Challenges in Talent Management in Selected Public Universities

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Abstract: Talent Management(TM) has triggered practitioner and academician to dig further in this particular area. In the corporate world, TM has become one of the essential programs that able to value their people. However, TM in public universities in Malaysia is still in early stages whereby there are lots of challenges need to be faced by the management. Therefore, this research conducted to examine the challenges faced by the dean in selected public universities in Malaysia. A qualitative approach has been used towards respondents and information obtained analyzed using ATLAS.Ti. Findings indicated that in TM practices which were attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining talent have their own challenges. Respondents agreed that TM has brought the university to a high level in managing people whereby it helps the employee to feel motivated and appreciated. In conclusion, the introduction of TM in public university in Malaysia has helped the human resource system to be better. The overall concept of TM will enhance employee capabilities and competencies to achieve mission and vision of the organization.

1. Introduction

In the last decennium, talent management has been put forward as a solution for various challenges in a society like for example the demographic evolutions on the labor market. At the same time, Talent Management runs the risk of being depicted as a passing hype since a common definition, as well as a scope and a conceptual framework, are still non-existing. Furthermore, most research on Talent Management can be situated in the private sector. In doing research on Talent management in the public sector, attention must be paid to the specific context in which governments develop their HR policy (Thuissen, Boselie & Fruytier, 2011).

The emergence of talent management into the literature and practice is still considered as fairly new, yet it gained a considerable attention among both researchers and practitioners for its strategic influence in the current highly competitive global economy (McCauley & Wakefield, 2006). So far, the academic literature focused on developing a clear definition of the concept of talent management and exploring its impact on organizational performance in terms of creating competitive advantage and enhancing high level of motivation and engagement among talents (Bhatnagar, 2007; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Kehinde, 2012; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Yarnall, 2011). Despite this focus and attention, various researchers noted that talent management literature continues to be under-explored (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Garrow& Hirsh, 2008; Höglund, 2012; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Reilly, 2008; Yarnall, 2011). In addressing the academic background of talent management, Lewis and Heckman (2006) argued that the subject was explicitly explored from the practitioners’ perspective without being subject to solid academic and peer-reviewed research. In line with this reasoning, Collings and Mellahi (2009) noted that the literature of talent management remains unclear about the concept as a whole especially in terms of its definition and theoretical boundaries. In addition, from the practitioner’s perspective, Yarnall (2011) posited that organizations are implementing talent management without careful considerations to the consequences of such application neither on the talent pool nor on the remaining employees. From the practical background, Garrow and Hirsh (2008) noted that talent management requires additional attention in terms of its focus and fit within the organization. Among the different dimensions that require additional attention, Garrow & Hirsh (2008) highlighted the talent management fitness into the organization's culture and workforce. According to Höglund (2012) talent management, as an HR practice sends organizational signals that are interpreted differently by employees in a way that impacts their attitudes and behaviors. However, positive and negative impacts of talent management on employees are not fully explored yet and constitute a current gap within the talent management literature (Höglund, 2012). In addition, how the different groups of employees perceive the implication of talent management on their employment relationships constitute a fundamental research blueprint for expanding the scarce
knowledge about the consequences of talent management (Högglund, 2012). This research study intended to examine how employees identified as talents develop a different perception of their employment relationship with their organizations versus those not identified as talents.

1.1. Attracting and Recruiting Talent

Attracting talent is for people who will fulfill its talent requirements in order to attract employees with the right skills and attitudes, companies need to find ways to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Iqbal, Qureshi, Khan, & Hijazi, 2013; Oracle, 2014; Schreier & Prügl, 2011). Procter and Gamble as cited in Kapoor (2012) and Günter et al., (2012) about hiring process that able to attract 600,000 application worldwide in one year, and due to that massive application, they managed to hire 2,700 people by stressing in opportunities for long-term careers and promotion from the company itself. The companies that have been studied differed considerably in how they resolve the tension between maintaining a consistent brand identity across business units and regions and responding to local demands.

1.2. Developing Talent

In different perspectives, employees can be developed by using technologies (Corsello, 2012) and it has a vital role towards effective management (Bidayatul Akmal Muda Kamil, 2013; Boudreau & Ramstad, 2004; Moczydlowska, 2012; Stahl, Björkman, Farndale, Gunter, Morris, et al., 2012; Tajuuddin et al., 2015a; Zhuge & Zhang, 2007). As noted by Ruiz and Fuentes (2016) and Corsello, (2012), technology will enable organizations and individuals to automate and standardize key processes as well as gain access to and generate a greater volume of timely and useful information, thus helping to maximize the organization’s TM strategy in a cost effective manner. Debane, Defossez, & McMillan, (2014) in their research emphasize on using of technology can be useful in the future and help the organization to grow. In addition, they also develop their own program to be used in manager development.

1.3. Retaining Talent

In India, service sector lead growth has been letting into one’s house a great amount of complete attention. The growth is more bent in the direction of knowledge and skills. Due to this, it has happened to focus to the manpower that embedded with skilled. Moreover, India is one of the best countries that able to supply a good talent into the world. On the other sides, the top student that has been recognized globally due to great achievement in their studies has been acknowledged by the World Economic Forum rankings (Gupta, 2010; Gupta & Tomar, 2008). However, most of the organization portrayed their concerns about the employability of this talent recently (Brown, Hesketh, & Williams, 2011; Fuchs, 2014; Hamid et al., 2011; Nilsson, 2014). Research has been done by Singh et al., (2012), it shows employees most likely to stay with their employers once employers know how to appreciate them. They also come up with four factors which are A company’s PM and professional development practices, the quality of supervision it provides employees, and the extent to which it behaves in a socially responsible.

2. Methodology

In this study, the qualitative has been used in order to collect information from the respondents. Three selected deans have been chosen from three selected public universities in Malaysia which are Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, and Universiti Teknologi Mara. The researcher took about one month to gather all the information starting from making an appointment, duration of the interview, extracting data from the voice recorder and analyzing using ATLAST.Ti.

3. Result

According to them, they actually agreed about each stage in TM actually, have their generally own challenges in enhancing JS and PM. From each challenge, they also kind of found the silver lining behind it generally such they for all intents and purposes are able to particularly find a quality staff that will particularly bring the faculty and HLI forward, or so they literally thought. Even though TM is still new in very public HLIs, the for all intents and purposes long-term effects will particularly be tremendously positives in producing for all intents and purposes better employee which will really lead to the generally better performance of the HLI. Each dean, for the most part, has encountered different challenges in TM and however, they basically agreed that if they have an actually full support system from academician and administration, TM will mostly be a success in anyways. They also were asked about the recommendation that they can suggest in order to make TM is better in practicing. According to Dean A, introducing and strengthening right away the talent management in public higher learning institution. For example, identify those are a really talented academician and then locate them in the talent pool. In a talent pool group, develop them with.
skills either managerial skills or teaching skills. After 5 years, select academician that are met the requirement to fill the vacant position either management position or academic position. Meanwhile, Dean B mentioned about his suggestion and HLIs should be prepared to create a special scheme to attract those with specialized expertise, and then part of development or affairs corporate there should be a clear marketing strategy for introducing the respective HLIs, and also diversifying methods of recruitment for academic and research purposes, this staff may not have the academic qualifications but this approach to determine the ability of staff commensurate with academic certificates should be considered as experience. Lastly, Dean C threw his opinion about the suggestion that the HLI can implement which HLIs need to strike a balance between the needs of expertise and academic qualifications to candidates who possess characteristics pliable and viable. Give a balanced scoring during interviews with academic qualifications. Candidates elected to fill the vacancy but not because of his expertise. He also added on HLIs should have a strategic plan and a succession plan that positions clearly understood and accepted by the citizens of HLIs and Lastly is HLIs must hold a workshop to strategic planning or succession planning office are transparent and appreciated by all campuses. A best practices-based approach to talent management puts employee performance at the core of all talent management.

4. Discussion

From the findings in this study, it was revealed that challenges came from all phases which are attracting and recruiting talent, developing talent and retaining talent. First of all, in the first phase, attracting and recruiting talent. Tim and Tom (2011) mentioned recruiting people is the hardest process in TM practices. This is aligned with Robert Walter Global Salary Survey (2016) findings addressed due to talent deficit, the government established TalentCorp Malaysia in order to attract overseas Malaysians back home. In the research findings which indicated TM in public HLI in Malaysia is still new and the strategy to attract best potential people is almost the same. This is because of a public HLI is attached with the government and the system of attracting and recruiting talent similarly the same with the technique applies by the government to attract or recruiting people. This is supported by Hussin, Ale, Ghinwa & Zakaa (2016) which have revealed competition and lack of available highly talented and skilled employees make finding and retaining talented people a major priority for organizations. Thus, the initiative taken by the HLI is by providing a proper program to search for a new talent and discover them within the HLI.

Apart from that, Kuan (2012) mentioned about an effective, efficient, competitive and resilient employee will definitely depend on the quality of its HRM. A Strong foundation of HRM, it will make the staff feel better, safe and motivate to work since they are thinking that they are being protected by good management portrayed by the organization. Next, due to current economic upside down, talents are looking for remuneration, benefits, and salary. This finding is supported by Thomas, Cameron, and Deep (2008) which revealed about make a more compelling case for government employment, emphasizing its many advantages including interesting work, attractive benefits, job security and upward mobility. Since the public HLI is attached with the government, the salary, benefits, and remuneration are fixed. The increment will happen yearly but it also depends on the performance. Two type of employee status in HLI nowadays which are permanent and contract staff and certainly the benefits would be different. Therefore, an academician in the HLI needs to put extra work such as involving themselves in research in order to gain extra money to cater with their commitment. Research grants are provided by the government to help the industry grow and it is actually beneficial to all parties such as citizen, student, academician, government, industry and etc.

Next challenge would be developing talent. In this stage, challenges faced were creating a value proposition that appeals to multiple generations in today workplace. This challenge also aligns with research finding done by Deborah and Monica (2010). Since the HLI extracting a fresh talent among their students, therefore the complexity of mixing multiple generations is kind of problems. The huge gap between generations can bring two possibilities either the faculty moving forward or vice versa. According to Lynette & Carley (2007) indicated persistent skills shortages, the challenging demographics the workforce and the diversity of generation in workplace give quite challenges to the organization. At this stage, the leader should come up with program, training, meeting, motivation, team building in order to have them connected among them and exchanging ideas for better future (Jill, 2014).

Experience and entry-level academician would give significant impact to the faculty if the leader knows to utilize their expertise to the max. Example, assigning entry-level and experienced academician in one research team is actually beneficial to the faculty as well as HLI due to great ideas, procedures, work ethics among these generations (Angela, 2012). In addition, developing a robust leadership pipeline also a part of developing talent. The ultimate dream of being an academician is to achieve the high rank of position which is a professor. Thus, in creating the path, it is challenging to the leader (Raida, 2009).
According to Tamanna (2015), major challenges encountering corporates all over the world to building leaders, retaining, sustaining talent capital. Meanwhile, Alexandra (2008), selecting a leader needs a proper plan due to a talented shortage in this current world, especially in the educational sector. Based on that statement, it is certainly important to have academicians with leadership traits in achieving and producing quality product and services in future.

In retaining talent, leader faced challenges in various forms. As a government-linked HLI, most of the talent chooses to be an academician of the stability of institution itself, benefits before and after their servicing like easy to apply any loans, retirement scheme and etc. Thus, this kind of advantages actually eyes opener to any talents especially young generations. Some of the good academicians quit their job due to a better position at the new institution and certainly better salary. This research finding aligns with Jedarm (2014) revealed talents often seen salary as a major factor of retaining. Therefore, a leader needs to have a better sight of retaining their best talents such as a proper plan for academician career path and it would give a significant impact to the HLI in future (Victor & Strayer, 2014). Sumita (2014) also stress on the shift in work values which have come across generations and the need for effective succession and career progression planning and understanding work values of employees.

According to the report done by NAHERI (2014), the implementation of TM is still new and program planned in each HLI is different about retaining their staff. This is also supported by Rudhumbu & Maphosa (2015) indicates that new implementation of TM is will be in progress. As a linked government HLI, the retirement scheme also one of the biggest factor that talent will retain. Few approaches have been conducted and implemented by the government to restructuring the retirement scheme to all government servants.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, in any organizations either in corporate or education sector, TM has its own challenges in order to help the organization to grow stronger. Therefore, the effort shown by Ministry of Higher Education to introduce TM in the public university has brought the university to a high level in order to compete with another university locally or internationally.

6. References


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