TALENT MANAGEMENT AND COMPETENCIES: A CROSS COUNTRY STUDY OF MALAYSIAN AND VIETNAM SEMI-PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Talent Management has gained attention of researchers and practitioners in developing nations in recent years. There is a shortage of empirical driven research in the South East Asian region and recent reports alerting to a crisis emerging in the higher education sector. Little is known about talent management perceptions and behaviour of Academics in universities in the region. Four constructs were identified and analysed from the literature - talent identification, talent culture, talent competencies and talent development. Questionnaires were distributed to academics from 4 semi-private universities in Malaysia and Vietnam. The findings reveal that talent identification, talent development and talent management culture are the most important contributors to talent management competency for Academics across the samples. The findings also suggest that talent management competency levels for Academics are significantly higher when management have integrated HR systems that identify value, measure team and individual performance, assess and develop, give honest formal feedback and a culture of rewarding high performance. The implications of the study suggest that organizations which embark on a 'one size fits all' Talent management strategy that ignore these job related factors could eventually face further problems such as high staff turnover, poor morale and associated costs. The paper offers a unique talent management model to contribute and enhance academic's intentions of careers in the South East Asian region and market segment.

Keywords: Talent Management Behaviour, Talent Management Perception, Semi-Private Universities, Talent Management Identification, Development, Culture Competency, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Talent Management In Developing Countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global environment is under severe challenge facing enormous competition and one of major challenges is employee talent management, which has become a potential powerful source of competitive advantage and sustainability (Ingham et al, 2006). Two studies, one of 40 global companies (Ready and Conger, 2007) another more recently of 37 multi-national firms (Bjorkman, Farndale Morris, Paauwe, Stiles, Trevor and Wright, 2012) found that virtually all of them identified a lack of a sufficient talent pipeline to fill strategic positions within the organization, which considerably constrained their ability to grow and sustain their business.

There is an abundance of academic research on talent management in various regional contexts (Collings and Mellahi 2009; Cooke 2011, 2012; Jones et al. 2012; McDonnell, Collings and Burgess 2012). However, there is a distinct lack of clarity regarding the definition, scope and overall goals of talent management, in tandem with empirically based research (Lewis and Heckman 2006).

An investigation of the number of publications devoted to Talent Management using print media indicators and bibliometrics conducted by Iles, Preece & Chuai, 2010 revealed that in the year 2000 there were 130 articles cited in Emerald databases and 230 in Business Source Premier, compared to the year 2008 (361 in Emerald and 989 in Business Source Premier), more than a threefold increase. Much of the debate on talent management is anecdotal rather than empirically based, and arguments are predominantly based on the selective self-reports of executives, and or individualistic with little or no emphasis on the strategic implications of talent management of organisations (Lewis and Heckman 2006, 142). This study attempts to broaden the empirical literature and is unique in that the locus of attention is on self-reporting of academics' perceptions of the talent management nuances at the coal face in four different organisations in a cross country sample of Malaysia and Vietnam.

1.1. Malaysian context: economy and university sectors

Bernama, the official governmental news agency of Malaysia, recently cited that the country of approximately 26 million populations has over one million Malaysians working overseas, in countries like Singapore and Australia, as well as countries outside the region in the United States and United Kingdom. Brain drain (returning to or investing in another country) appears to have escalated with 140,000 people leaving the country permanently in 2007 compared to 305,000 between March 2008 and

August 2009 (Asia Sentinel 2010; Harvey & Groutsis 2015).

In 1991 as recommended by the Wawasan 2020 (Vision 2020) the then Mahatthir administration made 138 recommendations, its largest was to become a regional education hub for higher education. Since then the private education Act and the Universities and University College Act amendments has seen three foreign universities set up with joint government ownership and control, local partnerships of the nine universities franchising to local private colleges, and overseas joint partnerships with foreign multi-nationals and universities in UK, Africa, China Indonesia and Cambodia (as cited in Mok, 2011). In 2004, 32% of students were enrolled in private higher education institutions in Malaysia. With some 27,000 international students studying in these institutions. 19 UK Universities are offering some 110 twinning programs, 18 Australian universities offering 71 programs. What is unique about Malaysia is that the government applies strong centralised intervention in terms of quality framework for both public and private higher education institutions yet it is embarked on market acceleration of the sector to become a regional hub of transnational proportions.

1.2. Government Linked Companies' Universities (GLCs Universities)

The Ministry of Education's, Malaysia (MOE), primary objective under the National Education Blueprint (2013-2025) released in September, 2013 is to transform the country's education system to be on par with those of developed countries. It has established strategic targets to be achieved by 2020 to increase the number of graduates by 40 per cent of the Malaysian population (Straits Times, 2014). This objective is to be driven by both the public and private universities in Malaysia. In order to achieve this objective, clearly public universities (fully funded by the government), may not be able to single-handedly achieve. Hence, many private universities have been granted the approvals to conduct and produce higher education graduates.

The Malaysian tertiary education provided by private providers (internationally recognised) has a global market share of 3% of total international students. The Malaysian government envisages that by 2015 the education sector would be able to attract 150,000 international students. It has been rationalised by the Malaysian government that with an increasing gross output of M$3.0 billion to M$ $7.00 billion, from 2005 to 2008 from private education sector, this sector is a viable and attractive sector (10th Malaysian Plan, p.130). In driving the objectives towards large scale high quality graduates, initiatives were reviewed and established under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) in 2010, which called for more university graduates to manage priority sectors, including tourism, health, biotechnology and education itself. These initiatives increased the global student enrolment for international students in Malaysia to over 90,000 in 2012 and enabled Malaysia as the world's 11th largest exporter of educational services (MOHE, 2012; Borneo Post, July 23, 2012).

The increasing demand for higher education both from the domestic and international students has increased the challenges for the current 20 public universities and 20 private universities (under large Government Linked Companies or GLC universities), and those set up by foreign universities (branch campus)in Malaysia (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013). The total student enrolment at both the public and privates universities stands at 290,000 as at 2013/2014 in wide ranging disciplines (MOHE, 2014).

With the increasing student population and the objectives set by the Malaysian government to achieve to become an 'educational hub for excellence in the Asian region' many challenges has since risen. These challenges include space and facilities for the increasing student population, high quality academics and professionals to deliver high standard and internationally accepted qualifications. Needless to say one of the primary challenges is the attraction and retention of qualified and competent academic staff for GLCs. The Ministry's data indicate that in 2008 there were only 1,070 PhD academics and 6,846 master's academics in service which does not suffice the increasing demand. The Malaysian Education Ministry reported that there was an urgent need for competent educators in the education industry (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, website, 2013). Evidence from several prominent researchers in Malaysia also suggest that some universities in Malaysia were losing students because of service quality and a lack of competent academics (Firdaus, 2006; Latif, et al. 2004; Hasan, et al., 2008, Ismail & Abiddin, 2009).

This developing situation of demand for high quality academics in Higher Education has further been compounded with the attrition rate of qualified and competent academics. A study by The National Higher Education Research Institute (USM), Penang in 2004, reported that both the Public and Private Universities had an attrition rate of 12% of PhD academics and 4.1% non-PhD academics. Almost 40% of these highly qualified academics sort employment in business and other non- educational sectors in 2004. The turnover was attributed to attractive compensation packages, career development opportunities, job security (usually on contract appointments with the academic institutions) and workload pressures. In another recent study on the attrition rate of academics, Chong (2014) reported that this trend had not been addressed and has continued at the rate of 30% in the education sector between July 2010 and June 2011. The Malaysian government (Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in its Strategic MasterPlan 2020 has identified several initiatives to addressed this growing concern for specifically for the Higher Education sector.

One of the critical initiatives for immediate action was the establishment of a National Research Consortium to identify and retain talent research academics besides attracting talent from overseas (Strategic Plan, MOE, 2014). Another government initiative offered attractive incentives to high quality talent to return under the Talent Corp Malaysia program.

The key challenge of the education system is to provide Malaysia with a competent workforce with knowledge and skills. Overall it has been widely

reported that the country needs an estimated 2.2 million total workforce by 2010. Presently, only about 12% of the general population pursue tertiary studies locally and a significant portion of those students study abroad (NAPIEI, 2002). By the year 2020, the government hopes that 40 per cent of the Malaysian population will attend tertiary education. Compounding this relatively small number of highly qualified academics discussed above and the quality service delivery, the attrition rate of academics in private universities such as the GLCs has become a significant concern. Competent academics are urgently required with the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) identifying 3 leading GLC universities spearheaded for specialised and strategic targets set under the Malaysian Economic Master Plan 2020. These GLCs are Universiti Tenaga Malaysia (UNITEN), Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) and Multimedia University of Malaysia (MMU).

Table 1. Summary of TM studies in Malaysia Researchers

	Research work
Zaini A., Siti A.,Kamaruzaman J., (2009)	Succession Planning in Malaysian Institutions of Higher Education
Scullion and Collings,(2010)	Global Talent Management, research on Multimedia University
Gopal, A., (2011)	Internationalization of higher education: Preparing faculty to teach cross-culturally.
Khairunneesam, M.N., (2011)	Work life balance and Intention to leave among Academics in Malaysian Public Higher Education Institutions.
Rosdi I. S., Harris H., (2011),	Human Resource Management practices and organisation commitment in Higher Ed. Malaysia

1.3. Vietnam context: economy and university sectors

Similar to Malaysia, Vietnam is also facing a shortage of PhD qualified academics and quality service delivery, it appears also to be losing academics to better paid private industry positions and secure government positions. However, the central socialist government's response entails various strategies from suspension of poor quality undergraduate and post-graduate programmes to recruiting PhD qualified expats, and sending younger Academics to study high quality PhD's overseas and repatriating them.

Between 1995 and 2005 student enrolments increased 4.43 times (from 297,900 to 1,319,754 students. Teaching staff increased by less than half (22,750 to 47,616 lecturers. A massive overload of teaching contributing to low morale and possibly poor Work Life Management. Coupled with low base salaries and ageing cohorts, where the majority of full & associate professors being over 55 years of age. Most people consider Academics as full-time public servants and not generally free to engage with local firms for research. With a large percentage of Academics working 2nd and 3rd teaching jobs in private institutions to supplement their teaching income (Ca 2006, World Bank Report).

According to MOET 2012 data, Vietnam had 77 universities and 114 colleges, in 2005 93 universities & 137 colleges, growing was 2 national universities, three regional (with 20 members), 76 independent. Amongst these were two semi-private 16 private universities and four semi-private and three private colleges. Research and teaching collaboration is low due to local skills emphasis on teaching and shortage of higher qualified staff with only 51% of Academics with higher degree qualifications (Ca 2006, World Bank Report).

In contrast to Malaysia, Vietnam does not yet offer incentives to foreign   educated Vietnamese. (Harvard Report 2008). No Vietnamese institution appears in any of the widely used (if problematic) league tables of leading Asian universities. Vietnamese universities are not producing the educated workforce that Vietnam's economy and society demand. Surveys conducted by government-linked associations have found that as many as 50% of Vietnamese university graduates are unable to find jobs in their area of specialization, evidence that the disconnect between classroom and the needs of the market is large. *Merit-based selection:* Corruption is rife and it is well known that degrees and titles can be purchased. University personnel systems are opaque and promotion is too often based on non-scholastic criteria such as seniority, family and political background, and personal connections. Faculties and the upper levels of administration tend to be dominated by individuals trained in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe who cannot speak English and, in not a few cases, are hostile to younger, western educated colleagues. *Autonomy:* Vietnamese academic institutions remain subject to a highly centralized system of control. The central government determines how many students, universities may enrol, and (in the case of public universities) how much university instructors are paid. Even decisions as core to the operations of a university as promoting faculty are controlled by the centre. This system denies universities and institutes the incentive to compete or innovate. Remuneration is based on seniority, and official salaries are so low that university instructors must moonlight excessively to support themselves. Research and teaching collaboration is low due to local skills emphasis on teaching and shortage of higher qualified staff with only 51% of Academics with higher degree qualifications. (Harvard's Ash Institute Report on Vietnamese Higher Education: Crisis & response 2008).

Statistics in 2013, from the Ministry of Science and Technology show that Vietnam has 24,300 PhDs and 101,000 master's degree holders - an increase of 7% and 14% respectively over the previous year. However, just 8,520 PhD holders were teaching in universities, while 633 were at junior colleges - an indication that many PhD holders do not opt for higher education jobs. Many prefer posts in government and state-owned enterprises.

A recent announcement by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) that 207 undergraduate programmes at 71 universities and colleges will be axed in the forthcoming academic year - in part because of under-qualified academics - has shocked the higher education community. online magazine *Motthegioi* - One World.

The Vietnamese higher education sector is volatile, with the government reacting by closing poor quality programmes and intervening to attempt redress talent management shortages. The current central government regulations lay down that bachelor programmes must have at least one lecturer with a PhD degree and three lecturers with masters degrees. Associate bachelor programmes require four lecturers with at least masters. Full-time academic staff should be adequate to cover around 70% of the coursework of the programme. Recently the central government has implemented a slew of measures, including a plan to send thousands g young lecturers to study for PhDs abroad, slashing student enrolment to maintain a reasonable ratio of lecturer-to-student, temporarily halting courses or even shutting institutions that do not match the requirements in terms of facilities and especially faculty. In 2012, MOET revoked the operating licences of 58 doctoral programmes. In 2013, 161 other masters degree courses were also temporarily suspended.

Talent management has been defined and applied in various ways. The generic understanding and views among the interviewed Government Link Companies are; talent management is to build a competent workforce to realize the vision and mission of the company. Employees with talents are those who have the potential to occupy critical positions. Stuart, Kotze and Dunn (2006) defined that talent is not just about having the brainpower, knowledge, experience, skill or the mental and physical characteristics to do something different or a higher order of difficulty and complexity in the future..

"Educational excellence" which is about world class branding, marketable academic programmes, research activities and facilities in attracting and retaining foreign and local students (Isahak, 2007), but how does one compete to be different? Governing bodies, in Malaysia such as the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) provide accreditation to quality programmes that fulfil certain standards. Universities have the responsibility to produce graduates that will meet the requirements of the industries. However, universities are lagging behind in meeting the needs of the industries (Hernaut, 2002).

In this context, talent management refers to the process of developing and integrating new workers, developing and retaining current workers, and attracting highly skilled workers to work for a company and it's beneficial to the organization. Furthermore, by HR explaining to management and employees why talent management is important, how it works and what the benefits are to the organization and participants, talent management strategies are more likely to be seen as a fair process.

Talent management to continue to training and developing high performers for potential new roles, identify their knowledge gaps, and implement initiatives to enhance the competencies among academicians at these GLCs' university. Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten) set up and managed by Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) under PETRONAS and Multimedia University (MMU) under it's parent company which is Telekom Malaysia (TM). These GLCs are rapidly growing in terms of broad discipline delivery and graduate satisfactory completions annually. With this development, the GLCs'academic quality and talent up skilling and retention of academic staff has become paramount.

Talent management actually can provide the job security for academics as it has positive and significant influence on employee attitudinal outcomes and organizational effectiveness e.g. employee work engagement, turnover avoidance, and value addition. The outcomes of poor managerial practices and situational factors associated with working inHigher education institutions could result in academics, employers and consumers alike complaining of poor quality service, high turnover, absenteeism and stress.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current literature on Talent Management (TM) has ambiguities around the definition of the concept, it is also evident that there is a lack of theoretical development in the area (for notable exceptions see Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005; 2007; Cappelli, 2008; Lewis and Heckman, 2006). A significant body of strategic HRM literature has pointed to the potential of human resources as a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Becker and Huselid, 2006; Schuler and Jackson, 1987), and argued that the resources and capabilities that underpin firms' competitive advantage are directly tied to the capabilities of talented individuals who make up the firm's human capital pool (Cheese, Thomas and Craig, 2008; Wright, McMahan, and McWilliams, 1994).

The terms "talent management", talent strategy", "succession management", and "human resource planning" are often used interchangeably. Talent management refers to the process of developing and integrating new workers, developing and retaining current workers, and attracting skilled workers to work for your company. Talent management is concerned with developing strategy; identifying talent gaps; succession planning and recruiting, selecting, educating, motivating and retaining talented employees through a variety of initiatives (Guthridge and Komm & Lawson 2008; Ringo, Schweyer, De Marco, Jones & Lesser 2010).

According to Jantan et al., (2009) talent management can be defined as an outcome to ensure the right person is in the right job; process to ensure leadership continuity in key positions and encourage individual advancement, and decision to manage supply, demand and flow of talent through human capital engine. The talent management process consists of recognizing the key talent areas in organization, identifying the people in the organization who constitute its key talent, and conducting development activities for the talent pool to retain and engage them and has then ready to move into more significant roles.

Baum (2008) said that talent management is an organisational mindset that seeks to assure that the supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time, based on strategic business objectives.

Talent consist of those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in

the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential (CIPD, 2007) (Davies and Davies, 2010). Talent management is increasingly seen as a critical factor in developing successful organizations and is a strategic priority for businesses (Davies and Davies, 2010).

Talent management is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement or retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation (CIPD, 2006) (Davies and Davies, 2010). Armstrong and Baron (2007) claimed that Talent management is being viewed as a comprehensive and integrated set of activities to ensure that the organisation attracts, retains, motivates and develops the talented people it need now and in the future). Talent is one of the most critical factors in achieving organizational effectiveness. Therefore it is important for GLCs'to focus on competency of the academic staff as it enhances skill, attitudes and behaviour that an individual or an organization is competent at and the ability to deliver; perform (a set of tasks with relative ease and with a high level of predictability in terms of quality and timeliness) (Spencer, 1993, cited in Tripathi et al., 2010).

Furthermore, capabilities that underpin firms' competitive advantage are directly tied to the capabilities of talented individuals who make up the firm's human capital pool (Cheese, Thomas and Craig, 2008; Wright, McMahan, and McWilliams, 1994). Hence, competency development is imperative and this refers to those activities carried out by the organization and the employee to maintain or enhance the employee's functional, learning and career competencies (Forrire & Sels, 2003).

2.1. Davies's Model

From the perspective of Davies and Davies, (2010), talent management is defined as a systematic and dynamic process of discovering, developing and sustaining talent. What works depends on the context and the way the organisation implements practices.

Davies model is based on three elements of talent practice. These are:

2.2. Talent Identification

Talent identification is the process and activities to define and discover the sources of talent. Attracting people to the organisation is not the same as attracting the right people, who will be enthusiastic, highly capable and loyal to the values, beliefs and mission of the organisation (Davies and Davies, 2010). In talent identification, management of institution will search the talented academician that would best benefit for academy future performance. Organisations are "operating in increasingly dynamic environments", and to be "truly successful they need to stay one step ahead of the game and predict who will be the key drivers of their future success" (Hay Group, 2005) (Cited in Davies and Davies, 2010). So the best organisations are future focused and predict what skills, attitudes and behaviours they will need from their talented individuals (Davies and Davies, 2010). Indeed, talent identification is imperative to identifying key positions which

contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions.

2.3. Talent Development

In talent development, learning and skills development is the most important capability for talent-focused organisation. An effective organisation will have a well-established process for the professional learning of all staff, which is effectively connected with other processes such as a performance management (Davies and Davies, 2010). According to Davies and Davies (2010), it is important to consider; what is in place for the development of all staff and where does talent enablement fit in. The variety of learning practices which are integrated with other human resources process, professional learning should be purposeful and link with strategic intents and have an impact (Davies and Davies, 2010).

Talent development involves developing leaders via processes such as coaching, feedback, training, mentoring and challenging employees (Evans, Pucik, and Barsoux, 2002) (Cited in Ibeh and Debrah, 2011). Developed in alignment with the research base on achievement motivation and talent development (Dweck, 2006; Pink, 2009; Colvin, 2008).

Various training and workshops will increase the supply of highly skilled academicians, enhance the knowledge of academicians and equip them with up-to-date skills and upgrade the quality and productivity of academicians. An example of the workshop focused on topics such as "Managing Conflict", "Managing Performance in Your Department", Enriching the Student Experience" and "Recruiting and Retaining Faculty". Furthermore, by providing an external training it is generates professional growth for the academicians. Whilst the academic staff is eligible for one local training and one overseas training per year (Choong, Wong & Lau, 2011).

"A job competency is an underlying characteristic of a person in that it may be a motive, a trait, a skill, an aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses".

Hence training and development is a strategic approach to increase workplace productivity and as incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its tasks and functions with competence.

Efforts will be intensify to raise the number of faculty members with PhD qualifications in order to meet international quality standards and ratings. In addition to do that, various schemes must be made available   to assist staff to upgrade their academic qualification by furthering their studies locally or abroad. These essential efforts undoubtedly will create opportunities to improve the quality of academicians. As employees' knowledge, skills and competencies are an important competitive weapon, hence talent needs to be maximized and recognized as one of the discrete source of organizational competitive advantage (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

2.4. Talent Culture

Talent culture enable talent for future focused activity which enables the planned replacement of key staff. Loyalty, commitment and retention cannot be guaranteed but in the process of developing people to "step up", organisation should consider whether it encourages people not to "stay on board" (Davies and Davies, 2010).

According to Davies and Davies (2010) talented people need to feel valued and their contribution is making a difference as such in term of affirmative is powerful; feeling appreciated, recognised and valued is motivational. Opportunities will help the talented person feel motivated and aligned to the organisation but future opportunities and roles will also need to be available to make this happen (Davies and Davies, 2010).

Cheese et al, (2008) suggest that motivation commitment, trust, empathy and inspiration, ensure that an individual is able to align their own interest with the organisation and assist with the retention of those talented individuals (Cited in Davies and Davies, 2010). In order to become a talent-focused organisation, the institution could focus on factors that determine the organisation culture. Furthermore, it is crucial for the institution to implement relationship building strategies for the academic's career development and opportunities Talented people need to feel valued and that their contribution is making a difference. Affirmation is powerful; feeling appreciated, recognised and valued is motivational. Opportunities will help the talented person feel motivated and aligned to the organization but future opportunities and roles will also need to be available at the right time.

Culture is one of the most precious things a company has; you must work harder on it than anything else (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010). Indeed creating an excellent working culture in the university, the academic's will be motivated. Throughout, job involvement it is the physical, emotional and mental involvement of people in an activity which provide a sound base for decision making, so employees with high level of job involvement strongly identify with and really care about the job they are actually engaged (Robbins & Coulter, 2005:375).

On the other hand, social environment of the organization can significantly affect employee job satisfaction especially co-workers interaction because cooperative co-workers are a modest source of job satisfaction to individual employees. It is evidenced that good and supportive co-workers and interpersonal relationship makes the job easier and enjoyable which in turn increase the level of job satisfaction (Ellickson & Logsdon, 2001).

Furthermore, university leaders need to avail themselves of a wide range of leadership characteristics drawing on dimensions of both transformational and transactional leadership. Past researchers have also suggested that some universities in Malaysia were losing students because their standard of service quality was not up to the expectation of the students (Jain et al., 2004; Firdaus, 2006; Ismail & Abiddin, 2009). It was reported that the level of service quality in the Malaysian universities was between moderate to slightly above the moderate level, Sim & Idrus, 2004; Ismail & Abiddin, 2009). How do Universities attempt to remain competitive and maintain a sustainable growth in this volatile environment in which programmes have been seen to be globally homogeneous in nature, competitive in terms of pricing, and significant in location and branding?

Universities play an important role in economic and social life. In order to fulfil this role successfully they need to attract and retain high quality staff. The university itself need a talent that possess an excel achievement. Academics need to possess strong levels of motivation in enhancing quality of the university. However, most of the university staff were highly exposed to burnout because their direct relationship with large numbers of students, staff and administrators and lack of opportunities for professional development, unclear promotion perspectives, and inadequate resources. This environment stresses academicians and reduces their performances.

In a competitive marketplace, talent management is a primary driver for organizational success and the demand for human capital. Organizations should recognize the core human capital, and be able to invest in it (Delery & Shaw, 2001). Lepak and Snell (2002) indicated that knowledge workers, those "people who use their heads more than their hands to produce value" (Horibe, 1999, p.xi). Hence, it is imperative for the Human Resource Managers, Deans and Head of Departments to retaining and re-inforce positive attitudes of the academic staff as it will lead to enhancement of productivity, creativity, innovation and overall organizational performance

Job satisfaction refers to the individual matching of personal needs to the perceived potential of the occupation for satisfying those needs (Kuhlen, 1963) while Price (2001) defined it in terms of the affective orientation that an employee has towards his or her work (Price, 2001). Job attachment, dedication and willingness are the key factors that provide satisfaction (Sargent & Hannum, 2005). Employees or university teachers may be considered as dissatisfied with their job if they remain absent and friction to the job of teaching and research. Talent management is important, especially in enhancing the organization's performance; this strategy has mapped out competencies relevant which it needs to harness and develop based on talent recruitment and creation. Hence, it would be of benefit to human resource and academics to connecting a wide range of human capital efforts under the single administrative umbrella of "talent management".

Research indicates talent management and competency has significant influence on employee attitudinal outcomes and organizational effectiveness. (de Pablos and Lytras, 2008). Furthermore, according to the Deputy Prime Minister YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Bin Yassin and Minister of Higher Education YB, The Education sector is one of the most important drivers to transform Malaysia into a high-income nation (Economic Transformation Programme: A roadmap for Malaysia, 2010 as cited in Choong & Lau 2011). Finally, having identified the problems of talent management in relation to competencies, the

objectives of this research are as follows: Firstly; to identify the relationship between Talent Management and competencies of Academics. Secondly; to identify the relationship between talent development and competencies. Thirdly; to identify the relationship between talent culture and competencies. Empirically based talent management research within university environments has been limited to a few studies. Especially in the Malaysian and Vietnam environment, also using a unit of analysis as the Academic and their perceptions of talent management is clearly lacking in the extant literature. Noting the absence of other more comprehensive models in the literature, the author adapted a version of an existing model in this study in order to predict factors related to talent management competency [Davies & Davies 2010].

3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the literature review and research problem, the following research framework has been developed. This model focuses on the relationship between talent management and competencies towards academicians. The independent variables are the predictors of talent management towards academics, which consist of talent identification, talent development and talent culture and dependent variables are competency towards academicians.

Figure 1. Research Framework
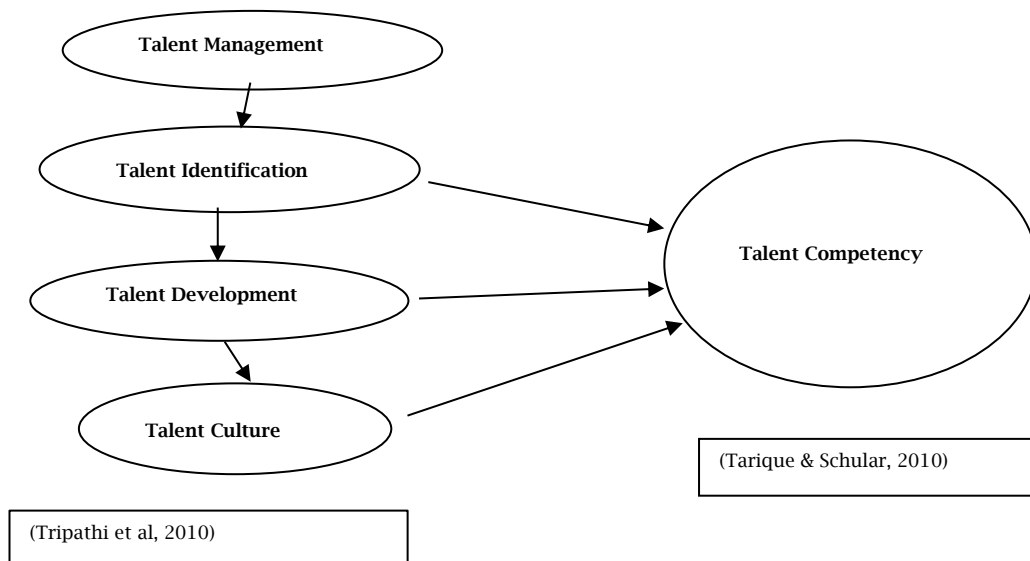
3.1. Research Problem

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the nature and extent of talent management factors on competency of Academics. The primary research question arising from the research, the literature review is: What are the factors that contribute towards Academics perception of talent management?

The secondary research questions arising from the literature review are:
a) How does talent management affect competencies?
b) How does talent identification affect competencies?
c) How does talent development affect competencies?
d) How does talent culture affect competencies?

Based on the above research questions the following hypotheses have been developed:
H1: There is a positive relationship between talent management and competencies.
H2: There is a positive relationship between talent identification and competencies.
H3: There is a positive relationship between talent development and competencies.

H4: There is a positive relationship between talent culture and competencies.
H5: There is a positive relationship between talent management and competencies across country samples.

3.2. Method

After approaching some five Malaysian universities of different sizes, including private, semi-public, local and international. Four universities agreed to participate in the survey. The questionnaires for this study were distributed using random and snowball sampling techniques. The final sample included respondents from 3 Malaysian universities and one Vietnamese university. Questionnaires were completed and were returned by mail to a specific post office box address in a self-addressed reply paid envelope to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Of the 210 questionnaires distributed for this study, 166 completed were returned giving a response rate of 79%. Vietnam sample of the 210 questionnaires distributed for this study, 168 completed were returned, giving a response rate of 80%.

Table 2. Profile of the responded organizations

	Malaysia		Vietnam	
Category	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Gender				
Male	84	50.6	95	56.5
Female	82	49.4	73	43.5
Age				
20 to 30 years	49	29.5	66	39.3
31-40	56	33.7	73	43.5
41-50	42	25.3	22	13.2
50 +	19	11.5	6	3.5
Years of Service				
<2 years	31	18.7	43	26
2 to 5 years	30	18.1	49	29
5-10 years	48	28.9	33	19.6
10 to 15 years	34	20.5	19	11.1
15 +	23	13.8	24	14.3
Education Level				
Post-2ndry Certificate /Diploma	9	5.4	8	4.8
Bachelor	42	25.3	35	20.8
Master	83	50	121	72.0
PhD/Doctorate	32	19.3	4	2.4
Position				
Tutor	47	28.3	25	14.9
Lecturer	57	34.4	117	69.6
Senior Lecturer	40	24.2	22	13.1
Principal Lecturer	22	13.1	4	2.4
Employment Type				
Full-time	116	69.9	160	95.2
Part time	31	18.7	5	3
Casual	19	11.4	3	1.8
No of employees	**166**	100	**168**	100

Despite the predominantly full-time nature of positions Vietnam (95.2%) Malaysia (69.9%) it is evident there is a low percentage of PhD qualified academics in the sample universities researched, with Vietnam (2.4 %) Malaysia 19.4 %, which is consistent with government and industry profile data reported earlier.

Exploratory factor analysis was utilized to investigate the underlying structure of the relatively large set of variables (24 variables) contained within the study. After a Varimax rotation four factors emerged explaining 68.6 % of the variation. Table 3. Shows, after removing these items and items with low loadings, the four factors were tested for validity using Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

A eigenvalue more than 1.0 was considered as the determinant criterion for each factor in factor analysis. The results of these factor analyses are presented in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively. The results in Table 3 suggest a four-factor solution with a total variance explained 68.6%. The KMO value of RMO was 0.812, which exceeded the recommended value of 0.6. This indicates sampling adequacy. These results suggest these constructs and their dimensions are factorially distinct and all items used to measure a factor/dimension loaded on a single factor. However, in arriving at the final set of items for each factor/dimension, some items were deleted (two items from Talent Identification, three items from Talent Development, one item from Talent Culture and three items from Competency) due to their poor loading with respective factors/dimensions.

The results revealed that factor loadings of items of all dimensions were above 0.5, the minimum threshold value. This is indicative of convergent validity of measures (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson 2010). The discriminant validity of the study constructs were tested as suggested by Hulland, Chow and Lam (1996). Thus, Cronbach's alpha values presented in the upper diagonal of table four for each constructs were greater than the constructs' correlation coefficients with other constructs. This is indicative of discriminant validity amongst constructs (Hullandet al 1996).

Additionally, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of each constructs (dimensions) presented in Table 2 and Table 3 were above 0.7, implying reliability of construct measures.

The results reveal that the majority of the constructs are significantly correlated with each other with correlation regressions ranging from 0.47 to 0.59. However, all correlations are less than 0.9, thus suggesting there is no multi-collinearity between these constructs (Tabachnick and Fidell 2012).

3.3. Hypothesis Testing

Two multiple regression analyses were run to test hypotheses. The first was run to test the influence of Talent Management on Competency. The second was conducted to examine the influence of dimensions of Talent Management on Competency. The results in Table 5 reveals that the first model explained 33.1 % variance in Competency. Talent Management (β=.57, p<0.001) had significant positive influences on Competency. So, H_1 was accepted. Table 2 also reveal that the dimensions model explained 33.2% variance in Competency. Of these dimensions, Talent Identification (β=.23, p<0.01), Talent Development (β=.19, p<0.05) and Talent Culture (β=.27, p<0.01) had significant positive influence on Competency. So, H_2, H_3, and H_4, were allaccepted.

Table 5 presents the mean, standard deviation and correlations for the constructs used in this study for Malaysia and Vietnam. The results reveal that most of the constructs are significantly correlated with each other with correlation regressions ranging from 0.11 to 0.63. However, all correlations were less than 0.9, thus suggesting absence of multi-collinearity between these constructs in both countries (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012).

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis for Study Constructs-Measurement Model

Construct	Statements	Factors			
		1	2	3	4
Talent ID	TalentID1-Is aware of the level at which team members are performing.	.79			
	Talent ID2-Makes use of assessment tools available within the company.	.53			
	Talent ID3- Encourages talented employees to develop their careers.	.51			
	Talent ID4- Addresses performance problems in a timely way – does not let poor performance continue.	Deleted			
	Talent ID5-Rates the performance levels of employees candidly during the performance appraisal process.	Deleted			
	Talent ID6- Adjust managerial decisions and actions to be appropriate for the performance levels of employees.	.54			
Talent Dev	Talent Dev1- Possesses a genuine interest to foster the learning and development of people.		Deleted		
	Talent Dev2- Makes an objective assessment of individuals' development needs.		Deleted		
	Talent Dev3- Coaches staff one-on-one.		Deleted		
	Talent Dev4- Gives honest feedback for developmental purposes.		.55		
	Talent Dev5- Actively create developmental opportunities for subordinates.		.57		
	Talent Dev6- Meets with subordinates for formal career planning sessions.		.65		
Talent Cul	TalentCul1- Nominates employees for various company awards (such as "on-the-spot" and "circle-of-excellence" awards).			Deleted	
	TalentCul2- Rewards employee's for exemplary work in a variety of ways.			.59	
	TalentCul3- Provides verbal or written recognition for individual contribution where appropriate.			.51	
	TalentCul4- Allocates increases fairly, according to individual performance.			.58	
	TalentCul5- Ensures that salaries are market related.			.66	
	TalentCul6- Celebrates exceptional performance of employees.			.58	
Comp	Comp1- Is creative and makes suggestion to improve the job				Deleted
	Comp2- Provide novel solutions to problems.				Deleted
	Comp3- Is able to meet identified standard when performing a job				.51
	Comp4- Uses time & materials to the best advantage of the company				.87
	Comp5- Has the ability to lead people				.62
	Comp6- Is able to motivate others to work for a common goal				.52
	Comp7- Is able to delegate work to peers				.61
	Comp8- Is willing to take ownership and responsibility for the job				Deleted
Eigenvalue		7.1	1.8	1.5	1.3
Percentage of variance explained		31.3	18.6	10.4	8.3
KMO		0.812			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		X^2=1608.41,df=190, p<0.001			
Cronbach's alpha		.75	.71	.81	.78

Notes: Talent ID-, Talent Dev-, Talent Cul- , Comp-

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlations for the Study Constructs

Proposed Hypothesis	Coefficient (β)	t-value	Conclusion
Effects of Talent Management on Competency			
Talent Management→Competency	.57	8.99***	H_1-Accepted
R^2 =.332, Adjusted R^2 = .331, F-value = 80.91***			
Effects of the Dimensions of Talent Management on Competency			
Talent ID→Competency	.23	2.82**	H_2-Accepted
Talent Dev→Competency	.19	2.17*	H_3-Accepted
Talent Cul→Competency	.27	3.20**	H_4-Accepted
R^2 =.335, Adjusted R^2 = .332, F-value = 26.959***			

*Notes: *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; ns= not significant*

Table 5. Mean, standard deviation and correlations for constructs Malaysia & Vietnam

	Mean	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Malaysia						
1.Talent Id	4.06	.49	.81[a]			
2.Talent Dev	4.08	.61	.57**	.83[a]		
3.Talent Cul	4.06	.55	.54**	.59**	.77[a]	
4.Competencies	4.18	.50	.48**	.37**	.29**	.79[a]
Vietnam						
1.Talent Id	4.13	.54	.81[a]			
2.Talent Dev	4.15	.52	.63**	.80[a]		
3.Talent Cul	4.18	.45	.52**	.58**	.79[a]	
4. Competencies	4.11	.67	.11	.53**	.23*	.81[a]

Notes: ** Correlation is significant at $p<0.01$
 * Correlation is significant at $p<0.05$
 [a] Diagonal value indicates the square root of AVE of latent construct

Table 6. Results of hypothesis testing- Malaysian Sample

Proposed Hypothesis	Coefficient (β)	t-value	Conclusion
Effects of Talent Management on Competency			
Talent Management→Competency	.57	8.99***	H[1]-Accepted
R^2 =.332, Adjusted R^2 = .331, F-value = 80.91***			
Effects of the Dimensions of Talent Management on Competency			
Talent ID→Competency	.23	2.82**	H[2]-Accepted
Talent Dev→Competency	.19	2.17*	H[3]-Accepted
Talent Cul→Competency	.27	3.20**	H[4]-Accepted
R^2 =.335, Adjusted R^2 = .332, F-value = 26.959***			

Notes: *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; ns= not significant

Table 7. Results of confirmatory factor analysis, Malaysia & Vietnam

Construct	Statements	FL		Other Parameters	
		Mal	Viet	Mal	Viet
Talent identification	Talent ID2-Makes use of assessment tools available within the company.	.57	.59	AVE (.65), CR (.75), α = .74	AVE (.66) CR (.77) α =(.76)
	Talent ID3	.58	.57		
	Talent ID4 Addresses performance problems in a timely way – does not let poor performance continue.	.58	.66		
	Talent ID5 Talent ID5-Rates the performance levels of employees candidly during the performance appraisal process.	.51	.65		
	Talent ID6	.70	.75		
Talent development	Talent Dev1	.53	.77	AVE (.69), CR (.76), α = (.74)	AVE (.64), CR (.78), α = .76
	Talent Dev2	.55	9		
	Talent Dev4	.53	.52		
	Talent Dev5	.62	.73		
	Talent Dev6	.67	.70		
Talent culture	TalentCul1	.57	.51	AVE (.59), CR (.85), α = (.84)	AVE (.62), CR (.83), α = (.81)
	TalentCul2	.73	.55		
	TalentCul3	.76	.64		
	TalentCul4	.76	.86		
	TalentCul5	.59	.76		
	TalentCul6	.54	.62		
Competencies	Comp1	.53	.54	AVE (.62), CR (.84), α = (.82)	AVE (.65), CR (.85), α = (.84)
	Comp2	.61	.59		
	Comp4	.52	.58		
	Comp5	.53	.59		
	Comp7	.81	.50		
	Comp8	.78	.73		

Notes: Fit indices for Malaysia; X²(296) =550.56, (p<0.001), CFI =.95, GFI = .95, NFI=.96, TLI= .95, RMSEA = .038, SRMR = 040. Fit indices for Vietnam; X²(296) =518.43, (p<0.001), CFI =.96, GFI = .97, NFI=.98, TLI= .96, RMSEA = .042, SRMR = 042. Mal-Malaysia, Viet-Vietnam, FL-Factor Loading, AVE=Average variance extracted, - Cronbach's Alpha, CR- Construct reliability, CFI= comparative fit index; GFI=goodness-of-fit index, NFI=normed fit index, TLI= Tucker-Lewis index, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR=standardized root mean residual.

4. FINDINGS AND MODEL RESULTS

4.1. Analysis and results

4.1.1. Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to ensure that items used to measure the study constructs were theoretically consistent (Byrne, 2009). Separate CFA analyses were run for each country. In arriving at the final set of items for each construct, some items were deleted (one item each from Talent identification and Talent development and two from Competencies) based on item to total correlations and the standardized residual values (Byrne, 2009). The resulting pool of items was subsequently subjected to confirmatory factor analysis. A completely standardized solution produced by AMOS version 21 using maximum likelihood method shows that all the remaining 22 items loaded highly on their corresponding factors, confirming the uni-dimensionality of the constructs and providing strong empirical evidence of their validity.

The results of the CFA for both countries are presented in Table 7. The fit indices of the CFA tests shown at the bottom of Table 2 suggest an acceptable level of model fit to the sample data. The CFA results reveal that the factor loadings of all constructs were significant (p<0.01) and above 0.5, the minimum threshold value, and the AVE values of all constructs were also above 0.5, both of which are indicative of convergent validity of the measures (Hair & Anderson, 2010) in Malaysia and Vietnam. The discriminant validity of the study constructs were tested as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Thus, in both countries, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values presented in the upper diagonal for each construct was greater than the constructs' correlation coefficients with other constructs. This is indicative of discriminant validity amongst constructs for both countries (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of each construct presented were above 0.7, implying reliability of the construct measures for both countries.

4.2. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for study constructs

Before testing hypotheses, cross-national measurement invariance was tested. Ensuring measurement invariance is necessary to undertake comparisons of the relationships between latent variables across countries (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). The test for configural invariance relied on a multigroup confirmatory factor analysis, with the two countries as groups and all constructs freely correlated. The results suggested good model fit (Table 8, M1), which supports configural invariance. The subsequent assessment of the scales for full metric invariance constrained the factor loadings to be the same across the countries (Table 8, M2). Compared with the model of configural invariance, the model of full metric invariance resulted in a significant increase in χ^2, indicating a lack of support for full metric invariance. Therefore, partial metric invariance was tested, where at least one item for each latent construct must be metrically invariant (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). Therefore, the next analysis step relaxed one equality constraint per latent construct, on the basis of the modification indices and expected parameter changes. The model with relaxed equality constraints (Table 8, M3) resulted in an insignificant χ^2 difference compared with the unconstrained model of configural invariance, in support of partial metric invariance. Therefore, analyses proceed into hypotheses testing.

Table 8. The Results of Measurement invariance

Model	X^2	df	X^2/df	Models compared	Δx^2	p-value	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
M1:Full configural invariance Unconstrained	1101.12	592	1.86	N/A	N/A	N/A	.038	.95	.95
M2:Full metric invariance	1138.83	619	1.84	M2 vs M1	37.7	0.01	.042	.97	.95
M3: Partial metric Invariance	1122.41	608	1.85	M3 vs M1	21.3	0.15	.038	.95	.95

4.3. Hypotheses Testing

Multigroup Structural Equation Modelling was employed to test the hypotheses across the countries. In the first step, the full model was specified separately for Malaysian and Vietnam sample. These models generated acceptable model fit (Malaysia; X^2(293) = 544.98, (p<0.001), CFI = 0.95, GFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.034, SRMR = 041; Vietnam X^2(293) =542.05, (p<0.001), CFI = 0.97, GFI = 0.98, NFI = 0.97, TLI= 0.96, RMSEA = 0.043, SRMR = 041). Then, structural invariance was tested to determine whether there were significant differences in the structural model across countries. The Chi-Square difference between the unconstrained structural model and the fully constrained structural model was significant (ΔX^2=71.7, df=25, p<0.001), thus indicating that the structural models was not invariant. Therefore, each hypothetical path was constrained and subsequent Chi-Square difference between unconstrained and constrained structural model for each path was noted. These results are presented in Table 9.

As the results revealed, Talent Id had significant positive influences on Competencies in Malaysia (β=.39, p<0.001) but not in Vietnam (β=.05, p>0.5). So, H_1 is accepted in Malaysia and rejected in Vietnam. The Chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2$=27.5, p<0.01) between the unconstrained model and the constrained model for this path is significant, suggesting significant difference between the countries relating to this hypothesis.

Table 9. The results of hypotheses testing across countries

Path relationships	Malaysia		Vietnam		Model Comparison	
	Est	t-value	Est	t-value	ΔX²	p
Talent Id → Competencies	.39	10.5***	.05	1.5ⁿˢ	27.5	.001
Talent Dev → Competencies	.25	8.82***	.38	9.2***	18.6	.008
Talent Cul → Competencies	.17	5.35**	.15	4.83**	1.6	.657

Notes: :*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; , ns= not significant.

Also, Talent Dev had significant positive influences on Competencies both in Malaysia (β = 0.25, p<0.001) and in Vietnam (β = 0.38, p<0.001). So, H_2 is accepted in both countries. However, as suggested by Chi-square difference for this path ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 18.6, p<0.01), this relationship is stronger in Vietnam than in Malaysia. Finally, Talent Cul had significant positive influences on Competencies both in Malaysia (β = 0.17, p<0.01) and in Vietnam (β = .15, p<0.01). Hence, H_3 is accepted in both countries. As suggested by the Chi-square difference for this path ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 1.6, p>0.5), there is no significant difference between the countries relating to this hypothesis.

5. DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated the relationship between talent management and competency. There appear to be three sub-components under talent management which are talent identification, talent development and talent culture.

The study found that, Academic's perception of talent identification, talent development and talent management culture relevance are the most important contributors to talent management competency for Academics. The findings also suggest that talent management competency levels for Academics are significantly higher when management have integrated HR systems that identify value, measure team and individual performance, assess and develop careers, give honest formal feedback and a culture of rewarding high performance. Cross country data reveals nuances that talent identification was not a strong factor in determining talent competency however this may be due to the bureaucratic and less transparent nature of recruiting academics in the Vietnam context. This is consistent with the literature as reported by Ca (World Bank Report).

The study concludes that utilizing a more comprehensive model that incorporates the TM whole lifecycle beyond recruitment and selection and using methodology with multi-item measures has unearthed nuances in the data that confirm and extend the extant literature of talent management in higher education. In particular organizations that embark on a 'one size fits all' TM strategy by ignoring these job related factors could eventually face further problems such as high staff turnover, poor morale and associated costs and potential sacrificial client/customer service strategies that will impact on the bottom line and the organization's reputation.

This study extends the work of previous talent management researchers by identifying that using a comprehensive multi-dimensional approach for measuring talent management reveals that Academic's overall perception of positive aspects of talent management competency included intrinsic, extrinsic and social factors. Also that work environment or the context of work has a positive association to talent competency.

Unlike previous studies which have relied on either anecdotal evidence or have approached talent from a variety of measurement approaches with varying units of analysis (from helicopter opinions of senior managers and or consultants) the unique contribution of this study allows future researchers to investigate the proposed model, apply or adapt it and have more comprehensive multi-dimensional empirically based identified factors associated talent management which may be generalised or contested to other similar higher education environments. The limitations of the study include small sample sizes, absence of longitudinal nature and thus the study could be limited to generalizability in other samples. Also mixed methods were not used to triangulate the data. Further research could be undertaken with those limitations in mind.

However according to our research and an extensive literature review, Talent management research and related practices should incorporate a more strategic and holistic approach of investigation to include talent identification, talent development and talent management culture as important contributors to talent management competency. Recently, global talent management case study research has emerged which considers further factors including company branding and company reputation as contributors to talent management competencies (Bjorkman, Farndale Morris, Paauwe, Stiles, Trevor and Wright, 2012).

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