CONCEPTUALIZING TALENT MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This paper seeks to make a contribution to our conceptual understanding of talent management (TM) based on a review of over 60 academic publications between 1995 and 2017. The approach starts with a characterization of talent and talent management. This is related to historical references of talent and the meaning of talent in working world, definition of TM and differentiation to Human Resource Management (HRM) as well as TM perspectives (workforce differentiation, Human Resource architecture, strategic impact, exclusivity, inclusivity, people, positions, social capital, equality and diversity, TM at European and Global level and TM from a perspective of managed talents). In the following, the author outlines the adoption of TM practices and activities as a topic, suggestion of TM starting points, linkage of talent and corporate strategy, description of TM practices and activities. After descriptions on characterization and measurement of TM outcomes, a differentiation of TM responsibility follows finally.

Keywords: Talent management activities, talent management practices, talent management perspectives, talent management outcome, talent management measurement

INTRODUCTION

Talent management (TM) usually stands for the achievement of outstanding business success based on individual talent (Capelli, 2008a; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; McDonnell et al., 2010; Sparrow, Hird and Balain, 2011; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a) and evolved as

intensively discussed topic in human resource management (HRM) literature and practice in recent years (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013b).

TM literature strands are at present focused on the characterization of talent and TM, TM practices and activities (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Thunnisssen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a), TM results (Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a) and strategic TM (Collings and Mellahi, 2009).

Future TM research for instance should enhance the further conceptualization of TM, related activities and effects (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010; Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a). This paper intends to respond to that call and aims to contribute to the conceptual understanding on TM by linking exemplified TM structure and content based on a review of over 60 academic releases between 1995 and 2017. This is mainly being predicated on the literature strands 'conceptualization of talent and TM', 'TM practices and activities' and 'TM outcome' (see Thunnisssen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a), including strategic TM aspects (see e.g., Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Stahl et al., 2012; Tansley et al., 2007).

CHARACTERIZING TALENT

Historical references on the talent term

In context of historical references talent is mainly considered as requirement for the improvement of individuals live (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, 2013), either by personal character traits (e.g., talent as special abilities) (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, 2013; Meyers, van Woerkom and Dries, 2013; Tansley, 2011) or by articles of value (e.g., talent considered as amount of silver or gold) (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, 2013; Tansley, 2011).

Identifying meanings of talent in the working world

Conceptualizations of talent in the working world (see e.g., Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, 2013; Meyers, van Woerkom and Dries, 2013; Tansley et al., 2007; Tansley, 2011) commonly highlight individual attributes (such as knowledge) as origin of talent (e.g., Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, 2013; Meyers, van Woerkom and Dries, 2013; Tansley, 2011). Differences are related to combinations of individual attributes and further features, such as internal factors (e.g., organizational priorities) and external factors (e.g., industry type) (Tansley et al., 2007; Tansley, 2011), or labor market aspects (e.g., possibilities to replace employees) (Dries, 2013). Meyers, van Woerkom and Dries (2013)

recognize high potential as a widely mentioned form of talent mentioned in literature. A high potential employee is mainly described by specific attributes (e.g., managerial capabilities) and ambition or aspiration (Aráoz; 2005; Martin and Schmidt, 2010; Ready, Conger and Hill, 2010; Tansley, 2011). Further key attributes are engagement, standing for emotional commitment (Martin and Schmidt, 2010; Tansley, 2011).

CHARACTERIZING TM
Defining TM
TM definitions differ greatly in literature (Dries, 2013; McDonnell et al., 2010; Mellahi and Collings, 2010; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013) and the main part of TM publications content no definition on TM (Dries, 2013; Lewis and Heckman, 2006). TM for instance is related to the achievement of strategic company objectives (see e.g., Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Duttagupta, 2005; Silzer and Dowell, 2010) or considered as supply-demand function in order to cater to talent needs punctually (e.g., Capelli, 2008a; Capelli, 2009). Because of ambiguities on TM definitions (Dries, 2013) and a lack of consistent theoretical fundament TM is also related to a management fashion at first glance (Dries, 2013; Iles, Preece and Chuai, 2010). But, this assumption is negated clearly (Dries, 2013).

Differentiating TM and HRM
Regarding the distinction of TM and HRM there are different meanings provided in literature (see e.g., Dries, 2013; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010). For instance, TM is considered as not fundamentally different from HRM (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010) or authors (Lewis and Heckman, 2006) speak from a replacement of HRM with TM. Most authors see TM as a part of HRM (Dries, 2013) or integrated HRM with a selective focus (Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010). In addition, TM is based on workforce differentiation, recognized as the key differentiating characteristic between TM and HRM (Bourdrau and Ramstad, 2005b; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013; Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010).

PERSPECTIVES ON TM
Workforce differentiation, HR architecture and strategic impact
Workforce differentiation models (e.g., Axelrod, Handfield-Jones and Michaels, 2002; Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005b; Handfield-Jones, Michaels and Axelrod, 2001; Huselid, Beatty and Becker, 2005; Lepak and Snell, 2002) distinguish employees delivering most distinctive contributions on organizational objectives from other groups of organizational incumbents.

Some authors (Axelrod, Handfield-Jones and Michaels, 2002; Handfield-Jones, Michaels and Axelrod, 2001) propose a performance related approach without connections to positions. Other authors (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005b; Huselid, Beatty and Becker, 2005; Lepak and Snell, 2002) emphasize the connection between outstanding contributions and certain positions for instance, knowledge-worker positions (Lepak and Snell, 2002), A positions (Huselid, Beatty and Becker, 2005) or pivotal talent positions (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005b). The approaches provided by Axelrod, Handfield-Jones and Michaels (2002), Boudreau and Ramstad (2005b), Handfield-Jones, Michaels and Axelrod (2001) and Huselid, Beatty and Becker (2005) were implemented top-down into the organization, whereas the conception provided by Lepak and Snell (2002) provide a bottom-up focus based on contributions to strategic targets out of positions with value and uniqueness (knowledge-worker positions) (Collings and Mellahi (2009). Finally, the 'War for talent' (Axelrod, Handfield-Jones and Michaels, 2002; Handfield-Jones, Michaels and Axelrod, 2001) approach is exclusively related to (e.g., A, B, C-performing) managers whereas in other models (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005b; Huselid, Beatty and Becker, 2005; Lepak and Snell, 2002) hierarchical aspects (e.g., managerial or non-managerial positions) play no role.

Exclusivity, inclusivity, people, positions and social capital

A categorization on four TM perspectives is suggested by Iles, Chuai and Preece (2010) who differentiate between exclusive-people, exclusive-positions, inclusive-people and social capital. The exclusive-people perspective is focused on individuals with significant contribution to organizational success (e.g., via competencies) and has no link to particular positions. The exclusive-position view is additionally related to key positions and provides therefore a more narrow TM perspective than the exclusive-people perspective. Contrary to the two exclusive views the inclusive-people perspective is potentially focused on all organizational members, mainly driven by humanistic aspects. Social capital is related to a broad talent pool combined with social factors (e.g., company culture) and organizational factors (company-specific routines) as well as organizational performance (Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010). Referring to numerous authors (Stahl et al., 2012; Tansley et al., 2007; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a) a lot of organizations execute exclusive and inclusive approaches simultaneously (see Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010). Tendencies for inclusive approaches are given (Dries, 2013; Festing, Schäfer and Scullion, 2013; Tansley et al., 2007) and can be located by way of example for small and medium-sized companies in Germany (Festing, Schäfer and Scullion, 2013) and at public or non-profit organizations (Tansley et al., 2007). The exclusive approach is more in use at major multinational companies (Atan and Stapf, 2017; Festing, Schäfer and

Scullion, 2013; Sparrow, Hird and Balain, 2011; Stahl et al., 2012; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a).

Considering TM with approaches to equality and diversity

Diversity management is related to an employers' positive promotion of equality and opportunity for each kind of organizational incumbent to erase discrimination caused by for instance gender, race or disability (Harris and Foster, 2010). TM and diversity management have much in common. Both disciplines are ambiguous in agreed definitions and tend to encompass many aspects of HRM (Stewart and Harte, 2010). Determinations on TM are for example related to find answers on "what type of talent management programme should be developed; should it be made available to all levels of staff or restricted to certain grades or occupational groups; how should individuals be selected?" (Harris and Foster, 2010, p. 425).

Recent studies on TM, equality and diversity (see Harris and Foster, 2010; Stewart and Harte, 2010) are related for instance to the identification of most frequent issues for line managers on TM implementation and application of equality and diversity policies. According to that most challenging are to create e.g., fair opportunities for employees to apply for jobs or talent selection processes e.g., formalized assessment processes instead of "pick up the pieces" (Harris and Foster, 2010, p. 428). Stewart and Harte (2010) investigated the relation of TM and diversity management concepts on an early stage (Stewart and Harte, 2010) based on interviews with six senior HR professionals of one public organization with 32.000 employees serving a population of 750.000 people in UK. Findings indicate for example that for implementation and connection of both TM and diversity strategy it is important to create a common understanding on each discipline (Stewart and Harte, 2010). Further coordinated activities between TM and diversity support confidence and effectiveness on the achievement of agreed goals (Stewart and Harte, 2010).

The relation of TM and diversity management is on an early stage (Harris and Foster, 2010; Stewart and Harte, 2010) and further research is needed to achieve common goals, just as equality and opportunity for every organizational incumbent (Harris and Foster, 2010).

European perspectives on TM

The most part of the empirical and theoretical work on TM is grounded on North American research and thinking. Based on this and not recognized as critique on the significant work from the United States (US), Collings, Scullion and Vaiman (2011) call for a counterbalance from different traditions and perspectives by focusing Europe as a diverse and interesting region for further investigations on TM. TM and corresponding decisions increasingly have to

acknowledge the differences in the context of people management in different parts of the world (Vaiman, Scullion and Collings, 2012).

However, research meanwhile introduced starting points for further exploration of TM in European context (Collings, Scullion and Vaiman, 2011) such as future talent shortages in UK and Germany (Collings, Scullion and Vaiman, 2011; Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011). For this reason according to the perception of the author it is currently too early to speak from a 'European TM' per se.

Collings, Scullion and Vaiman (2011) provide an overview on recent European TM publications. Examples for TM releases on a European perspective are e.g., Vivas-López, Peris-Ortiz and Rueda-Armengot (2011) who examined the relationship between TM and organizational learning. Based on a sample of 167 large Spanish organizations they found out that companies have to be efficient in developing and implementing a talent-friendly organizational environment and processes in order to support the development of new skills and capabilities. Another one is provided by Whelan (2011) who investigated in the connection of social networks and TM in knowledge-intensive organizations. The main finding here suggests not being focused only on the identification of key positions in a company, but rather the connections between workers in complementary key positions (Collings, Scullion and Vaiman, 2011). Furthermore and as described above, latest research on European TM for example regarding the exploration of TM approaches in Germany are provided by Festing, Schäfer and Scullion (2013) or Atan and Stapf (2017).

Global TM

Companies acting in a global economy meanwhile realized the necessity to manage also their talents in a global context (McDonnell et al., 2010; Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011; Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2010; Stahl et al., 2012; Stahl et al., 2007; Tarique and Schuler, 2010; Vaiman and Collings, 2013). There is no common definition existing on Global TM (GTM) (Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2010; Tarique and Schuler, 2010). A comprehensive definition on GTM is provided by Mellahi and Collings (2010): "Broadly defined, global talent management involves the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage on a global scale, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles which reflects the global scope of the MNE, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with the best available incumbent and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization" (Mellahi and Collings, 2010, p. 143-144).

Based on the variety of GTM definitions two challenges appear (Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010). First, achieving a consensus on the meaning of GTM (Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011). Second, distinguishing GTM from IHRM (Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010), a field of HR encompassing HR practices and policies corresponding to stakeholders on international level (Tarique and Schuler, 2010).

Recent studies on Global TM (GTM) (see Gutridge, Komm and Lawson, 2006; Mellahi and Collings, 2010; Ready and Conger, 2007) are for instance related to explore TM barriers e.g., senior management spent not time enough for high-quality TM (Gutridge, Komm and Lawson, 2006). Stahl et al. (2012) conducted a study on GTM practices with HR professionals and managers of 33 MNEs located in 18 countries. Based on the findings Stahl et al. (2012) suggest six key principles for effective GTM: (1) alignment with strategy, (2) internal consistency (e.g., internal fit of TM activities related to different regions) (3) cultural embeddedness (e.g., inclusion of company values at GTM) (4) management envolvement (e.g., participation of senior management) (5) balance of global and local needs (e.g., through standardized performance tools and process) and (6) employer branding through differentiation (e.g., to find ways to differentiate themselves from competitors).

Compared with IHRM the emerging field of GTM is in its infancy (Tarique and Schuler, 2010). Researchers therefore should carry on exploring the content and definition of GTM (Mellahi and Collings, 2010; Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011) and conceptual boundaries, for instance to IHRM (Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010). These efforts should also contribute to overcome TM barriers in future (Mellahi and Collings, 2010).

TM from a perspective of managed talents

About the perception of talents e.g., regarding their understanding on positive or negative TM impacts, there is only little information available (Höglund, 2012). Tansley et al. (2007) for instance summarized concerns regarding TM usually referred by organizational members e.g., in terms of diversity issues for the pool of talents regarding people with advanced age or part-time working contracts. Furthermore, talents fear not being identified for further carrier opportunities if they were not able to work in the company headquarter, for instance because of immobility reasons. Höglund (2012) points out, if employees know officially being considered as talents by their organization, it may increase their expectations on earnings which could be challenging to accept from employer side. Future research therefore should enlarge also our knowledge on the consequences of TM activities.

TM PRACTICES, ACTIVITIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Adoption of TM practices and activities as a topic

TM practices as a topic in academic papers is a long-lasting subject (Vaiman and Collings, 2013). Nearly 70 percent of academic TM literature is focused on TM activities and practices. Most releases examine aspects on (1) recruitment, staffing and succession planning, (2) training and development and (3) retention management (Thunissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013b). In practice, TM is mainly adopted by large organizations (e.g., more than 250 employees) and the private sector whereas the public and voluntary sector is dropping behind (Tansley et al., 2007).

Suggesting TM starting points

Authors (see e.g., Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Stahl et al, 2012; Tansley et al., 2007) propose different approaches on TM in early development stages. Tansley et al. (2007) for instance prefer a talent-related approach starting by the definition of talent firstly. Collings and Mellahi (2009) suggest a position-related approach by defining firstly pivotal positions which are roles with outstanding contributions to the organizational set of competitive advantages. Stahl et al. (2012) suggest starting TM with defining talent and aligned requirements based on corporate strategy.

Linking talent and corporate strategy

Conceptions regarding the linkage of talent and corporate strategy (e.g., Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007) provide similar processes beginning at the interface between the organization itself and external context by considering organizational competitive advantages in context of external factors, such as market opportunities (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007) or talent supply (Tansley et al., 2007). The following next steps are for instance related to the determination of qualitative talent needs (e.g., talent performance levels), quantitative talent needs (e.g., talent demand) and related talent practices such as recruitment or development (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007).

Developing a formal or informal talent strategy

TM can be conducted informally or by formal approaches. Informal approaches are characterized for instance by no articulated strategy, informal processes, limited number of talented individuals, no designated talent pools or closed and secretive TM conduction. A formal approach is related on example to well-established strategies, formal processes, openness for all employees, several talent pools or a transparent TM conduction. Determinations on single characteristics can lead to different TM development levels for instance, level 1, if talent is

managed ad hoc without any formal practices or strategy abilities up to level 4, characterized by formal practices linked to an articulated strategy and strategic corporate context (Tansley et al., 2007). According to Collings and Mellahi (2009) strategic TM is related to identify and fill pivotal positions supported by a talent pool of high potential and high performing employees and the development of a differentiated HR architecture for filling these roles. Several organizations were in a transition process from a less to a more formal and strategically-integrated TM conception, but one best way of executing TM is not existing (Tansley et al. 2007).

Describing TM practices and activities

TM practices are usually related to attraction, engagement, selection, talent pool development, deployment, succession planning, development, retention and reward on talent (Tansley et al. 2007).

Attraction of talents is related for instance to the organizational ability to attract external talents based on industry or sector image, employer branding and identification with the organization's value (Tansley et al., 2007). Other authors (Tarique and Schuler, 2010) emphasize the importance of developing a "human resource reputation" (Tarique and Schuler, 2010, p. 127) or a "recruitment brand" (Tarique and Schuler, 2010, p. 127) or different "employee value propositions" (Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011, p. 511) in order to attract talent, especially on global level.

Employee engagement is defined for instance by "the willingness and ability to contribute to the organisation's success" (Towers Perrin, 2004, p. 12) or more simply the "passion for work" (Truss, Soane and Edwards, 2006, p. 2). Employee engagement is an important part of TM (Tansley et al., 2007), because employees who are positively engaged achieve higher levels (Philips and Roper, 2009) of profitability, productivity, workplace safety, retention and customer satisfaction (Bhatnagar, 2007; Philips and Roper, 2009) and "the more highly engaged the employee, the more likely he or she will be to say positive things about the organization" (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008, p. 749).

External talent selection is conducted by examining resumes, references or conducting candidate interviews (Philips and Roper, 2009). Internal talent selection usually is based for instance on a performance and potential review (McCauley and Wakefield, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007). The meaning of performance is relatively obvious for many firms but a common understanding of potential is more difficult (Sparrow, Hird and Balain, 2011). Organizations should avoid to be focused on mainly past performance (Sparrow, Hird and Balain, 2011) or to equate current high performance with future potential (Martin and Smith, 2010). Forced rankings in performance management were used by organizations for instance to overcome inflated

performance ratings and to provide a rigorous application of performance management standards (Sparrow, Hird and Balain, 2011).

A talent pool is a collaborative resource of talented employees and can have several forms and memberships, such as entry-level talent (e.g., a job starter identified as talent) or emerging talent (e.g., a young professional considered as talent) (Tansley et al., 2007). Talent pools are considered as instrument to plan talent resources efficiently, such as promotions for further positions (Tansley et al., 2007) or deployment decisions (Cunningham, 2007).

Authors (Tansley et al., 2007) emphasize the development of talent within the existing workforce in order to achieve efficient internal deployment of open positions with available talents. This can help the organization to overcome skill shortages in the external labor market and offer career opportunities for existing talents.

Succession planning is a process related to find suitable successors for identified key posts (Tansley et al., 2007). It can be aligned with career moves (e.g., promotion from functional staff to line manager) and development activities (e.g., leadership coaching) (Tansley et al., 2007). Succession planning is a main issue of senior managers (Tansley et al., 2007) and usually aligned with senior roles (Tansley et al., 2007) for instance, a sales manager with personnel and segment responsibility. Succession planning should avoid a long-term planning because future needs are not possible to predict at any given time of planning (Capelli, 2009). Further it is unpredictable that nominated successors decided to leave (Cunningham, 2007). Instead, organizations should investigate who is the most ready for an open position now (Philips and Roper, 2009) and try to install several persons for succession of roles (Barlow, 2006; Cunningham, 2007; Sharma and Bhatnagar, 2009).

Several options are available for talent development (Tansley et al., 2007). Most of research on talent development is related to developing executives for global leadership tasks (Garrow and Hirsh, 2008; Tarique and Schuler, 2010) e.g., via trans-national development programs with rotations between company sites of several countries (Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011). Formalized approaches on talent development can enhance organizational attractiveness for talents (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach, 2011; Tansley, et al., 2007).

Most popular activities on talent retention provided by organizations are e.g., learning and development options, like management and leadership programs, faster career progression, flexible working conditions (Tansley et al., 2007) or frequent conversations on talent performance, development requirements and motivation (Philips and Roper, 2009; Tansley et al., 2007). Effective retention strategies should encompass for instance the

responsibility of managers for retention objectives and rewards for the improvement of retention rates (Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011).

TM and reward is an under-researched field. In one hand literature point out increasing levels of payment every year were considered as number one career motivator e.g., for young executives below 40 years (Tansley et al., 2007). On the other hand non-material rewards, such as career enhancements or role challenges were preferred primarily by talents (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach, 2011).

The management of talent exit and turnover is hardly discussed in TM literature (Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruyiter, 2013a; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruyiter, 2013b). Employees resign for instance by attraction of a new position outside the current organization (pull factor) or dissatisfaction with the actual position and aligned circumstances (push factor) (Tansley et al. 2007), such as long working hours and the pressure to study also on off-periods at global accountancy companies (Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011). Push factors are considered as more significant regarding the most resignations (Tansley et al. 2007). Talent turnover can lead to problems, if the leaver is hard to replace e.g., because of seldom abilities. Turnover can also be combined with advantages, if the new incumbent provides more effective work or motivation than the forerunner (Somaya and Williamson, 2008; Tansley et al., 2007).

Differentiating TM responsibility

Successful TM is based on aligned contributions of senior management, HR, line managers and individual employee (Scott and Revis, 2008; Tansley et al., 2007). It should be supported from the top (Festing, Schäfer and Scullion, 2013; McCauley and Wakefield, 2006; Sparrow, Hird and Balain, 2011; Scott and Revis, 2008; Stahl et al., 2012; Tansley et al., 2007) for instance, by a TM review panel or members of the senior management (Tansley et al., 2007) providing a key role in demonstrating the lead in TM purposes (Festing, Schäfer and Scullion, 2013; Sparrow, Hird and Balain, 2011; Tansley et al., 2007) such as determination of TM practices or strategies and commitment on them (McCauley and Wakefield, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007). HR can take over support functions regarding conception and application on TM activities (Tansley et al., 2007) or strategy development (Tansley et al., 2007). Most talent decision mistakes are made outside HR. TM should therefore be focused on aligned activities between HR and line managers. HR should especially support line manager mostly engaged on TM (Tansley et al., 2007) to avoid misunderstanding of talent implications (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005a). Target of TM should also be to encourage individual employees to develop a personnel responsibility for self-development (Tansley et al., 2007). All described activities can be accompanied by a TM

review panel, which is responsible for the strategic development and organizational implementation of TM (Tansley et al., 2007).

TM OUTCOME

Characterizing outcomes

TM outcome is mostly related to organizational performance as main objective (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach, 2011; Capelli, 2008b; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Iles, Preece and Chuai, 2010; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a). Organizational performance is focused on financial outcomes (e.g., company profit), organizational outcomes (e.g., market value) and HR outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction) (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach, 2011; Dyer and Reeves, 1995) and results from individual performance first (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a). Individual performance is either an outcome of motivation and engagement (Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a) or motivation, commitment and extra-role behavior (Collings and Mellahi, 2009) or employee ability, motivation and opportunity to perform (Boselie, Dietz and Boon, 2005).

Measuring outcomes

Measuring the impact on TM activities is still challenging (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach, 2011) and the contemporary shortage of methodology and measurement attributes avoid stringent statements on the connection of results and TM activities (Lewis and Heckman, 2006).

Therefore researchers (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005a; Lewis and Heckman, 2006) advice against measurement approaches (see e.g., Tansley et al., 2007). Research findings indicate that quantitative approaches for TM evaluation were commonly not in use (Tansley et al., 2007; Yapp, 2009) and existing measurement is related mainly to cost measurement, for instance cost per individual regarding return on TM investments (Yapp, 2009).

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

TM as a research field evolved during the last decade, but empirical research is still limited (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Meyers, van Woerkom and Dries, 2013; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013b). Contemporary academic literature is conceptual and examines the topic in all its fields (Thunnisen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013b). TM as a research field is therefore in a growing state (Dries, 2013; Thunnisen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013b).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research on TM should be focused on other regions e.g., Europe (Collings, Scullion and Vaiman; 2011) and related challenges e.g., talent shortages in Germany (Collings, Scullion and Vaiman, 2011; Festing, Schäfer and Scullion, 2013; Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011; Vaiman, Scullion and Collings, 2012). GTM is recognized to be a future research field for instance, drawn on definition (Mellahi and Collings, 2010; Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011) or conceptual boundaries (e.g., related to IHRM) (Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010). Further research is necessary to clarify content of talent (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, 2013; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Meyers, van Woerkom and Dries, 2013; Tansley, 2011; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a) and conceptual boundaries of TM (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010; Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a) for instance, in relation to HRM (Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010; Scullion, Collings and Caligiuri, 2011; Tarique and Schuler, 2010). More research is necessary to improve talent decisions related to TM practices and corresponding measurement (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler and Staffelbach, 2011; Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Vaiman, Scullion and Collings, 2012). Moreover, further research is important to enhance knowledge about talent stakeholders, such as knowledge-workers (Lepak and Snell, 2002) and related TM practices (McDonnell et al., 2010; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a), such as talent selection (Iles, Preece and Chuai, 2010). Furthermore, future research should explore organizational TM approaches e.g., exclusive or inclusive ones by Iles, Chuai and Preece, 2010 (Iles, Preece and Chuai, 2010; Tarique and Schuler, 2010; Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier, 2013a).

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