



An Overview on Talent Management in Nursing

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ABSTRACT

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Talent management has attracted increasing attention from academics and practitioners in recent years, but there are a number of gaps for further theoretical and empirical development. The present paper aims to contribute to the literature on talent management in nursing by developing a clear and concise definition of talent management and offering an in-depth review of the talent concept. Furthermore, we distinguish two main approaches of talent management: exclusive and inclusive talent management. Then, this paper examines the different characteristics of indicators of talent management in health care system particularly in recruiting nurses. The analysis of the findings of studies conducted to date indicates that leading indicators for nurses have not developed. Therefore, managers of health centers need to specify route of nurses' career and future positions from the beginning to get optimal individual and organizational output.

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Introduction

The term talent management has become increasingly common and received a remarkable degree of interest from practitioners since a group of McKinsey consultants coined the expression 'war for talent' in 1997 (Axelord, Hanfield-Jones, & Michaels, 2002; Michaels, Hanfield-Jones, & Axelord, 2001). Smith (2007) and Ashton and Morton (2005) stated that effective talent management is considered as critical success factor for organizations which gains sustained competitive advantage for organizations by identifying, developing, and

attracting and retaining high-potential employees. Martin and Hetrick (2006) stated that as the importance of knowledge economy is growing regularly, the value of the talent will also be more highlighted. To date, there has been relatively little empirical research about talent management, and this phenomenon has not been subject to critical scrutiny (Collings & Mollahi, 2009). By seeking monopoly or special approach, talent management offers a distinctive perspective which is different from the workforce. In this view, certain talents are distinguished from others (Chuai, 2008). A review of the literature focused on talent management reveals a disturbing lack of clarity regarding the definition, scope, and overall goals of talent management and the existing information is not therefore applicable and reliable (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Despite a wide range of written literature on talent management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007), to name but a few, there is no consensus regarding the determination of talent indices. An increasing number of authors in the talent management domain (Garrow & Hirsh, 2008; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Reilly, 2008; Tansley et al., 2007) attribute the ambiguity inherent to talent management construct to the inadequate operationalization of the underlying construct talent. They just proposed some implicit and imprecise theories about what the talent is (Barab & Plucker, 2002). Actually, in many essays (Collings & Mollahi, 2009; Pfeffer & Sulton, 2006) and books (Cappelli, 2008; Lawler, 2008) about talent management, talent is introduced as a subset construct of management activities without providing any accurate and explicit definition of it. Selection of nurses based on assigned talent indicators might increase efficiency more in organizations than other formal models in the face of fast environmental changes (Tansley et al., 2007). This study discusses the different aspects of talent management and investigates the concepts and indicators of talent management in nursing.

Talent Management

A review of the literature focused on talent management reveals a lack of clarity over conceptual boundaries of the topic and the *definition*, scope, and overall goals of *talent management*. In the broadest possible terms, talent management is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization (Duttagupta, 2005). Its purpose is to assure that a rich source of talent is available to accurately align the right people with the right jobs at the right time based on strategic business objectives. According to Schweyer (2004), talent management contains of all human resources processes, perspectives, and technologies. It is normally used as an essential attribute for sourcing, selecting, screening, retention,

development, and deployment of the talented workforce with analysis and planning as an adhesive ingredient. Talent management may apply the same tools of human resources management, but the focus is on an approximately small segment of workforce that can be identified as organization's talents by current performance and future capabilities or potentials (Tansley et al., 2007). To date, there is no clear and single definition of the talent management and its dimensions and general goals despite numerous and relevant studies in this domain. This implies a gap between interns and academic world which talent management may help bridge the gap (Sweem, 2009; Tansley et al., 2007). This gap in medical and health services management centers has a greater manifestation and only a few studies have recently been done in this regard. Table 1 presents different definitions of talent which can be found in the academic human resource management () literature (Hartman, Feisel, & Schober, 2010). As it can be seen in Table 1, talent management is considered as a management function (Lewis & Heckman, 2006), or as one of the functions of human resource management department in realizing the organization's strategic objectives (Schweyer, 2004; Williams, 2000). By identifying and developing high-potential employees or individuals both inside and outside the organization, the organization can add further value to the organization in some cases. Collings and Mellahi (2009) emphasized the identification of key positions that have the potential to impact the competitive advantage of the organization. This perspective argues that the pivotal talent positions should be identified at first stage which leads to high potential workforce.

Table1

Overview of Different Definitions of Talent Management in the Literature

Research Stream	Authors	Definition
Pivotal or Key Organizations' Positions	Collings & Mellahi (2009)	-Strategic talent management are the activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization.
Talent Development	Hirsh (2008)	-Talent Management is a positive and beneficial act for best people in their jobs and an investment for their growth. Also, it helps to flourish potentials and benefits people as well as helping them to improve their strengths and eliminate weaknesses.

Talent Identification and Development	Bhatnagar (2007)	-Talent management was initially designed to improve the process for recruiting and developing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current organizational needs.
	CIPD (2006)	-Talent management is the process by which an organization identifies, manages, and develops its people now and for the future.
Management of Talented People through Human	Uren (2007)	-Talent management has five elements including attract, identify, deployment, development, and engagement to assist to expand them in this way.
Resource Management Functions	Cappelli (2004)	-It is referred to the activities that the employer does to hire, train, develop and totally manage those employees who are involved in important executive positions in organization.
Strategic Talent Management	Dutttagupta (2005)	-In the broadest possible terms, TM is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization. Its purpose is to assure that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time based on strategic business objectives.
	Williams (2000)	-Talent management is a strategic management of current talent flow in organization to ensure that according to organizational strategic objectives, right people, in the right jobs and at the right time are involved in the proper jobs.
Talent Identification and Development	Slizer & Dowell (2010)	-Talent management is an integrated set of processes, programs, and cultural norms in an organization designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy, and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs.
	Ulrich & Smallwood (2012)	-Talent = competence [knowledge, skills and values required for today's and tomorrow's job; right skills, right place, right job, right time] × commitment [willing to do the job] × contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their job].

Perspectives on Talent Management

These perspectives can in fact be found in the literature between an exclusive versus inclusive people focus or a focus on the organizational positions against the people themselves. Combining these contrasting perspectives results in the four-category model where we have four main perspectives on talent management. Exclusive-people perspective takes a relatively narrow or exclusive view of talent and considers just special group of people as talented who

has the capability to make the significant difference for the present and future performance and competence (Delbridge, Gratton, & Johnson, 2006; Smith, 2007). In this view, superkeepers are a few groups of nurses who have demonstrated better accomplishments of themselves and they have inspired others to achieve great achievements and who embody the merits and values of the organization (Berger, 2004), and their loss or absence severely makes the growth of organization slow because of their powerful impact on current and future organization performance. Branham (2005) postulates the Pareto principle, i.e., that 20 per cent of the workforce can contribute 80 per cent of the value. Due to this, like Pareto's principle, nurses are divided up into various groups with different interests. Larson and Richburg (2004) referred to the personnel evaluation system of General Electronic (GE) company and categorized its controversial segmentation into A-level (10-20 per cent as top), B-level (70 per cent as average), and C-level (10 or 20 per cent as weak). It is based on segmentation of the workforce into sections that the employees' value propositions differentiated. Regardless of employees' performance, competence, potential, or other features, managers would treat all employees as equally valuable (Becker, Huselied, & Beatty, 2009; Michaels, Handfield, & Axelord, 2001). On the other hand, exclusive-positions perspective takes a narrow or exclusive position to talent management. In this perspective, important and strategic jobs or key positions are emphasized and the person who is taking these jobs is considered as potential candidate (Becker, Huselied, Beatty, 2009). Generally, it is recommended placing the best employees (A players) in strategic positions, good performers (B players) in support positions, and nonperforming jobs and employees (C players) that do not additional value are to be outsourced or eliminated. In this perspective, selecting suitable people to appropriate positions is very important (Becker, Huselied, & Beatty, 2009; Collings & Mollahi, 2009). The best nurses are placed in the intensive care unit (ICU) and the less importance or educated nurses in the ordinary care unit. The problem of this perspective is laid in inconsistency of required talents in different sectors. All nurses in different hospital sectors can benefit from different talents which have the highest level of consistency with a job. On the other hand, ward nursing staff establishments can lead to nurses being dissatisfied with their jobs and emotionally exhausted.

In contrast to the two exclusive perspectives on talent management, inclusive-people perspective takes an inclusive stance, often from humanistic considerations. This perspective believes that everyone in the organization has talent potentially, and it is the role of manager to direct all employees to deliver high performance in practice (Buckingham & Vosburgh,

2001). Slizer and Dowell (2010) asserted that, in an ideal organization, everyone has a part to play and something to contribute in that context. In addition, the organizations should help all employees focus their efforts and energy on the time, energy, and cost rather than helping just certain people in key positions (Yost & Chang, 2009). The application of this perspective will encounter nursing sections with many issues because nurses' work in a healthcare context is related to improving the health and well-being of patients and time nurses spend to obtain an ideal position can cause irreparable damage to the patients.

Social capital perspective states that *hiring talented* individuals is critical to an *organization's* success. It could mean hiring talents from another organization to work often lead to a decline in performance of an individual. Furthermore, this condition would cause a decline in the performance of all other members of a group that have to work with him, and as a result the organizational performance declines. Therefore, the organizations should focus on developing and retaining talents that emerge within the organization (Groysberg, Nanda, & Nohria, 2004). In this perspective, all nurses in different sections should be recruited based on the same talent standards. This highlights that the differences within various sections will not affect these standards. Applying this method in nursing, the sections that need special talents face talented employees' shortage and their performance will be less effective. Consequently, the sections that have highest fitness level with each of these perspectives show the highest level of efficiency. Job burnout as the main issue can arise in both of these sections. All nurses work in hospitals face job burnout in their career path due to very high job stability.

Identification of Talent Perspectives

It is very important to consider who is taken as talent in talent management. To some extent, the way a talented person is defined is difficult and depends on the organizational own view because there is no universally accepted definition of it. In Towers Perrin's (2006) survey, none of 32 investigated companies had common definition of talent. These definitions were different based on the strategy of organization, type of company, and competitive environment. Research in various contexts proposed different perspectives on talent. Some recent studies were considered talent as a specific set of individual capabilities, knowledge, and expansion capabilities (Becker, Huselied, & Beatty, 2009; Michael, Handfield, & Axelord, 2001). In other definition, high potential talent builds and expands individuals' current performance (Bjorkman, et al., 2013; Smart, 2005). In this case, talents may have

been specific knowledge or job skills that differentiate them from other employees and make their replacement more difficult (Hough & Oswald, 2000; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2013). In other perspective, talent is typically described as an innate ability that manifests in a particular field (Tansley et al., 2007) and shows individual differences in basic capacities and abilities (Hough & Oswald, 2000; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2013). In other words, talent refers to high potential applicants. Also, it can be considered as permanent knowledge or mastery which is apt to learn and teach (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001). Finally, talent is a feature that generate value for the organizations and can be found in various kinds such as power (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001), divine power (Gagne, 2007), ability (Michael, Handfield, & Axelord, 2001), merit (Slizer & Dowell, 2010). Table 2 shows the commonly used terms related to talent in different articles.

Table2
Terms Commonly Associated with Talent in the Literature

Related terms	Resources
Ability	Gagne (2000), Hinrinchs (1966), Michaels, et al. (2001), Slizer & Dowell (2010), Tansley, et al. (2006), Williams (2000)
Capacity	Jerico (2001)
Capability	Stahl, et al. (2007)
Commitment	Ulrich (2007)
Competence/ Competency	Bathke-Langenegger (2012), Gonzalez- Cruz, et al. (2009), Slizer & Dowell (2010), Ulrich (2007), Williams (2000)
Contribution	Ulrich (2007)
Experience	Cheese, et al. (2008)
Knowledge	Bathke-Langenegger (2012), Cheese, et al. (2008), Michaels, et al. (2001), Tansley, et al. (2006)
Performance	Stahl, et al. (2007), Tansley, et al. (2007)
Potential	Tansley, et al. (2006), Tansley, et al. (2007), Williams (2000)
Patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior	Buckingham & Vosburgh (2001), Cheese, et al. (2008)
Skills	Cheese et al. (2008), Hinrichs (1966), Michaels et al. (2001), Slizer & Dowell (2010), Tansley, et al. (2006)

After identifying different types of talents, the managers should enter into the category of organizational human potentials based on their potential capabilities and current preparations and they should train to take the job and key positions in the organization (Collings & Mollahi, 2009). Among various review articles that are mentioned above, and despite all the

existing gaps in this context (Collings & Mollahi, 2009; Lewis & Heckman, 2006), we can introduce the following various perspectives as common ones on talent.

First, the nature-nurture debate is a longstanding one when it comes to individual differences and it is pertinent to discussions about talent as well. The concept of innate ability is raised from individual differences. Williams (2000) defined talent as an innate ability which is a unique mix of innate intelligence or brain power and a certain degree of creativity or the capacity to provide innovative solutions to problems in his everyday world in addition to effective and efficient communication between employees. Talent is an innate ability that an individual possesses and uses to manage different affairs in special occasions (Gagne, 2007). Two people with the same intelligence may act differently to implement a distinct talent because while one of them has the ability to use other one does not have. In fact, talent represents a competitive advantage for organizations in order to maximize their effectiveness. Although skills can be learned in many settings, the innate abilities arise from within the individual (Slizer & Dowell, 2010). Many research suggested that in recruiting and retaining nurses the features must be searched which facilitates continuous learning and the growth of unique capabilities or enablement of talent. Talent is an innate ability that an individual should have it from the beginning and it cannot be obtain from a position-time.

In contrast to the natural ability approach, talent as mastery approach focuses on doing the works efficiently which is the result of learning and practice (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001). Ericsson, Prietula, and Cokely (2007), for instance, conclude from their research across a wide range of performance domains (i.e., chess, medicine, auditing, programming, dance, and music) that talent which they operationalized as expert performance is nearly always made, not born. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) defined talent as a function of experience and effort. Thus, nurses' recruitment will change based on their level of effort and gained experience. A growing number of individual and organizational variables are effective on the process of mastery growth in a way that predicted values always cannot achieve the satisfactory results. In fact, working condition for nurses is considered more effective than nurses themselves.

A third approach to talent focuses on commitment operationalized both as commitment to one's work and one's employing organization. According to Allen and Meyer (1991), organizational commitment is a psychological state that binds an employee to an organization as a result of desire, need, and obligation. Desire (affective commitment) refers to employees' heart's desire and interest to continue his membership and remain with an organization. Need

(continuance commitment) involves a person's bond to an organization based on what it would cost that person to leave the company. Obligation (normative commitment) refers to a feeling of moral obligation, indebtedness, organizational socialization, and responsibility to continue working for a particular organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The concept of talent as commitment can be seen as a complementary approach to talent, rather than a supplementary approach, which is presented as one of components of talent. Talent is competence times commitment times contribution. All three elements should exist and high scores on one element (e.g., commitment) cannot compensate for low scores on another (e.g., competence) (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012).

A final 'object' approach to talent refers to the fit between an individual's talent and the context within which he or she works, i.e., the right place, the right position, and/or the right time. The fit approach is essential to the discussion of talent management as it emphasizes the importance of context, implying that the meaning of talent is relative rather than absolute, and subjective rather than objective (González-Cruz, Martínez-Fuentes, & Pardo-del-Val, 2009; Jericó, 2001). Talent includes an outstanding maturity that generally was called fitness, i.e., knowledge, mastery, and ability. It can put an individual among ten percent of the top employees who work in the same field of study.

Talent Management and Nurses Performances

Fitness for nurses has a crucial importance in protection, recovery, and promotion of human health (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, & Silber, 2003). As a pillar of healthcare system, hospitals help nurses upgrade their fitness (Aiken et al., 2009). World Health Organization (WHO) stated that nurses are the best supporter of healthcare system in all communities and lack of sufficient qualified nurses can negatively effect providing patients health. The primary nursing care goal is the recovery of patients and realizing this fact is possible through behavioral and scientific cares and effective communication with patients (Habibzadeh, Ahmadi, Vanaki, 2010). The nurses' performance has an important effect on providing care, recovering patients, and achieving health objectives (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, & Silber, 2003; Kane, Muller, Duval, & Wilt, 2007; Stanton, 2009). Their performance needs to apply a complex mixture of knowledge, mastery, motivation, and merit that leads to a definition of nursing fitness (Cowan, Norman, & Coopmah, 2005). Nurses' tendency towards turnover and non-medical activities, working outside of hospital, and early retirement or redemption particularly in young nurses all over the world reduce the number of nurses in the hospitals

(Buchan & Calman, 2004). Healthcare system encounters with considerable global challenge and concerns about nursing shortage despite the undeniably significant improvements in the field of science and technology. This will directly affect the health status and the shortage of nurses will prevent improving this status (Buchan, Parkin, & Schalski, 2008). In response to this challenge, talent management system is used in order to improve and expand quality, fitness, mastery, experience, and culture in nursing workforce (Cowan, Norman, Coopmah, 2005; Douglas, 2013). For more than one decade, talent management system has been applied in the healthcare system which is a good health indicator (Brightman, 2007; Douglas, 2013). Healthcare system's talent management was effective on the growth and development of nurses and healthcare system management can create a competitive advantage for recruiting, retaining, and developing talented nurses.

Discussion

Selection of appropriate nurses means that the managers should be assured that they have skilled, qualified, and knowledgeable personnel for care of patients and the patients have the right to be *under* the health and social *care professionals* with updated and relevant expertise. Therefore, recruitment and maintaining qualified and worthy nursing workforce play a vital role in patient satisfaction and hospital performance. This means that placement in the proper position should be fitted the interests, abilities, value, and personality of individual (Cowan, Norman, & Coopmah, 2005; Maureen, 2008). Having talented skilled nurses is a key factor in achieving big hospitals with several specialized units (Maureen, 2008). The financial value of hospitals depends upon the quality of talents, which improve the condition of hospitals. Relying on these talents, hospitals will make profit and their income will increase dramatically (Buchan & Calman, 2004; Douglas, 2013). According to the literature and theoretical point of view, the field of talent management is still is in its infancy and needs to become familiar with theoretical advances (Collings & Mollahi, 2009). In the talent management realm, it is important to know the people who were considered as talented ones for an organization (Collings & Mollahi, 2009). Each organization has its own attitude and opinion in this field and there is not a common accepted definition for it (CIPD, 2006). Healthcare system has a great deal of influence on proper management of talents regarding society health. Despite of insufficient research about proper talents in nursing, the studies in different organizations show that nursing career has a reduplicated importance in talent system because of its professional standards and scientific and technical nature. In spite of

general framework of talent management and its different perspectives in different industries, we cannot mention single perspectives for nurses. The reason is the application of each indicators within a different period of time which shows its role and position in different career paths. The provided criteria in other research were represented based on the non-medical nature of those organizations and they were also proposed by considering the common nature of employment. Different units of healthcare system follow the unique features which do not provide the possibility of comparative study with other organizations. The nature of nursing career requires having various masteries in different times and in different sections. There is not any standard unit of talent, despite of having unit of professional qualifications.

Conclusion

The present study set out to present the literature on talent management in nursing by developing a clear and concise definition of talent management and offering an in-depth review of the talent concept. From a theoretical point of view, this review suggests that the area of talent management is in its infancy and a significant degree of theoretical advancement is required. Hence, the managers should involve the maximum known talents in their selection at the time of recruitment in order to be helpful for nurses in different sections. Unlike many other jobs, the career path may not be specified from the beginning for the nurses. In nursing careers, career path need to be specified before recruitment and nurses should work in places that have highest proportion with his/her talent based on needed talents and professional qualifications; because the cost of unqualified nurses can breed irreparable humanistic and economical damages. Using talent management system in healthcare system, clinical skills of nurses can boom, job satisfaction of personnel can increase, recruiting, applying, and retaining qualified nurses can take place, and provide improving skills and opportunities for learning. These factors prevent nurses' turnover and transfer and as a result increase the efficiency of organization and treatment of patients. The present study is not free from limitations. The very first limitation of the study is to examine differences in the conceptualization and implementation of talent management. Differences might be examined at the organizational, departmental, country, and/or cultural level, using multilevel designs. In doing so, researchers would respond to calls for more evidence of how talent management is implemented across different contexts and which approaches are more prevalent. Also, the use of other qualitative and quantitative methods such as observation, questionnaire, and

interview should shed more light on this issue. Moreover, future research is required to understand how the success of talent management is measured in different nursing sections. In sum, in depth investigation and case study to understand the effects of talent management in nursing is needed.

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