Talent Management Practices in the South African Public Service

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Abstract

Talent management refers to the attraction, selection, and retention of employees, which involves a combination of HR processes across the employee life cycle. This study explored the best practice in talent management to ensure high potential talents are employed and retained due to the rising rate of employee turnover in the South African public service. A literature review and meta-analysis were conducted to explore different authors' views on the three main objectives of the study, which are to know the competencies of talent managers in developing high potential employees; explore the mechanisms talent managers can adopt in keeping high potential employees and to reveal the best practices in talent management. Findings from the study revealed that talent management is essential in assisting the employees in advancing their skills, improving their performance, and feeling engaged and motivated, thus allowing them to achieve desired goals. The ability to facilitate good planning, decision-making, change management, interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, programme implementation, and learning opportunities are the competencies required of talent managers to develop potential talents. Effective communication and feedback, promotion and advancement, efficient leadership, work-life balance, good organisational culture, development and training, and organisational commitment are the competencies required of talent managers to retain talents in the organisation. Regarding the best talent management practice, the study recommended that talent managers should specify the skills they need and select from a diverse pool of candidates. Other factors include onboarding practices, learning and development, performance management, an effective reward system, and a succession plan.

Keyword**s**: Human Resource Management; Talent management, Talent development competencies, Talent retention competencies, Talent management best practices South Africa.

Abstrak

Manajemen bakat mengacu pada daya tarik, seleksi, dan retensi karyawan, yang melibatkan kombinasi proses SDM di seluruh siklus hidup karyawan. Studi ini mengeksplorasi praktik terbaik dalam manajemen talenta untuk memastikan talenta berpotensi tinggi dipekerjakan dan dipertahankan Karena meningkatnya tingkat pergantian karyawan di layanan publik Afrika Selatan, studi tersebut. Tinjauan literatur dan meta-analisis dilakukan untuk mengeksplorasi pandangan penulis yang berbeda tentang tiga tujuan utama penelitian, yaitu untuk mengetahui kompetensi manajer bakat dalam mengembangkan karyawan berpotensi tinggi; mengeksplorasi mekanisme yang dapat diadopsi oleh manajer berbakat dalam mempertahankan karyawan berpotensi besar; dan untuk mengungkapkan praktik terbaik dalam manajemen bakat. Temuan dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa manajemen bakat sangat penting dalam membantu karyawan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan mereka, meningkatkan kinerja mereka, merasa terlibat, dan termotivasi, sehingga memungkinkan mereka untuk mencapai tujuan yang diinginkan. Kemampuan memfasilitasi perencanaan yang baik, pengambilan keputusan, manajemen perubahan, hubungan interpersonal, kecerdasan emosional, implementasi program, dan kesempatan belajar adalah kompetensi yang dibutuhkan manajer talenta untuk mengembangkan talenta potensial. Komunikasi dan umpan balik yang efektif, promosi dan kemajuan, kepemimpinan yang efisien, keseimbangan kehidupan kerja, budaya organisasi yang baik, pengembangan dan pelatihan, dan komitmen organisasi adalah kompetensi yang dibutuhkan manajer bakat untuk mempertahankan bakat dalam organisasi. Mengenai praktik manajemen talenta terbaik, studi tersebut merekomendasikan, di atas segalanya, bahwa manajer talenta harus menentukan keterampilan yang mereka butuhkan dan membuat

seleksi dari kumpulan kandidat yang beragam. Faktor lain termasuk praktik orientasi, pembelajaran dan pengembangan, manajemen kinerja, sistem penghargaan yang efektif, dan rencana suksesi.

Kata kunci: Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia, Menejemen kemampuan; kompetensi pengembangan bakat, kompetensi retensi bakat, Praktik terbaik manajemen bakat Afrika Selatan.

INTRODUCTION

The ability of the human resource department to recognise high-potential employees in an organisation is critical for achieving success (Festing & Shafer, 2014:263). Collings (2014:302) defines talent management as the systematic identification, development, retention, and deployment of high-potential employees who may considerably increase an organisation's value. For organisations to remain competitive, high-potential talent must be groomed and retained, which requires personal and organisational development considering the rate of dynamism in the business environment. Due to changes in technology, innovations, and the economic/business climate, human resource practices among organisations have changed significantly in recent decades (Van Zyl *et al.,* 2017:2). A need exists for talent managers to build or sustain positive and people-oriented employees to achieve the goals of the organisation.

According to Odierno (2015:10), employee recruitment alone is insufficient to assure organisational goal achievement; personnel must also be appropriately engaged, trained, and rewarded, which is the responsibility of talent managers. A mobile workforce that can transform an organisation through its personnel is described as talent management (Church *et al.,* 2015:17). Talent management is responsible for attracting, developing, managing, and retaining talent. All of these are essential success elements. Mkhonza and Letsoalo (2017:1) opine that some South African public service talent managers lack the skills to effectively perform their duties, a major constraint restraining success rates. Bika (2020:1) affirms that there is a need for the public sector to recruit and put the right people in the right jobs as it is crucial to actualising the stated objectives. As a result, recruiting and putting the right employees in the right positions is not enough to maintain these workers.

Attracting and maintaining a skilled pool of workers has been a problem in the South African public service, making it difficult for employees to stay with specific organisations for longer. As a result, public talent managers should address the issue of the high employee turnover rate ravaging the public sector. Talent managers must hire, train, and retain skilled personnel to create a professional workforce that will improve the overall service quality. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020) states that government agencies will continue to lose key staff to the private sector, leaving these institutions with high replacement costs if talents are not well-managed. As a result, the study seeks to outline measures deemed relevant for South African public organisations to identify and retain high-potential workplace talent.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study explored the best talent management practices that public sectors could adopt in South Africa to ensure equitable retention of talents in the workplace. This study adopted a qualitative study. Lapan (2012) emphasises that qualitative researchers immerse themselves completely in the study. Qualitative research comprehends an issue by induction, emphasising the process, values, context, and interpretation in contextualising ideas and concepts and reporting these in a narrative format (Trainor & Graue, 2013; Creswell, 2014). A qualitative method, according to Bryman and Bell (2015), and Saldana

(2016), includes collecting non-numerical data and interpreting the findings in a narrative account. In this regard, a thorough search was made in various databases to gather articles based on talent management practices in the quest to find solutions to the problem under investigation. This study was anchored on the following research questions:

1. What is the meaning of talent and talent management?
2. What are the competencies of talent managers in developing high-potential employees?
3. What mechanisms can talent managers adopt to retain high-potential employees?
4. What are the best practices for talent management?

Having adopted qualitative principles, the study started by expounding upon the meaning of talent and talent management and other themes obtained in the study's research questions. A meta-analysis was established based on the research themes stated above. The best practices in talent management were established based on the authors' views from the meta-analysis, which served as the study's recommendations. This is in an endeavour to improve talent management practices in the public service sectors in South Africa.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The meaning of talent and talent management

The study of Tansley (2013:339) affirms that talent refers to individuals identified as possessing a high level of prospect who can attain greater achievements. Tansley (2013:339) further sees talent as "consisting of those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential." In the view of Tyagi *et al.* (2017:46), talent is defined as "people who can develop differences in the organisational performance either by their instant contribution or by demonstrating the best stage of capability." These definitions define talent as people who contribute more in different contexts through their competence, knowledge, and ability. In the view of Khan *et al.* (2013:30), talent is the aggregate of individual abilities, intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character, and drive, and also the ability to learn and grow. Richard *et al.* (2011:6) further posit talent as a term used to describe operationally responsive, technically sound, and intelligent employees. However, Keller (2017) refers to these people as the top performing and brightest employees, falling within the 'A' category and the top 10%-20% of an organisation. The fundamental inference here remains that talent is mostly linked to a specific set of people or employees with relevant skills, experience, character, good judgment, the right attitude, and willingness to learn and demonstrate commitment to growing the organisation (Richard *et al.*, 2011:6).

Concerning talent management, Ngethe *et al.* (2012:297) affirm that it is the application of diverse measures to improve talented employees' skills and keep them in the workplace over a relatively long period. To ensure equitable talent management practice and to retain high potential employees, Ngethe *et al.* (2012:301) proposed that proper leadership styles should be effectively implemented to uphold employee satisfaction. The implementation of talent management encourages retention, which helps induce the stability and productivity of organisations. Consistent with this, Selesho and Naile (2014:296) affirm that the human resource management of every organisation should endeavour to implement talent management and leadership to ensure employees remain productive and skilled to face future challenges in the workplace.

Managing employees' talent is one of the most critical issues, as some organisations fail to create, attract, develop and retain precepts to redefine employees' values (Bradley, 2016:13). According to

McDonnell *et al.* (2017), talent management "includes the attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of individuals who have great value either because they have 'high potential for the future or because they are fulfilling business/operation-critical roles." According to Ansar and Baloch (2018:214), talent management aids in the growth and advancement of highly talented and skilled employees by using formalised procedures, resources, policies, and processes. The talent management process focuses on developing employees and executives for the organisation's future. In this regard, Bradley (2016:14) and Krugel (2014:7-8) posit that talent management enhances organisational capacity in preparation for future challenges.

Competencies of talent managers in developing high-potential employees

This section perused the competencies a talent manager should possess in organisations to develop high-potential employees. A meta-analysis was conducted to identify different authors' views. Table 1 presents the competencies of talent managers in developing potential talent.

Table 1: Competencies of talent managers in developing talent

Sources	Planning	Decision-making	Change management	Inter-personal relationship	Emotional intelligence	Programs Implementation	Learning opportunities
Latukha (2015)	X						
Fajčíková, Fejfarová & Urbancová (2016)	X						X
Gorgas, Greenberger, Bahner, & Way (2015)	X				X		
Vaiman, Haslberger, & Vance (2015)							X
van Zyl, Mathafena, Ras (2017)						X	X
N'Cho (2017)			X				
Ramli, Isa, Baharin, Ibrahim (2018)				X			X
Taylor (2018)		X				X	
Anastasia *et al.* (2019)	X		X	X			
Meyers, van Woerkom, Paauwe, Dries (2020)				X			X

Table 1 indicates that planning, decision-making, change management, interpersonal relationship, emotional intelligence, program implementation, and learning opportunities are the competencies a talent manager should possess to develop high potential talents. The factors presented in Table 1 are discussed further to explain how they are linked to enhancing the development of high-potential employees in the organisation.

Proper planning

Latukha (2015) and Fajčíková, Fejfarová, and Urbancová (2016) affirm that a talent manager should be able to do proper strategic planning for the organisation to succeed. According to Jeseviciute-Ufartiene (2014:177), the planning skill or competence is inextricably tied to the organisation and its employees' growth. Latukha (2015) confirms that planning has long been associated with higher productivity and long-term growth and is also viewed as a crucial managerial task. As a result, Alipour *et al.* (2013:36) state that the capacity to plan properly and strategically leads to the growth of an organisation and the development of personnel efficiencies. Proper planning in the talent management process involves deciding what activities must be performed to select and train the potential talents, also reach the goals, and choose the best way to use human assets and prospects to realise the intended result (Fajčíková, Fejfarová & Urbancová, 2016). A detailed assessment of present resources and market patterns, as well as projecting upcoming markets and imminent demand, are all part of the planning process. (Anastasia *et al.*, 2019:1). Gorgas, Greenberger, Bahner, and Way (2015) opine that planning specifically assists in evaluating the goal to determine if it is feasible and simplifies how to evaluate performance concerning the goals, as well as assigning tasks to workers (Alipour *et al.*, 2013:37).

Decision-making qualities

Taylor (2018) confirms that talent managers should be able to make the right decisions based on facts rather than emotions; expertly examine problems and use reasoning to arrive at answers. According to Mohan, Muthaly, and Annakis (2015:47), the capacity to make logical, educated, and collaborative decisions may significantly minimise opportunity costs while also strengthening the focus of the organisation. Effective decision-making is also a critical ability for managers as this necessitates their ability to assess numerous options and choose the best course of action (Alipour et al., 2013:37; Karhu & Ritala, 2018:25). Real decision-making may be addressed from many perspectives, and Mohan et al. (2015:49) addressed the decision-making duty from psychological, cognitive, and normative perspectives. From a psychological perspective, the decision is based on the needs, benefits, inclinations, and values of the individual making the decision. This method of decision-making is centred on the individual making the decision. The cognitive perspective refers to the feedback arrangement that connects a person's or an organisation's activities to the broader environment's responses. This decision-making process involves multiple cycles and an ongoing review of the decision reactions and outcomes. The normative perspective involves deciding in groups, such as, within a workplace, which in many ways represents a communicative sagacity. This implies that choices taken are founded on the capacity of an organisation to communicate and share reasoning within the premises and conclusions of the driving behaviour of such an organisation. In the view of Taylor (2018), it is required that the talent managers can properly organise the organisation in the right manner through effective decision-making qualities.

Change management qualities

N'Cho (2017:626) describes change management as a systematic approach to the transition or transformation of an organisation's goals, processes, or technologies. Change management applies different approaches to aid individuals in adapting to change. The processes and procedures used by an organisation to describe and implement change in internal and external operations are referred to as change management (Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider, Hussain & Ali, 2018). Talent managers are responsible for successfully accepting and executing the change in the workplace. Change management ensures that employees understand the transition, commit to it, and operate efficiently throughout the process (N'Cho, 2017:626). Mohan, Muthaly, and Annakis (2015:47) assert that talent managers should remain open-minded and adjust opinions considering new knowledge. Also, talent managers should endeavour to accomplish several activities and shift focus rapidly as demands change; successfully handle transitions from task to task as well as to adapt to changing client needs. Anastasia *et al*. (2019:1) state that a talent manager should also be willing to learn new things; be positive about the job or profession; be open to new ideas, technologies, and tools that can help enhance efficiency and standards; keep an eye on emerging trends; and be open to recommendations from others.

Good interpersonal relationships

According to Alfes, Shantz, and van Baalen (2016), interpersonal relationships have a social link or association between two or more people. It permits employees to interact with and comprehend others in both personal and professional life. Employees with strong interpersonal skills can collaborate and communicate well with their co-workers (Ramli, Isa, Baharin & Ibrahim, 2018). In the workplace, misunderstandings and ambiguity foster antagonism; confrontations lead nowhere and, as a result, undermine the working environment. According to Meyers, van Woerkom, Paauwe, and Dries (2020), organisations require talent managers who can recognise and motivate employees regularly. Anastasia *et al*. (2019:1) confirm that giving team members rules that they should collaborate productively is a must for leaders. There is a faster decision-making process and less unhealthy conflict when teams get together. Providing team access to a talent optimisation platform to adjust the way they communicate and collaborate is one approach to empower them to be their best (Alipour *et al.,* 2013:38). In this regard, Anastasia *et al.* (2019: 1) argues that it is essential for talent managers to schedule frequent team-building workshops conducted by local specialists in addition to giving every member of his/her team access to people's data.

Emotional intelligence qualities

Different personalities and goals compete for attention and support in organisations, thus creating complicated political landscapes. The ability of talent managers to possess emotional intelligence is key to creating group cohesion in an organisation (Gorgas, Greenberger, Bahner & Way, 2015). Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to constructively recognise, use, and control one's emotions to reduce stress, communicate effectively, sympathise with others, overcome obstacles, and diffuse conflict (Goleman, 2021). Emotionally intelligent leaders continually think about how their actions and decisions affect others. Empathy communicates to others that leaders care about their success and well-being and that they are not alone in their struggles (Wen, Huang & Hou, 2019). Emotional intelligence has several advantages, such as improved collaboration, and for various reasons, employees with higher emotional intelligence function better as a team (Goleman, 2021). Improved working conditions, easier adjustments, more self-awareness, and self-control are some advantages of emotional intelligence in the workplace.

Programme implementation abilities

Outcome evaluations' internal and external validity depends on how well a planned programme or intervention is implemented (Thunnissen, 2016). Making a programme work is the goal of managers, and this covers the who, what, where, and how a program was executed (Anastasia *et al.*, 2019:1). The systematic study of strategies that support the application of research findings and other evidence-based information into policy and practice is known as programme implementation, and this is essentially a road map or an action plan that lays out the steps for creating and implementing successful initiatives (Church, Rotolo, Ginther & Levine, 2015). From a general and professional perspective, the quality of a talent manager is to have the capacity to successfully implement the organisation's programs (van Zyl, Mathafena & Ras, 2017). In this regard, Jeseviciute-Ufartiene (2014:179) stated that for this to happen, a talent manager must expect challenges; consider how a problem and its solution may influence other units; collect information before making choices; compare options to objectives and make acceptable conclusions; adapt well to shifting priorities, deadlines, and directions; remove any non-value-adding procedures; and is prepared to act, even under duress, criticism, or tight deadline. Alipour *et al.* (2013:38) add that talent managers must also take calculated risks; detect and properly assess warning signals of a problem; review current procedures for improvements, and tell supervisors of concerns as soon as possible.

Learning opportunities and leadership development programs

The provision of learning opportunities and leadership development enhances an individual's ability to perform in a leadership role within an organisation (Vaiman, Haslberger & Vance, 2015). Berman (2015) and Joyce (2017) view leadership roles as incorporating strategies that are implemented by fostering alignment, gaining mindshare, and developing the talents of others. As implemented by talent managers, leadership development programmes boost employee morale and retention, increase productivity, promote better decision-making, form stronger teams, and teach future leaders to have a management style that promotes a happy work environment (Meyers *et al.,* 2020). Employees can strengthen their decision-making skills by participating in leadership development programmes (Silzer & Borman, 2017). Involving in leadership development programs helps settle conflicts among team members; understands the concepts of problem-solving and process improvement; develops self-awareness and innovative leadership skills; and examines the significance of change management and the difficulties that come with it (Berman, 2015). Furthermore, Mohan *et al.* (2015:47) further aver that talent managers should advance the employees' future performance by improving their capacity to perform through learning, generally by altering the employee's attitude or expanding their skills and knowledge.

Mechanisms talent managers can adopt in retaining high-potential employees

The meta-analysis presented in Table 2 expounds on the compendium of factors identified by different authors in retaining potential talents.

Table 2 indicates that the factors that talent managers could apply to retain high potential employees include communication and feedback, promotion and advancement, leadership, work-life balance, good organisational culture, development and training, and organisational commitment. These factors are further expounded upon subsequently.

Table 2: Mechanisms to retain high potential employees

Sources	Communication & Feedback	Promotion & Advancement	Leadership	Work-life balance	Organisational culture	Development & Training	Organisational Commitment
Kolzow (2014)			X				X
Dhas & Karthikeyan (2015)				X			
Van Zyl, Mathafena & Ras (2017)	X		X				
Khoreva, Vaiman &Van Zalk (2017)						X	
Kokkersvol & Øksnes (2018)		X					
Luz *et al.* (2018)		X					X
Pathiranage, Jayatilake &Abeysekera (2020)					X		
Kumar (2022)		X				X	

Effective communication and feedback

To be a great communicator, talent managers should be able to listen and convey information clearly to employees (Van Zyl et al., 2017). Communication is effective when all parties attach similar interpretations to the message, listen intently to everything said, and make the sender feel heard and understood (feedback). According to Kolzow (2014:12), communication is the most powerful tool for influencing others. Mohan et al. (2015: 49) stressed that a leader must be able to convey messages successfully to the employees to ensure they move in the right direction. Effective communication and feedback demand that talented leaders should have a good vision and guide people toward a common goal. Therefore, the capacity of the leaders of an organisation to communicate effectively with members of the organisation does positively influence the progress and productivity of the employees (Kolzow 2014: 13).

Promotion and advancement

The advancement of an employee's position in a hierarchical system is referred to as career promotion. Kokkersvold and Øksnes (2018) affirm that it is the duty of a talent manager or the human resource manager to promote the eligible employee to the desired position. Kumar (2022:24) posits that career growth means following a well-defined path toward the corporate ladder. It is merit-based, regardless of race, gender, age, or ethnicity and Kolzow (2014:14) concurs that the promise of progress in one's career may be enough to inspire people to work hard. According to Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015:14), career progression entails the presence of various career pathways based on the demands of individual employees and the organisation. However, Dialoke and Nkechi (2017:10) emphasised that dedication to career progression allows employees to be engaged and remain productive to the organisation. Kokkersvold and Øksnes (2018) concur that creating opportunities for promotion and advancement allows workers to improve their skills and competencies.

Leadership

Kolzow (2014:11) defines leadership as "the art of mastering change and the ability to mobilise others' efforts in new directions." Concerning this perspective, Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015:11) define leadership as "a process whereby individuals influence others to achieve shared goals or commonly desired outcomes." As cited by Kolzow (2014:12), the military perspective explains leadership as influencing people by giving them purpose, bearing, and incentive, while working to achieve the task and advance the organisation. Joyce (2017) states that leadership is accustomed to both the ability and process of influencing others. Aibieyi (2014:54) also agrees that leadership includes changing business and actively selecting from alternatives while depending on the progress and coordination of other employees to undertake stated responsibilities. Kolzow (2014:12) concurs that leadership is flexible, adaptable, and innovative but should be carefully applied to achieve organisational goals.

Maintaining a work-life balance

Work-life balance is focused on attaining a balance between professional and personal duties and responsibilities. Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015:11) aver that the demands of an individual's job and private life should be balanced in a condition balance. This depicts that employee should be able to meet work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities" (Meenakshi, Subrahmanyam & Ravichandran, 2013:32). Work-life balance is a two-way process that considers both the requirements of employees and the needs of employers (Meenakshi et al., 2013:33). It is also characterised as a sense of accomplishment and well-being at the office and home, with minimal role conflict and no intolerable levels of conflict between work and non-work needs (Mohan et al., 2015:49). Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015:14) outlined three very significant benefits of effective management of work-life balancing to include the following: being able to effectively manage multiple responsibilities at home, work without guilt or regret; able to work in flexible ways so that earning an income, and manage family/other commitments become easier; being part of a supportive workplace that values and trusts staff" (Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015:14). Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015:11) affirm that talent managers should adopt work-life balancing to keep potential employees in the workplace.

Investing in skill development and training

Khoreva, Vaiman and Van Zalk (2017) over that career development is buttressed through on-the-job training, and this is done through registering for suitable business classes and seminars that will enhance the development of employee careers. This necessitates the need for learning possibilities in many teams through various affordable choices available. Talent managers should ensure that employees stay abreast with current events in the business, in addition to developing personal desires (Karhu & Ritala, 2018:26). Likewise, hosting lunch-and-learn meetings through video, with any exterior or interior guest speaker, according to Muthaly and Annakis (2015:48), can be used by the organisation to train its employees because it is very cost-effective and simple.

Organisational culture

Organisational culture refers to customary values, conventions, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions, which determine human behaviour within an organisation and how things ought to be done, especially when such behaviours are not expressed. Cui and Hu (2012:29) define organisational culture as a "system of values, beliefs, and behavioural patterns, which subconsciously drives members of the organisation to make each choice and decision." Pathiranage, Jayatilake and Abeysekera (2020:245) concur that talent managers should uphold organisational culture as ethics to be observed by employees as a standard to determine their behaviour in the workplace. Yirdaw (2016:3) indicates that "organisational culture is the glue, which combines the nonhuman resources with the human resources in an organisation to build teamwork and good performance." Pathiranage *et al.* (2020:246) further view organisational culture as a prerequisite, which talent managers must uphold to keep potential talents in the organisation.

Organisational commitment

According to Luz *et al.* (2018: 86), one method to reduce employee turnover by talent managers is to have a high level of employee commitment. Organisational commitment is a psychological relationship that exists between an employee and the organisation (Yirdaw, 2016:9). It depicts the level of commitment and support that employees have for the organisation, with a commitment and desire to remain with them (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014:56). Organisational commitment refers to the willingness of employees to identify with the objectives and standards of the business. It can also depict the extent to which employees of an organisation perceive themselves as fitting to the business (or its parts) and feel devoted to it (Meyer, Kam, Goldenberg & Bremner, 2013:382). According to Luz *et al.* (2018:85), it is the psychological condition that replicates the relationship between employees and organisations. It is essential for workers to move past what is defined in the contract and to exhibit optional performances that will help the business to realise its objectives.

The best practices in talent management

The best practice in talent management refers to the operational procedures adopted by talent managers that are accepted and prescribed as being correct or more effective in yielding positive results. The meta-analysis in Table 3 presents the compilation of factors by different authors to establish the best practice in talent management.

Table 3: The best practice in talent management

Sources	Diverse pool	Skills specification	Onboarding process	Learning and development	Performance management	Reward system	Succession plan
Joseph & Sridevi (2015)			X		X		
Mangusho et al. (2015)				X	X	X	
Talpos *et al.* (2017)				X			X
Tetik (2017)	X			X			
Almohtaseb *et al.* (2020)		X			X		
Ryba (2021)		X	X				
Pandita & Ray (2018)				X		X	

Table 3 shows that the factors needed to achieve an efficient and effective talent management practice include facilitating skills specification, sourcing of a diverse pool, onboarding process, learning and development, performance management, good reward system, and succession plan. These factors are discussed subsequently.

Diverse talent pool

A talent pool is a collection of engaged individuals who have previously worked for an organisation or applied to work for it, and who have demonstrated the necessary abilities and desire to work in the future (Tetik, 2017). For various professions and skill levels, organisations can have several talent pools that can be instrumental in achieving set goals. Ali and Guha (2018) affirm that organisations can attract a diverse talent pool through open invitations for internal applicants, connections with people who could know of qualified candidates, especially minorities and women, and placing advertisements in relevant magazines, trade journals, social media or other online channels. Talent managers should create a diverse talent pool to attract the best talents that will achieve the organisation's objectives.

Setting clear skills specifications

Ryba (2021:1) emphasised the need and importance for talent managers to define organisational goals during the hiring process. Talent managers should endeavour to set goals while ensuring that employee or team objectives align with the specific organisational objectives. According to Puckett (2017:1), employees must understand their duties in the organisation and how their performance will be evaluated concerning those goals. Organisations that do not specify their objectives are bound to fail. Ryba

(2021:2) further explains that talent managers should enhance the capacity of employees to work toward the organisation's overarching plan and align goals to the general objectives to increase growth and development opportunities available for the organisation.

Onboarding process

The methods for integrating new hires into an organisation are referred to as the onboarding process. This involves activities that help new employees complete a new-hire orientation process and learn about the Company's structure, culture, vision, goal, and values (Ryba, 2021). Onboarding is a critical aspect of any business that must be carefully managed to allow new employees to adapt to the culture, values, and work environment. Otherwise, organisations risk having a high turnover rate. A poor onboarding process can have various negative consequences as it can set a new employee up for failure, reduce workplace productivity, and influence an employee's perception of the organisation; as a result, huge costs and even higher turnover rates are possible (Joseph & Sridevi, 2015).

Learning and development opportunities

Once performance gaps have been identified, employees know exactly the areas of improvement to advance in their professions (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2020). To assist employees in increasing their performance, a strong commitment to developing new capabilities is required (Luz *et al.,* 2018:86), and this could be done through the implementation of professional development opportunities. It enables employees to fine-tune and further develop the vital skills required to accomplish their performance targets and contribute to the Company's strategic objectives (Talpos *et al.,* 2017). Learning and development enhance employees' growth and expand their knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve business performance. Employees are more productive and efficient when they gain the necessary skills for their job, which helps accomplish organisational growth and provides employees with new opportunities (Tetik, 2017).

Performance management

According to Almohtaseb et al. (2020), regular performance evaluations allow talent managers to reflect on past accomplishments, current challenges, long-term targets, and skill development. It also considers skill sets, career ambitions, and growth strategies to bridge performance gaps. To achieve maximum success in talent management, managers must provide feedback and mentorship, coaching, and help employees accomplish their career goals. Through the implementation of performance management, organisational goals are being met effectively and efficiently through individual and collective performance (Puckett 2017:1). The most successful organisational outcomes are intimately related to excellent talent management practices, which aim at prioritising the employees. Investing in the employees' success entails investing in the organisation's success (Luz *et al.*, 2018: 87).

Reward system

Introducing policies and procedures that reward every person in the organisation equally and consistently across the board is known as reward management (Pandita & Ray, 2018). In this direction, Mangusho *et al.* (2015) posit that rewarding employees for excellent work help them feel valued and can be a great motivator for increased productivity. Performance-based awards are given to employees who do well in their jobs. Pay plans, incentive schemes, group bonuses, and commissions are examples of

performance-based rewards. Talent managers offer benefits to the employees as a part of membership-based rewards. The primary goal of rewards and recognition is to promote and motivate employees to achieve their best (Pandita & Ray, 2018). One of the motivating factors in Human Resources is rewards and recognition. Employees are rewarded and recognised for their efforts.

Succession plan

Succession planning is a talent management technique that entails building a pool of qualified people who can fill essential positions when leaders and other key employees depart (Talpos et al., 2017). Organisations with succession plans create a talent-oriented culture by hiring competent people and elite talent. The talent management strategy necessitates meticulous succession planning, which helps managers identify critical jobs, people with suitable skills, and open positions (Jindal & Shaikh, 2020). Talent managers should make succession plans to keep the organisation going while attaining specific objectives.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the talent management practices in South African public service. It was noted in the introduction and motivation of the study that talents are not well-managed in the South African public service. This has led to a high job turnover rate, which has negative implications for organisations. The study adopted a literature review concept to explore the meaning of talent management, the competencies talent managers should possess, the measures to keep high potential employees, and the best practice in talent management. Results show that the talent management practice in organisations should be carefully implemented to ensure the employees' satisfaction to enable them to stay with the organisation. The study further discovered that organisations should develop their employees to acquire new skills to ensure that objectives are met. The study concludes that the best talent management practice could be attained if the recommendations of this study could be applied in the public sectors of South Africa.

Talent management should always plan adequately to know the type of talent they need in the organisation. Other competencies needed by talent managers to develop high potential talents include good decision-making qualities, change management, interpersonal relationship, emotional intelligence, program implementation competencies, and the provision of learning opportunities. Toward retaining employees, talent managers should apply communication and feedback; promotion and advancement; good leadership qualities; work-life balance; good organisational culture; training and development; and organisational commitment. To enhance the best practice in talent management, talent managers should facilitate skill specification and select from a diverse pool of candidates. Other factors include onboarding practices, learning and development, performance management, an effective reward system, and a succession plan.

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