

The Reality of Talent Management Implementation: A Case Study on Royal Jordanian Airlines

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Abstract

This study focused on investigating and analysing the influential factors that led to the introduction and implementation of talent management at Royal Jordanian airlines. Using a case study method, the qualitative study aimed to obtain an understanding of how 10 managers, human resource managers, senior executives, managers and a general manager, viewed the introduction and implementation of talent management in the company, using semi-structured interviews. Information was also obtained on their perceptions of talent management, using an interpretive paradigm. Findings showed that the managers perceived the concept of talent management in different ways, about what it was used to achieve in an organisation and it was ambiguous in both its introduction and implementation. Recommendations were set out for the company, the company could; improve its employee incentives to develop their talent; provide a career development structure for all employees; treat all employees as able to develop their abilities the best they can and talent management should be used with existing employees, not from talent pools outside the company.

Keywords: talent management, implementation, perceptions, royal Jordanian

1. Introduction

The various reasons for the introduction and implementation of talent management in large organisations have been regarded as unclear in the literature. It has been pointed out by Lewis and Heckman (2006), that there is little 'clarity regarding the definition, scope, and overall goals of talent management' (p. 39).

Talent management is often implemented in an organisation to align it with the company's business objectives. A company's business strategy and objectives are designed to create differentiation from its competitors, and talented individuals are a major source of an organisation's competitive advantage. Consequently, talent management is a necessary element in making the implementation of a business strategy possible (Deb, 2005).

In their work on human resources and different talent approaches in organisations, Lubitsch, Devine, Glandfield and Orbea, (2007) observed that an organisations' approach to talent management are formed out of the underlying perspectives and beliefs of the staff in an organisation. Such perspectives and beliefs are frequently implicit rather than openly discussed. Instead of analysing the outcomes of talent management, this research therefore, explores the reasons for the introduction and implementation of talent management in the Royal Jordanian airline company, derived from the perceptions, feelings, and beliefs of different levels of managers employed by the company to develop an understanding of the talent management used in that context.

2. Study Problem

In 2014, Royal Jordanian stated (Rj.com, 2014) that they would implement an ambitious vision over the next five years, consisting of a number of strategic plans designed at enhancing the value of Royal Jordanian, and providing more opportunities for development (p. 31). It will raise the company capital, and add to it with revenues aside from that of transporting cargo and passengers, to support and benefit the company and its competitive position. The company is upgrading a large part of its fleet of aircrafts and this has been an on-going process since 2011 and this is continuing into 2016. It is using code sharing as a marketing strategy with other airlines to retain coverage of its services. However, it has suffered considerable financial losses in 2014 and 2013, with a narrow profit in 2012, considerable loss in 2011, and a profit in 2010. It is faced with fierce competition from other airlines and it has challenges of civil unrest in nearby countries. These two factors are affecting the

sales of seats and leading to reductions, or cancellation of flights to particular destinations.

In 2012, the Hay Group conducted a case study of Royal Jordanian and made recommendations to the company. They conducted interviews and investigated what performance meant, problems in performance, and how the company envisaged performance developing. They investigated the existing culture and a new culture that the company wanted. They found a traditional organizational which needed to be more customer-orientated, and results driven. They recommended, wide-ranging performance management change, connecting reward and recognition with measures of performance, and the developing of behaviour and skills and behaviour necessary for delivering the airline's strategy (haygroup.com, 2012). In short, they recommended the linking of performance with competencies.

It is argued in this paper that the company could enhance or develop their talent management to improve their performance. However, to provide recommendations for the company on talent management, it will be necessary to investigate the existing talent management in the company. In short, to undertake research to ask, and seek answers to 'What factors influenced the ways in which talent management was introduced and implemented, in Royal Jordanian Airlines?'

3. Research Aims and Objectives

The overall research question of this research is 'What factors influenced the ways in which talent management was introduced and implemented, in Royal Jordanian Airlines?'

The first objective of this research is to ascertain the features of the talent management used at Royal Jordanian Airlines and to identify the influences on the introduction and implementation of talent management in Royal Jordanian Airlines?

The second objective is to examine some of the management at Royal Jordanian Airlines, specifically a sample consisting of Human resource managers, Senior executives, Managers, and General Managers' perceptions, feelings and values about talent management at the company.

Consequently, the research aims are:

- 1). To identify those factors that has influenced the ways in which talent management has been introduced.
- 2). To identify those factors that has influenced the ways in which talent management has been implemented.

4. Questions of the Research

- 1). What factors have influenced the ways in which talent management was introduced, in Royal Jordanian Airlines?
- 2). What factors have influenced the ways in which talent management has been implemented, in Royal Jordanian Airlines?

5. Contribution of the Research

- 1). This is the first piece of research, as far as this researcher is aware to investigate the ways in which talent management was introduced and implemented, in Royal Jordanian Airlines.
- 2). This research on talent management in Royal Jordanian provides a unique opportunity to focus on talent management in considerable depth in one particular organization. The study will not only investigate those factors that influenced both the introduction and implementation of talent management in the organization, it will also assess perceptions of the role and skills of the human resource department in talent management.
- 3). It will provide recommendations for the management on ways to improve Royal Jordanian's performance by developing or enhancing their talent management.
- 4). This research will provide a stepping-stone for future researchers to examine talent management in other aviation organisations.

6. Literature Review

Definitions of talent management are unclear because it can refer to one of two situations (Hirsch, 2009). Firstly, talent might be thought of as linked to a particular section of the workforce, such as those employees thought to be potential future leaders of the company. Secondly, human resource management has used talent management to mean attracting and developing individuals with talent to retain, reward, and motivate those individuals. Therefore, talent management may mean the management and the development of the entire workforce, or a section of the workforce.

Talent management as been seen as evolving in parallel with human resource management (Cheese, Thomas, &

Craig, 2008). The researchers indicated that human resources and talent management go hand-in-hand. Human resources facilitates many organisation processes, however, talent management necessitates the involvement of the entire company and the concept of an underlying talent mindset.

The process of talent multiplication is both a strategic asset and an element of business strategy. Cheese et al., (2008) have described this process in the following way, as beginning 'with a pervasive talent mind-set and culture driven by top leadership, top-down understanding of a human capital strategy required to support business strategy, and understanding of the value linkages' (p. 85).

An employee must be competent at a particular task to fulfil the talent needs of a company. Talent need for competency underlies the discovery, the development and the placing of the talent. Value propositions for employees are shaped and targeted at for a particular need in an area of the workforce. Human resources supports both work processes in the whole company, and a wide range of work processes and rewards system. Whole workforce performance including value measures and outcomes and investments in employee talent and connected indicators of performance are monitors across the company.

The main elements of the implementation of talent management have been discussed in the literature. Such elements provide an indication of the reasons for implementing talent management. Garavan, Carberry and Wok, (2012) suggested that the elements of talent management entail planning, selecting and implementing various strategies for the talent in the workforce in order that the company has sufficient talent to fulfil its strategic objectives and that the activities of organizational development are aligned with both with talent management and organizational processes. By contrast, in a report on a McKinsey Organisation survey, Lawson, Mueller-Oerlinghusen and Shearn (2005) noted that human resources in the majority of organisations do not have either the capabilities or the skills for a business role. In a similar vein, Guthridge, and Komm, (2006) argued that human resources focus on industrial relations and personnel matters, and do not have the necessary skills or capabilities to connect talent management to the organisations' business strategy.

On the other hand, Collins (2001) suggested that the implementation of talent management should focus on the right people for the organisation rather than ensuring that the business strategy is right. He argued that it is the right people that are the organisation's greatest asset rather than people generally in the organisation.

The role of the human resources department and its relation to, or role in talent management in an organisation has been discussed in the literature. Chuai, Preece and Iles (2008) believed that talent management is an aspect of the functions of human resources and talent management adds value to human resources. Whereas, Chuai et al., (2008) argued that talent management improves and gives extra value to the traditional human resources. The researchers also provided a talent management framework and argued that talent management may focus, firstly on exclusive employees, with high potential and high performance, and secondly, exclusive employees in key positions, both suggesting a human resources stance and, thirdly, inclusive employees in the organisation, and fourthly, social and human capital, suggesting an organisation stance.

Generally, talent management (TM) means the abilities or skills that an individual uses to carry out a task (Haturu, 2010). This meaning is apparent in the definition provided by Michaels and Handfield-Jones (2001) 'as the sum of a person's abilities – his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character, and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow' (2001, p. xii, cited in Haturu, 2010, p. 10). However, a detailed all-encompassing definition of TM is difficult, since different writers have different assumptions about the meaning of the concept.

Haturu (2010) distinguished three approaches to TM in the literature. Firstly, TM has been regarded as a part of traditional human resource practices, for example, in selection, recruitment, performance measurement and training (Cheese et al., 2008; Robertson & Abbey, 2004; Cohen, 2001). Secondly, TM is an approach that is a part of human resource planning (Rothwell & Kazanas, 2004). Finally, a third approach relates TM to particular elements, including talent pools, talent development, individual potential, and the attracting and retaining employees (Michaels et al., 2001; Fulmer & Bleak, 2008; Smilansky, 2006; Rueff & Stringer, 2006). Haturu (2010) concluded from his review that the three perspectives on TM do not clarify in detail their definitions of TM. Indeed, he argued that the former two approaches do not provide an understanding of how TM is managed through traditional human resource practices or strategic human resource planning. Whereas, the latter approach on TM offered a generalisation of TM with various topics rather than a focus on the depth of TM in the topics.

After reviewing the three approaches to talent management and their particular definitions of TM, Haturu (2010) set out the following definition. 'A strategic activity aligned with the firm's business strategy that aims to attract, develop and retain talented employees at each level of the organisation' (2010, p. 13). In addition, the talent planning is a process that is connected to an organisation's strategic planning and business processes and the

central element of this process is the employee. This notion of TM is framed in the resource based organisation theory set out and discussed in work by Barney (1991, 1995) Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Vance and Vaiman, (2008). This theory proposed that competitive advantage only arises when organisations develop particular resources that are mostly rare, mostly valuable and generally difficult to imitate. Talent management in organisations places attention on the talent provided by its employees rather than on employees. Haturu (2010) provided an example of this focus:

Rather than ask how an organisation's talent can support the firm, talent management asks how an organisation's talent structure can be fine-tuned by attracting, developing, and retaining people. By being a leader in activities, a firm can develop organizational capabilities that are valuable, rare, and hard to imitate, and hence can enjoy a sustained competitive advantage (2010, p. 14).

This literature review has provided a discussion of the relevant central areas of talent management to draw upon in the discussion of talent management in Royal Jordanian

Airlines. This review has highlighted the fact that there is no clear definition on talent management and there are a wide variety of views on human resources and organizational processes, and talent management may be an aspect of these two elements in a company. An organisation requires a concise definition of the meaning of talent management and what type of talent management is being implemented and applied.

The activities of talent management appear to indicate some of the aims and goals of talent management. Hirsh (2009) has regarded talent management to be an integral part of the activities of human resources. He proposed five activities that human resources could use as a talent management strategy. Firstly, focus should be placed on employees who might create risks for the company if they are not developed, additionally, all employees should receive continuous development over the long-term. Secondly, focus should be placed on each employee's development and performance and this should be integrated with the talent processes of the whole organisation. Thirdly, all managers should accept responsibility for both the identification and development of employee talent. Fourthly, career development should be a standard feature of the workplace. Finally, an on-going organisation development is essential for the company.

In Hirsch's (2009) work, the aims and goals of talent management can therefore include, developing talent to reduce or prevent risks to the company, to improve talent of the whole workforce, all managers should identify talent and be involved in their development, and career development should be available for all employees.

7. Methodology

The research employed a qualitative research approach that emphasises words unlike quantitative based research that places emphasis on quantification in the data collection and the data analysis (Bryman, 2012). The interpretivist epistemological position was adopted in this research. This position stresses that researchers may understand the social world through the meanings given to actions and social roles by members living in the social world. Therefore, social reality may be understood and interpreted through 'social actors' (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 1997, p. 107) living in the social world. In addition, the research follows the ontological position of constructivism. This position has contended that 'social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena 'out there' and separate from those involved in its construction' (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). This research endeavoured to understand the reality (Remenyi, Williams, Money, & Swartz, 2005) of the introduction and implementation of talent management in Royal Jordanian according to the perceptions of, and meanings ascribed to talent management.

7.1 Case Study

This research employed the exploratory single case study method as an underlying framework for the research. Research using a case study has been defined in the following way by Yin (2009):

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context: especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009, p. 18).

Case studies have limitations, since they require skilled researchers, they may be time consuming and they require great attention to draw conclusions that are generalisable to other populations (Dul & Hak, 2008). Nevertheless, they have considerable advantages, they do not have the restrictions of questionnaires, they may result in new insight and be perceived as highly valid by practitioners, who will be the new users of the findings of this research.

7.2 Purposive Sampling

The aim of purposive sampling is to seek participants for the research in a strategic manner to ensure that those participants who are sampled are pertinent to the questions of the research (Bryman, 2012). Since the sample is purposive rather than random the researcher is unable to generalise the findings to a larger population.

The purposive sample inevitably introduces a sampling bias in the research, that is a 'distortion in the representativeness of the sample that arises when some members of the population (or more precisely the sampling frame) stand little or no chance of being selected for inclusion in the research' (Bryman, 2012, p. 187).

The participants in the sample were selected because they are employees of Royal Jordanian Airlines and, of management level or above, and they are deemed to have both knowledge and experience of the talent management in the organisation.

7.3 Sample Frame

The sampling frame consisted of ten participants who were employees working at Royal Jordanian Airlines. The sample comprised of two human resource managers, two senior executives, five managers and one general manager, as shown in the below table, along with the participants' length of service at Royal Jordanian.

Table 1. Population sample length of service and age group

Identifier	Position	Length of service
HRM1	Human resource manager	5 years
SE1	Senior executive	16 years
HRM2	Human resource manager	12 years
M1	Manager	3 years
M2	Manager	2 years
M3	Manager	8 years
M4	Manager	3 years
SE2	Senior executive	22 years
GM1	General Manager	1 years
M5	Manager	1 year

7.4 Data collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews were employed in the research as a data collection method, which contained a series of questions stemming from material in the literature review and a pilot study using the interview questions with a manager at Royal Jordanian, who did not later participate in the actual research project.

The semi-structured interview questions had various aims. The research has suggested that the notion of talent management can mean a variety of different things to each individual. The different notions of talent management mean that when a particular form of talent management is implemented, it has particular aims that tie-in with that notion of talent management. The main questions sought to ascertain the participant's understanding of the concept of talent management, and what they perceive to be the aims of talent management. Initial thoughts on talent management and what the influences were, that led to the introduction and the implementation of talent management. Their perceptions on the effectiveness of the implementation were also sought. The final question was adapted from Haturu (2010), 'What are the best recruitment processes to use to attract the best talent for your organisation?' (2010, p. 44), to investigate participant's perceptions about the best recruitment for the company.

7.5 Data Analysis

The qualitative computer programme, NVivo was used to organise the material into the themes under investigation in the research.

8. Findings

Ten themes were established from the participants' perceptions and beliefs, as useful for answering both the research questions and objectives of the research. Conceptual perceptions, aims and goals, initial thoughts, reasons for introduction, and for implementation, effectiveness, links between the introduction and implementation and business strategies, role and skills of management, best form of recruitment for talent, and organisation culture.

8.1 Conceptual Perceptions of Talent Management

The participants provided responses about their understanding of the notion of talent management. The first three responses indicate that talent management is about human resource planning and strategy:

It identifies who will become the future leaders in the company. Not just the top leaders though, the leaders for all grades of staff (HRM1).

This is a principle of developing people to evaluate and assess people to drive the planning and strategies of the company (M3).

It is the creation of a way of thinking about the company that takes the company forward. It stimulates and challenges the workers to develop their personal capabilities and then the organisation planning can use these workers to improve the organisation capabilities as a whole (SE1).

The following three responses suggest that talent management is directly connected to traditional human resource practices:

This is the part of human resources that deals with selecting and recruiting staff and measuring employee's performance at work. It's also the company's training schemes to develop the staff's skills, the skills needed in the company (HRM2).

Talent management is about developing the employees needed and most important for the company. Employee appraisals and employee feedback establishes which staff should be developed and those that should not. It is a form of grading that helps the management know which employees are the most talented for the company (M5).

It is about attracting and recruiting people with the talent required for the work (M2).

The final four descriptions of talent management focused on two aspect of talent management. Firstly, employees and their talent:

It's about giving good workers opportunities to excel in their work in the company (M1).

Talent management means developing employee's talent (M4).

This is about retaining the talented people in the company, the ones who are good at their work. The people the company wouldn't want to lose (GM1).

Secondly, the external source of talented employees:

This involves recruiting graduates from agencies that have talent pools of people. The agency usually interviews the individuals and company's can approach these agencies for the right kind of talent needed for the company (SE2).

It seems that the notion of talent management was perceived in a variety of ways by the managers interviewed in this research, as related to business strategies and planning, human resource practices and specific elements of talent management.

8.2 The Aims and Goals of Talent Management

Many of the responses about the aims and goals of talent management focused on the strategic business benefits and general organisation benefits of talent management. For example:

Talent management is in used to push the company forward, to improve the company's overall performance and raise the company's profile in the aviation industry (SE1).

Talent gives input into the company ethos and spirit. It builds the values that lie beneath the culture of the company. We want talent that infuses a sense of achievement and stresses high levels of performance, to help the company move on (HR2).

The whole workforce is developed to improve competitiveness and performance (GM1).

Talented employees should be developed to retain them; otherwise they will leave to go to other companies (HRM1). The goal should be to develop the talent to address the business strategies and improve performance of the company (SE2).

Several participants reported the employee benefits as the goals of talent management. For example:

To give employees more involvement in the decision-making process, and there should more chances for workers to use their abilities and skills to influence company initiatives (M1).

Improving employee's performance improves the performance of the company. It [talent management] provides

advantages for company and for the employees (M4).

The company needs to create a better career structure for the most talented people. They [the employees] need more opportunities to move forward with their careers (M3).

It seems, then that the aims and goals of talent management were varied. They ranged from addressing business needs and for improving the organisation culture, to creating benefits for both the employees and the company simultaneously.

8.3 Initial Thoughts on Talent Management

The manager's responses on their initial thoughts on talent management were varied. Some reported concerns about business strategy:

Does the organisation have the talent to obtain its business objectives? (HRM2).

It's important for the business to develop its talent to carry out its strategy plans over the next five years (SE1).

All levels of management should be involved in the development of talent management and its implementation (M4).

Others reported issues about the role of talent management:

Should talent management be given a higher priority in the company (HRM1)

Should we develop the skilled people, as they would be willing to put more into their work, if they were offered rewards (M2).

There needs to be some changes in the management of the talent in the organisation and the employees need to have their concerns about the future addressed (M4).

The findings have suggested that business needs could be addressed with talent management. Additionally, it was perceived that talent management might improve the work situation for employees, as there was no incentive for employees to be interested in developing their talent since there were no rewards offered to employees to do so.

8.4 Reasons for the Introduction of Talent Management

Several managers gave responses related to company performance as reasons for the introduction of talent management in Royal Jordanian. For example:

Talent management was required for competitive advantage (HRM1).

I was aware of the drop in seat sales and thought the organisation should use talent to improve sales (HRM2).

There was a dire need for change. Due to increased competition and heightened expectations of customers, than we'd been offering. Technology had changed and we needed to change to accommodate it. Such as inflight check-ins, that sort of thing (SE1).

Others noted that there was no incentives or rewards to use talent management in the company:

There was no incentive to use talent for the company. There was a fear of change all the way through the company. They really didn't like change. Change for changes sake (M3).

No significant rewards were on offer for employees to get motivated to develop their abilities (M4).

People [the employees] have complained that decisions on promotion are made in an unfair way They [employees] want to feel respected and recognized by the company. They want communication from the company about their professional development (M2).

Others were familiar with talent management:

Some of the human resource managers had good experience of talent management in previous companies (M1).

It seems that there were many reasons for introducing talent management at Royal Jordanian. Ranging from company performance, changes in technology, and as in the responses for the introduction of talent management, talent management might improve the work situation for employees, in terms of incentives and promotion.

8.5 Reasons for Implementation of Talent Management

The manager's perceptions about the reasons for the implementation of talent management seemed mostly concerned with addressing perceived problems with current employees. For example:

It was difficult to find staff in the company that was prepared to develop their abilities. Existing staff didn't want to be promoted or advanced in the company when vacancies came up. New processes of talent management was

a way to encourage individuals to develop themselves (HRM2).

It was hard to replace talented individuals [employees] when they retire or they leave the company. The individuals here, now, need developing or we'll lose staff (SE2).

People [employees] seek compensation for their hard work and developing their skills. They want to work for a company they are proud of. If they are rewarded for their talent they are more likely to stay [employed by the company] (M2).

In the past the assessment of people's [employees] work was inadequate. There was a need for people to be assessed as suitable for a work activity and it [talent management] meant people could be appraised for their work (GM1).

Another response reflected a personal motivation to carry out changes with the development of talent:

I have only been with the company for just over a year, and I thought some changes might be good for the development of workers (M1).

Another response focused on talent management and the company business strategy and future business plans:

Talent management was needed to motivate workers to develop the growth of services to the Middle East (SE1).

As I say, talent management was required for competitive advantage. We needed the employees who could work in ways and at a high level to make the company stand out, to be a leader in the industry (HRM1).

Such responses indicate that the reasons for the implementation of talent management varied from business need to simply a talent development need.

8.6 Effectiveness of Talent Management

The higher-level managers perceived that talent management in the company was effective for a variety of reasons:

Workers are accountable for their talent development and that makes the talent development process more effective (SE1).

The development of talent is related to performance management or management evaluation, and this has improved (HRM2).

It has been very effective, the talent management. We know what the workers think, their opinions, their expectations, because workers feel able to offer suggestions and contribute ideas for improvements (SE1).

Such perceptions were in contrast to those perceptions of the lower-level managers, whose perception suggested that talent management had not been effective:

I've noticed that existing people [employees] are only selected for talent management based on evaluations made only by supervisors (M2).

Plans for talent management is carried out away from the usual activities of the human resources department, like training and recruitment (M1).

It appears that there was mixed responses on whether talent management had, or had not been effective. The company has more insight into employee expectations and needs and business performance has increased. Whereas, only particular employees were selected for talent development, and human resources is no longer involved in talent management.

8.7 Connection between the Introduction and Implementation of Talent Management and Business Strategies at Royal Jordanian

Again, there was a difference in the perceptions of the higher-level managers and the perceptions of the lower-level managers on the links between introduction and implementation of talent management. Higher-level managers thought:

There is a close relation between the introduction and implementation of talent management and business strategies. We use talent to fulfil the business objectives (HRM2).

Yes, there is a connection. The talent is a major part of the future business plans (SE1).

Whereas, lower level managers contradicted such perceptions of a connection between the introduction and implementation of talent management and business strategies:

As far as I'm aware, talent management is not included in the business management. It's used simply to develop

people's [employees] talent (M3).

On the whole, talent management is perceived as being connected to business strategies, but it is also regarded as simply operating to develop talent in the company.

8.8 The Role and Skills of Management on Talent Management

Overall, most participants thought the human resources department had the appropriate skills to carry out talent management at Royal Jordanian. For example:

The human resources department has the responsibility for talent management and they should use their skills based on past experience for talent management (M4).

The human resources department provides all of the planning and processing for talent management and they have the skills to recruit new talent and develop existing talent (HRM1).

The human resources department oversees all the processes of talent management. It has the skills and evaluation methods to set up the measurement of talent, and run evaluation tests and make sure the needs of the company are catered for by those workers with talent (SE1).

However, three managers and the general manager thought they had the skills to carry out talent management at Royal Jordanian. For example:

Managers should be involved in the talent management. We [the managers] know who needs extra encouragement to develop their abilities. We are in constant contact with the workers and we recognize the potential talent in workers, and we have the people skills to do that (M1)

Human resources look at personnel matters and do not have the time or skills to deal with talent management. They recruit people [employees] for jobs but they don't deal with talent management (M2)

It seems that there is a difference in opinion on who has the skills to carry out talent management in the company.

8.9 Best Recruitment for Talent

In response to the question of what is the best way to recruit talent for the company, several of the higher-level management believed that external sources of talent were crucial for the company. For example:

Using proven recruitment methods based on theories of talent management (HRM1).

It is a good idea to carry out head hunting through alternative external sources such as, professional agencies that specialize in finding the right person. Then we can interview them and select the most suitable candidates (SE2).

Its best to recruit talented staff by defining the organisation's exact needs and use those needs to attract staff (HRM2).

Selecting only new workers that fulfil particular talent needs suitable for their job (SE1).

It is best to provide people [employees] with continuous training and provide rewards for people that is appropriate for their needs and for the company's needs as well (GM1).

Whereas, several of the lower-level managers focused on the recruitment of existing staff, for example:

It involves training up existing workers that show potential (M1).

Giving existing people [employees] incentives to develop their abilities (M3).

Offering competitive salary to the employees and being prepared to pay that level of pay (M4).

Give people [employees] with potential a chance to develop their skills, especially those people who fit into the company's culture and have the right values (M2).

There is a strong contrast in the views of the higher-level management, who generally perceive external talent as the best way to recruit talent, and the lower-level management, who believed that existing employees should be developed.

8.10 Organisation Culture

The theme of a problematic organisation culture was apparent in several of the manager's reports, on the reasons for both introducing and implementing talent management in Royal Jordanian. For example:

Many workers seem to be disenchanted with the company benefits and have no incentive to develop their talent (M1).

This suggests the culture requires changing by the management. There were many instances where the higher-level managers had a contrasting view to those of the lower-level managers. For example, the higher-level managers tended to seek talent from outside the company whereas; lower-level management thought existing employees should have their talent developed.

9. Discussion

This discussion critically explores some of the manager's responses to the interview questions, set out above. An additional theme of the organisation's culture, was evident in the differences in opinions on various aspects of talent management and these will also be explored in the discussion.

The descriptions provided by the participants on talent management, indicated that their understanding of talent management fall within the three approaches to talent management distinguished by Hurn (2010). Firstly, the rather traditional human resource practices, for example, selection, recruitment, performance measurement and training; and human resource planning and strategy.

Definitions concerning a particular element of talent management, including, for example, developing excellence, developing talent, and securing talent from external talent pools after they have been interviewed and assessed by agencies as having the particular talents the company needs. Secondly, conceptual perceptions concerning resource planning and strategy, for example, included future leaders of the company, developing talent to be the drivers of planning and business strategies, and talent management as taking the company into the future, and to increase the organisation's capability. Thirdly, descriptions of talent management that directly related to traditional human resource practices, including elements of recruitment and selection, and measuring performance and the development of employee skills, grading staff for talent development, and attracting staff with talent.

The participant's understanding of talent management provided a mixture of definitions of talent management. It seems that the notion of talent management was rather an ambiguous concept in Royal Jordanian airlines.

The literature on talent management has also suggested that the concept of talent management is difficult to define. In their review of the literature on notions of talent management, Collings and Mellahi (2009) concluded that there was no clear definition of talent management. Tansley, Turner, Foster and Harris, (2007) argued that organisations need a concise definition of talent management that is shared by the whole organisation. Interestingly, in another review of talent management Lewis and Heckman (2006) noted the various difficulties when creating definitions of talent management, but they also noted the lack of empirical evidence that supported management claims of talent management. In contrast, Boudreau and Ramstead (2005) noted that the human resource focus on services and personnel; should change to a new decision paradigm and therefore, a new definition of talent management based on strategy. It is clear that Royal Jordanian requires a clear definition of talent management.

Many of the higher-level manager's responses about the aims and goals of talent management focused on the company benefits of talent management. For example:

To improve the company's overall performance, to enhance the company ethos and spirit, to improve competitiveness, to address the business strategies, and to improve talent retention to prevent risks to the company. This latter point is in line with Hirsh's (2009) argument that an organisation should focus on employees who might create risks if they are not developed.

By contrast, several lower-level managers reported the employee benefits as the aims and goals of talent management. For example, employees should have more involvement in the decision-making process and there should be a stronger career structure for talented employees. In line with Hirsh's view that career development should be a standard feature of the workplace. Hirsch (2009) added all employees should receive continuous development over the long-term.

The higher-level manager's responses about their initial thoughts on talent management concerned issues with the agreement between talent management and the company's business strategy, in terms of its business objectives and strategy plans. Additionally, they thought talent management should be given a higher priority. It has been observed that company's that are committed to developing a talented and motivated workforce by aligning their human resources with their business strategies, will improve the performance of their business (Deb, 2005).

The lower-level managers' responses were concerned with the possibility of developing willing, skilled employees, who would require rewards for their efforts. It seems there is no incentive for employees to be interested in developing their talent since there are no rewards offered to employees to improve their talent.

Others believed they should be involved in both the development and implementation processes of talent management. Initial thoughts on talent management by higher-level managers, based on organisation strategy contrasted with thoughts on offering rewards to employees, and which members of management should carry out the implementation of talent management.

Several managers gave responses about company performance, including competitive advantage, and the drop in sales as reasons for the introduction of talent management in Royal Jordanian. Others believed that talent management was introduced in the company because the employees had no incentives to use their talent, or because decisions on promotion are not made fairly. Alternatively, it was introduced because some of the human resource managers had good experience of talent management gained in previous companies.

It seems that, according to some of the managers interviewed, the employees have a poor perception of the company as being reluctant to provide them with rewards, compensation or incentives to develop their talent. This suggests that the company may not be placing enough value on its existing employees. The employees may feel that the company is placing priorities on business factors rather than employee factors. It has been argued by Adamsen (2016) that a more inclusive stance could be taken with talent management, whereby all employees are considered and treated as having potential talent. Talent management then places each employee in working situations where they may develop their skills and abilities to the highest level they can. In line with Hirsh's view that career development should be a standard feature of the workplace, and all employees should receive continuous development over the long term. If this occurred all employees may feel valued by the company.

Perceived reasons by higher-level managers for the implementation of talent management focused on problems with current employees. Employees do not wish to develop their abilities, do not want to be promoted when vacancies arise, and talented employees are hard to replace if they leave or retire. Lower-level managers indicated that it was their own personal motivation that was a reason to implement talent management, specifically to carry out changes with the development of talent. Another pointed to the development of talent management and the company business strategy as reasons for implementation

Manager's initial thoughts on talent management and reasons for the implantation of talent management indicated the need for changes in the management of talent, and a need for improved assessment and appraisal of employees, and changes in the development of staff. Indicating that the reasons for the implementation of talent management varied from business need to simply a talent development need.

Higher-level managers perceived that talent management in the company was effective in employee accountability and management evaluation. Lower-level managers thought supervisors selected employees for talent development, suggesting other employees were not suitable for talent development, and are missing out on talent development. This further suggests that the talent management at Royal Jordanian is not effective. This form of talent management could lead to disenchantment in those employees who would like to be selected for talent management but are not. Furthermore, lower-level managers believed that talent management is not integrated within the activities of the usual activities of the human resources department. This finding goes against Hirsch's (2009) argument that the activities of human resources should be integrated with talent management processes.

Higher-level managers thought there was a strong relationship between the introduction and implementation of talent management and business strategies at Royal Jordanian. However, there was also contrasting views on this relationship by the lower-level managers, who thought talent management was not a part of the company's business strategies.

Responses about the role and skills of management on talent management demonstrated that the senior executives strongly believed the human resources department should carry out the complete process of talent management within Royal Jordanian. However, the executive's responses did not state emphatically, if the human resources department did undertake the talent management in the company.

On the other hand, several managers thought the human resources department dealt only with the recruitment of employees rather than the recruitment of talent. They did not have the capabilities to deal with talent management. Therefore, they focused on the recruitment of personnel not talent management. This finding may suggest that the human resources department is focused in managing personnel and industrial skills (Lawson et al., 2005). If this is the case, the senior management appears to expect the human resources department to be the main force for talent management in the company, even though, as the managers at lower grades perceived, the human resources department do not have the skills or capability to deal with talent management (Guthridge et al., 2006).

A managerial conflict of interest was apparent in the findings, regarding which members of the management had the necessary skills, knowledge or experience to deal with talent management. Four managers thought they had the skills to carry out talent management since they worked closely with employees and they knew whose talent should be developed at Royal Jordanian. Interestingly, Hirsh (2009) argued that all managers should be involved in talent management, that all managers should accept responsibility for both the identification and development of employee talent.

Higher-level managers perceived that talent should be recruited from outside the company. This was a surprising finding since it has been observed that there was a increasing view that talent should be recruited from within organisations, since it is acknowledged that outside recruitment of talent from competitors is frustrating, because they are expensive and tend to move on to other organisations (Deb, 2005). Lower-level managers argued for internal development of talent.

An additional theme related to the culture of the organisation seemed apparent. There was a conflict of interest in the managers. Some of the lower level managers indicated that employees working for the company should be given rewards, incentives or compensation to develop their talents. Also that the human resources department did not have the skills to carry out talent management, and they should be involved in talent management, since they worked closely with employees. Furthermore, they thought a career structure for all employees should be in operation in the company and they indicated that value should be placed on individual employees rather than the business strategy.

By contrast higher-level managers thought the recruitment for talent should be taken from external sources of talent pools, and traditional human resources had the skills to deal with talent management. Also that existing employees had no wish to develop their talent and talent was necessary for the company's business strategy and planning. Furthermore, there were several different notions of talent management, and it was not clear who has the responsibility for carrying out talent management in the company.

It seems the company has managers with different values. This could be problematic for the culture of the company. The organisation culture is an essential element of the talent management approach, according to Stockley (2014). Talent management is an approach:

“To attract, develop and retain people with the aptitude and abilities to meet current and future organizational needs. Talent management involves individual and organizational development in response to a changing and complex operating environment. It includes the creation and maintenance of a supportive, people oriented organisation culture” (p. 197).

The data has indicated that the culture at Royal Jordanian is not based on a supportive, people oriented framework that is required for the talent management approach, according to Stockley's definition of talent management.

10. Conclusion

The definition of talent management in the company was ambiguous and meant different things to the managers. It was used to refer to strategy and planning, an element of talent management and traditional human resources management. The aims and goals of talent management for higher-level managers focused on the company benefits of talent management, of performance, competitiveness, and business strategies, and to improve retention. Lower-level managers were concerned with employee benefits, of more involvement in the decision-making process and a stronger career structure for talented employees.

Initial thoughts on talent management by the higher-level managers concerned the agreement between talent management, and the business strategy, and talent management should be given a higher priority. Lower-level managers were concerned with developing willing, skilled employees, who would require rewards for their efforts, and managers should be involved in the development and implementation of talent management. The introduction of talent management related to company performance, competitive advantage, the drop in sales, because the employees had no incentives to use their talent, and because decisions on promotion were not made fairly. The implementation of talent management according to the higher-level managers resulted from problems with current employees who had no wish to develop their abilities and business performance. Lower-level managers had personal motivation to implement talent management, to make changes to the talent management in the company.

Talent management in the company was regarded as effective for the higher-level managers particularly employee accountability and management evaluation. But ineffective by lower-level managers, who thought existing employees were selected only by supervisors, and talent management is not integrated within the

activities of the of the human resources department. There was a contrast between the higher-level managers perceptions that there was a strong relationship between the introduction and implementation of talent management and business strategies, and lower-level managers, who thought talent management was not a part of the company's business strategies.

Senior executives strongly believed the human resources department should carry out talent management but they did not say that the human resources department did carry out talent management in the company. Others thought the human resources department dealt only with the recruitment of employees rather than the recruitment of talent. Higher-level managers perceived that talent should be recruited from outside the company, despite the literature that has argued for the development of talent within organisations. The lower-level managers argued for the internal development of talent. The managers have suggested changes should occur with development of talent and this could involve changing the culture of the organisation, in terms of who manages the talent management, and who has their talent developed.

The responses to the questions appeared to indicate evidence of a problematic organisation culture, with managers with different values on the nature of talent management being operated in the company. There were several different definitions of talent management, there were several managers who regarded themselves as appropriate for developing talent in the employees of which they were in contact, there was disagreement about the role of the human resource department and the skills and capabilities of that department to carry out talent management, and who should be developed and finally, it was not clear who had the responsibility for carrying out talent management in the company. It is clear that the definition and aims of the talent management within the company needs to be clarified, as does the role of the management who are responsible for talent management.

The main points arising from the findings indicate some recommendations for the company. The company could improve its employee incentives to develop their talent. It could also provide a career development structure for all employees and treat all employees as able to develop their abilities to the best they can. Talent management should be used with existing employees, not just with the recruitment of talent from talent pools outside the company.

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