

KESHAVA- Holistic Employee Selection Framework in the VUCA World

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Abstract

Ability to attract and retain talented people is a key attribute for evaluating companies for determining industry ranking. World's most admired companies' survey uses nine attributes to evaluate the reputation of the companies. Ability to attract and retain talented people is the first among nine attributes. The current practice of evaluating only knowledge, skill, and attitude may be insufficient for selecting the right employees for organizations operating in the VUCA world. This paper proposes a new holistic KESHAVA framework for employee selection by organizations operating in the VUCA world. Employees with high KESHAVA score are better equipped to perform and excel in the VUCA world. The benefits of using a holistic framework and the managerial implications are also discussed.

Key Words : VUCA World, Employee selection, Character, Competency, KESHAVA framework, K-positive, K-negative



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The dynamic and fast-changing nature of our world today is best described by managerial acronym- VUCA, short for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. The mega trends driving the VUCA world are; digitization, the rise of emerging nations especially the BRICS, and sustainability. Business leaders who are values-led and purpose-driven have to redefine the role of business in society and shape them with the right values and culture to achieve service excellence (Manwani, 2013). Rational leadership capability alone is no longer adequate and needs to be complemented with a new set of competencies associated with developing 'wise' responsible leaders who can steer organizations to sustainability and responsible growth while putting purpose along with profits. Higher order thinking and decision-making skill aligned with values and vision, and incorporating the best possible outcome for all stakeholders, is expected from business leaders of VUCA world.

Ability to attract and retain talented people is a key attribute for evaluating companies for determining industry ranking (Haygroup, 2014). World's most admired companies' survey uses nine attributes to evaluate the reputation of the companies (see Appendix 1 for all nine attributes). Ability to attract and retain talented people is the first among nine attributes. This proves that the reputation of an organization is heavily dependent on the right talent selection. The public face of a service firm is its contact employees and they often perform a complex and difficult job (Bateson, 1995). From the customer's point of view, the employees are the service (Schneider and Bowen, 1995; Surprenant and Solomon, 1987; Tansik, 1990), and their attitudes and behavior have a significant impact (Hartline and Ferrel, 1996). The service economy (57% of Indian GDP 2013-14) mandates that marketing transforms its scholarship and practises to embrace what really matters; value co-creation and delivery, customer relationships, and customer equity often provided by employees, not generally thought of as marketing or salespeople. The recruitment, training, and motivation of employees, beyond the sales force, must become a priority because these associates are often the service providers delivering the value and building the relationships with customers (Brown and Bitner, 2006).

Human resource focus is one category among the seven categories in performance excellence measurement for Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (USA). The Human Resource Focus Category examines how the organization's work systems and employee learning and motivation enable employees to develop and utilize their full potential in alignment with the organization's overall objectives and action plans. Also examined are the organization's efforts to build and maintain a work environment and an employee support climate conducive to perform excellence and to personal and organizational growth (BNQP, 2010). The capacity for leading in VUCA world depends on a well-developed mindset for gauging (knowledge management & sense-making) the realities of the environment in which employees work.

This paper has three objectives namely; (1) Discuss the role of employees and employee selection in VUCA world; (2) Introduce the holistic KESHAVA framework; (3) Explain the benefits of using KESHAVA framework for employee selection in VUCA world.

Role of Employees in a High-Tech and High-Touch VUCA World

VUCA world with technological disruptions provide a unique opportunity to leverage individual talent and collective capability through tech advances. The fear that technology will reduce the role and relevance of values driven employees is unfounded. Great technologies always bring with them the power of great possibilities, and have proven their ability to amplify people and societies time and again. The world is poised at the cusp of incredible opportunity to leverage technology and augment individual talent and collective capability (Sikka, 2014). Though human perception and physical abilities may be finite and hence can be augmented and even replaced, but human imagination and creativity have no limits. That is why it must be our pursuits to become more humane and to have technology enable us to further enhance our humanity. Providing even high-tech services with high-touch is an imperative in the VUCA world. Ensuring high touch or an empathetic and exemplary service is impossible without the right employees (having good character and competence in equal measure) who are most suited for the VUCA world. This makes right selection of employees the most fundamental and critical task for any organization in the VUCA world.

Employee Selection in VUCA World

To perform a task well an individual needs the right Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA). Knowledge, Skills and Attitude is a list of special qualifications and personal attributes that one needs for a particular job. These are the requirements that the hiring organization wants to find in the person being considered to fill a particular job to verify the job-person fit. How well an applicant can show that he/she matches the position's defined KSAs determines whether he/she will be seriously considered for the job.

If an individual has qualifications and skills which will help him to remain in demand (job market), industry relevant (domain expertise), capable, adaptable, flexible with the right behavioural, communication, interpersonal skills required for factoring the challenges of the real practical world, that person is considered to possess employability skills (Wadadekar, 2015).

Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA)

Knowledge refers to an organized body of information, usually of a factual or procedural nature, which, if applied,

makes adequate performance on the job possible. Skill refers to the proficient manual, verbal, or mental manipulation of data or things. Skills can be readily measured by a performance test where quantity and quality of performance are tested, usually within an established time limit. It is also referred to as expertise when the skill is perfected through training or practice. Attitude refers to a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude can be formed from a person's past and present. Attitude is measurable, changeable, and influences the person's emotion and behavior. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action, and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards (Allport, 1935).

Nishkama-Karma Model and Employee Selection

Internal marketing, treating employees as customers, is well acknowledged as an essential part of services marketing. Kotler et al. (2007) defined internal marketing as the task of hiring, training and motivating able employees who want to serve customers well. The primary step for effective internal marketing is to select the right and best employee of the organization. Paninchukunnath and Jain (2010)

recommended a model (see Figure 1) based on Nishkama-Karma concept in Indian Philosophy. It is employees, who through their understanding of a company's ideology, truly build an image of the organization in the minds of customers and other stakeholders. Corporate culture shapes the internal environment of a service organization. It includes factors such as vision, mission, values, commitment to continuous improvement, customer orientation, ethical conduct etc. Thus to shape the employee behavior, Nishkama-Karma concept has to be made an integral part of service organization's culture. This will reinforce the efforts undertaken to shape the new employees in the initial days in the organization. Living the right values, right attitude and demonstrating the appropriate behaviours (as given in Figure 1) by all employees will spread a Nishkama-Karma culture across the organization and help the organization to sustain service excellence and achieve service leadership. The values in the model are based on AMA ethics code and the employee behaviours are based on the study done with 113 consumers who availed interpersonal services and experienced service satisfaction. The focus of employees with nishkama attitude will be to undertake selfless service and not on the personal gains.

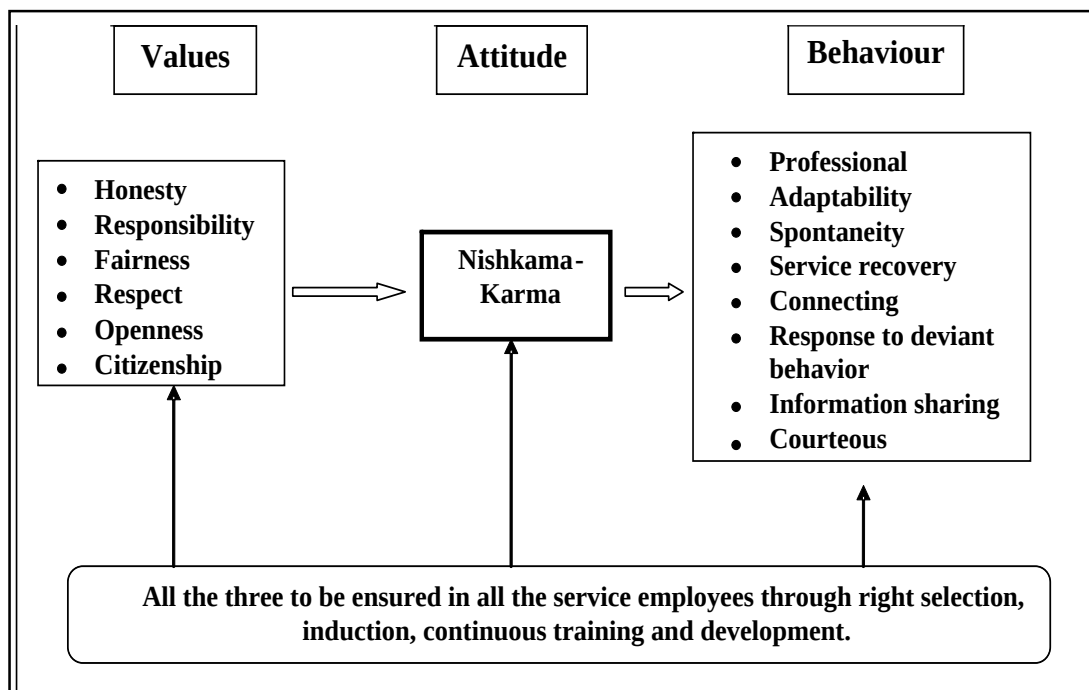


Figure 1. Nishkama-Karma Model for achieving service excellence in interpersonal services (Paninchukunnath and Jain, 2010)

Limitations of the Current Frameworks

The existing KSA framework (knowledge, skill and attitude) is an integral part of job analysis and especially job specification for most organizations today. In the VUCA world, KSA framework as a selection tool can fall short in assessing the right candidates who are having good character and competence. It does not capture the potential employee's values, emotional intelligence, hardworking orientation and the ambition to grow and self actualize. This makes KSA framework insufficient to check for the employee-job fit and especially employee-organization fit for any organization which wishes to compete, win and achieve excellence in VUCA world. Nishkama-Karma Model is useful in employee selection but it does not discuss the skill dimension and does not directly discuss hardworking orientation, ambition to self-actualize and emotional intelligence which are critical qualities needed in employees of an organization which wants to excel in VUCA world. Given the narrow approaches adopted by majority of the organizations, the need for a holistic framework is very high. In the next section, an attempt to propose a holistic framework is made.

The Holistic KESHAVA Framework

This paper is proposing a holistic framework for employee selection in the VUCA world- the KESHAVA framework (K-framework). The framework consists of seven key qualities needed in an employee to adapt and perform in a VUCA environment. The organizations need to explore all the seven components in an applicant to assess his/her fitness to face the organizational challenges in the VUCA world.

The components of the holistic KESHAVA framework are- Knowledge, Emotional Intelligence, Skill, Hardwork, Attitude, Values and Ambition. The importance and benefits of each component is delineated below.

1. Knowledge—It is the first component of K-framework. Knowledge is a familiarity, awareness or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills, which is acquired through experience or education by perceiving, discovering, or learning. Knowledge can refer to a theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. Today we are living in a knowledge era. There is a lot of truth in the idiom, 'Knowledge is power.' Knowledge truly empowers us.

Knowledge helps us make informed decisions. Education and training can provide knowledge, skills, imagination, creativity and entrepreneurial qualities to find and solve the challenges of VUCA world.

Knowledge is not necessarily gleaned from books in a classroom. It could come from experience or from just watching other people's lives. According to Peter Drucker, knowledge has to be improved, challenged, and increased constantly, or it vanishes. Knowledge workers are workers whose main capital is knowledge. 'Learnability' or our ability to learn has always been and will remain at the heart of our continued relevance and success. We must renew our existing skills, constantly improve, and improve our ability to improve. Learning and practising new things should be a part of daily life. In the VUCA world all employees have to be knowledge workers who are committed for lifelong learning. They should acquire right and relevant knowledge all the time. Alvin Toffler once wrote- "*The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.*" To succeed in VUCA world, an employee must be in a constant state of adaptation – continually unlearning old rules and relearning new ones. That requires continually questioning assumptions about how things work, challenging old paradigms, and relearning what is now relevant in one's job, industry, career and life. Employees have to re-engineer their jobs while doing them in the VUCA world which is possible only if they possess the relevant knowledge.

2. Emotional Intelligence (EI)—It is the second component of K-framework. The employees has to be emotionally intelligent to express and promote positive emotions like laughter, joy, happiness, wonder, interest and there by ensure positive service climate within the organization (Paninchukunnath, 2008). Emotional Intelligence, as a psychological theory, was developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer. EI is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

For decades, researchers have studied the reasons why a high IQ does not necessarily guarantee success in the classroom or the boardroom. By the 1980s, psychologists and biologists, among others, were focusing on the

important role of other skill sets — needed to process emotional information — played in promoting worldly success, leadership, personal fulfillment, and happy relationships. In 1990, psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey of Yale theorized that a unitary intelligence underlay those other skill sets. They coined the term ‘emotional intelligence’ which they broke down into four branches:

- Identifying emotions on a nonverbal level
- Using emotions to guide cognitive thinking
- Understanding the information emotions convey and the actions emotions generate
- Regulating one’s own emotions, for personal benefit and for the common good

Goleman(1995) argued that existing definitions of intelligence needed to be reworked. IQ alone was no guarantee of adeptness in identifying one’s own emotions or the emotional expressions of others. It took a special kind of intelligence to process emotional information and utilize it effectively — whether to facilitate good personal decisions, to resolve conflicts, or to motivate oneself and others. Goleman broadened Mayer’s and Salovey’s four-branch system to incorporate five essential elements of EI. They are:

- a. **Emotional self-awareness** - Knowing what one is feeling at any given time and understanding the impact those moods have on others. Hallmarks of self-awareness include self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, and a self-deprecating sense of humor.
- b. **Self-regulation** - Controlling or redirecting one’s emotions; anticipating consequences before acting on impulse; the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods. Hallmarks include trustworthiness and integrity; comfort with ambiguity; and openness to change.
- c. **Motivation** - Utilizing emotional factors to achieve goals, enjoy the learning process and persevere in the face of obstacles. Hallmarks include a strong drive to achieve, optimism even in the face of failure, and organizational commitment.
- d. **Empathy**- Sensing the emotions of others. Hallmarks include expertise in building and

retaining talent, cross-cultural sensitivity, and service to clients and customers.

- e. **Social skills** - Managing relationships, inspiring others and inducing desired responses from them, an ability to find common ground and build rapport. Hallmarks include effectiveness in leading change, persuasiveness, and expertise building and leading teams.

The above five elements are also considered as key soft skills needed in employees by many organizations though they may not use the term EI. Engaging employees is one of the top five most important challenges for management, according to a survey of 656 CEOs from countries around the world (Wah, 1999). Employee engagement is the degree to which individuals are personally committed to helping an organization by doing a better job than what is required to hold the job. Kahn (1990) defines employee engagement as - the harnessing of organization member’s selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. An emotionally intelligent employee will be better engaged and therefore perform better in the roles assigned from time to time. Emotionally intelligent employees express and promote positive emotions like laughter, joy, happiness, wonder, interest etc. and thereby create a very positive environment in the organization.

3. Skill—It is the third component in K-framework. It is the learned ability to carry out a task with pre-determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. In the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership, self-motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job. Skills like - higher order thinking skills (HOTS), whole brain thinking (WBT), design thinking (DT), continuous learning, self management, right decision making and leadership can be enhanced through management education (Paninchukunnath, 2013).

Competency is cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person to act effectively in a job or situation. Competence indicates sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. People need a broad range of relevant

skills in order to contribute in a VUCA world. It is the employee who has proactively worked to expand and diversify his/her skill sets who will be the most well placed to take higher responsibilities.

The following list provides a brief illustrative overview of the knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits commonly associated with 21st century skills (Source:Edglossary.org);

- Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information
- Research skills and practices, interrogative questioning
- Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression
- Perseverance, self-direction, planning, self-discipline, adaptability, initiative
- Oral and written communication, public speaking and presenting, listening
- Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, virtual workspaces
- Information and communication technology (ICT) literacy, media and internet literacy, visual interpretation, data interpretation and analysis, computer programming
- Civic, ethical, and social-justice literacy
- Economic and financial literacy, entrepreneurialism
- Global awareness, multicultural literacy, humanitarianism
- Scientific literacy and reasoning, the scientific method
- Environmental and conservation literacy, ecosystems understanding
- Health and wellness literacy, including nutrition, diet, exercise, and public health and safety

4. Hardwork—It is the fourth component in the K-framework. Right work ethics and the willingness to work hard is a critical quality needed to survive and win in VUCA world. Hardworking people habitually work diligently and for long hours. This does not mean that they are workaholics. They consider work as worship and derive pleasure out of their

work. Goal oriented and well planned hardwork can lead to smart work. Smart work demands that one should prioritize work, be creative and complete work in or before time with effectiveness and efficiency. Winning is often found in mastery of the details and excellence consists of examining and improving many small processes and routines (Kanter, 2012). Though assessing the hard and smart working nature of an individual, is difficult during the interview stage, the past achievements and work habits can be good indicators.

5. Attitude—It is the fifth component in K-framework. The Mahabharata (one of the two major Sanskrit epics of India) extensively explores dharma. Dharma is a complex word that encompasses virtue, duty and law. Above all dharma is chiefly concerned with doing the right thing. The epic believes that human flaws are ultimately responsible for all destruction and calamity and that exercise of dharma or righteousness is the only way to salvage this destruction. The dharma of an employee in a service firm is to serve the customer with nishkama attitude (Paninchukunnath, 2010).

The concept of Nishkama-Karma, described in (chapter 2, verse 47) Bhagavad Gita, is the best concept to motivate and guide the actions of service employees while interacting with customers. The concept as per Gita advocates—“*To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction*” (Prabhupada, 1989). There are three considerations here: prescribed duties, capricious work, and inaction. Prescribed duties are activities enjoined in terms of one’s acquired modes of material nature. Capricious work means actions without the sanction of authority, and inaction means not performing one’s prescribed duties. Lord Krishna advised that Arjuna not be inactive, but perform his prescribed duty without being attached to the result. One who is attached to the result of his work is also the cause of the action. Thus he is the enjoyer or sufferer of the result of such actions.

As far as prescribed duties are concerned, they can be fitted into three subdivisions, namely routine work, emergency work and desired activities. Routine work performed as an obligation in terms of the scriptural injunctions, without desire for results, is action in the mode of goodness. Working with expectation of specific desired results becomes the cause of bondage; therefore such work is not auspicious. Everyone has his proprietary right in regard to prescribed

duties, but should act without attachment to the result; such disinterested obligatory duties doubtlessly lead one to the path of liberation (self-actualization). Lord Krishna instructs that everyone has the right to perform actions in order to purify one's existence and advance in spiritual knowledge. But one's should not cultivate one's mind to think that by the right to perform actions, one receives rewards. This mentality is destructive to advancement because then one will get attachment to the actions and then subsequently to the rewards. According to Lord Krishna, one should neither be attached to results of action nor to inaction of not performing one's prescribed activities. We should not allow our egos to dictate to us that we should be inactive because then we incur the sin of non-committance in performing our natural duties every day.

Arjuna (service employee in this context) was therefore advised by the Lord to fight (serve customers) as a matter of duty without attachment to the result. His nonparticipation in the battle (deciding not to work/serve customers) is another side of attachment. Such attachment never leads one to the path of salvation (personal growth). Any attachment, positive or negative, is cause for bondage. Inaction is sinful. Therefore fighting (the enemies/serving customers) as a matter of duty was the only auspicious path of salvation for Arjuna (Prabhupada, 1989). The Nishkama-Karma attitude of service employees is beneficial for themselves, organization and customers as shown in the **Table 1** below;

Table 1- Comparison of Nishkama-karma (the right attitude) and Sakam-karma (self-interest driven).

<i>Nishkama-Karma</i> (selfless approach)	<i>Sakam-Karma</i> (self- interest driven)
⇒ Benefit for employees	
Psychological energy conservation	Burnout
Reactionless, steady action	Reactionful, erratic action
Perfection (as the aim)	Success
Inner autonomy	Dependence on praise etc.
Freedom	Bondage
Work-as-worship for excellence	Competitive rivalry
Mind-enrichment	Job-enrichment
Leads to yoga with the higher self	Alienation
Better concentration and focus	Distraction
⇒ Benefit for organization	
Socio-economically appropriate	Questionable
Work-commitment	Reward
Employee engagement	Detachment
⇒ Benefit for customers	
Satisfying service experience	Ordinary/poor service experience

Source-Adapted from 'Ethics in Management' by Prof. S. K. Chakraborty(2006)

The Gita defines karma yoga as acquiring expertise in one's activities and lays down four basic principles as; (1) Activities can be controlled; (2) The results of activities cannot be controlled; (3) An obsession with the results desired from activities must not be inculcated; (4) Discrimination between necessary and unnecessary activities; and a commitment to perform necessary activities. As per Adhia (2015), karma yoga has six tenets; (1) Whatever activity we do should not be against the normally accepted socio-ethical code of conduct of a society; (2) Whatever role we have chosen to play in life or which God has given to us should be performed most diligently, without any laxity and with utmost care; (3) Our focus should be mainly on the present activity at hand and not on the fruits which that action is likely to bring for us; (4) Acceptance of whatever results come as God's blessings; (5) Absence of sense of doer-ship or ego; (6) Share whatever fruits you have got in life with all others, whether it is money, knowledge or credit. All the six tenets in brief can be summarized as - any activity done without 'selfishness', 'carelessness' and without 'ego', can become a karma yoga (a state of blissful action). Such an attitude in everything we do is the karma yoga attitude to work and life.

Singh and Singh (2012) have proposed four dimensions of Karma orientation of salespersons: work as selfless action, work as duty towards others, detachment from work-related rewards, and equanimity under environmental influences. Along with '*Nishkama Attitude*,' when the employee is having positive attitude, the benefits to organization magnifies many fold. Positive attitude manifests in the employee in the form of positive, constructive and creative thinking; optimism, motivation, and energy to do things and accomplish goals, and a happy demeanor.

6. Values—It is the sixth component in K-framework. Rokeach (1973) defined values as enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. 'Enduring beliefs' means that; values are generally stable, although they can change as people continue to make decisions that involve putting one value ahead of another. According to American Marketing Association (AMA) values represent the collective conception of what people find desirable, important and morally proper. Values serve as the criteria for

evaluating the actions of others. Marketing practitioners must recognize that they not only serve their enterprises but also act as stewards of society in creating, facilitating and executing the efficient and effective transactions that are part of the greater economy. Marketers must embrace, communicate and practise the fundamental ethical values that will improve consumer confidence in the integrity of the marketing exchange system. Values for marketers which are intentionally aspirational include honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, transparency and citizenship (AMA, 2014).

- **Honesty**—to be truthful and forthright in our dealings with customers.
- **Responsibility**—to accept the consequences of our marketing decisions and strategies. Make strenuous efforts to serve the needs of customers.
- **Fairness**—to try to balance justly the needs of the buyer with the interests of the seller.
- **Respect**—to acknowledge the basic human dignity of all stakeholders. Value individual differences and avoid stereotyping customers. Listen to the needs of customers and make all reasonable efforts to monitor and improve their satisfaction on an ongoing basis.
- **Transparency** – to create a spirit of openness in marketing operations.
- **Citizenship**—to fulfill the economic, legal, philanthropic and societal responsibilities that serve stakeholders in a strategic manner.

As per Chakraborty and Chakraborty (2005), the foundation of ethics in practice lies in values within. Values are the cause and ethics is the effect. Behaviour is the purest form of the expression of one's values, intent, priorities and feelings. Good behavior of employees emanates from the good value system present in them and the values nurtured by the leaders of the organization.

Terminal Values (TVs) and Instrumental Values (IVs)

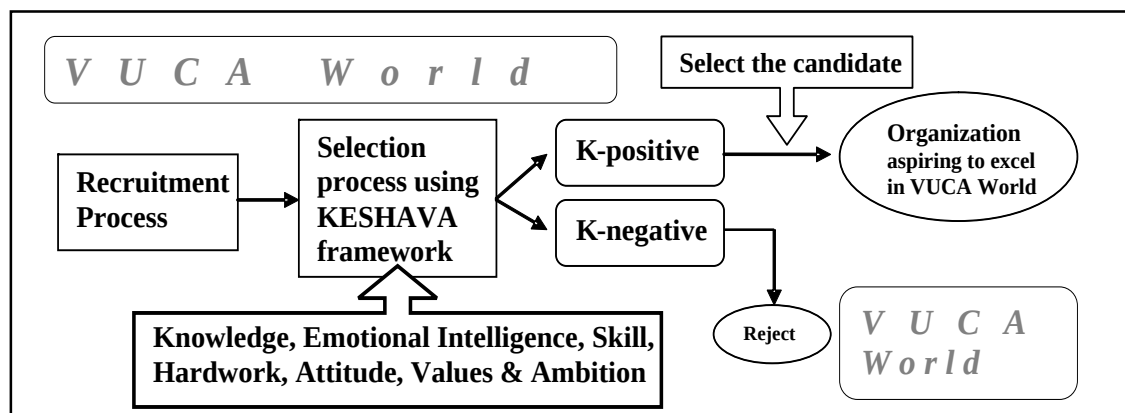
According to Rokeach (1973), there is a difference between values that are modes of conduct and values that are end-states of existence. Values that are modes of conduct are referred to as instrumental values. Values that are end-states of existence are terminal values. TVs are the goals that we

work towards and view as most desirable. These values are desirable states of existence. They are the goals that we would like to achieve during our lifetime.

Instrumental values are the preferred methods of behavior. They can be thought of as a means to an end. IVs consist primarily of personal characteristics and personality traits such as honest, polite, and ambitious. IVs are core values, permanent in nature, comprise personal characteristics and character traits. IVs include values like honesty, sincerity, ambition, independence, obedience, imaginativeness, courageousness, competitiveness, and also some negative traits.

7. Ambition—It is the seventh and final component in K-framework. An employee has to be ambitious to grow and take higher responsibilities. There should be an internal

motivation and a strong drive to achieve high professional standards and excellence. Employees should have passion to work for internal reasons that go beyond money and status (which are external rewards). A clear inner vision of what is important in life, the joy in doing something good for self and others, curiosity in learning, a flow that comes with being immersed in an activity which is useful for all. Lack of ambition to grow and achieve self actualization among employees can adversely affect the growth and expansion plans of any organization. Ambition can be assessed by checking his/her clarity about goals and the propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence. The willingness to attend training both in-house and external in different parts of the country; as well as the willingness to undertake challenging assignments or leadership roles whenever needed is also indicators of ambition.



Source: Developed by the author

Figure 2: KESHAVA framework and Employee Selection

Benefits of using KESHAVA Framework in VUCA World

It is important to raise the bar of performance expectations so that people stretch themselves for superior performance. To raise the bar, a pre-condition is motivated and engaged employee who is willing to learn from his and others mistakes. KESAVA framework will help organization select the candidates who are willing to work hard and learn continuously. To derive the full benefit, all the seven components of the K-framework need to be assessed (see Figure 2). All the seven components are essential in the employee to win in VUCA world. If the employees cannot win in VUCA world, the chance that organization can win is

remote. Based on the K-framework, the selection team can identify KESAVA Positive (K-positive) candidates. K-positive candidates are the ones who possess all qualities in sufficient amount as per the organization's requirements and standards for the specific job. KESAVA Negative (K-negative) are the candidates with one or more qualities missing as per the K-framework (see Appendix 2). K-positive candidates can be selected and oriented well to face the VUCA environment and adapt themselves fast. K-negative candidates should ideally be rejected as their ability to adapt to the VUCA environment will be low or may take very long time to adapt than K-positive candidates. When

organizations are looking for effective and efficient hiring practices which are more standardized across all branches and units of the organization, K-framework can be a facilitating tool which can be easily adopted by all organizations.

Providing exemplary service to customers is the primary goal of any organization, which cannot be achieved in the absence of K- positive employees. Over focus on job-person fit may be insufficient when every employee is expected to be fully engaged for customer oriented service delivery and market oriented business management. Company-person fit will be as critical as job-person fit in VUCA world. Holistic selection framework, like K-framework, will help in reducing avoidable attrition by ensuring better company-person fit in addition to job-person fit. K-positive employees who will be company fit and job fit will be the reliable and strong pillars for shaping a VUCA world ready organization. K-framework can also be used as a template to reinforce the qualities in the selected K-positive employees during induction and refresher training programs.

Managerial Implications

Organizations in VUCA world need to be agile and innovative, constantly redefining the way they do business in order to maximize stakeholder value and build a profitable and sustainable business model. Winning in VUCA world requires that organizations practise the following critical aspects and values - agility, foresight, consumer centricity, think globally and act locally; and 'attracting great talent' (Manwani, 2013). There is a link between enlightened corporate behavior and performance. The most sustainably successful businesses are also the most moral - not through formal programs like corporate social responsibility (CSR), but through "sustainable values" (as opposed to "situational values"). They had an orientation toward sustaining human relationships built into their day-to-day practices and behaviors by each of their employees' right from the CEO to entry level trainee employees. Customers will receive good service from employees if the employees are selected, treated and supported well at all times by the top level management. Employees who are in the interface between the company and the customers are in the value zone and each one of them is capable of creating more value or less value for customers. Under Employees First, Customers Second (EFCS) management approach, the whole

intent of 'Employees First' is to do everything top level management can to enable value zone employees to create the most possible value for customers and other stakeholders (Nayar, 2010).

Employees having good character and competence in equal measure are most suited for the VUCA world. Leaders of the firms in VUCA world should ensure that the employees go beyond merely serving customers to create unique, delightful, experiences; to honourably represent their company and nurture its brand, not only when they are on the job, but whenever they publicly express themselves in tweets, blog posts, emails, or any other interaction; and to be creative with fewer resources and resilient in the face of unimaginable uncertainty. These contributions will not come as the result of threats or even bonuses. Instead, leaders must inspire employees with a sense of deep purpose and shared values after selecting the right employees (K-positive) who can get sufficiently inspired to honourably represent their company and nurture its brand in every interaction with all stakeholders (Seidman, 2012). The service climate in an organization is a critical aspect to ensure internal and external customer satisfaction. Shaping a positive service climate is a joint responsibility of employers and employees. The relation between the service climate and customer loyalty seems to be reciprocal, since it is found that the greater is the service climate, the higher is the customer loyalty, (partially mediated by performance) and the higher is the customer loyalty, the greater is the service climate (Schneider et al., 1998).

Developing a team of K-positive employees and through that, a positive service climate, becomes the first task for business leaders in a VUCA world. A community of K-positive employees who innately understand the organization's purpose and will make practical and principled, self-directed decisions day-to-day that put the customer first. According to Sanjiv Mehta, MD of HUL, the pace of change in India is ferocious and disruptive. The employees have to anticipate and lead change to achieve the full potential which the company is capable of achieving (Mukherjee and Singh, 2014). Developing high performance culture in the organization to face VUCA world is difficult without K-positive employees. Delivering and sustaining service excellence can be essentially the key competitive advantage for many organizations (Albrecht and Zemke, 2001). A compelling issue confronting service organizations

is improving customer's service experiences by identifying and maintaining positive service climates (Schneider and Bowen, 2009). Organizations have to create and maintain a positive service climate so that employees deliver excellent service (Schneider, 1990; Schneider and Bowen, 1995). One of the most elusive challenges for leaders revolves around getting people to be enthused and energised on a continuous basis. Organizations have to focus on talent management and development of the leadership pipelines, building HR systems and processes that can enable the organization to respond with alacrity to the turbulent business environment and creating employee engagement systems that foster trust and collaboration. Careful selection of employees with the help of holistic framework can reduce errors in talent selection which can be very costly for any organization in VUCA world.

The critical aspect to be kept in mind by the selection team is that, wrong employees can demotivate others and they cannot be trained or training is not a solution for wrong selection at the first place. They can be a liability which cannot be managed or disowned easily. Wrong employees can create a negative service climate in the organization as they are already a misfit either to job or organization which is constantly learning to adapt to a VUCA world and excel in service delivery. Using holistic frameworks like K-framework can help in eliminating or minimizing wrong selection by the selection team.

The main advantage of K-framework is its simplicity. It is a simple framework which can be easily adopted by all organizations whether big or small. The simplicity will ensure its fast adoption by all members in the selection team irrespective of their domain expertise (especially when non-HR members are in the selection team). K-framework will help select the right people who are good at adapting to any environment. Adapting in a VUCA world is impossible without unlearning and relearning on an ongoing basis. Adopting a holistic framework, like the K-framework, for employee selection will ensure the competitive strength needed by the organization. K-framework will help organizations to select the right talent which is the first step to develop and manage talent for adapting and excelling in the VUCA world.

Future Direction

Though K-framework is a holistic framework which can be easily adopted by practitioners in all organizations, there is

a need to check its usefulness in meeting all the challenges of VUCA world. Future research can explore the importance of each element in the framework and prioritize them. The identification of any major element not incorporated in the KESHAVA framework is an important area of future research. The right values to be inculcated in service employees can be investigated empirically by conducting a study among service managers and academicians from India.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The attributes of reputation on which companies are evaluated in determining the industry rankings (Haygroup, 2014).

1. Ability to attract and retain talented people
2. Quality of management
3. Social responsibility to the community and the environment
4. Innovativeness
5. Quality of products or services
6. Wise use of corporate assets
7. Financial soundness
8. Long-term investment value
9. Effectiveness in doing business globally

Raters are asked to evaluate each eligible company on each attribute by assigning a score from zero ('Poor') to ten ('Excellent'). For the purposes of the industry rankings, a company's overall score is determined through a simple average of the individual attribute scores. Companies who rank in the top half of their industry are defined as **"most admired"** within their industry. The attributes were developed prior to the inception of the Most Admired Companies rankings in the mid-1980s through a series of interviews with executives and industry analysts to determine the **qualities** that make a company **worthy of admiration**.

Appendix 2: Candidate Evaluation Sheet for Employee Selection (based on KESHAVA Framework)

Candidate Evaluation Sheet for VUCA Fit Employee

The total score of a candidate (KESHAVA Score) should not exceed 70 as each parameter is evaluated out of a maximum score of 10.

Parameter S No.	K Knowledge (Max. 10)	E EI (Max. 10)	S Skill (Max. 10)	H Hardworking (Max. 10)	A Attitude (Max. 10)	V Values (Max. 10)	A Ambition (Max. 10)	K- +ve (Y/N)	Total Score (Max. 70)
Candidate 1									
Candidate 2									
Candidate 3									
-									
-									
-									

- The candidate is K-positive if all seven aspects are present (any score between 1 to 10) in him/her.
- The candidate is K-negative if one or more of the seven aspects are absent (0 score) in him/her.

The exact questions/statements can be decided by the respective HR team conducting the selection process. The cutoff score can also be decided by the HR team. In general, all seven parameters **individually** need to be above zero.

Qualifiers like: 0-10(Poor); 11-25(Average); 26-45(Good); 46-55(Excellent); Above 55(Outstanding) can also be used for the total score achieved by the candidate out of 70 marks.
