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Talent management in healthcare organizations - qualitative research results

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Abstract

Talent management has received increased attention over recent years, however, up-to-date research has concentrated mainly on developing concepts, constructs and definitions. Although numerous researches, talent management has not been studied extensively in regard to diverse types of organizations. The need for highly qualified employees, which may be regarded as talents, is emphasized and evident in this types of organizations. Up to this moment studies on talent management in health care organizations are scarce, and the need for such research is obvious. The research was based on 5, semi structured interviews carried out in chosen, different health care organizations in Poland. The data gathered during interviews were analyzed following abovementioned methodology leading to conclusions which include theoretical implications in form of propositions, practical implications, as a list of talent management practices suitable for health care organizations as well as future research directions.

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1. Introduction

In recent years talent management has received increased research attention due to its ability to create and sustain competitive advantage of the company (Ashton & Morton, 2005; Coulson-Thomas, 2012). Basically, talent management is related to creating a talent pool from external and internal sources, adequately deploying these resources in pivotal positions, and further, work on their work motivation, organizational commitment and extra-

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roles behaviors that contribute to organizational performance (see: Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Such understanding of talent management concentrates attention on differentiation and departing from classical – human resource management approach. That means that organization willing to actively engage talents in organizational life have to figure out ways of capitalizing on their competencies and prepare structures, strategies and climate to encourage their employees on pivotal positions to contribute to organizational success.

Despite growing research interest little is known about the ways in which public organizations, and healthcare in particular, manage their talents. To fill in this literature gap this study aims at exploring and understanding talent management in healthcare organizations. This aim is obtained in two basic steps. Firstly, we review recent talent management literature trying to identify directions in which scientific debate goes. Secondly, we present empirical study research carried in 5 chosen healthcare organizations from southern Poland and formulate theoretical and practical implications.

2. Research on talent management: what do we know and where do we go from here?

There are several valuable research paths undertaken by researchers in talent management recently. We present just a fraction of a vast number of this diversity just to emphasize numerous approaches that are valuable and had received research consideration.

The first one concentrates on creating sound theoretical background for the discipline. In this vein two main subcategories may be identified. The first relates to defining talent, the nature and essence of talent management. Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, and Gonzales-Cruz (2013) present a broad, in-depth analysis of the term of talent stating that talent may be conceptualized as naturalability, mastery, commitment and fit revealed in innate abilities, acquired skills, knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees which lead to achieving outstanding results. They also claim that inclusive and exclusive approach to talent management may be identified. In the same manner Meyers, van Woerkom, and Dries (2013) state that talent may be innate or acquired. Despite numerous other approaches to the problem of definition consistent results were not obtained.

The second approach concentrates on talent management itself. Growing interest in talent management has resulted in numerous studies, in which several interesting approaches may be identified. In particular, four main perspectives on talent management are prevailing in the literature. First of them focuses on sets of practices and functions strongly related to human resource management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Researchers undertaking this perspective try to differentiate the set of talent management practices underlining its strategic and future oriented nature and relationship to strategic objectives (Tarique & Schuler, 2010).

Second perspective concentrates on perceiving talent management as a way in which valuable competencies of talented employees are put into practice. The researchers addressing the issue from this standpoint theorize that talents, sometimes described as “top performers”, are *crème de la crème* of an organization. It emphasizes that talent management is addressed to elite group of employees. Therefore, researchers in this vein focus on exclusive approach to talent management, and, according to these authors organizations are as strong as competent are their best employees (Downs & Swailes, 2013; Christensen Hughes & Rog, 2008).

Third approach emphasizes the role of employee flow within the organization and refers to supply and demand – it concentrates attention on internal talent pools strongly relating decisions in the field with succession planning (Aksakal, Dagdeviren, Eraslan, & Yuksel, 2013; Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). Fourth perspective focuses rather on identification of key – pivotal – positions than on searching talents by itself. It highlights organizational perspective and organizational interests are the key point in this vein (Iles, Preece, & Chuai, 2010; Vural, Vardarliier, & Aykir, 2012).

While there are numerous other approaches presented in the literature (for example decisive – see: it seems that presented ways of conceptualizing talent management refer to the vast majority of theoretical veins. On the basis of different approaches at least two conclusions may be made. First, talent management is embedded in internal contradictions, and managers are responsible for dealing with them. Second, talent management requires consistent and effective set of organizational solutions (Vaiman, Sculion, & Collings, 2012).

There are also other studies related to particular aspects of talent management. Both theoretical and empirical relationships with organizational success, competitive advantage and organizational effectiveness have been

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