anticipate right now and creating more flexible contracts or conditions of work. Candidates who are unsure if they will be compelled to emigrate would undoubtedly enjoy that level of flexibility.

Another crucial consideration is the process's predictability and adherence to defined time periods. At the outset, it is important to outline the steps of the process, how long it will take, and when applicants may expect particular conclusions. Such a detailed specification of the recruiting framework is extremely valuable to applicants in these unpredictable times, making it simpler to make judgments regarding potential modifications and accepting an offer. The simple supply of feedback at each level is very significant and demonstrates a purposeful and serious attitude.

5. Conclusion

As the research shows, personnel selection in the conditions of the digital environment, war and sustainable development is carried out in BANI-environment and, accordingly, requires agility, systemic and interdisciplinary vision. One of the available vectors of sustainable personnel

recruitment and selection is talent marketplaces, which allow synergetic combination of the latest digital technologies such as AI and ML with the best human expertise in the field of HRM, psycho-sociological approach and proactive vision.

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