

# NURTURING AND MANAGING TALENT-PRIORITIES OF THE MODERN ORGANIZATION

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***Abstract:** Talent management has been a subject much discussed in the literature on organizational behaviour in recent years. However, the concepts of skill and talent management requires the conceptual clarification and new directions of approach in the organizational environment.*

***Keywords:** talent, management, human resources*

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## 1. Defining the concept of talent

Although in recent years, organizations are becoming increasingly convinced of the importance of the identification and cultivation of talents to maximize performance, practitioners of human resources management still difficulties of definition and operationalization of talent (Nijs-Gallardo, Gallardo, Dries and Sels, 2014, p.180). Since 1998, when a group of consultants from Mc Kinsey suggested the phrase "war for talent", to put greater emphasis on talent management and its implications on the performance of the Organization (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013, p. 290).

The origins of the term "talent" can be found in the ancient world (Greek- talanton, Latin- talenta) being used to denote a unit of weight or money. Subsequently, the significance of the talent has changed, being praised as an inclination, disposition, will or desire (in-valuable talent is something that should not be wasted (Meyers, M.C., Van Woerkom, M., Dries, N., 2013, p. 306), in the 14th century being perceived as a special natural ability or skill, perhaps based on the figurative interpretation of the parable of the talents likens. In the 19th century, according to Tansley (2011, p. 267), talent "was viewed as embodied in the talented-hence, the person of talent and ability". It is the first time we are given a topic-oriented perspective, as opposed to previous approaches centered on the characteristics of individuals.

Current dictionary definitions approach talent as a "skill, inclination, innate in a particular area" (DEX, p. 1067), emphasizing thus the idea of natural ability in being good at something. The specialized literature signifies the confusion that persists today in terms of talent meaning in various contexts that are analyzed.

**Table 1.** Summary of relevant talent prospects

Literature stream	Operationalization of talent	Main Criterion	Main contribution	Main gap
HRM	Talent as capital	Contribution to organization	Links individual talent to organizational context	Lack of theory and empirical evidence
I/O Psychology	Talent as individual	Predictive validity	Long research tradition in	Criterion problem-talent

	difference		personnel selection, promotion systems and performance appraisal	for what?
Educational psychology	Talent as giftedness	Domain-specific excellence	Strong (causal) theoretical frameworks	Mostly conceptual work; no research in adult population
Vocational psychology	Talent as identity	Self-concept crystallization	Recognition of the dynamic nature of talent, as a construct over the course of a person's life	Mostly narrative research; difficult to reconcile with more positivistic approaches
Positive psychology	Talent as strength	Self-actualization	Treat positive outliers as research subjects of choice rather than measurement error	Assumption of strength-based approach as „win-win” for individuals and organizations
Social psychology	Talent as the perception of talent	Rater accuracy	Brings in element of social perception-talent that is not acknowledged does not exist	Generalization of experimental findings to real-life settings?

**Source: Dries, N. (2013)-** *The psychology of talent management: A review and research agenda*, Human Resource Management Review, 23, p.275

If we refer to the field of business organizations, we note that the talent is conceptualized in two broad ways (talent as object vs talent as the subject). The different perspectives of the approach object-talent (talent as natural ability, talent as craftsmanship, talent as match, talent as commitment) are complementary rather than supplementary. Addressing the talent (talent as people) seems to be more common in organizational practice (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013, p. 297).

## 2. Virtues of talent management

Talent management is a relatively recent term proposed by practitioners, as a set of practices that aim to bring the right person for a position at the right time. It became the dominant topic regarding human capital at the beginning of the 21st century. Recent reviews of the specialized literature dedicated to the subject have concluded that academic talent management is characterized by the lack of definitions and theoretical classification (Ariss, A.A., Cascio, Paauwe, W.F., J., 1986, p. 173). This inconsistency in definition can be determined due to the fact that there are at least three different ways of interpretation of talent management:

(1) the talent management is used simply as a new term for human resource practices;

(2) may refer to the practice of planning in the series;

(3) may refer in a more comprehensive approach to management of talented employees.

Therefore, an understanding of the concept of uneven talent management in terms of its goals (for example, it is unclear whether talent management refers to the talent of all employees or only to that of employees with high performance). There is also a reduced guidance on how this concept should evolve in the future.

**Table 2.** Some definitions of talent management selected from the literature in human resources management

Reference	Definition of talent management
Sloan, Hazucha and Van Katwyk (2003)	„Managing leadership talent strategically, to put the right person in the right place at the right time”(p.236)
Pascal(2004)	„Talent Management encompasses managing the supply, demand and flow of talent through the human capital engine”(p.9)
Duttagupta(2005)	„In the broadest possible terms, TM is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization. Its purpose is to assure that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right job at the time base don strategic business objectives”(p.2)
Jerusalim and Hausdorf (2007)	„High potential identification and development (also known as talent management) refers to the process by which an organization identifies and develop employees who are potentially able to move into leadership roles sometimes in the future (p.934)
Capelli(2008)	„At its heart, talent management is simply a matter of anticipating the need for human capital and setting out a plan to meet it”(p.1)
Silzer and Dowell (2010)	„Talent management is an integrated set of processes, programs and cultural norms in an organization designed and implemented to attract, develop, display and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs”(p.18)

**Source:** selection realised from Dries (2013, p.274)

Collins and Melahi (2008), quoted in Sparrow and Makram (2015), propose four generic talent management philosophies, such as:

-people approach: talent management as a categorization of people;

-approach based on talent management practices through the presence of key practices of human resources management;

-approach based on management positions as talent identification of pivotal positions;

-approach "strategically pools": talent management as internal talent pools and succession planning.

Analyzing various sensitive points reported in the literature, Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014, p.194) have proposed four distinct philosophies related to talent management, on the basis of two dimensions (including exclusive and stable-buildable):

- "the war for talent: identifying, attracting and retaining talented individuals;
- nature-nurture interactions: development of individuals with potential;
- everyone has a particular talent: identifying and using it;
- everyone can become a talent through training: providing development opportunities for anyone.

The authors specify that the approaches of talent management based on exclusivity will be facing two challenges difficult to overcome in the future: global talent shortages and dynamic environment in which organizations operate.

The use of a more comprehensive philosophy can determine an overcome of these obstacles by investing in different types of talent. The results of the management of talents depend not only on the general philosophy of the organization, but also on individual approaches of those responsible for implementing human resources practices related to talent, especially the line managers.

Studies conducted in various countries reveal aspects related to the management and differentiated development of talents. Thus, in France, 60% of the businesses investigated had a talent-management policy, and the 57.0% had implemented this policy for more than three years, but only 40.5% of them applied it to all categories of staff. 69% of the respondents understood through talent an ability to exert the highest responsibilities. In Germany, 54% of small and medium enterprises investigated guided their activities of talent management towards all their employees, while 29% considered technical experts as the most important target group, and 10% focused their efforts on management activities (Festing, Schafer and Scullion, 2013, p., 1878). In a study conducted in India and China, only 5% of respondents defined talent as whole people in the organization, approximately 10% believed that talent is given by candidates on posts and well educated employees, and 45% felt that consisted of the most performing employees (Cooke, F.L., Saini, D.S., Wang, J., 1986, p. 228).

## **2. Conclusions and future research directions**

In time, talent management has been criticized for a lack of focus and for being just another approach that does not add much value to a well coagulated literature such as the human resources management literature. It was also questioned if the talent management represents a distinct research field or you can obtain sufficient knowledge by investigating the literature dedicated to human resources management (Meyers et al., 2013, p. 318).

Al Ariss et.al. (2014, p.176-177) gives us some suggestions for future research in this field. Firstly, it is proposed as a talent management understanding the construct relationship by considering the links to individual, organizational, institutional and national/international level.

**Table 3** Key levels that define the talent management research

Key levels	Specific themes
Individual level	Individual or personal agency, strategy and experience such as work-life, impacting upon talent development
Organizational level	Firm-wide policies and practices-both conscious and non-conscious-and HRM strategies that shape TM
Institutional context	Legislative, political and legal frameworks art regional, national and international levels that institutionalize TM in employment, education, and other fields both formally and informally
National/international/sectoral context	TM analyzed with respect to its context, recognition of how TM practices can transcend (or not) national borders among different industries, networks, and organizations

**Source: Ariss, A.A., Cascio, W.F., Paauwe,J.(2014)-Talent Management: Current theories and future research directions, Journal of World Business, 49, p.177**

Following a bibliometric research and a content analysis Gallardo, Gallardo et al. (2015, p. 275-277) presents the following recommendations for future research:

- the deliberate choice of the theoretical framework and its implementation in accordance with the requirements of the research project;
- -sustained efforts to develop rigorous research methodology, the potential use of longitudinal studies, given the intervention in the real life of the organizations and multilevel studies;
- contextualized approach to talent management, in particular in the case of multinational companies operating in a multicultural context;
- taking into account the dynamics of teams in talent management;
- the role of ethical considerations in talent management: talent development-related decisions are influenced by the errors of those who adopt decisions, but also the accuracy of specific instruments involved in this process.

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