

# Talent Management: A Review of Its Dimensions and Loci in Contemporary Times

**Ogbonna Robert NGWU<sup>1</sup>; Omaniem NWAUBETA<sup>2</sup>; Eberechukwu Donatus NWOGBO<sup>3</sup>; James APEMIYE<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Department of Management, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus

<sup>4</sup> Department of Business Management, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu

**Abstract:** The challenges associated with managing talent in contemporary times are a constant source of debate among academics and consultants, but the literature on the theme is sparse and has grown somewhat irregularly. We proffer an overview of the literature on talent management, a body of work that spans several paradigms, as well as a clear statement as to what explains talent management. The new themes in talent management focus on its complexities, including issues of labour markets as well as the general task of dealing with labour uncertainty; and strategic jobs for which investments in talent are likely to yield the greatest return.

We review practical themes on modern dimensions, its locus and further outlining its progression over time; which qualitatively formed our bases for generalization of the facts and conclusion proffered.

**Keywords:** Human capital, Labour markets, Talent progression

## I. Background

Talent management is an ongoing, expert-created term covering a scope of long-standing practices that target getting the opportune individuals in the correct activity at the perfect time. These incorporate workforce arranging, progression coordinating, employee improvement, and career advancement. The concept dates back to a 1998 McKinsey report [1], which contends that an employee's productivity exhibits a great deal of the variance in the overall performances across the businesses. It has become the predominant human capital subject of the mid-twenty-first century [2, 3]. Essentially every survey of business executives, not only of human capital experts, affirm this assertion, and top human capital development experts have either established new practice areas or rebranded existing practice areas to offer talent management solutions.

Consistent with critique bemoaning the dearth between scholarly interest and across professional enthusiasm for this concept [3, 4], a survey of the scholarly writing utilizing the term talent management yields shockingly infinitesimal outcomes. The authors consulted an array of articles, books, and studies on the theme of talent management and related concepts to discover contemporary dialects on the issue. Although the extent of this article does not allow us to give a complete account of all the explored literature that bother on the talent management theme, we reference reviews on the most relevant related themes all through.

## II. Conceptualizing Talent Management

Cappelli and Keller [2] aver that the term talent management has gotten away from a standard definition, and about each article composed on the subject starts with handwringing over the calculated limits of the term. For instance, Lewis and Heckman [5] note the upsetting absence of lucidity in regards to the definition, degree and by and large objectives of talent management. Similarly, Collings and Mellahi [6] reason that the idea of talent management is inadequate regarding the definition and hypothetical improvement and there is a similar absence of observational proof on the subject. Also as Gallardo-Gallardo et al. [7] state, apparently talent can mean whatever a business executive or scholar needs it to mean since everybody has their concept of what the construct does and doesn't incorporate. Maybe the most

notable analysis from analysts is that the utilization of the term talent management is frequently minimal more than a rebranding of a range of typical Human Capital Development (HCD) activities [5]. Even though this is a reasonable analysis of the greater part of the business executives, it is less valid in the academia and studies, which has been progressively cautious in its endeavors to recognize talent management from the investigation of clear HCD practices and vital human capital development executives for the most part [8, 9, 10].

Notwithstanding, a prominent element of a significant part of the current writing on talent management is that it keeps on concentrating on practices related with lifetime professions in partnerships, regardless of the way that the most significant move in the course of the last 30 or more years on how organisations deal with their workforces has been an expansion in dismissals and outside recruiting at all administrative levels [11, 12]. As Cappelli [8] contends, despite the fact that the focal talent management concerns hinge on: forecasting human capital needs and setting out strategies to meet them, may not be new, as customary methods/arrangements are never again suitable on the grounds that the certainty that was required for them never again holds. New practices must record for that vulnerability and the expanded conspicuousness of external labour markets [2]. Right now, questions tended to by talent management are not new, yet the appropriate responses are. A definition that is reliable with traditional practices and catches what scholars and analysts have been doing under the heading of talent management is as per the following: the procedure through which firms envision and address their issues for talent in vital tasks. As contended underneath, the unmistakable spotlight on vital employments is the new thought in scholarly investigations. This definition is adequately fit to the scholarly need to rejuvenate theory advancement while mirroring the interests of professionals, for whom the enthusiasm for talent management is unequivocally centered on few jobs, usually senior administration and official positions.

## **2.1. A Survey of the Conceptual Dimensions**

Two discussions have emerged out of ongoing endeavors to draw reasonable limits around the term and the field of talent management. The principal focuses on the qualification among comprehensive and selective ways to deal with talent management, and the second on whether workforce variation endeavors should start with individuals/people or jobs/employments.

### **2.1.1. Talent Management: Comprehensive and Selective Dimensions**

Comprehensive approaches recommend that talent management ought to apply to all professionals. All workers of an organization are viewed as having qualities that can make added creative value for the organisation. Selective approaches, conversely, see a subset of workers or employments as making lopsided worth [7, 2]. The down to earth ramifications of these two approaches concerns the undertaking of rare assets: Is improvement for everybody, or should the firm differentially put resources into specific people or employments? Comprehensive approaches appear to have grown all the more as of late, conceivably because of the more liberal ideas noticeable all around during the 1960s and 1970s, just as working environment regulations and guidelines requiring equal treatment of staff in areas such as retirement strategies and medical benefits/care.

Selective approaches have a more drawn out history, most likely motivated by the practices in the military where various leveled plans are accepted. Selective approaches are predictable with an investment of resource expansion in the strategic management literature [13, 14] in which varied investments and utilization of resources are believed to produce more noteworthy business returns. Selective approaches have progressively come to dominate scholarly works of literature on talent management, as reflected in the evolving enthusiasm for workforce variation [9, 15]. The thought of workforce variation, a key hypothetical improvement in the key human capital development works of literature, proposes that firms ought to lopsidedly put rare resources in the individuals or jobs from which they anticipate the best return. It contrasts from more seasoned practices, which just accepted that the significance of people or employment was related to its situation in the organisational chart.

### **2.1.2. Individuals and Jobs as the Loci of Talent Variation**

The restrictive approach prompts a second discussion around whether the locus of workforce variation ought to be the individual or the job. Would it be advisable for us to start by recognizing a subset of people who may be opened in a variety of jobs or by distinguishing a particular group of jobs that are by and large vital and afterward center around filling those jobs with talent? The individual variation point of view has its foundations in the resource-based perspective of the firm, which proposes that "the worth of human capital is naturally reliant upon its capability to add to the competitive advantage or core competence of the firm" [16]. The most unique conceptual model remains the design theory of HCD [2, 16], which links bits of knowledge from the resource-based view, exchange cost financial aspects, and

human capital theory to show how differential interests in workers having exceptionally important and profoundly unique, one of a kind human capital can prompt competitive edge. A few researchers have developed this work, with, for instance, promising endeavors to show how portability imperatives give significant limit conditions on the connection between firm-specific capabilities and competitive edge [17, 2]. There is proof that top performers contribute excessively to firm productivity. Research on the efficiency of knowledge workers has shown that top performers are commonly more important than ordinary staff [18]. This has driven numerous professionals to advocate for an ABC idea of talent management, proposed and developed by Jack Welch's vitality curve, in which a few employees are top performers (the A performers), others are extremely poor performers (the C performers), and most are stuck in an ordinary class (the B performers). Verifiable right now that exhibition is dispositional, with the goal that the objective is to employ A performers and dispose of the C performers [19, 20].

Nonetheless, there is additionally considerable research demonstrating that an excellent exhibition is not altogether dispositional. Investigations of investment experts [21] and healthcare specialists [22] have featured the significance of intra firm relational networks to productivity, with Groysberg et al. [21] finding that good investment expert were frequently incapable to recreate their past degrees of accomplishment inferable from the loss of social capital related with a transition to another firm. Groysberg et al. [23] provide a reason to feel ambiguous about a more and better way to deal with talent management, finding a curvilinear connection between group execution and the level of experts in investment banking looking into valuable organisations. More generally, the field of HCD is grounded on the perception that management practices, and not just individual differences, drive productivity. Also, the estimation of prevalent individual productivity is often directed by the task involved. Humphrey et al.'s [24] role composition model of team performance provides support for the idea that the job should be the locus of variation. They found that certain roles are more important to team performance than others, the implication being that staffing decisions should take into account the strategic importance of different tasks before considering individual attributes. A job variation perspective is also consistent with the historical view of talent management, in which the key jobs were executive positions, assessing which individuals had the potential to succeed in those jobs was a central task, and development to make them successful in those jobs was the most significant expenditure. And it reflects the perspective of most practitioners, for whom the focus is on filling a small number of key roles, typically senior management and executive positions, as well as key technical positions [25, 2]. Given the apparent dominance of the job variation perspective, we can more clearly define "talent management" as the process through which organizations meet their needs for talent in strategic jobs, "talent" as those individuals who currently or have the potential to differentially contribute to firm productivity by occupying strategic jobs, and a "talent pool" as the high-performing incumbents in strategic jobs and those individuals identified as having the potential to occupy strategic jobs in the future [8, 9].

Hunter et al. [26] discovered critical contrasts in outcomes when contrasting top performers and poor performers over a variety of jobs, yet the gap differed altogether relying upon the unpredictability of the activity. Considerably further back, Jacobs [27] utilized contingency theory to show the nexus between singular execution, employments, and hierarchical execution, demonstrating how commendable a staff's productivity adds a noteworthy increment to a firm's all-out productivity in certain jobs and not every other. This has prompted ongoing arguments upholding for the job as the more suitable locus of variation. From this point of view, a few jobs are more basic to a firm's productivity than others, and firms ought to give more resources to those jobs in which singular productivity has the best potential to affect firm performance [28]. Concentrating on the job as the locus of variation does not reject individual differences. It offers supremacy to the job, as the general estimation of individual variation relies upon the idea of the job [7, 24]. As portrayed by Becker and Huselid [29], "The value of staff capabilities inside a firm is not only a supply-side phenomenon. It is an element of how those capabilities are utilized and where they are utilized."

Humphrey et al's [24] job composition model of firm performance offers help for the possibility that the job ought to be the centre of variation. They found that specific jobs are more imperative to firm productivity than others, the suggestion being that staffing choices should consider the vital significance of various jobs preceding thinking about individual characteristics. A job variation point of view is likewise steady with the chronicled perspective on talent management, where the crucial jobs were executive positions, evaluating which staff could prevail in those jobs was a crucial task, and advancement to make them productive in those jobs was the most important expenditure. Also, it mirrors the point of view of most executives, for whom the task is on filling few key jobs, commonly top management, and official situations, just as key technical positions [25]. Given the obvious strength of the job diversity point of view, we can all the more unmistakably characterize "talent management" as the procedure through which workplaces address their issues for talent in vital employments, "talent" as those people who at present or can differentially add to

firm productivity by involving in key jobs, and a "talent pool" as the high-performing occupants in key jobs and those people recognized as having the capacity to possess key positions later on [8, 9].

### Conclusion

The practices related to talent management and in this manner, academic writing following those practices are insignificant cue. These practices prompted considerable interests in training and development, inner profession plans, and afterward progression intending to fill official employments. This model appears for viable purposes to be completed. A considerable lot of the biggest and most seasoned enterprises do hold a few components of this approach, although their utilization has been generously weakened by the ascent of outside recruiting. Smaller and emergent organizations never had those practices. For them, outside hiring is regularly the true answer for talent management issues. Research on the above practices has additionally declined forcefully, maybe in light of the fact that there are fewer open doors for information variety.

Topics, for example, evaluating the potential for progression are as yet important in numerous firms, yet it is presently significantly more likely that any modern appraisal activities will be finished by stakeholders [30, 2]. Research results have a lot more noteworthy drawback hazard for a stakeholder than they do at any point had for individual staff: An analysis indicating that a business's practices are incapable may be a brief humiliation yet would lead the business to change those practices and improve its results. An investigation demonstrating that stakeholder's or merchant's practices were inadequate likely makes it bankrupt. Getting information to contemplate the result of practices, for example, recruiting and selection, evaluation, improvement, and professional success may hence be progressively difficult. A related change has to do with investigating novel practices in talent management. Previously, talent management themes were the custodian of workforce commitment. That is not true anymore. There is a large number practicing analysts despite everything occupied with structuring selection and evaluation frameworks, however, look into on these and related subjects are in sharp decline. The new themes, related to outside recruitment, are substantially more prone to be concentrated by experts in procedure and management theory definitely because those applied models better fit the phenomenon being examined.

Indeed, even with enthusiasm from analysts from these new fields, we know remarkably a negligible knowledge about the new practices in talent management. We do not have even basic unmistakable information about how managers are dealing with the difficulties of talent management. There is no methodical, delegate information on job practices. Nor do we have point by point depictions of how individual organisations handle talent management, even though we see the colossal guarantee in scholarly professional coordinated efforts. Although firms have gotten proficient at gathering rich information on job applicants, contracting rehearses, execution, versatility, and a scope of other business practices and results, not many organisations have the theoretical and exact devices important to see the connections among this different information, to interface them together, and to dissect them in manners that produce significant bits of knowledge. These are on the whole aptitudes the academics bring to the table. Every one of the new issues identified with internal and external talent management referenced above holds enormous hypothetical and reasonable intrigue, giving a success win circumstance in which firms give researchers access to point by point information as an end-result of help producing bits of knowledge and answers to inquiries important to the two approaches. Past coordinated efforts with individual firms, we urge analysts to consider connecting with firms that gather information on various firms, for example, advisory firms, business agencies, and official survey firms. Although our survey of the considered literature drove us to characterize talent management as the procedure through which firms address their issues for talent in key jobs, endeavors to distinguish important jobs are recognizably missing from the extant literature [15, 2]. Endeavors to operationalize the idea of the vital job and to observationally recognize such employments inside and across firms, especially those situated outside the executive group, are painfully required. Descriptive data on how (and whether) firms identify strategic jobs in practice would also be supportive.

### References

- [1] E. Chambers, M. Foulon, H. Handfield-Jones, S. Hankin, and E. Michaels, The war for talent, *McKinsey Quarterly*, 3, 1998, 44–57.
- [2] P. Cappelli, and J. Keller, Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges, *Annual Review of Organisational Psychology and Organisational Behaviour*, 1, 2014, 305–31.

## Talent Management: A Review of Its Dimensions and Loci in Contemporary Times

- [3] W. Cascio, and H. Aguinis, Research in industrial and organizational psychology from 1963 to 2007: changes, choices, and trends, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(5), 2008, 1062–81.
- [4] S.L. Rynes, T.L. Giluk, and K.G. Brown, The very separate worlds of academic and practitioner periodicals in human resource management: implications for evidence-based management, *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5), 2007, 987–1008.
- [5] R.E. Lewis, and R.J. Heckman, Talent management: a critical review, *Human Resources Management Review*, 16(2), 2006, 139–54.
- [6] D. Collings, H. Scullion, and P. Dowling, Global staffing: a review and thematic research agenda, *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 20(6), 2009, 1253–72.
- [7] E. Gallardo-Gallardo, N. Dries, and T. González-Cruz, What is the meaning of “talent” in the world of work? *Human Resources Management Review*, 23(4), 2013, 290–300.
- [8] P. Cappelli, *Talent on Demand: Managing Talent in an Age of Uncertainty*. Cambridge, MA. (Harvard Business School Publication, 2008).
- [9] D. Collings, and K. Mellahi, Strategic talent management: a review and research agenda, *Human Resource Management Review*, 10(10), 2009, 16–20.
- [10] I. Tarique, and R. Schuler, Global talent management: literature review, integrative framework, and suggestions for further research, *Journal of World Business*, 45(2), 2010, 122–33.
- [11] N. Dries, The psychology of talent management: a review and research agenda, *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4), 2013, 272–85.
- [12] P. Cappelli, *The New Deal at Work: Managing the Market-Driven Workforce*. Boston, MA. (Harvard Business School Press, 1999).
- [13] S.K. Majumdar, On the utilization of resources: perspectives from the U.S. telecommunications industry, *Strategic Management Journal*, 19(9), 1998, 809–31.
- [14] M.S. Bothner, J.M. Podolny, and E.B. Smith, Organising contests for status: the Matthew effect vs. the Mark effect, *Management Science*, 57(3), 2011, 439–57.
- [15] M.A. Huselid, and B.E. Becker, Bridging micro and macro domains: workforce differentiation and strategic human resource management, *Journal of Management*, 37(2), 2011, 395–403.
- [16] D.P. Lepak, and S.A. Snell, The human resource architecture: toward a theory of human capital allocation and development, *Academy of Management Review*, 24(1), 1999, 31–48.
- [17] B. Campbell, R. Coff, and D. Kryscynski, Rethinking sustained competitive advantage from human capital, *Academy of Management Review*, 37(3), 2012, 376–95.
- [18] T. Felin, and W. Hesterly, The knowledge-based view, nested heterogeneity, and new value creation: philosophical considerations on the locus of knowledge, *Academy of Management Review*, 32(1), 2007, 195–218.
- [19] B. Axelrod, H. Handfield-Jones, and E. Michaels, A new game plan for C players, *Harvard Business Review*, 80(1), 2002, 80–88.
- [20] D.P. Lepak, and J.D. Shaw, Strategic HRM in North America: looking to the future, *International Journal Human of Resources Management*, 19(8), 2008, 1486–99.
- [21] B. Groysberg, L. Lee, and A. Nanda, Can they take it with them? The portability of star knowledge workers' performance, *Management Science*, 54(7), 2008, 1213–30.
- [22] R.S. Huckman, and G.P. Pisano, The firm specificity of individual performance: evidence from cardiac surgery, *Management Science*, 52(4), 2006, 473–88.
- [23] B. Groysberg, J. Polzer, and H. Elfenbein, Too many cooks spoil the broth: how high-status individuals decrease group effectiveness, *Organisation Science*, 22(3), 2011, 722–37.

- [24] S.E. Humphrey, F.P. Morgeson, and M.J. Mannor, Developing a theory of the strategic core of teams: a role composition model of team performance, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(1), 2009, 48–61.
- [25] C. Fernández-Aráoz, Getting the right people at the top. MIT Sloan, *Management Review*, 46(4), 2005, 67–72.
- [26] J.E. Hunter, F.L. Schmidt, and M.K. Judiesch, Individual differences in output variability as a function of job complexity, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(1), 1990, 28–42.
- [27] D. Jacobs, Toward a theory of mobility and behavior in organizations: an inquiry into the consequences of some relationships between individual performance and organizational success, *American Journal of Sociology*, 87(3), 1981, 684–707.
- [28] M.A. Huselid, R.W. Beatty, and B.E. Becker, “A players” or “A positions”? The strategic logic of workforce management, *Harvard Business Review*, 83(12), 2005, 110–17.
- [29] B.E. Becker, and M.A. Huselid, Strategic human resources management: Where do we go from here? *Journal of Management*, 32(6), 2006, 898–925.
- [30] D. Ulrich, J. Younger, and W. Brockbank, The twenty-first-century HR organization, *Human Resources Management*, 47(4), 2008, 829–50.