

A Model of Talent Management in a Faith-Based Institution: An Appreciative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Talent Management (TM) is the ability of an organization to acquire and retain skilled employees for competitive advantage. Both organizations and employees tend to be at a competitive advantage when organizations attract the right employees and develop strategies to meet the organization's vision and mission. However, there is a dearth of studies on TM models for Higher Educational institutions (HEI). Therefore, the study aimed to develop a TM for HEI since many organizations emphasize effective TM for retaining high value for organizational productivity and employee efficiency. The study is anchored on attractive quality theory. A qualitative approach with an appreciative inquiry research design was employed to understand how HEI identifies and retains talented employees. Purposeful sampling was used to select 8 participants, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim. The data was analyzed using HyperResearch, a qualitative data analysis software, by coding and grouping codes into categories and themes. The findings suggest that best practices in attracting and retaining talented employees involve appealing institutional credibility, advertisement, inclusion, work environment, integrity, employee motivation, institutional policies, and scholarship were among the TM practices. In addition, good TM embraces a good work environment, institutional policies, and opportunities for scholarship. The study recommends the use of position for positive influence without abuse of power to attract and retain talented employees. Future researchers might benefit from the study by empirically testing the proposed model of TM in HEI.

Keywords: Talent management, model, faith-based institution, appreciative inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

For almost two and half decades, the concept of Talent management (TM) has gained attention in academics and business organizations due to its usefulness in identifying, attracting, retaining, and developing employees for companies to be ahead of labor market competition (Cascio & Colligins, 2022; Chambers et al., 1998; Illes et al., 2010; McDonnell et al., 2017; Vitor, 2015). TM is conceptualized as the ability of organizations to acquire and

retain skilled employees for competitive advantage. Both organizations and employees tend to be at a competitive advantage when organizations attract the right employees and develop strategies to meet the organization's vision and mission (Dahiya & Rath, 2021; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Thunniseen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2017). The key to attracting and retaining employees is often part of the human resource department. For instance, Hughes and Rog (2008) maintain that the human resource department is increasingly running out of talented employees; therefore, attraction and retention strategies must be implemented if businesses have to achieve their long-term goals. On the other hand, Trivisan et al. (2014), contrasting Hughes and Rog's (2008) findings, concluded their study by stating that organizations need to understand the influence of the macroeconomic scenario on the job market before implementing a talent retention strategy. Consequently, an adequate understanding of employee attraction and retention implementation strategies would lead to sustainable organizational performance and employee engagement (Al-Qeed et al., 2018; Mohammed, 2015; Mwanzi et al., 2017; Vitor, 2015).

Organizations desire talented employees due to their significant contribution to organizational performance (Cassio & Collings, 2022). Organizations with adequate and talented employees are considered to have organizational support and less employee intention to leave (Mensah, 2019). The implementation of TM is often easier said than done. A survey by McKinsey & Company (2018) found that organizations that successfully implement TM outperform their competitors by 99% compared with those that have not. However, organizations often faced with several challenges in implementing TM strategies, particularly in areas of talent attraction and retention, due to factors such as a shortage of skilled employees due to retirement, covid 19 pandemic, and lack of organizational work-life balance (Dychtwald et al., 2006; Kigo & Gachunga, 2016; Oladapo, 2014). Therefore, this study sought to develop a model form TM for a higher educational institutions (HEIs) to address evidence, knowledge, methodological, and population gap (Miles, 2017).

METHODS

A qualitative research approach with an appreciative inquiry research design was employed for the study to engage people at all organizational levels to explore, value, and discover how faith-based HEI identifies and retains talented employees. As a qualitative design, appreciative inquiry (AI) seeks to engage individuals at all organizational levels to create effective, positive change by incorporating a 4-D cycle based on discovery, dream, design, and destiny (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The study was conducted in a selected faith-based HEI in the Philippines, Asia. The study participants were chosen purposefully (Creswell, 2018) from the faith-based HEI who were willing to participate in the study. The participant criteria were based on individuals employed in the institution for more than two years. A total of 6 participants accepted to participate in this study. A purposeful sampling technique was used to collect data from ten participants composed of administrators and employees (faculty and staff) who voluntarily chose to participate in the study (Saunders et al., 2019). The data collection was based on a semi-structural interview– open-handed questions and in-depth

interviews. Face-to-face interviews were employed. The interview was audio recorded using a cellphone with the participant's permission. Each participant's interview will take approximately 45 minutes or less on different days. Further, the data was recorded in field notes and interview transcripts. The faith-based HEI participants' names were substituted with made-up names. The data was analyzed thematically using Yin's (2016) framework. The framework involves five steps. These steps include compiling the data, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and a summary of the findings. The study used a combination of three ethical frameworks of Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015 and Creswell, (2016) to ensure ethical considerations were met. The framework comprises informed consent, confidentiality, informing participants about the data, ensuring participants' safety and privacy, and reporting the data ethically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The major findings for the discovery phase were advertisement and institutional image on how faith-based HEI attracts talented employees. Advertisement is defined as communication used to market a product, brand, or service to an audience to generate interest, engagement, and sales (Adjust, 2024). Despite its significant benefit in attracting individuals to adhere to what the organization is communicating, advertising to attract talent has been a challenge for HEI, hospitals, and the public sectors in different places. Kissoonduth's (2017) study suggests that to attract and retain highly skilled academics, especially those from black backgrounds, educational administrators should prioritize allocating resources toward effectively managing the innate potential of black academics at lower hierarchical positions. Chang and Tanford (2018) found that job advertisements should be designed to attract individuals who want to join the organizations. However, Onah and Anikwe (2016) posited that despite good advertisement, attracting and retaining academic staff in HEI is an issue due to brain drain, gender disparity, unappealing wage packages, and insufficient training and development. Thus, to avoid misinformation, when seeking to attract talented employees, HEI should strive for transparency in advertising the position benefits and rewards (Mckinsey, 2022). Another mechanism that helps in retention and attraction is the attraction theory, which seeks to attract internal and external customers (Raza & Hanif, 2013; Pawar, 2014). On the other hand, institutional image is conceptualized as the ability of the institution to build and sustain good connections with the community and its constituents. (Beyono, 1978; Terkla & Pagano, 1993). However, in this study, institutional image takes place when the attracted talent upholds the institution's core values. Limited studies have been conducted on institutional images as an influencing factor in attracting employees. Nevertheless, the literature is fragmented, with studies that show the institutional image as factors that satisfactorily influence students' behavior (Alves & Raposo, 2010; Azeem, 2020). Inclusion through equal employment opportunity and diversity are interconnected concepts that promote employment opportunities in various organizational domains that facilitate diversity by recognizing and accepting employees of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and races (Daniel, 2019; Wax, 2022). Fostering an equal employment opportunity and diverse work environment is not just a legal obligation but a moral imperative for faith-based HEI (Wanjala, 2013). By embracing inclusivity and valuing the unique perspectives and contributions of all individuals, faith-based HEI can unlock the full potential of its workforce, drive innovation, and create a more just and

equitable society. Building a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to succeed is essential for creating a thriving and sustainable future for students and employees in faith-based HEI (Too, 2013). In conclusion, faith-based HEI should implement institutional credibility, advertisement, inclusion, work environment, integrity, employee motivation, institutional policies, and scholarship to attract and retain talented employees to enhance organizational productivity and less turnover. The study's findings imply that there is a need to create institutional credibility that attracts employees. To attract employees, faith-based institutions should provide an inclusive work environment with a high degree of integrity without nepotism and accountability. Finally, faith-based HEI should be free from harmful politics, with collaboration, knowledge creation, and knowledge sharing, which would lead to attracting and retaining talent with cutting-edge knowledge through scholarship. A qualitative multiple case study should be conducted in different faith-based HEIs in Asia to improve the proposed model. Also, a quantitative multiple regression could be undertaken to test the proposed model. The study's limitations were based on participants' availability to be interviewed due to their schedules. Finally, the study's generability should be based on the researcher's context.

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