

A New Perspective to Talent Management in Romanian Public Institutions

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Abstract

Talent management has developed as a field of research especially in recent years to meet the challenges of the labor market, caused by global economic crises, the lack of qualified personnel in many fields of activity, as well as excessive migration to better-paid jobs.

Initially, talent management was geared towards large organizations in the private sector, but in recent years research has also spread to the public environment.

At this moment in Romania, the field is in the early stage of development, empirical research is reduced in number and there is no real concern for identifying, developing and motivating staff with special skills within public institutions.

This paper contributes to the development of scientific literature in Romania by clarifying the concept of Talent Management and how it is implemented in Romanian public institutions, based on the analysis of specialized literature and qualitative analysis based on the Interview Guide applied in sixteen public institutions.

Key words: human resources management, talent management, public institutions

J.E.L. classification: O15, M12

1. Introduction

Talent management has developed as a field of research at a time when human resource management has no longer met the challenges of global labor market. The difficulties faced by organizations in identifying values that contribute to future success and performance have led to the need to develop new methods of attracting, recruiting, selecting and developing high-potential staff.

Initially viewed as a fad (Claus, 2019) or trendy concept, then a branch of human resource management, talent management (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) became an increasingly discussed and disputed topic in the academic world with the publication of “The War for Talent” by McKinsey consulting company in 1997. Silzer and Dowell (2010) consider the field of talent management to be the greatest challenge faced by 21st century managers.

The research field of talent management has developed especially in the last ten years, with an increase in the number of publications including this topic after 2010, which demonstrates that the field is not worthless (Sparrow, 2019). Even so, the concept of talent management is not clearly defined and evolves according to the needs of each organization.

The fact that more than a quarter of a century after the development of the concept there is no consensus between the academic world and practitioners indicates that the field of talent management is in the phase of growth and development.

Current approaches emphasize conceptual confusions in defining talent management, and demographic changes, globalization, economic crises, and increased technological development have led to the need to redefine current talent concepts, talent management, and to develop new application manuals (Liu, 2019).

2. Literature review

In order to clarify the concept of talent management and how it is perceived by managers and employees of organizations in the private sector and in public institutions, we analyzed a number of 36 scientific papers published in the period between 2016 and 2022 published in international databases.

According to Cappelli (2014) and Ansar and Baloch (2018) the term of talent management was first used by the American Management Association in 1957 in the book "Selection of management personnel" by authors Dooher and Marting. Starting from the premise that people cannot be considered just human capital or company assets, Casse (1994) states that talent management gives a competitive advantage to organizations that know how to recognize and appreciate the surplus value brought by their most valuable asset, human resources. The term was coined by McKinsey consultants who developed it in *The War for Talent* (1998), paving the way for a new field of research.

The beginnings of the field of talent management attest that it was considered a component part of human resource management. The current challenges regarding the management of human resources have attracted the development of the field and thus 4 currents of opinion have been profiled (Krishnan and Scullion, 2016; Baglieri, et al., 2019; Mousa and Ayoubi, 2019; Kwon and Jang, 2021; Tlaiss, 2020) that analyze the management of talents from the perspective of four models: entrepreneurial, humanist, elitist and competitive (Pagano-Castano et al., 2021, Meyers et al., 2019, McDonnell, et al., 2017) and four philosophies: inclusive/stable, inclusive/developable, exclusively stable/exclusive or developable (Lawless, et al., 2019, Meyers, et M. al., 2019; Das Mohapatra et al., 2020)

According to the analysis of the specialized literature, there is no unanimously accepted definition for the concept of talent management. Although we have identified a multitude of approaches to the concept, which refer to identifying, attracting, developing, retaining and promoting staff with outstanding skills and abilities, the vast majority of the works focus on the definition of the concept of talent management proposed by Collings and Mellahi, (2009): "Talent management is those activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions, which differentially contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage of the organization, the development of a pool of high-potential and high-performing employees to fill these roles and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate the occupation of these positions with competent holders and to ensure their continuous commitment to the organization".

Definitions that are mostly used in the analyzed works are taken from the literature or offered by the study participants (Faiyyaz et al., 2016; Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen 2016; Thunnissen, Buttiens, 2017, Tafti et al. 2017; Makram et. al, 2017; Irtaimeh, 2017; De Boeck et al., 2017, Savanevičienė A., et al. 2017; Saha et. al, 2017; Crowley-Henry et al., 2018; Dahshan, M., et al. 2018; Jayaraman et al., 2018; Mahjoub et al., 2018; Masri et al., 2019; Filippus, et al., 2019; Musakuro et al., 2021 ; Tyskbo, 2021; Bartrop-Sackey, et al., 2022)) and other authors propose own definitions containing both objective and subjective approaches (Mahfoozi et al., 2018, Ruchira, et al., 2020).

Although globally published studies have grown in recent years, no remarkable progress has been made in clarifying the concept of talent management due to the fact that current research has not taken into account the ethical dimension of the phenomenon, there are no comparative studies at the level of organizations in the same field of activity located in different countries (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013), more empirical research is needed in small, medium-sized organizations and public institutions (Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen, 2016; Kwon and Jang, 2021, McDonnell et al., 2017) and the effects on employees and organizations have not been sufficiently studied (Kwon and Jang, 2021). The dominant research population was represented by managers from large organizations, especially from the United States, and the research questions and the purpose of the articles based on empirical research are related to the issues encountered and the culture of each country, therefore the results of the studies cannot be generalized in order to establish theoretical benchmarks (Pagheh, 2019; Faiyyaz, 2016).

Despite these limitations, the studies and analyses undertaken to date support the fact that talent management plays a significant role in improving organizational performance.

3. Research methodology

From a literature perspective, talent management can be characterized as a continuous process of attracting, evaluating, developing and retaining talented employees within the organization (Collings and Mellahi, 2009).

In order to identify the stage of talent management in Romanian public institutions, we applied an Interview Guide in three counties of Romania: Bacau, Iasi and Suceava. The interview guide included 24 questions, of which 18 were open-ended and 6 were closed-ended (socio-demographic characteristics). Out of the total respondents, seven people hold management positions, two people are specialists in human resources, and seven people are specialists in various fields of activity in the public sector. The collected data was analyzed and processed with the help of the Nvivo qualitative analysis program and Microsoft Excel computer files.

Participants in the study were asked to provide a definition of talent management and how it is implemented in the institution where they operate.

Although the concept of talent management is relatively new and in Romania there are few specialized papers published in the field, the study participants provided definitions of the concept according to those used globally, which shows an increased interest in the new field of research.

Most respondents say that the talent management process is primarily about identifying talents and then developing, motivating and keeping them in line with the needs of the organization.

We summarize the definitions of the talent management concept offered by the study participants:

Table no. 1 The concept of talent management from the perspective of respondents

Respondent's Field of Activity	Talent Management Concept
Public administration	<i>“Management is leadership. Therefore, TM is the ability of the hierarchically superior boss to identify the abilities of the subordinates in order to establish the tasks so that his activity is carried out with maximum efficiency. At the same time, it is worth mentioning the boss' ability to communicate clearly and comprehensibly with all the employees he manages”</i>
Public administration	<i>“Talent management at the level of the organization in which I work is not promoted but can only be selected to be part of a close management team, identified at the organizational management level and will be exploited and used to the maximum without periodic recognition as personal motivation of the respective employee for the activities they perform daily”</i>
Public administration	<i>“It is about identifying and selecting employees, except for developing and maintaining them”</i>
Respondent's Field of Activity	Talent Management Concept
Culture	<i>“Talent management is first and foremost about discovering talent. In the artistic field, the evaluation of the potential is procedural, the graduation of the profile faculty representing only one stage. Other conditionalities are the imagination of challenging projects that stimulate creation and artists; collaboration with diverse directors, varied working methods and original stage stylists, putting actors in creative stimulating situations from the point of view of creativity”</i>
Health field	<i>“Retaining people with key actions in the company”</i>
Post secondary education	<i>“Talent management is a process of selecting future employees with different skills, suitable and necessary for the field of activity, skills that can lead to the successful achievement of the objectives and purpose of the organization, in an ever-changing environment”</i>
Post secondary education	<i>“Talent management is a process of identifying the performance of individuals in a particular field of activity”</i>
Pre-university education	<i>“Talent management is defined and gains value over time, being in a permanent adaptation”</i>

Pre-university education	<i>"Discovering and using the talents of the employees in order to develop or successfully crown the company's/institution's approaches"</i>
Pre-university education	<i>"Talent management involves all managerial actions to develop, motivate and retain high-performing teachers."</i>
Pre-university education	<i>"Talent management is a tool for organizational development, which is based on the individual development of employees and their loyalty to the values of the organization."</i>
Higher education	<i>"Engaging people with the right skills and competencies and integrating their professional goals into the organization's development strategy"</i>
Higher education	<i>"Acquisition/ development/ training (motivation)/ maintenance of the human resource that has high competencies in a specific field of activity and interest for the organization - in order to achieve the planned objectives (organizational)"</i>
Higher education	<i>"Ability to identify these talents"</i>
Higher education	<i>"Attracting valuable employees who have valuable results in the professional path, creating the right conditions in the organizational environment to make performance on the targeted job. Our institution implements such practices and implements various tools, from recruitment to rewarding performance"</i>
Mass-Media	<i>"Talent management is initiated by building teams that recognize, nurture, and encourage employee talent or skills"</i>

Source: Responses of survey participants after structured interviews

4. Findings

Based on the answers obtained, we note that talent management is implemented at the level of organizations in public institutions, even if it is often equated with human resource management.

The process is all about identifying and attracting people with special skills that fit the needs of the organization. In areas such as culture and the media, talent is a sine-qua-non condition of occupying a position within the organization, and talent management focuses on identifying, recruiting, developing and retaining competent employees who are committed and want to develop professionally. The implementation of talent management in public institutions will increase staff efficiency by improving education and training programs, by developing new practices for identification, attraction, development and promotion, as well as increasing organizational performance.

Similar to the concept of *Talent*, the works that address the concept of *Talent Management* relate to the needs of the organization and less to the needs of employees, but we conclude that:

Talent management is not only the process of identifying, attracting, selecting and developing people with high potential, but also the process of forecasting through which organizations develop a pool of talent to ensure the flow of personnel and its positioning in the right place according to their skills and competences.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The objectives of public sector organizations are less tangible and harder to measure compared to private sector objectives where they are clear and well-defined, and therefore talent management in public institutions is a huge challenge for managers and Human Resources Departments (Collings et al., 2017).

The analysis carried out in the Romanian public institutions and the review of the specialized literature have demonstrated that the efficient management of talents will lead to increased organizational performance, regardless of the geographical region, culture or field of activity.

The current limitations in implementing talent management in public institutions derive from the fact that at this time there are no clear methods and tools for measuring talent that allow the identification of people with skills and competences suitable for key positions, rigid and impermissible legislation, limited resources and lack of interest of managers in attracting, developing and promoting talent.

Expanding empirical research globally will allow the development of new theoretical and practical benchmarks with which we will be able to demonstrate the usefulness and necessity of implementing talent management in public institutions.

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