

The Empirical Study on Talent Identification Strategies and its effect on Performance of the Public Sector Organizations in Sri Lanka

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Abstract— The cornerstone of an organizational performance is identification of high potential talent in the hyper-competitive and increasingly complex global economy. Hence, Organizations exploit diverse strategies for identification of talented people. This article move forward theory of talent identification strategies (TIS) through the practical implication of public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. The principal duet of talent identification strategies (TIS) was hypothesized: Interior talent identification strategies (ITIS) and Exterior talent Identification Strategies (ETIS). The foremost intention of this study is to discern the impact of talent identification strategies on public sector performance in Sri Lanka. The questionnaire survey was conducted for 180 HR professionals in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. In order to analyze data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to test for its normality, and Pearson correlation test was used for measuring the relationship between variables and also regression analysis was applied for determining the effect of variables. The results indicate that talent identification strategies are not significant predictors of performance in public sector companies. Internal alignment between talent management strategies and Business Strategy are suggested for future research as crucial to trump organizational performance.

Keywords— *talent management, talent identification strategies, interior talent identification strategies, exterior talent identification strategies, organizational performance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since, talent pool has become powerful source of competitive advantage and sustainability, business world face enormous competition in finding talented people to the organization [28]. It is vital for the organization to take a proactive role in identifying and cultivating their workforce who have capabilities and potentials.

Talent management (TM) is a strategic approach to identifying talents to meet expected level of performance in the company by facing global challengers effectively. The initial and key function of talent management process is the recognition of knowledgeable and skilled individuals of the organization. Furthermore, Anwar, A., Nisar, Q. A., Khan, N. Z., & Sana, A. [3] identified that TIS are the most crucial fundamentals of talent management process. Even though an organization fails to identify its talented individuals, it will have given little value to the right positioning and right development opportunities for the individuals in order to achieve the overall objective of the business [28].

Sri Lankan business community has been mainly divided in to two sectors; (1) public sector and (2) private sector based on numerous crucial factors such as, ownership, operations, goals& objectives and so on [2]. Public sector organizations form the backbone of Sri Lankan economy constituting to provide services to the public. In which main services health, education and security are provided under the free basis and other services such as transport, agriculture, insurance, bank, etc. are provided at a lower rate which compares to the private sector [24]. While most of these organizations provide services, few of them are earning profits, which belong to the semi government organizations. They also employ a majority of the working population with high job security. As a developing country, public sector has been playing a crucial part in economic, social and cultural development in Sri Lanka. Thus, the wellbeing of this vital sector is very important to up keep the wellbeing of the overall development of the country. However, this sector does not seem to be dynamic and performing well in achieving their expected goals which compares to the private sector and also public-sector organizations of other countries such as China, Singapore and Malaysia in Asian region. Many organizations seem to have lack of efficiency and effectiveness. Most of the organizations are highly influenced by the political parties of the country. The policies and procedures have changed based on the political agenda. New technological innovations and adaptations are lacking behind. Hence, existing employees are dissatisfied due to inadequacy of proper strategies to overcome these obstacles. Numerous HR professionals and practitioners stated that organizational performance heavily depends on employees' performance no matter size, nature or the ownership of the business [24]. As some experts of this sector argued, one of the main reasons for the high rate of inefficiency is due to its lack of attention on the talent management strategies in their organizations. In which talent identification strategies (TIS) are crucial. Hence, the broad objective of this study is to examine effect of talent identification strategies (TIS) on performance of public sector in Sri Lanka.

II. TALENT MANAGEMENT (TM)

TM means a systematic and bundle of HR policies and practices (planning, forecasting, identifying, attracting, selecting, hiring, rewarding, retaining, reducing and

removing, training and developing, and evaluating) which relates to the managing and utilizing of human talents in order to congregate the local and global business challengers of the company [36]. Similar definition stated by Scullion et al. [40]: TM involves attracting, selecting, developing and retaining the best employees to achieve organizational strategic priorities. TM refers to set of HRM activities of business to manage their talented people to play differentiated role in order to meet global challengers [40]. The three definitions have similar features that they identified TM as a mechanism of identifying, developing and retaining talents. Furthermore, TM is strategically essential for the company not only in managing talents, but also for managing expansion, downsizing and structural alignment of the firm [20]. TM scholars have paid more attention on strategic integration of TM [13]. since, three talent management strategies: talent identification, talent developing and talent retention were identified. For the talent identification, use various mechanisms and are explained by the TM scholars [40]. After identification of talented individuals to the organization, development and retentions of them are the responsibility of human resource manager with the support of other managers of the company. Since this study stresses on talent identification strategies (TIS) on organizational performance (OP) in PUSO in Sri Lanka, following section emphasizes talent identification strategies, mainly interior talent identification strategies and exterior talent identification strategies.

III. TALENT IDENTIFICATION STRATEGIES (TIS)

Human resource professionals and practitioners understood that talent identification is most challenging task of the organization [16], [33]. Organizations exploit different strategies to identify talented people since; they are the investment of the organization towards organizational success.

Tansley et al. [38] stated that, identifying talented individuals of the organization is a responsibility of a talent review panel which consists of the head of human resource management, representatives of senior management, line management and individuals who have specific expertise in the particular area. However, identifying talents are not always based on the judgment of talent review panel as different organizations employ different kind of strategies for identifying talents [9].

Identifying talent strategies basically can be divided into two categories: internally and externally. Identifying talent strategies internally may include competence/skill inventory, performance appraisal and human resource planning. However, selection of identifying talent strategies is based on HR management philosophy on its effectiveness [4]. In line with the above study Stahl et al., [36]. study is prominent, it investigates how leading multinational companies build and sustain their talent pipeline sampling 37 global companies; based on the finding of the study, the practice of "leadership competence models" is the most

significant model of talent management. Leadership competence models refers to a set of knowledge, skills, competencies, traits and behaviours that a organization is willing to perceive, build up and sustain among their existing staff that have high potential. On the basis of research findings, Stahl et al. summarized the best practices in the area of recruitment and staffing as follows: establishing a strategy for making a talent pool, building a relationship with leading institutes and universities to find talent, maintaining proper hiring strategies, careful consideration of employee positioning and employee branding, adopting an organizational culture, conducting a performance assessment, as well as maintaining competence profile for leadership talent succession planning and different talent pool.

About the identification of talent strategies in a Sri Lankan context, Dharmasiri [18], Karunathilaka [22] explained six B's. It was originally introduced by Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) and Dharmasiri [18] and Karunathilaka [22] explicated its Sri Lankan aspect. The six B's refer to six talent management strategies: buying, building, borrowing, bouncing, binding and boosting. Under the identification of talent strategies, buying strategy involves the aspect of talent acquisition. The talent acquisition strategies include: referral hiring, building a web based hiring and aiming towards potential employees to be used by the organizations. In the Sri Lankan private sector, organizations practice more innovative recruitment strategies instead of traditional methods. However, public sector organizations are lacking behind in innovative strategies. The recruitment and hiring processes are strict with the public policy framework and it cannot go beyond the scheme of recruitment (SOR) which is implemented by public policy makers. That is being said, borrowing strategy also lines up with talent identification which refers to acquisition of talent on a contract basis. There are several borrowing strategies introduced by Dharmasiri [18]: outsourcing of work, forming of joint alliance, retaining consultants, maintaining relationships with former employees and visiting benchmark sites. In Sri Lanka both public and private sector organizations use this strategy and some human resource manager is converted into an outsourcing manager. However, due to the trade union pressure, several outdated labours and the nature of the functions performed by the organizations are considered as obstacles towards practicing of borrowed strategy. Kermally [25] argued that, as a market place becomes more complex and dynamic, and when an organization meets global market, it requires talented people to execute the market's needs.

However, several researchers illustrated that it becomes increasingly hard to acquire and retain suitable talent for local and international operations of business ([20], [13], [21], [36]). The identification of high-potential talents are progressively becoming a severe crisis for most of the local and global organizations [7] and [10]. On the other hand,

Kermaly [25] said that even though organizations still practice the concept of redundancies, appropriate talents are at a comparatively lower level. As per the finding of Douglas et al. [20] large number of organizations still get great effort to fill up talent shortage in higher level of talents. Thus, appropriate talent identification is also a key issue of any organization. Present study encompasses with both interior and exterior talent identification strategies in which dimensions of interior strategies are skill inventory, skill audit, performance appraisal and exterior strategies' are tested through different selection methods.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE (OP)

Many authors Organizational performance (OP) comprises of the actual output or goals of an organization as considered against its expected outputs or goals. Since organizational performance is a multidimensional conception, organizations rely on multiple measures of performance when reckoning the success or failure of the organizations [33]. Richard et al. [32]. argued that OP comprises mainly three determinants. Such as financial performance, product market performance and shareholders return. Moreover author explicated the measurement criteria of each determinants of OP: the financial performance involves profits, return on investment, return on assets and etc., product market performance involves sales and market share. The shareholder return involves total shareholder return and economic value added. Organizational performance (OP) plays premier role both in management and human resource management disciplines. Experts of the above disciplines are fascinated with organizational performance including strategic planners, finance, legal, operations and organizational development. In recent years, many organizations have attempted to manage organizational performance using the different methodology where performance is tracked and measured in multiple dimensions.

The performance of the public sector in Sri Lanka is not at the expected level. On the report of World Bank (2017), Sri Lanka ranks 111 among 190 countries in the "ease of doing business" index. For the time being, according to the Transparency International, Sri Lanka ranks 91 out of 180 countries in terms of corruption perception. Inferior governance and ineffective rules and regulations have caused economic growth in Sri Lanka to slow down [39]. Nevertheless, the public sector must perform its role effectively for the engine of economic growth in Sri Lanka to function well. As a labour intensive country, Sri Lanka has sufficient strength of talented labour (censes, 2016) in order to capitalize them and reap the high level of performance [17].

V. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK AND STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The primary objective of this study is to identify the effect of talent identification strategies on public sector performance in Sri Lanka. As stated in the literature survey, it authenticated that TIS and OP have positive relationship. Nevertheless, TM is as an emerging field of HRM, strenuous to find local researches. Thus, a research frame work is designed by taking into consideration of impact of main variables.

Thus, three variables are identified in the research frame work: talent identification strategies as independent variables and organizational performance as a dependent variable. Talent identification strategies comprise with two variables: Interior talent identification strategies (ITIS), Exterior talent Identification Strategies (ETIS). Based on the theoretical frame work, three hypotheses are developed. Such as, H1: Talent identification strategies have positive impact on organizational performance.H2: Interior talent identification strategies have positive impact on organizational performance.H3: Exterior talent Identification Strategies have positive impact on organizational performance.

VI. RESEARCH METHOD

To examine the aforesaid hypotheses, a questionnaire survey was carried out among the HR professionals of public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. This instrument comprises of three sections. First it assesses demographic profile of the respondents (Table 2) and Secondly TIS. TIS involves of two components: Interior talent identification strategies, Exterior talent Identification Strategies. Thirdly it measures organizational performance (OP). And it was designed using a Likert five scale models with the options from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each option was scaled: 5= strongly agree; 4= agree; 3= neutral; 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree.

The questionnaire survey was organized from 23/11/2017 to 16/05/2018. There are 294 public sector organizations that are registered under Ministry of Planning (Ministry of Planning, 2017). Since talent management strategies are almost related to the human resource management functions, respondents of this survey were human resource professionals. For the collection of data, an official cover letter that clarifies the purpose of the survey had been attached together with the questionnaires. It incorporated also with researcher's email address and mobile phone number in case there were further clarifications about the questionnaire from the respondents. Respondents have been guaranteed of complete confidentiality and honest opinions were encouraged.

In total, 294 questionnaires were distributed by the researcher and 202 questionnaires returned. However, only180 questionnaires, equal to 61.22 per cent, were considered for data analysis. The remaining 22

questionnaires were not taken into data collection because questionnaires were not properly completed by the respondents.

VII. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Four statistical techniques were employed with different purposes. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts in this field of HRM, in addition to testing of reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. To analyze data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to test for its normality, Pearson correlation test was used for measuring the relationship between variables and regression analysis that was applied for determining the effect of variables.

A. Reliability

For testing of reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha was used and those values of three variables are [ITIS (0.897), ETIS (0.802) and OP (0.903)] more than 0.7. Further the internal consistency reliability of the measures used in this analysis can be considered as good for talent identification measures.

B. Demographic Profile

Consistent with a male-controlled sector under research, most (60 per cent) of the participations are males. This is the nature of human resource management field in Sri Lanka. However, over the past decade contributions from female HR managers have increased dramatically. In addition to another feature of the public-sector population was introduced by this research; around 85 per cent of the HR professionals are above the age of 40 years which were considered as experienced workers. Moreover, their education levels are above the degree (around 60 per cent) and also in middle and senior level (around 95 per cent) position of the employment. At present HR managers are in top level of the organization. In demographic data on organizational side, 60 per cent of companies consist of more than 1000 employees. From the above discussion it can be concluded that the sample of this research does not deviate much from the general population of HR managers at public sector organizations. Hence, it is considered as representative of the population of interest.

C. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Descriptive analysis was carried out to determine the mean scores and standard Deviations for the variables. Based on 180 valid cases being examined for two independent variables; ITIS, ETIS and one dependent variable; OP, the statistic output as shown in Table 2 was obtained. Apparently, the mean scores for all three variables are closer to 3 and OP (3.83±0.523) is the highest and both independents variable are almost similar (ITIS: 2.98±1.03, ETIS: 2.77±1.1). It means that organizational performance of the sampled organizations is high and quite similar contribution is given by ITIS and ETIS for their performance.

The result of the correlation analysis also was given in Table 2, which proved that there is a significant and weak positive correlation between talent identification strategies [IT IS:r=0.185, ETIS:r=0.081] and organizational performance (r=0.138) in public sector organization, which is less than 0.3. In social sciences, based on Cohen's criterion, correlation values of more than 0.3 are considered as sizable level of association [35].

D. Hypotheses Testing

Multiple regressions were used to test H1, H2 and H3. Results are tabulated in Table 03. Based on the results, OP slightly depends on TIS (ITIS & ETIS). The R-squared value was 0.053, which means 5.3% of the variation in OP is explained by ITIS and ETIS. The p-value from the ANOVA table is less than 0.001, which means that at least one of the two variables: ITIS and ETIS can be used to model OP. The equation: $OP = 3.563 + 0.202 (ITIS) - 0.121 (ETIS)$. Thus, for every unit increase in ITIS, OP is expected to increase by 0.202 units provided other variable remain unchanged and for every unit increase in ETIS, OP is expected to decrease by 0.121 units provided other variable remain unchanged. P-value of only ITIS is less than 0.05. Hence, ITIS is the significant predictors of OP and ETIS is not the significant predictors of OP. Based on the standardized Beta coefficients; the effect of ITIS (0.4) and ETIS (-.254). The VIF values are less than 5. Hence, there is no problem of multicollinearity. In the residual plot, all the points are falling within ± 3 and the points are at random. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality on the residuals gives a p-value of 0.058, which is more than 0.05. It means that residuals are normally distributed and it is symmetrical. Thus, the assumption of normality of the residual terms is met. Hence, data are supported to accept the H1 and H2 only and H3 is not supported by the data.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study put forward significant insights regarding the effects of TIS (ITIS and ETIS) on OP of public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Even though talent identification strategies are significant on public sector performance, its contribution to performance of the public sector is very low. In line with the present study, Arachige and Robertson [5] explained, selective hiring as a high-performance work practice upon financial performance of Sri Lankan organizations was not significant. Along with Abeysekara [1] stated that realistic job information also was not significant. However, numerous research findings were contradictory for the finding of the current study. Lynch and Smith [26]; Marwat, Qureshi, & Ramay [30] and Saddam & Mansor [34] stated that talent identification and selection are the preliminary stage of HRM process which helps in identifying and positioning of talented people for the relevant job in order to enhance the organizational performance. Abiud, Okiko, & Kadondi [3] and Mustapha, Ilesanmi, & Aremu [30] examined the recruitment and selection process (recruitment policy, recruitment procedures, cost constraints, time constraints, selection

techniques, and selection criteria) were significant determinants of the employee performance (effectiveness, organizational image, efficiency and innovativeness) of the micro finance institutions in Kigali. Rwanda Schuler; Jackson & Tarique [37] stated that competence based talent identification was significant with success of the IT sector in India. Similar study was done by Shirkhani & Nazari [9] for oil products company in province of Ilam and claimed that talent attraction was a significant predictor of organizational performance. Mahmood, Iqbal, & Sahu (2014) revealed that recruitment and selection practices of banking sector in Pakistan were positively associated with organizational outcome and it was also a significant predictor. Rop & Kwasira (2015) to examine the impact of attraction of talent on OP in public universities in Kenya using different

indicators. Such as branding of employer, reasonable pay, work life balance and job security. However, indicators of OP: customer satisfaction and quality of service are almost similar to the non-financial indicators of present study. For the reason is Rop & Kwasira had derived the indicators based on the Maslow Theory. The final outcome of the study shows that attraction of talent has significant positive impact on OP. The study suggested that organizations can move forward their betterment through different aspect of talent attraction like employer branding and giving guaranteed of providing benefit for their existing and potential staff. This suggestion could be considered by the policy makers especially of public sector organizations in Sri Lanka to enhance their performance.

From the above discussions there are two things to address; (1) limitations of this study and (2) comments for future research. The existing literature regarding TIS in this review does not identify the variables related to the internal alignments between TIS and OP. Hence this study shows moderate association between independent and dependent variables. TIS studies used in this review are also lacking in testing of relationship between demographic variables and TIS in order to achieve the organizational success. In terms of further research, above factors can be considered and also has to remember that the time of TM is changing swiftly.

From theoretical implication perspective, the researchers in Sri Lanka can use this model for future research especially in public sector to replicate and compare this finding. Currently, there is limited research on TM in local context and this research is a sign of requirement to be understood further. The model needs to be enhanced further to understand different talent management strategies and opportunities for OP. This study also implies many essential managerial or practical implications. Averting of the inferior practices of TM, study recommend crafting a talent plan integrated with strategic plan of the organization. In this skill audit might be executed to identify the internal and external talent, talent mapping and competence framework to match the organizational requirements with talents.

Moreover, now with the Baby Boom generation is going to retire, generation Y & Z are emerging in the workig place.

As a results, new technology, social media: face book age and twitter era are embedded by new generations. Hence HR professionals have to change their traditional recruitment methods to innovative sourcing methods such as, recruitment workshops, re-hiring, campus reserch programs, employee referrals, on line recruitment, websites which are away from traditional advertisement methods [11]. Moreover, traditional interview methods should also be changed to role plays, presentations, assessment centers, trade test/job specific test, psychometric and competency profiling [17].

TABLE 1- DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender			Diploma	78	42.7
Male	105	58.6	Other	41	23.0
Female	75	41.4	No. of Employees		
Age			< 100	25	14.0
<30	84	14.9	101-500	16	9.0
31-40	56	31.1	500-1000	31	17.1
41-50	27	46.8	> 1001	108	59.9
>51	13	7.2	Level of Employment:		
Educational Qualification			Senior	115	63.88
Post Graduate	41	23.0	Middle	65	36.11
Degree	20	11.3	Junior	0	0

The study proclaimed that intangible assets such as human talents are the most dominant assets for the organization rather than tangible assets such as capital, money, technology and material. Based on the research finding, identifying talented people effectively is crucial for organizational success and correspondingly organizational success depends on performance of the talented people and which leads to organizational sustainability and competitive advantage for the future. Hence, it is essential for human resource professionals of the company to coordinate with the top management especially in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka to address the talent management initiatives.

TABLE 02 – DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATION

Variable	Mean	SD	TIS	ITIS	ETIS	OP
TIS	2.88	1.02	1			
ITIS	2.98	1.03	.958**	1		
ETIS	2.77	1.1	.963**	.845**	1	
OP	3.83	.523	.138**	.185**	.084**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 3 - RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.563	.110		32.311	.000		
ITIS	.202	.065	.400	3.102	.002	.287	3.49
ETIS	-.121	.061	-.254	-1.971	.050	.287	3.49

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