Elucidating the Influence of Talent Management Practices on Talent Outcomes through Talent Management Attributions and Job-related Affective Responses: A Psychological Perspective

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Management), Newcastle Business School, College of Human and Social Futures, University of Newcastle, New South Wales,
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September 2022

Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that the work embodied in the thesis is my own work, conducted under normal supervision. The thesis contains no material which has been accepted, or is being examined, for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968 and any approved embargo.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the tremendous support and dedicated efforts I have received from several people, to whom I am deeply grateful. Full of respect and gratitude, I extend my thanks and appreciation to the following people.

First, I am extremely grateful to my amazing supervisors, Associate Professor Ashish Malik and Dr. Philip J. Rosenberger III for their invaluable advice, continuous support, and patience during my PhD journey. It has been an absolute pleasure working with both of you. To my principal supervisor, Associate Professor Ashish Malik, I am deeply grateful to you for your thoughtful guidance, encouragement and treasured support. Thank you for being an exemplary and visionary mentor and for trusting me and offering me enormous research opportunities that transformed me to a next level. I always appreciate everything you taught me. To my co-supervisor, Dr Philip J. Rosenberger III, called by his initials, Dr PJ, your support and advice throughout this PhD journey has been indispensable. Thank you for opening my eyes to a meaningful data analysis and for your compassion and enthusiastic patience over the years. Without both of your tremendous understanding and encouragement in the past challenging years, it would be impossible for me to complete my study.

Next, My love and gratitude go to my beloved husband, Roshan, who sacrificed his rewarding career in Sri Lanka and joined me to support this rollercoaster PhD ride to get this far. Your calm and consistent viewpoint always encouraged and inspired me. I am forever grateful for your responsible shoulders and unconditional love. I could not have completed this thesis without your support.

Then, I owe a debt of gratitude to my parents, my sister and my mother-in-law for their unconditional love and encouragement that inspired me to work towards completing this journey. A special thanks also go to my Aunt Devika Dayasena and Uncle Kumara Dayasena in Sydney for their numerous support and care.

I thank the World Bank-AHEAD project team for awarding me a scholarship with funding for the first three years of my candidature. My sincere gratitude goes to all the members of the Department of Human Resource Management and the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna and granting me study leave to pursue

higher studies abroad. I also thank all the staff members of the Newcastle Business School for assisting me throughout my candidature.

I thank my friends: Marian, Gimhani, Amila, Laknath and a bunch of PhD colleagues across borders for their continuous support and love that kept me strong and focused on my PhD. I thank my landlady late Connie Lawson for her love and care for my study.

Finally, I would like to express my genuine gratefulness to all participants (interview and survey) who kindly supported my study despite the challenging time caused by the global health pandemic in 2021.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, Chandrasena De Silva and Anoma De Silva, and my sister, Heshani De Silva. They laid a solid foundation of education and taught me the value of life on which I rebuilt my life today. Also, I dedicate this thesis to my loving husband, Roshan Jayakody, who sacrificed his whole time, energy and effort to ensure this PhD journey was going well during different challenging times, and his constant motivation is the strongest driving force that has helped me thrive immensely.

Contents

Statement of Originality i

Acknowledgements ii

Dedication iv

Contents v

List of Tables xi

List of Figures xiii

List of Abbreviations xiv

Abstract xv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

  1.1 Chapter Objectives and Structure 1

  1.1 Background of the Study 2

    1.1.1 Employee Attributions of Talent Management 5

    1.1.2. The Research Context 9

  1.2 Research Problem and Questions 10

  1.3 Significance and the Contributions of the Research 12

  1.4 Overview of Research Design 15

    1.4.1 Definitions of Key Theoretical Constructs 18

  1.5 Thesis Structure 19

  1.6 Delimitations 22

  1.7 Conclusion 22

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 24

  2.1 Introduction 24

  2.2 What is meant by ‘Talent’? 25

  2.3 What is Talent Management and Why do Organisations need it? 32

  2.4 What are the Main Approaches to Talent Management? 38

  2.5 Talent Management Process 41

  2.6 Talent Management Practices 43

    2.6.1 Talent Acquisition 44

    2.6.2 Talent Development 44

    2.6.3 Talent Retention 45

  2.7 What are the current themes available in the TM Literature? 46

2.8 Psychological Perspective of TM – What is Known and What Remains Unknown 51
2.8.1 Employee Perceptions of Talent Management Practices 54
2.8.2 Employee Attributions towards Talent Management Practices 57
2.8.3 Key Theories Linking Employee Perceptions of TM Practices, TM Attributions and Employee Outcomes 59
2.8.3 The Role of Job-related Affective Responses 61
2.8.4 Key Organisational Actors in Talent Management 63
2.8.5 The Role of Individual Identification in TM 65
2.9 Methodological Deficiencies of Current TM Research 68
2.10 Summary of Key Observations 68
2.11 Research Problem Statement 71
2.12 Conclusion 72
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 73
3.1 Introduction 73
3.2 Research Paradigm 74
3.3 Research Method 76
3.4 Research Context: Talent Management in Sri Lankan Banking Sector 78
3.5 Study One: Qualitative Phase 81
3.5.1 Sampling Technique and Unit of Analysis 82
3.5.2 Data Collection Technique 85
3.5.3 Interview Guide 86
3.5.4 Analysis of Qualitative Data 87
3.5.5 Quality Assurance of Qualitative Data 89
3.6 Study Two: Quantitative Phase 91
3.6.1 Sample and Unit of analysis 91
3.6.2 Data Collection Technique 93
3.6.3 Survey Instrument Design 95
3.6.4. Operationalisation of Constructs 97
3.6.4.1 Perceived TM Practices 98
3.6.4.2 TM Attributions 99
3.6.4.3 Organisational Commitment 100
3.6.4.4 Psychological Well-being 101
3.6.4.5 Turnover Intention 101

3.6.4.6 Job Satisfaction 101
3.6.4.7 Job Strain 101
3.6.4.8 Individual Self-Concept 101
3.6.4.9 Perceived Line Manager's TM Implementation Effectiveness 102
3.6.4.10 Demographic Measures 102
3.6.5 Analysis of Quantitative Data 108
3.6.5.1 Preliminary Data Analysis 108
3.6.5.2 Common Method Bias Analysis 108
3.6.5.2 Structured Equation Modelling (SEM) and PLS-SEM 109
3.6.6 Quality Assurance of Quantitative Data 111
3.7 Ethical Considerations 112
3.8 Conclusion 113
CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS 114
4.1 Introduction 114
4.2 Data Collection and Sample Characteristics 115
4.3 Data Analysis 118
4.4. Findings of Qualitative Data Analysis 119
4.4.1 Key Findings for RQ1: TM Practices in the Sri Lankan Banking Sector and Design and Implementation of the TM Process 119
4.4.1.1 TM practices from Managerial and Employee Perspectives 119
4.4.1.2 Insights Regarding Design and Implementation of the TM Process 128
4.4.2 Findings for RQ2: Talents Attributing Meanings to TM Practices 134
4.4.3 Findings of the Influence of TM Attributions on Talents' Attitudinal and Behavioural Outcomes 139
4.4.3.1 Talent Outcomes 139
4.4.3.2 Job-related Affective Responses 147
4.4.3.3 Boundary Conditions 150
4.5 Summary of Qualitative Findings 156
4.6 Conclusion 160
CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT 161
5.1 Introduction 161
5.2 Research Model Development in Talent Management 162
5.3 Theoretical Underpinnings of the Research Model 164

5.3.1 Employee Attributions of Talent Management 165
5.3.2 Talent Management as a Signal for Sense-Making 165
5.3.3. Talent Management within the Broader Context of Social Exchange 166
5.3.4 Self-consistency of Talents 167
5.4 Theoretical Constructs and Hypothesis Development 168
5.4.1 Perceived Talent Management Practices and TM Attributions 168
5.4.2 TM Attributions and Employee Outcomes 173
5.4.3 TM Attributions and Job-Related Affective Responses 176
5.4.4 Job-related Affective Responses and Talent Outcomes 180
5.4.5 The Mediating Effects of Job-Related Affective Responses in the TM Attributions-Employee Outcomes Relationship 181
5.4.6 The Role of Perceived Line Manager's TM Implementation Effectiveness 182
5.4.7 The Moderating Role of Individual Self-Concept 185
5.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study 188
5.6 Conclusion 191
CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION 192
6.1 Introduction 192
6.2 Preliminary Data Analysis 193
6.2.1 Missing Values 193
6.2.2 Suspicious Response Patterns 193
6.2.3 Outliers 193
6.2.4 Sample Profile 195
6.2.5 Assessment of Data Distribution 196
6.2.6 Assessment of Descriptive Statistics of the Constructs 197
6.3 Assessment of PLS-SEM Results: Outer and Inner Models 198
6.4 Assessment of the Outer Model (Reflective Constructs) 200
6.4.1 Internal Consistency Reliability 200
6.4.2 Convergent Validity 202
6.4.3 Discriminant Validity 206
6.4.5 Common Method Bias Analysis 216
6.5 Assessment of Higher-Order Constructs in the Outer model 216
6.5.1 The Approach of Specifying HOCs 216
6.5.2 The Assessment of the Outer Model of HOCs 217

6.5.2.1 The Assessment of the Outer Model of Formative HOC 217
6.5.2.2 The Assessment of the Outer Model of Reflective HOC 218
6.5.2.3 Assessment of the Outer Model for Discriminant Validity: All HOCs and LOCs 219
6.6 Assessment of the Inner Model 222
6.6.1 Assessment of Collinearity of the Inner Model 222
6.6.2 Assessment of the Predictive Power of the Inner Model 223
6.6.3 Stone-Geisser's Q^2 Value 224
6.7 Inner Model Analysis: Hypotheses Testing 225
6.7.1 Assessment of the Direct Effects of the Inner Model 226
6.7.2 Assessment of the Mediating Effects of the Inner Model 228
6.7.3 Assessment of the Moderating Effects of the Inner Model 230
6.8 Supplementary Analyses 234
6.8.1 Multigroup Analysis for the Moderation Effects 234
6.8.2 Supplementary Analysis: Gender 236
6.9 Conclusion....................... 238
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION 240
7.1 Introduction 240
7.2 Discussion of Research Hypotheses 241
7.2.1 Perceived TM Practices and TM Attributions 243
7.2.2 TM Attributions and Talent Outcomes 246
7.2.3 TM Attributions and Job-related Affective Responses 247
7.2.4 Job-related Affective Responses and Talent Outcomes 248
7.2.5 The Mediating Effect of Job-Related Affective Responses in the TM Attributions-Talent Outcomes Relationships 250
7.2.6 Role of Line Manager's TM Implementation Effectiveness 252
7.2.7 Role of Individual Self-Concept of Talents 254
7.3 Conclusion of the Research Problem 256
7.4 Theoretical Contributions and Implications 261
7.5 Managerial Implications 264
7.6 Limitations 267
7.7 Directions for Future Research 269
References 272
Appendices 315

Appendix 1: Organisational Participant Information Statement 315

Appendix 2: Organisational Consent Form 319

Appendix 3: Participant Information Statement: Employee Interview (Study One) 321

Appendix 4: Participant Information Statement: Manager Interviews (Study One) . 325

Appendix 5: Consent Form (Study One) 329

Appendix 6: Interview Guide (Study One) 330

Appendix 7: Participant Information Statement: Survey (Study Two) 333

Appendix 8: Survey (Study Two) 337

Appendix 9: Human Research Ethics Committee Approval 344

Appendix 10: Assessment of Influences of Outliers 347

Appendix 11: Descriptive Statistics of Indicators of all the Constructs 352

Appendix 12: Assessment of Skewness and Kurtosis for Items of the Study Variables 354

Appendix 13: Initial Outer loadings of the Reflective Constructs (before item deletion) 357

Appendix 14: Initial Assessment of Discriminant Validity of all Reflective Constructs 359

Appendix 15: Results of the Path model: All Constructs 364

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Meanings and Attributes of Talent in Empirical Contexts………………….30

Table 2.2: A Compilation of TM Definitions …………………………………………34

Table 2.3: Empirical Studies of TM from a Psychological Perspective………………..53

Table 3.1: Six Phases of Thematic Analysis…………………………………………...88

Table 3.2: Sampling Characteristics……………………………………………………93

Table 3.3: Items of the Key Constructs………………………………………………104

Table 4.1: Profiles of Interview Participants…………………………………………116

Table 4.2: Quotes on Commitment-focused TM Attributions………………………..135

Table 4.3: Quotes on Control-focused TM Attributions……………………………...137

Table 4.4: Quotes on Talent Outcomes associated with Commitment-Focused TM Attributional Views…………………………………………………………………...141

Table 4.5: Quotes on Talent Outcomes associated with Control-Focused TM Attributional Views…………………………………………………………………...144

Table 4.6: Quotes on Job Satisfaction………………………………………………...148

Table 4.7: Quotes on Job Strain………………………………………………………149

Table 4.8: Quotes on Perceived Line Manager's TM Implementation Effectiveness...151

Table 4.9: Quotes on Individual Self-concept………………………………………...154

Table 6.1: Labels of Constructs, Dimensions and Indicators…………………………194

Table 6.2: Respondent Profile…………………………………………………………...195

Table 6.3: Skewness and Kurtosis Values……………………………………………196

Table 6.4: Descriptive Analysis of the Constructs and Dimensions…………………198

Table 6.5: Settings of SmartPLS Analysis……………………………………………199

Table 6.6: Specification of Outer Model……………………………………………...199

Table 6.7: Internal Consistency Reliability Results…………………………………..202

Table 6.8: Outer Loadings of the Reflective Constructs……………………………...203

Table 6.9: AVE of the Reflective Constructs…………………………………………205

Table 6.10: Cross-loading Validity Results…………………………………………...208

Table 6.11: Construct Correlations: Fornell and Larcker Results……………………212

Table 6.12: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ration of Correlations (HTMT) Results…………214

Table 6.13: Harman's Single-factor Test Results……………………………………..216

Table 6.14: Formative HOC Measures: TMP (Type II Outer Model)………………..218

Table 6.15: Reflective HOC Measures: ControlA (Type I Outer Model)…………….219

Table 6.16: Assessment of Discriminant Validity using the HTMT criterion: HOCs and the First-order Constructs of the Outer Model………………………………………..220

Table 6.17: Inner VIF Values for Collinearity Assessment…………………………..222

Table 6.18: Level of R^2 and R^2adj of Endogenous Variables of the Inner Model…...223

Table 6.19: Stone-Geisser's Q^2 Values for Endogenous Variables…………………..224

Table 6.20: Results of the Direct Effects of Hypotheses……………………………...226

Table 6.21: Assessment of Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction………………………229

Table 6.22: Assessment of Mediating Role of Job Strain…………………………….230

Table 6.23: Results of the Moderation Analysis……………………………………...231

Table 6.24: PLS-MGA Analysis: Moderating effects of LMG-TM…………………235

Table 6.25: PLS-MGA Analysis: Moderating effects of SelfConcept………………..236

Table 6.26: PLS-MGA Analysis for Gender………………………………………….237

Table 7.1: Summary of the Hypotheses Testing Results……………………………...241

Table 1A: Descriptive Statistics of Indicators of all the Constructs………………….352

Table 2A: Assessment of Skewness and Kurtosis for Items of the Study Variables…354

Table 3A: Initial Outer loadings of the Reflective Constructs (before item deletion)..357

Table 4A: Initial Discriminant Validity of Results Fornell and Larcker Criterion…...360

Table 5A: Initial Discriminant Validity Results: HTMT criterion……………………362

Table 6A: Results of the Path model: All Constructs ………………………………...364

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Chapter 1 Map……………………………………………………………1
Figure 1.2: Research Significance, Gaps and Contributions…………………………..12
Figure 1.3: Thesis Structure……………………………...………………………20
Figure 2.1: Chapter 2 Map…………………………………………………………..25
Figure 2.2: The Link between TM and Individual and Organisational Outcomes…….36
Figure 2.3: A Dynamic Model of TM……………………………………………....42
Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 Map…………………………………………………………74
Figure 3.2: Steps Involved in the Exploratory Sequential Design of the Study……....77
Figure 3.3: The Overview of Mixed-Method Research Design……..………………..78
Figure 4.1: Chapter 4 Map……………………………………………………....114
Figure 4.2: Data Structure……………………………………………….........157
Figure 5.1: Chapter 5 Map…………………………………………………………162
Figure 5.2: Theoretical Framework of the Study……………………………………190
Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 Map…………………………………………………………192
Figure 6.2: Path Coefficients and Significance Levels of the Inner Model…………..233
Figure 7.1: Chapter 7 Map……………………………………………………....240
Figure A1: Cook’s Distance Tests…………………………………………………….348

List of Abbreviations

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HPWS	High Performance Work Systems
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
VIF	Variation Inflation Indicator
PIS	Participant Information Sheet
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
RQ	Research Question
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
HDI	Human Development Index
HOC	Higher-Order Constructs
LOC	Lower-Order Constructs
LCBS	Licensed Commercial Banks
LSBS	Licensed Specialised Banks
CAQDAS	Computer Assistant Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBSL	Central Bank of Sri Lanka
RBV	Resource-Based View
GTM	Global Talent Management
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management
TM	Talent Management
TDM	Total Design Method

Abstract

Talent Management (TM) involves activities and processes that attract, develop and retain employees who are of particular value to an organisation (talents) to reach strategic and sustainable success. Managing talents is considered essential to surviving in today's dynamic, new-normal and competitive business environment, especially in service organisations operating in resource-constrained environments. Having structured and consistent TM systems do not guarantee generating results and return on investment of TM unless organisations examine the effectiveness of TM through understanding the individual outcomes of talents, as the central participants of TM programs at work. Examining talents' perceptions of TM is crucial to determine talent outcomes that indicate whether the organisational TM inducements/practices are valued, yet do not critically reflect insights into talents' experience of agreements and disagreements regarding those inducements.

Understanding the perceived reality to assess the effectiveness of TM practices requires unveiling how talents make sense of their TM practices and how these meanings influence their proximal attitudinal and behavioural outcomes that contribute to service excellence and organisational success. The extant TM literature does not sufficiently explain psychological mechanisms through which talents make sense of their TM practices. This study bridges this critical gap in the literature by incorporating theory-driven and context-specific exploration into the psychological (micro) perspective of exclusive TM, focused on the central recipients of TM practices. This thesis seeks to conceptualise the meanings talents ascribe to underlined intentions behind organisational TM practices drawing human resource attributions, signalling and sense-making theories within the wider context of social exchange to elucidate the influence of TM practices on talent outcomes. It develops a theoretical framework that captures key constructs of perceived TM practices, commitment-focused TM attributions, control-focused TM attributions, job satisfaction, job strain, along with talent outcomes; organisational commitment, turnover intention and psychological well-being. In addition, the talents' perception of their line manager's TM implementation effectiveness and the individual self-concept of talents was also examined to moderate the relationship in the theoretical framework.

This research adopted a mixed-method approach, with a qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase. The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with 5 TM process owners (TM/HR managerial group) and 17 TM process participants (talent group) of medium to large Sri Lankan banking sector organisations. The qualitative findings highlight context-specific information regarding key TM practices and designing and implementing TM processes. Importantly, the findings indicate that talents attach multiple meanings through their perceptions regarding the signals of organisational TM practices. Informed by the qualitative findings and the literature, the study's theoretical framework was tested in the quantitative phase which involved a cross-sectional online survey with usable 182 responses received from a sample of talents from the Sri Lankan banking sector. The quantitative data was analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

The quantitative findings indicate that talents' perceptions of the availability of TM practices act as a signal that positively influenced developing commitment-focused attributions regarding TM practices yet did not negatively influence developing control-focused TM attributions. As a positive attributional pathway, commitment-focused attributions that reflect concerns for well-being and service quality positively influenced talent outcomes directly through an affective response - job satisfaction. As a negative attributional pathway, control-focused TM attributions that reflect concerns for cost reductions and work intensification did not directly influence talent outcomes, yet largely influence indirectly through a job-related affective response, that is, via job strain. Further, the talents' perceptions of their line manager's TM implementation effectiveness indicated a direct positive influence on commitment-focused TM attributions yet no effect on control-focused TM attributions. Lastly, talents' self-concept was found to moderate the relationship between the TM attributions and organisational commitment as a talent outcome indicating a strengthening and buffering effect based on the nature of the attributional pathways in predicting talent outcomes.

The study contributes to the current understanding of how talents ascribe different meanings to organisational TM practices and their subsequent effect on their outcomes in a financial service environment of a developing country. Talents are considered to be one of the most crucial drivers for growth and success in challenging knowledge-intensive structured service environments. For TM/HR managers, understanding talent's attributions to organisational TM practices as sense makers enables them to ensure talents receive signals of TM’s underlying strategic purposes as the management intended. Such understanding help improves communication within TM processes to signal talents to elevate their work outcomes while managing investment over human capital effectively in resource-constrained environments. The proposed theoretical model will serve as a roadmap for future empirical advancement of the TM literature.

Keywords: Talent Management Practices; Talent Management Attributions; Talent Outcomes; Line manager’s TM Implementation Effectiveness; Individual Self-concept; Sri Lankan Banking Sector.