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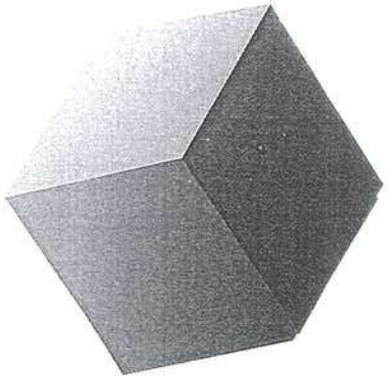

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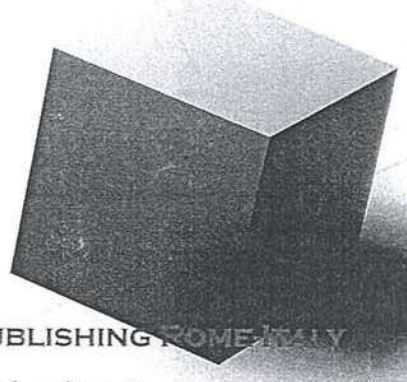

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A Qualitative Research about Talent Management Policies of Companies for "PR" Employees in the 21st Century in Turkey

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Abstract

In today's world, having a cost effective and focused talent management strategy is particularly critical for every organisation's success. The talent pool and the development of talents among the entire workforce will determine the future success for most businesses. Talent at all levels of the business is critical to the organisation and if managed well, will have a dynamic impact on the bottom line. Today's recessionary business environment with its increasing levels of job losses, fear among workers, globalisation, rising expectations on executives and scarcity of top talent(talent gap) has led organisations to count on managers to support them in identifying and developing employees who are flexible enough to find their way and lead others in the increasing complex environment. Within this context the main purpose of this study is to explore talent management policies and implications of companies by using a qualitative research methodolody, semi-structured interview technique. It has been searched specifically the implications for PR specialists who may have a critical impact on the development of a corporate reputation of the firm. 4 companies leading in their sectors were searched and the interview results were compared by using content analysis. Results were discussed in the discussion part and quantitative research models proposed for future researchs.

Keywords: *Human Resources Management, Talent, Talent Management, Public Relations Employees, Qualitative Research*

1. Introduction

One of the biggest challenges of companies today, all over the world is building and sustaining a strong talent pipeline. Not only do businesses need to adjust to shifting demographics and workforce preferences, but they must also build new capabilities and revitalize their organizations- all while investing new technologies, globalizing their operations and contending with new competitors.(SİX PRİNCİPLES'TAN) Having a cost effective and focused talent management strategy is critical for every organization's success. The talent pool and the development of talent among the entire workforce will determine the future for most businesses. Organizations needs to employ a range of initiatives to ensure talent is recruited and nurtured among all staff with the business. Both employees and management need to work together in areas such as performance management, career development, training and up skilling, with line management playing a critical role in identifying and agreeing developmental opportunites for staff in their areas (talent manegement)

There are different approaches for talent management applications of the organizations. Some organizations select an elite group of high performers and potentials and they only focus on the "stars" of the business. However, another view is that, organizations take a more inclusive view of those that have talent with the business, focusing on developing the capabilities, strenghts, knowledge, skill and abilities of a broader range of people. The basic beleive in that approach is managing the talent inclusively. Either selective or inclusive, talent management is an area that is growing in popularity and different organizations may have different strategies to select, develop and keep their talents. Talent at all levels of the business is critical to the organisation and if managed well, will have a dynamic impact on the bottom line. Eventough the positive obvious affect of talent management on organizational performance is clear, researchs show that organizations didn't have systematic and strategic approach to talent management. This brings the necessity of academic and sectoral researchs to fill the gap and with that purpose this study tries to identify the awareness level and implications of the companies in Turkey about talent management.

Talent is about a person's personality, skills, motivation, as well as their potential to grow. The starting point in talent management is that an employee has the potential to add value to the organization and the manager he/she reports to wants to ensure this happens. *Talent manegement* centers around developing processes that provide a continious source of talented people starting with the recruitment of the right people, mapping their training and development pathway within the organization and ensuring career growth and promotion opportunities are offered at the right stages in this plan. *The role of the front line manager* is critical to success in this area as the direct manager of each person is the one who knows their strenghts and areas of potential better than any other. Recosnising talent traits and praising people for showing them are critical skills for a line manager to develop. Line managers need to see behaviours that set the really talented people apart from others. Increasingly, organizations are recognising the need and value of the developing the talent of those working within the business. A range of formal and informal idenfication methods can be used within the more strategic organizations investing in planning and systematic talent identification processes.

After explaining generally the importance and contribution of talent management for the companies, this research specifically aims two things. At first, generally describe and define the talent management applications of companies and secondlly as the name of the article indicates concentrate on PR specialists, their competencies and the positioning of PR workers in talent managament process. There are some reasons to concentrate on PR specialists in the research. Today in the globalised markets, the importance of public relations for corporations has been realized in the last decades. "Public relation is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptence and co operation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problem sor issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the pulic interrest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication technigues as its principal tool." (Hutton, 1999, 200-201). Public Relations activities of the companies provide important contributions to the development of corporate reputation and image of the company, which brings internal&external customer loyalty, forming a loyal community, blocking market entrance of competitors, strengthening the competitive advantage, being in a good cooperation with government and law makers. All of these image increasing activities provies loyal customers which means profit maximization. From the perspective of business management, public relations applications has a direct impact on companys' *sales performance* (increasing level of companies' services and products); *financial performance* (investments & rapidness of cash flow); *human resources management functions* and policies (recruitment of most talented employees and candidates, working with a high qualified staff with relatively low amount of salaries and decreasing labor costs; *increase in internal (employee) and external customer satisfaction* as a result of the high performance levels of the qualified, talented employees); *strategic desicion making, crisis management* (i.e. taking support from internal and external stakeholders during crisis period creating a powerfull synergy), and having influence on even govenmental policies and law ag*ents*. All of these advantages decreases the total costs of the company by increasing total productivity, effectiveness and efficiency which brings higher profit maximization.

Together with the increasing importance of PR for the companies, the need for talented and highly qualified PR specialisits and employees also increases for the sectors. Knowledge, skills and abilities demanded from the companies for PR specialists and workers also started to change. Increasing level of the intellectual capacity of the communities also brings about some changes in PR specialist's job descriptions and job spesifications.At the same time because of the contribution to the company productivity and profit maximization PR specialists are one of the key dimensions of human capital of the companies.This intellectual capital and resource has to be carefully managed and keep in safe by applying right human reources management policies. All of these demands need a spesific talent management policy which is going to be implied for PR employees to increase their performance, potential, satisfaction and loyalty to their companies who are the key strategic human asset in creating company image. The aim is to establish an environment for the employees to develop themselves and their careers and adopt themselves to the institution. Talent management is of considerable importance in increasing the performance of the institution and the employees. The dimensions in defining talent management are "trust to the institution", "perception of self-efficacy", "institutional support", "job satisfaction" and "competence". Previous studies prooved the impact of these dimensions on employee performance, satisfaction and commitment to the companies.

Within the context of this basic aim, research questions of the study are: whether companies are using talent management policies? Do they aware of the importance of talent management? How do they define a talent and which approach are they using to select, to develop and to keep their talents? Whether they are using a stars approach by only focusing on high fliers or do they have a more inclusive approach? How they are determining their talent pools? Are they selecting and recruiting talents outside of the company or applying a more inner developmental approach? If so what are their strategies to develop their talents, which training and development activities are they handling? How they are

maintaning their talented employee's loyalty, commitment and engagement to the company? For example are they using coaching and mentoring programs? Which specific reward systems they are using (compensation, salary policies) for talents? What should be the role and function of top level and other level managers as well as HR departments in deploying such a talent management program in an organization? What is the impact of talent management programs in developing employee motivation and performance and organizational performance at the same time? What are the critical points that has to be taken into consideration in applying such a system to increase effectiveness and efficiency of the talent management program?

2. Method

2.1 Sampling & Procedure:

Sampling & Procedure: By using a *descriptive research methodology*, talent management policies of human resources management departments were analyzed by using *semi-structured interview methods*. And after that, *a content analysis* were made for the data collected from the interviews. Job descriptions and job specification models (knowledge, skills and abilities KSA's), motivation policies, institutional support, performance appraisal systems, employee recognition programs, career development policies, training and development strategies were all asked with in-depth interviews. There are 17 open-ended questions, first 16 questions aimed to gather information about attacting and selecting talents to the company, development of talents in the company and keeping talents and providing their loyalty to the company. In the last and 17th question PR specialists position in the above specified areas were asked.

4 company from different sectors -which are also the leading companies in their sectors- were visited. Interviews were done with the specialists and managers working in either Human Resources Management departmants or Talent Management Departments. The sectors are "finance&banking", "logistics", "consulting" and "telecommunication".

3. Results

In this part, semi-structured interview notes has been shared by giving examples from the important applications of the companies one by one and the results are summarized briefly in *Table 1.*

Table 1. Analysis of the Talent Management Policies of Companies Searched

Basic Policies And Implications	Acquisiton & Attraction of Talents	Development of Talents	Keeping Talents& Providing Loyalty	Position of PR specialists in the talent pool	Important things to increase the success of the applications
Company 1. Sector: Finance &Banking	Employer Branding Programs, Hero Club Programs for newly graduates, Assesment Centers, Performance Appraisal	Home-Grown talent programs, External and Internal MBA opportunities in prestigious universities, Internal mentorship, expatriate management programs	Training&Development Programs, any other policy	Not enough	Integrity Ethics Perception of justice
Company 2. Sector: Consultancy	Performance Appraisal System, Assesment Centers (in-basket technique and panel interviews)	Mentoring	Employee Recognition Programs, Advice Reward Systems, Extra payments for high fliers	PR has to be included in the system, internal and external communication channels has to be kept open to create a corporate image	Trust in supervisor, employees, perception of justice, top management's support and beleif of the system.
Company 3.	Management by	Expatriate	Providing employees'	Has to be	Justice perceptions

Sector: Logistics & a MNCs	Objectives (MBO), Vertical and Horizontal Performance Appraisal System	management, Academy for Young Talents in Vienna	career expectations, well established career programs, cross functional mobility opportunities, career opportunities in abroad, Advice Reward Systems, Rewarding best advices with a bonus payment and Employee Recognition Programs	developed	and trust of the employees to the company and their managers, perceived support and perceived value given by the company
Company 4. Telecommunication	Competency based performance appraisal system, Assesment Centers, Employer Branding Programs, Young Talent and "wanted" programs, direct dialogue with university clubs	Mentorship programs will start next year	Development programs & determination of high potentials are in the agenda of next year	Well structured and organized PR department, the number of PR specialists in talent pool is good enough	Openness, Justice

First company analysed in the study in terms of talent management applications is one of the oldest and leading companies in *Banking&Finance sector in Turkey*. It was founded during 1940's and it has nearly 17.000 emploees. There is a seperate Talent Management Department within the organization chart reporting to HR director. The establishment of the department goes back to 3 years before. The interview was made with a talent management specialist and according to her definiton *"Talent management is a process of transforming business strategies to the real performance"*.

In the determination of talents, Goleman's *emotional intelligence, learning ability (openness to experience) and leaderhip (self-leaderhip, change leaderhip, task leaderhip etc..)* are basic criterias to determine and select high potential. Performance level of the employees is the key in determining talents. The basic question is that whether this high performer can maintan the expected performance level for an higher position? They are including high performers to their talent pool eventough they aren't high potentials. So "high performance is a must and priority to be included in the talent pool".This means that they are applying *an inclusive talent management strategy* for their companies at different levels. This levels are "young talent programs", "management trainee programs", "talent management review" and "executive development planning". Within this context a well established *"performance appraisal system"* is the basic analysis providing basic inputs for talent management and it is "the skelaton of the system". They are making *assesment center applications* (a method using various appraisal systems in assessing the performance including group-panel interviews, in basket methodology, personality inventories, simulations, role play techniques etc..) in determining the high performers. In the company *"home-grown talent"* philosophy prevails. The rate of the talents promoted to higher positions is %8,5 after the establishment of a talent management department (within 3 years).

There are also cross-positionings for the talents according to their KSA's (knowledge, skill and abilities) and career expectancies. For example a talent may change his/her department from credits to sales.

The company is also utilizing *"employer branding" and "hero club" applications* to attract young talents and new graduates to the company. "There is a long term internship program for the new graduates and they can continue if they like to stay".

To develop talents, they are using internal mentors, they are sending their talents to national prestigious MBA programs and even abroad MBA programs. There is an ongoing expatriate management system at the same time. High potentials may go abroad for a 9 month period to be in part of international projects and after they come back they may start in an upper level.

Internal mentors have been determinining voluntary based and there are 40 high level mentors in the company. They are making mentorship for one level lower positions.

Lastly, integrity, ethics and perception of justice is the important factors for the succsessfull application of the system. There is no a specific system to determine PR talents in the company and the number of PR specialists is very low comparingly to other departments.

Second company is an "human resources management consultancy firm" giving consultancy services to different sectors since 2004. The company gives consultancy services to the companies in different sectors such as IT, finance,

social media, energy, fast consuming products etc... The interview was conducted one of the firm partners. According to her definition, "talent management is a process determining high perfromance & high potential employees and developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to fulfill the performance criterias in upper positions", "company strategies is the starting point in this process, whether the company is going to apply a resizing strategy (downsizing, getting bigger opening new locations in other parts of the country etc..), do the company have the necesssary human resource to satisfy this strategic demands in the near future, whether the higher positions has to be filled from outside or inside of the company?, what is the urgency to fulfill new positions? Is it possible to develop candidates inside of the company or not?". The partner stated that: "As a basic policy filling the positions inside of the company should be the key one, but sometimes companies can make selection&recrutiment for the potential talents outside of the company" and she gave sample applications for the determination of talents from one of the biggest companies in Turkey, a leading cementry company: "It has been reliazed that there are no current talents to fulfill critical positions within the company and a project began to select and recruite the right canditates outside the firm. There are two profiles, one is sales & marketing, the other one is production&technical. Those profiles were defined together with HR managers and functional department managers. A newspaper article prepared by utilizing PR strategies. First of all, the definition of critical profiles was made and competencies to fulfill this profiles were determined namely; "analytical thinking, conceptual thinking", "knowledge of foreign languages", "leadership abilities". In the first stage of the selection, a general competecny exam was applied to all of the applicants and their English knowledge level were also tested. In the second stage, in-basket technique (one of the specific methods of assesment centers) were used. Candidates who took the highest scores were entered to panel interviews with HR manager and functional department manager, after that steps new talents were determined to fulfill the critical positions in the company." As it is seen from the example, talent management is a process which is intermingled to the all of the basic functions of Human Resources Management, it is most developed and systematic level of HRM applications.

Likewise the first interview result, *"performance apprisal system"* was stated as the key for giving all of the answers to these needs. As the second interviewee stated "there are various applications to keep talented employees and maintain their loyalty to the company"." "Mentoring programs and rewarding systems were some of them, mentoring is a special one because there is one-to-one direct relationship with the mentor and this direct support creates high feeling of value and creates loyalty. Mentoring applications is highly recognized and needed by young talents". Another applications are *employee recognition programs*, for example *"advice reward systems"*. "Advices and new ideas were taken from employees according to departmental or company goals. The best practices were choosen and rewarded which entails creativity and provides value for the company. This rewards may be a bonus payment or a regognition letter from CEO". "Some companies may also use an extra payment system for high potentials. For example they are paying 5 to 10 % more payment for high potentials. Lastly, for the effective application of the system, "trust in supervisor employees' perception of justice, top management's support and beleif of the system" were stated as the critical points. The interviewee also stated that "reward system should include every employee in the organization not only "stars" or "high fliers" and employees should also participate to the desicion making like determination of personal and departmental goals etc.., managers also has to keep open internal vertical and horizontal information channels".

Third company, a leading MNC in the logistic sector. The interview was conducted with HR manager and also Middle East HR coordinator of the company. Talent management applications are under the responsibility of human resources management department and TM applications are all integrated in HRM systems. She defines talent as "a person who does something better than the others with the same resources; if someone has the same knowledge, skills abilities and competencies but shows a better performance than the others this is a talent". The basic strategy is the determination of talents within the company. Critical positions are determined acoording to strategic and financial criterias. Through ERP modules, if a new position is opened, first an internal memo is given to employees in the company, this article stays open 15 days, if no application is taken, outside candidates are searched. Interbal recruitment is the global firm strategy and it is also applied in Turkey. Management by objectives (MBO) and Performance appraisal system is the key and backbone in the determination of talents. Each employee from desk office to blue collars are included in the system. Each year, 4 quantitative and a 1 qualitative target is given each employee. Performance is appraised according to these targets. For the attraction of talents, "corporate reputation and perception is quite important especially for Y generation". Employer branding applications, social responsibility programs and perception of people about how the copmpany behave its employees are all important factors in determining the attraction of new talents to the company. Eventough there is a marketing communication specialist working and giving reports to sales& marketing manager, all of this activities are also the responsibility of HR department. PR and HRM work and behave in coordination. HR manager states that "*we are a global multinational company, therefore there is a good image in the labor markets to attract talented people, this is an advantage in Turkey conditions. Each employee and talent in our company know that*

he/she has good career opportunities both in Turkey and abroad in the global level. Employee's career expectations are also taken into consideration and expatriate management also facilitates the chance of making career in the global. For example, a financal specialist went to France as an expat to finance management department, stayed there for 3 years and after that he started his career in Turkey as CFO (promoted to an upper level). Another talent went to France for the same position and he stayed in French company and went on his career there accordingly to his career expectations, or an employee who worked in operations during 5 years may be transfered to sales department if he/she has such a skill. These examples clearly shows us the avalibility of vertical and horizontal and cross functional passages (functional mobility-between departments) in the native company and the global, and our talents also aware of these compensation options. We have also an academy for our young talents in Vienna to develop their skills, knowledge and abilities to promote to an upper position and show the same level of performance in this upper position at the same time. All of these talent development programs also increases the loyalty, increases motivation and organizational commitment level of the talented employees". There are also reward and compensation policies applied to keep talented employees. For example "*advice reward systems*" is one of them. As HR manager stated: "In 2012, one of our employee's advise to decrease operational costs was choosen the very best advice of the year in the global company, he has taken a good amount of bonus payment and a recognition letter from the CEO of the multinational. This also increases performance and motivation level in the company and plays a role modellig function for the other employees." Tenure and experience is also rewarded, for example a recognition certificate is given to the employees who finish 5th year, and recognition plackets are also given to the employees who finishes 10 th year in the company. All of these programs increases employee loyalty and keeps turnover rates low. This company has the lowest turnover rate comparing to the other companies in the logistics sector in Turkey. As a last point, likewise the other views, justice perceptions and trust of the employees to the company and their managers, perceived support and perceived value given by the company are the critical factors that affect the successfull and effective application of talent management systems.

Fourth company, give services in telecommunication sector, one of the leaders in the sector, which has 23.000 employees, 8.000 of them are blue collor workers. There is a seperate talent management department which gives report to HR director, composing of 40 employees. The interview was realized with one of the talent management specialists currently responsible from the establishment of talent management system and also a young talent from PR department participated and asseessed the employee perception of talent management applications in the company. Talented PR specialists states her satisfaction about the talent management system and her wishes to continue in the company since it is offering a good career opportunity for her. In this company, they have been applying talent management program since 2 years. Up to now, talents of the company were determined and a talent pool were created. In the coming year, they are planning to determine high potentials and systematically apply talent development programs. They determined their talents via performance appraisal systems, 360 competency appraisal system and assesment center applications. For the acquisition of new talents they are applying employer branding programs and the program named "wanted" was one of them. New graduated young people are accepted to the program which is going to last 12 days. Candidates are participating to the lectures and courses about management and managerial functions, successful managers from different sectors also give seminars to the young talent candidates. After that period, they know the company and its strategies, career opportunities, they develop a good perception of corporate image, etc...After that period canditates are passed through a general ability exam and assesment center applications (a multi method assesment- panel interviews, role plays, simulations, personality tests, in-basket techniques etc...) . At the end new talents which fits well to the organizational culture were determined and job offers were made. As another point, in the company percentage of employees who are promoted to upper levels is 75% which means that they give importance to development of own talents and company loyalty. In the upcoming year they are planning to apply internal mentorship programs for high potentials. Employee motivation is one of the important criterias in the assesment of managerial performance and 360 performance appraisal sytems have been using as a basic output for reward, payment and compensation system. They are also giving extra bonus payments to high peformers and applying project based rewarding. Openness and justice are the key policies in rewarding. Lastly, they have a big amount of PR workers and a more structured PR department composing of media relations, corporate social responsibility, corporate reputation etc.. All of the PR functions are applied systematically comparing to other companies interviewed. They give a special importance to PR specialists since effective PR is also contributes to the development of corporate reputation in turn acquisition new talents. This gives a concrete resullt because the company is perceived as the most valuable brand and a highly reputaed one, in the market researchers it keeps its position in the first 3.

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4. Discussion

The main goal of all of the business firms is to provide profit maximization by increasing efficiency and effectiveness. In the management and organization studies literature, from the very beginning of classical period to the post modern times different organizational structures and the best structure to increase productivity has been searched. Today, it is a well accepted truth that organizations not only composed of structures or organizational schemas but there is lively mechanism i.e. an organizational dynamic. Organizations are first of all composed of humans and the interaction of people (interpersonal relationships -such as between supervisor and emplyee, between workplace friends- as well as intra group and inter group relationships and dynamics). So in this lively dynamic, the human resource and its well management creates the key for successfull and effective organizations. Eventough this discussion may be another paper's subject, the idea is that, every organization and business company today are aware or at least they have to be aware of the vital necessity to select and attract the best human resource, develop this resource to increase their potential and performance and to keep talented ones and high performers to maintain organizational stability. So "talent management" has such a pshilosophy based on the good and effective management of human resources. It is also the most developed form of human resources management and strategic HRM applicatios. It is obvious that if it is applied effectively, it has direct results on employee motivation, satisfaction, commitment and overall organizational performance. So talent management is the backbone of successfull management of this human potential.

Therefore, the basic aim of this article was to search talent management applications of companies and their awareness level and specific applications to attract, develop and keep their talents. Eventough this is a qualitative research and a starting point for further researches, there are common points that we may discuss here. First of all, corporate companies and leading companies in their sectors in Turkey are aware of the *strategic importance of talent managament* and they are applying talent management as an integrated policy to their human resources management functions. Multinational companies are the luckiest ones because they are basically adopting global talent management strategies and applying them to the local whereas other big firms has been established their own systems within the last 2-3 years and they started up the implications newly. Of course this qualitative analysis only give some samples and done with a case study format, so to analyze the impact of talent management's direct impact on some organizational behaviour variables like performance, motivation, employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, work engagement and even external customers, in the future we need amprical researchs. All of the companies stated the importance of organizational justice, fairness, trust in supervisor and trust in top management so all of these OB variables may be used as moderators in the upcoming research models between talent management applications and the proposed dependent variables below. At the same time as a longitudional study, the results of talent management applications in the same companies may be measured in the long run to amprically prove the impact on performance and bottom line results. Futhermore, one of the important results of this study is that, public relations and human resources management departments have to work in coordination espacially in the matter of attacting talented employees to the company. In Turkey, the basic accepted view is stil that PR and HRM are supporting functions for the organizations, but it is obvious that they are the backbone of all organizatioal system since they keep internal and external customer satisfaction, i.e. the most important determinants of organizational profit. Corporate image and reputation is the most important factor in attracting talented employees to the organization and it is the basic responsability of effective PR. Organizations has to be aware of the critical functions (both PR and HRM) in survival of the companies in this harsh competitive environment.

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