

ABSTRACT

1. Introduction

In 1997, McKinsey & Company coined the term “war of talent” and stated that the organisations were undergoing war against each other in order to achieve competitive advantage and long-term strategic success. Several factors such as changing demography, mobility of the workers, globalization, and the demand for a knowledge-based economy were responsible for such a war-like situation and contributed to the rise in the practice of Talent Management. Talent Management is a practice that aims to identify, develop, and retain the most critical asset, i.e., talent, which not only ensures strategic success but also builds sustainability for the organisation.

Organisations usually differ in their styles or approaches toward the practice of Talent Management. The inclusive approach to Talent Management adopts a strength-based principle, which signifies that organisations adopt and nurture the natural ability of each and every individual. However, identifying and developing individual talent for all employees requires a huge investment in terms of time, money, and effort. Also, such an approach is not feasible from the labour economics point of view. The exclusive approach to Talent Management works on the principle of workforce discrimination and segmentation, which suggests that organisations should implement Talent Management practices for those who display higher performances and potentiality. Organisations are able to generate higher returns by investing in the most promising employees and are also able to achieve sustainable and strategic competitive advantage through the disproportionate allocation of resources. This exclusive approach to Talent Management is widely used by organizations across different industries and is also quite prevalent in the hotel industry, which is employee-centric.

2. Review of Literature

The review of literature across the field of Talent Management demonstrates that so far the research has been carried out in three main domains, i.e., defining talent and Talent Management, conceptualising Talent Management practices, and measuring expected outcomes from Talent Management practices. Talent Management practices help in achieving higher financial outcomes in organisations, but the employee-level outcomes

from the practice of Talent Management are still lacking and are considered a black box in this field (Dries & Pepermans, 2008; Björkman et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2014; Gelens et al., 2014; De Boeck, 2018; Meyers et al., 2019; Bhatia & Baruah, 2020). Literature suggests that Talent Management practices help in achieving the desired attitude of employees, which is considered favourable by the organisation (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Bethke-Langenegger, 2011; Chami-Malaeb & Garavan, 2013; Björkman et al., 2013; Sonnenberg et al., 2014; Khoreva et al., 2015; Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015; Kontoghiorghes, 2015; Mensah & Bowle, 2018; De Boeck, 2018; Alferaih et. al., 2018; Meyer, 2019; Malik & Singh, 2020). But the practice of the exclusive approach to Talent Management evokes resentment, frustration, and stress among those employees who are not included in the pool of talent (Dries & Pepermans, 2008; Tansley & Tietze, 2013; Höglund, 2012; Malik & Singh, 2014; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016; Malik & Singh, 2018; Krebs & Wehner, 2021). This practice of workforce discrimination that is being followed under Exclusive Talent Management creates a difference in the attitude of talented and non-talented employees because of their perception of justice (Down & Swailes, 2013; Gelens et.al., 2013; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2017; Narayanan et al., 2019; Bhatia & Baruah, 2020; Malik & Singh, 2020; Kwon & Jang, 2021; Peterson et al., 2022) and perception of support received from the organisation (Gelens et al., 2015; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016; King, 2016; De Boeck et al., 2018; Mensah, 2019; Bhatia & Baruah, 2020; Gupta, 2020; Kravariti et al., 2022).

3. Research Gaps

The review of literature highlighted that examining employee-level outcomes from the practice of Talent Management is an under-explored topic. A few studies that have been conducted to assess the employee-level outcomes have mostly focused on the positive attitude and ignored the possibility of negative reactions, which may arise from the practice of Exclusive Talent Management. Very little research exists in the hotel industry that examines the positive attitude and the negative attitude of employees (e.g. Alferaih et. al., 2018; Shugla & Busser, 2019). Research, in general, lacks empirical evidence in examining the employee-level outcomes as most of the studies in this direction are either review studies or have adopted interview methods, which involve very few participants and therefore suffer from the problem of generalisations. Also, Talent Management studies in the tourism and hospitality industry are mostly conceptual and call for wider empirical

research in this industry (Johnson et al., 2019; Shugla & Busser, 2019). Moreover, research lacks in determining the difference between talented and non-talented employees to assess the effectiveness of Talent Management practices. Further, it is just being assumed that the difference in the attitude of talented and non-talented employees towards the practice of Exclusive Talent Management is the perception of justice and the perception of organisational support. To advance the field of Talent Management, it is indeed necessary to gather empirical evidence for the assumptions that have been proposed.

4. Objectives

Based on the review of literature and the research gaps, the following objectives have been framed for this research:

- i. To assess the attitudes of employees towards the exclusive approach to Talent Management in the hotel industry.
 - a) To evaluate the relationship between Exclusive Talent Management practices and employees' attitudes.
 - b) To evaluate the difference in the attitudes of talented and non-talented employees.
- ii. To assess the relationship between the exclusive approach to Talent Management with perceived justice and perceived support in the hotel industry.
 - a) To evaluate the relationship of Exclusive Talent Management practices with the perception of justice and perception of support.
 - b) To evaluate the difference in the perception of justice as well as the perception of support among talented and non-talented employees.
- iii. To determine the role of perceived justice and perceived support in the formation of employees' attitudes in the hotel industry.

5. Research Methodology

The study has adopted both exploratory as well as conclusive research designs to fulfil the objectives of this study. Primary data has been collected by adopting both qualitative (interviews conducted with the Human Resource Department) as well as quantitative research methods (survey conducted with the employees). The selection of hotels was based on the list obtained from the website of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. A preliminary study was conducted with the Human Resource

Managers and the respective Line Managers to determine the organisational definition of talent, identify the Talent Management practices being followed and to further classify employees according to their status of talent from the past year's assessment of their performance evaluation reports. A total of 735 employees participated in the survey from across 15 hotels. The questionnaire was divided into four sections, which consisted of various demographic variables along with multiple items of Exclusive Talent Management practices, employees' attitudes, and perception of justice and support, which were measured using a six-point Likert scale. Further, the sample distribution for all the demographic variables is considered adequate keeping the total population characteristics in mind. The data so collected was also tested for various assumptions such as normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and common method bias. The reliability and validity of the sample data were also assessed before undertaking any statistical analysis. The data so collected was analysed through various descriptive analyses, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and a structural equation model was also designed to fulfil the objectives of the study.

6. Major Findings

- i. The attitudes of employees toward the exclusive approach to Talent Management in the hotel industry
 - a) Exclusive Talent Management practices lead to positive employee-level outcomes such as affective organization commitment, satisfaction, engagement, motivation, trust, intention to remain with the organization, organization citizenship behaviour, work effort, and psychological contract fulfilment.
 - b) However, there is a significant difference between the two groups of employees, i.e., talented and non-talented employees, with respect to all of their positive outcomes such as affective organisation commitment, satisfaction, engagement, motivation, trust, intention to remain with the organisation, organisational citizenship behaviour, work effort, and psychological contract fulfilment.
 - c) The difference exists between them in such a manner that talented employees perceive a higher level of positive attitude from the Exclusive Talent Management practices in comparison to the non-talented employees for the hotels surveyed in this study.

- d) Exclusive Talent Management practices in the hotel industry in Delhi also lead to negative employee-level outcomes, such as job stress, along with positive employee-level outcomes. But there are no significant differences between the two groups of employees in their level of job stress.
- ii. Relationship between the exclusive approach to Talent Management and perceived justice and support in the hotel industry
 - a) Exclusive Talent Management practices in the hotel industry in Delhi have a significant impact on the employees' perception of justice as well as the perception of support.
 - b) Further, this perception of justice and support differ for the two groups of employees such that talented employees perceive a higher level of both justice and support in comparison to the non-talented employees.
- iii. Mediating roles of perceived justice and perceived support
 - a) Perceived justice was found to partially mediate the relationship of Exclusive Talent Management practices with both positive as well as negative attitudes of employees in the hotel industry in Delhi.
 - b) Moreover, the perceived support was found to partially mediate the relationship between Exclusive Talent Management practices and the negative attitudes of employees in the hotel industry in Delhi.
 - c) No mediation effect was found for perceived support in the relationship between Exclusive Talent Management practices and the positive attitudes of employees in the hotel industry in Delhi.

7. Theoretical Contributions to the Body of Knowledge

This study has significantly contributed to the field of Talent Management in four different directions. Firstly, this study provides a clear understanding of the term talent in hotel industry by providing a Talent Competencies Model and also provide guideline to the practitioners by framing a Talent Management Model for Hotel Industry in India. Secondly, this study has brought employees into the limelight who were largely being ignored in formulating Talent Management strategies and policies. This study is the first of its kind that has quantitatively assessed the different components of attitude such as affective, behavioural, and cognitive and has considered all possible positive as well as negative attitudes of employees in the hotel industry. Thirdly, this study also takes into account the difference in the attitude of talented and non-talented employees towards the practice of

Exclusive Talent Management. This study adds to the body of knowledge that talented employees perceive a higher level of positive attitude from such practices in comparison to the non-talented employees in the hotel industry. Lastly, by evaluating the employees' perception of justice and support, this study also contributes towards the ethical dimension of Talent Management.

8. Managerial/ Practical Implications

This study brings out significant learning for the hotel managers by highlighting the employee-level outcomes from the practice of Exclusive talent management.

- i. The study offers valuable insights about different variables of positive as well as negative attitudes of employees. The managers must aim to reduce the difference in the level of positive attitude between the two groups of employees by inculcating practices that boost clear understanding and open communication about the intent and objectives of undertaking an exclusive approach to Talent Management.
- ii. Moreover, managers must also aim to reduce the level of stress by providing flexibility to the talented employees and undertaking proper counselling and providing feedback to the non-talented employees to improve their performances.
- iii. Since the differences also exist between the employees with regard to their perception of justice and support, and further these perceptions have also been found to significantly play an important role in determining the attitude of employees, therefore, managers must consider these two important variables in devising Talent Management practices. Managers can reduce the difference in the employee's perception by adopting a hybrid approach, which involves a mix of both inclusive and exclusive approaches to Talent Management practices.
- iv. The study also offers a valuable suggestion to the managers to adopt the practice of Talent Management depending on the societal cultural values in which an organisation operates. This means that in a society of high power distance culture and individualism, an exclusive approach to Talent Management will be quite suitable because people accept inequality, agrees to the fact that individuals differ from each other and may not perceive injustice from the elitist culture of Talent Management. However, the practice of Exclusive Talent

Management will fail to achieve its meaning in those societies, which believe in collectivism and egalitarian culture.

9. Scope and Limitations

- i. The academic scope of the study is restricted to assessing the attitudes of employees toward the practice of Exclusive Talent Management and examining the difference in the attitudes between talented and non-talented employees.
- ii. The study has also been restricted to consider the mediating role of only perceived justice and perceived support.
- iii. Further, the study is geographically confined to the 5-Star Deluxe, 5-Star, and 4-Star hotels because Talent Management practices are quite prevalent in such categories of hotels. Delhi was selected as the study area for this research because it represents the highest number of branded hotels and the largest room inventory in the country.
- iv. The study has relied upon archival data of the past year's performance assessment to identify talent.

10. Future Research Directions

Every industry is different in its nature and type of employment. Therefore, similar studies can either be replicated across different industries or comparative studies can be conducted across industries to gain a wider picture of employees' attitudes towards the exclusive approach to Talent Management. Since the researcher suggests that the managers must implement an inclusive or exclusive approach to Talent Management depending on the societal culture and values, therefore, similar studies can be conducted in different geographical locations for both the hotel industry as well as other industries in general. This may also bring out interesting findings as to whether talented and non-talented employees perceive different levels of justice and showcase different levels of positive attitudes under different national contexts or not.