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## Article

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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Developing a talent management model using government evidence from a large-sized city, Iran

Ali Mahfoozi<sup>1</sup>, Sanjar Salajegheh<sup>2\*</sup>, Mahmoud Ghorbani<sup>3</sup> and Ayoub Sheikhi<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract:** The objective of the present research study is to construct a Talent Management model for the public sector from exclusive and inclusive approaches. The authors used a questionnaire survey to collect data from 357 employees at 32 governmental organizations, and then applied structural equation modeling for further analyses. The results revealed that Talent Management model is a multifaceted construct consisting of two main parts (i.e. Talent Management Mindset and Talent Management Strategy) that affect the talent management practices in the public sector. Specially, the practices linked to Talent Management Mindset were found to be the most influential. Although studies concerning talent management are frequently founded on an exclusive approach, this study considered all employees in the organizations. The Talent Management model proposed in this study can provide vision as well as direction for the definition or practices of talent management in the public arena.

**Subjects:** Personnel Selection, Assessment, and Human Resource Management; Strategic Management; Gifted & Talented

**Keywords:** talent management; mindset; government; strategy; inclusive & conclusive approaches

### 1. Introduction

Globalization exerts a growing pressure on organizations. Moreover, various issues are a prospect of concern for the public sector, such as outsourcing, downsizing, budget cuts, aging population, and smaller size of the succeeding generation. It is well known that managers' ability of identification, education, and use of people determines the success of an organization (Barner, 2006). Recognizing

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### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Talent management has become a necessity for governmental organizations to manage unprecedented changes. Therefore, this study was an attempt to construct an evidence-based model using qualitative and quantitative data from the public sector. This model is found to consist two dimensions, seven factors, and 33 indicators.

employee predicament is a paramount priority for governmental organizations (Kiyonaga, 2004). Talent management refers to the process of identifying and developing key individuals who possess important knowledge, skills, and abilities in a business. The importance of the identification and development of potential leaders is lost among demographic statistics and summary information, which, in turn, results in a talent shortage (Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morrison, 2006; Gandossy & Verma, 2006).

Rothwell (2010) maintains that talent management is a process where the best people are attracted, developed, and retained. Lamoureux, Campbell, and Smith (2009) state that talent management contains recruitment, selection, identification, retention, management, and development of manpower, who has the potential for high performance. Its chief focus is on the individual's skill and potential to play senior management roles.

It is of utmost importance to retain essential capabilities in the manpower to maintain business competitiveness. The talent management process provides key individuals with opportunities to expand their skills and experiences through involvement in challenging duties, professional development, and career growth, which, in turn, establish loyalty in business. Moreover, it is shown that talent management can enhance individual's contribution to organizational success (Barnett & Davis, 2008). Fundamentally, talent management establishes a talent pool containing external and internal sources, adequately deploys such invaluable resources in paramount positions, and then concentrates on motivation, organizational commitment, and extra-roles behaviors, which are influential on organizational performance (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). It was reported that US companies with robust talent management practices benefited from a 22% higher return to shareholders (Garman & Glawe, 2004). Of note, companies with low annual executive attrition rates were observed to take advantages of talent retention programs (Pomeroy, 2006).

Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, and González-Cruz (2013) note that talent may be shaped as a concept of natural ability, mastery, commitment, and fit, which are evident as innate abilities, acquired skills, knowledge, and attitudes whereby better outcome can be achieved. Similarly, Meyers, van Woerkom, and Dries (2013) state that talent can be innate or acquired, in nature. Defining talent as an acquired concept causes some organizations to adopt particular talent management practices. However, there are frequent reports on failure of such efforts. In a survey by RHR, it was shown that only one-fourth of the companies they investigated were strongly confident on the amount of talent they would need to achieve the predetermined growth in the future (RHR International, 2004). Likewise, Balaguer, Cheese, and Marchetti (2006) demonstrate that around 81% of their respondents believed that the current talent management practices were highly ineffective. Therefore, there is a crucial need for top leaders and performers although talent management systems fail to meet this need. Moreover, the talent literature reveals that talent management processes and systems suffer from several problems in their design (Barnett & Davis, 2008). To develop an appropriate model of talent management, which can meet the future needs of the organization, we must include the best practices in our model that not only identifies key talent, but also measures it. Accordingly, two major constructs are included in the model for governmental organizations: talent management mindset and talent management strategy.

Ashton and Morton (2005) define talent management as “the integration of different initiatives or constructs into a coherent framework of activity” (p. 30). They put stress on certain crucial components for defining talent management—Ethos; this element is also known as “talent mindset”, referring to “embedding values and behavior” which “support the view that everyone has potential worth developing” (Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015, p. 30). Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod (2001) maintain that talent mindset is a passionate belief, regarded as the key notion behind talent management. They note that talented individuals play a pivotal role in accomplishing excellence in business which is impacted by the company's values and goals. This cannot be conducted by the process of human resource management. However, it depends on a peculiar and distinct mental predisposition (Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015). Michaels et al. (2001) pinpoint a “war for talent” in the future of

human resource management as a result of talent shortage. This is also evident in their study that approximately half of leaders would intend to leave the organization. This condition necessitates a shift in the organization priorities not only to improve the skill level of majority (up to 60%) of the manpower, but also to survive in the era of the smart economy.

Of critical concern is talent management strategy. Luna-Arocas and Morley (2015) define a talent strategy as “a systematic approach to the attraction, the development and retention of people with excellence competencies appropriate to the work context” (p. 29). From this perspective, talent management deals with competencies which should be identified based on the organizational values and goals (Hayton & McEvoy, 2006; Kochanski & Ruse, 1996; Ulrich, 1998; Ulrich, Brockbank, Yeung, & Lake, 1995). Accordingly, this study aimed at proposing a conceptual model of talent management based on competencies contextualized within governmental organizations. To reach the purpose, this mixed-method study developed the model using an extensive review of literature, Delphi method, and structural equation modeling (SEM).

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Talent management mindset

Implementing a talent management architecture is highly influenced by talent’s way of thinking at both organizational and individual states which is referred to as ‘talent mentality’ or “talent mindset”. It is a leading factor determining the success of any implementation process and an organization. Nilsson and Ellström (2012) note that talent management is a mindset to strengthen person-organization fit (Morley, 2007), and to ensure that all workers perform and they are able (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001; Walker & LaRocco, 2002). A talent management mindset arises from a deep-seated belief that talented individuals within an organization exceed its competitors. The obvious result of such a belief is seen in managers’ actions to fortify their talent pool, implying that talent management mindset is associated with desirable outcomes (talent performance and retention). Undoubtedly, the chief challenge to the realization of a talent management strategy is related to human beings, which is summed up in the study by Guthridge and Komm (2008) as “mind habits”. Another study indicated that poor talent management exerts negative impacts on executive commitment and leadership shortages. It is also complemented in the literature that the success of talent management strategies relies on executive and line managers’ mindset. Therefore, this is hypothesized that talent management mindset is a trigger for all talent management competencies.

Some scholars have attempted to expand their studies on key elements comprising talent management mindset (McCauley & Wakefield, 2006). Finally, some essential practices are introduced; some related to the organizational culture or context, and others to the measurement of competencies. As an example, high-performance organizations can compete with their rivals through some work practices focused on employees, including team building, a healthy relationship among collaborators, training initiatives, and development opportunities (Hiltrop, 1999). These practices contribute to the process of recruiting, developing, retaining, and motivating manpower (Camps & Luna-Arocas, 2009; Luna-Arocas, 2011; Luna-Arocas & Camps, 2007). Talent intention to quit might be influenced by the quality of their relations with their line managers (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Thus, building and maintaining a two-way communication channel (Gaylard, Sutherland, & Viedge, 2005) are a key to retain top employees (Levin & Rosse, 2001). Some (e.g. Peccei & Rosenthal, 2001) highlight that the concept of empowerment assists organizations to achieve the outcomes through establishing “a sense of personal competence and most important according to our results, an agreement with organizational goals and values” (p. 849). They explain that “this more complex conception of empowerment as a multidimensional subjective state directs attention beyond issues of job design to the management of meaning and culture within organizations” (Peccei & Rosenthal, 2001, p. 849). Hence, four main components are contained in talent management mindset: talent attraction, which is required to be aligned with the organizational values (Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010; Kim & Scullion, 2011; Stahl et al., 2012); talent identification, meaning the differentiation of workforce into

categories based on their level of talent (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001; Gandossy & Kao, 2004; Huselid, Beatty, & Becker, 2005; Tucker, Kao, & Verna, 2005); talent development, which needs feedback concerning potentials and competencies in an organization (Hayton & Kelley, 2006; McCauley & Wakefield, 2006); maintaining positive relations, meaning development of an effective working relationship with employee (Gaylard et al., 2005; Griffeth et al., 2000; Levin & Rosse, 2001).

## 2.2. Talent management strategy

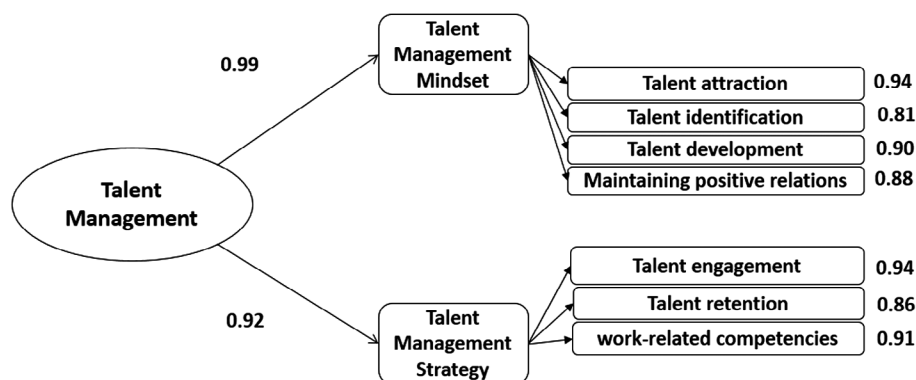
Donahue (2001) remarks in a talent management strategy a triad of “heads, hands and hearts”. Importantly, hearts express passion—an individual’s intrinsic motivation, referring to the most significant element of employee engagement. This essence might appear in the literature as “organizational commitment”, “intrinsic motivation”, “employee involvement”, or “passion and dedication to work”. However, some contemplate the difference between employee engagement (Kahn, 1990) and job involvement (Lawler & Hall, 1970; Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965), commitment to organizations (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 2013), or intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975). The concept of employee engagement is multidimensional; it can be viewed emotionally, cognitively or physically (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Luthans & Peterson, 2002); being emotionally engaged means to establish meaningful relationships with other colleagues and coworkers, and to share empathy and concern with others; cognitive engagement is related to having an awareness of mission and role in the work environment.

On one hand, Ross (2005) maintains that the war for talent retention commences in the hiring process to enroll employees, whose talents and abilities are harmonized with both short- and long-term needs of the organization. She also states that the organization must create an opportunity to grow new employees, and constantly improve their employment experience. Five factors are identified to contribute to employee engagement, job satisfaction, retention, and stress as follows in descending order: exciting work/challenge, career growth/learning, relationships/working with great people, fair pay, and supportive management/great boss. More to the point, employee engagement and talent retention act together; put differently, employee engagement is a key to talent retention (Glen, 2006).

Michaels et al. (2001) classify employees into three categories as A, B, and C players: “A players define the standard for exceptional performance by constantly delivering results and inspiring and motivating others; B players are solid performers who meet expectations, but who may have limited upward mobility; and C players deliver barely acceptable results” (p. 127). Afterward, they provide strategies to retain these employees; the development and satisfaction of A players is of utmost priority; B players should be confirmed and grown in an attempt to enhance their best work; as for C players, it is necessary to adopt a decisive approach to boost their performance, except where it is required to prevent them from moving into the most key roles (Delong & Vijayaraghavan, 2003; Michaels et al., 2001). Some believe that top performers should be rewarded and recognized (i.e. substantial pay) more than average performers (as cited in Michaels et al., 2001). A constructive and individual profit from the training for workforce ends up with organizational advantages, such as enhanced commitment, employee satisfaction, and retention (Garger, 1999).

Work-related competencies, on the other hand, are a means of creating strategic competitive advantages and managing talented individuals (Wuim-Pam, 2014). Undoubtedly, two organizations are more likely to be comparable in terms of financial outcomes, although they adopt distinct ways to reach the results that rely on specific competencies to fit organizational culture and strategy. To retain top performers, employee core competencies play a pivotal role. It is hypothesized that identifying the right competencies would retain the talent in the organization through the most strategic way. Competencies are interchangeably used with measurable or observable knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors (KSABs), determining successful job performance in both public and private organizations (HR Washington State Human Resources, 2012). Indeed, competency is the individual’s ability to do a job properly. Moreover, it might be defined as behaviors that form a structured behavioral frame to identify, evaluate, and develop employees. Organizations compete for top performers

**Figure 1. The conceptual model (preliminary framework).**



and then competencies, which contribute to such performance. In other words, work-related competencies are placed at the heart of talent management. Employing core competencies throughout talent management can maximize employee's potential. Competencies are described as "the building blocks of a talent management system" (Berger & Berger, 2011, p. 7). The talent management processes contain "recruitment and hiring, retention, employee engagement, job classification management, compensation management, performance assessment, competencies, professional development planning, and succession planning" (Taylor & Lee, 2014, p. 9). Competencies are essential for talent management since they are "a consistent, objective basis for making decisions about hiring, promoting, evaluating, and developing employees" (Rutledge, LeMire, Hawks, & Mowdood, 2016, p. 3). They also view competencies as a helpful tool for talent management. Accordingly, talent management strategies deal with a triad of talent engagement (which is the state of emotional and behavioral commitment to an organization Bhatnagar, 2007; Falcone, 2006), talent retention (meaning the ability of an organization to retain its high-performance individuals Birt, Wallis, & Winternitz, 2004; Gaylard et al., 2005), and work-related competencies (which refer to reframe work in terms of knowledge (cognitive), skills (functional), and attitudes (behavioral), with a view toward success (Rutledge et al., 2016; Wuim-Pam, 2014). As most of the literature on retention lacks scientific and empirical evidence (Oehley & Theron, 2010; Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004), this study aims at providing critical factors affecting management of talented workers in the public sector.

### 2.3. Conceptual framework of talent management

After an extensive search on the Talent Management literature, the following fundamental model was derived. Based on the proposed model in Figure 1, the Talent Management is introduced as the exogenous latent variable, with the Talent Management Strategy and Talent Management Mindset as the endogenous latent variables. It is suggested that distinct Talent Management dimensions are expected to contribute to the development of Talent Management Mindset and better implement of Talent Management Strategy. Considering the associations demonstrated within the literature of the present study, these components were culminated in a structural model (Figure 1), exhibiting the certain paths between the constructs. The components of talent management mindset have been initially categorized as:

- talent attraction;
- talent identification;
- talent development; and
- maintaining positive relations.



**Table 1. Number of organizations and employees in stratified random sampling (proportional allocation)**

	Stratum			
	Extractive organizations	Distributional organizations	Regulatory organizations	Symbolic organizations
Number of organizations in each stratum	3	16	9	4
Number of employees in each stratum	952	2,936	1,771	292
Size of the stratum	56	172	104	17

Talent management strategy has been divided into:

- talent engagement;
- talent retention; and
- work-related competencies.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Sampling

The statistical population of the present study included employees at various governmental organizations in Mashhad, the second largest city of Iran, during the year 2014. These organizations are to adopt the Provincial Budgeting System. Therefore, a total of 32 organizations were identified with a population size of 5,951 people. For this large population, two-stage sampling, including one-stage cluster sampling and stratified random sampling was employed to collect data. With 15% attrition over three months, the ultimate desired sample size resulted in 357 participants. In the first stage of sampling, Gabriel A. Almond's classification of the governmental organizations was used to categorize all the target organizations in this study. Therefore, these organizations were divided into four classes: (1) extractive organizations (chiefly receiving resources, such as goods, individuals, services, and etc.), (2) distributional organizations (chiefly giving out resources among society members), (3) regulatory organizations (chiefly contributing to the regular order in a society), and (4) symbolic organizations (chiefly involving in the institutionalization of behavior in a society). Hence, these 32 organizations were assigned into classes with similar field of activities. Table 1 shows the classification of the organizations and the number of employees in each class. After determining the sample size in each class, a total of 357 questionnaires were prepared and distributed among them.

#### 3.2. Questionnaire

According to the Talent Management literature, the present study drafted a Talent Management model of the public sector employees (Figure 1). Afterward, the Delphi method was utilized to obtain indicators of each part (i.e. Talent Management Mindset and Talent Management Strategy) that further constituted items of the questionnaire used. Therefore, a survey was employed to collect data from employees in the public sector to establish a Talent Management model, which was evaluated by applying SEM thereafter.

The first draft developed following a threefold iteration of the Delphi method by consulting 18 professionals to affirm the suitability of the structure of the suggested Talent Management model, and to revise the indicators for each part. The Delphi method is an appropriate approach to create the questionnaire used in the present study. This is also addressed in various research fields (Bhuasiri, Xaymoungkhoun, Zo, Rho, & Ciganek, 2012; Wang, 2013). Eighteen academic professionals of the Islamic Azad University (assistant and associate professors; eight women and ten men) with more than 15-year experience in Management examined the importance of certain Talent Management

indicators. As stated by Gall, Borg, and Gall (2002), following indices are employed to determine consensus, and to calculate scores of each indicator: standard deviation  $<1.00$ , quartile deviation  $<1.0$ , importance with mean values  $>3.50$  (70%), and modes  $>4.00$  (80%). The group consensus is reached after three rounds. The indicators of Talent Management provided a basis for the survey questionnaire used in this study. The questionnaire obtained from the Delphi method had two parts: Talent Management Mindset and Talent Management Strategy. The first part, Talent Management Mindset, is comprised of four dimensions: talent attraction, talent identification, talent development, and maintaining positive relations. The “talent attraction” dimension included three factors (identifying employee’s personality, ability to identify employee’s weaknesses, and provision of advantages better than rivals’ to attract talented workforce). The “talent identification” dimension refers to applying talent tests, evaluating level of employee interest, personality test, and job knowledge test. The ‘talent development’ dimension included five factors (employee engagement in organization activity, creating a positive image of the organization, continuous assessment of talent, training and developing talented individuals, and attention to career advancement management). The ‘maintaining positive relations’ dimension refers to cooperation and partnership of top managers, as well as adaptation of talent strategies to organizational goals.

The second part, Talent Management Strategy, is comprised of three dimensions: talent engagement, talent retention, and work-related competencies. The “talent engagement” dimension included eight factors (proportionality between positions and employees, selecting employees adaptable to the organization, selecting talented individuals based on organization’s needs, training individuals available roles in the organization, creating job opportunities for employees, providing an open environment, diversity in tasks, and informing individuals about work process). The “talent retention” dimension refers to treating employees with respect, holding appropriate relationships with colleagues, holding appropriate relationship with the manager, maintaining a balance between work and life, adequate education, having a sense of meaningful job, having an interest in the job and its tasks, and having a sense of achievement. The “work-related competencies” dimension included two factors (individual competency and organizational competency). The “individual competency” factor refers to individual progression to accept high-level posts, people development, satisfaction of talented individuals, and increasing added value of the individual employee. The “organizational competency” factor refers to reaching competitive advantages, keeping pace with global changes, increasing stakeholder satisfaction, and increasing organization productivity. A five-point Likert scale was employed in the present study (1—strongly disagree, 5—strongly agree).

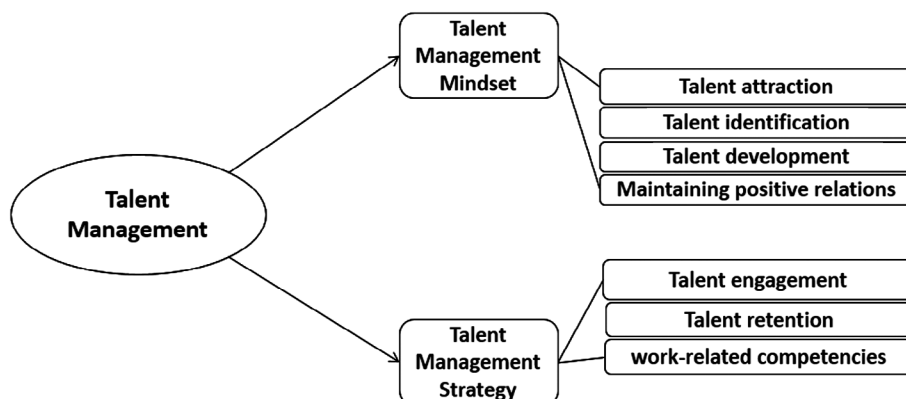
### 3.3. Reliability and validity

The first-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to investigate the validity of the measurement structure for every construct, and to make the items simple. In accordance with Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008), each item having a standardized loading below 0.50 was removed from the questionnaire. As a result, the final survey had 33 questions divided into two subscales, with 11 items for Talent Management Mindset and 22 for Talent Management Strategy (Appendix 1). The former subscale contained two items for “talent attraction”, four items for “talent identification”, three items for “talent development”, and two items for “maintaining positive relations” (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.89$ ). The latter subscale included six items for “talent engagement”, eight items for “talent retention”, four items for “individual competency”, and four items for “organizational competency” (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.91$ ).

Second-order CFA was subsequently employed to explore the validity of the model structure. The findings are depicted in Figure 2. The statistical software package AMOS 21.0 was employed to conduct SEM. Table 2 summarizes the fit indices. Overall, they showed a good fit. The  $\chi^2/df$  should be below 5.0 (Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin, & Summers, 1977). A value of SRMR lower than 0.10 shows a good fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The SRMR for this model was 0.044. The comparative fit index (CFI) shows the incremental fit of the model. The CFI should be equal to or higher than 0.90 to prove a good model (Byrne, 2013). The CFI index was 0.91 for the present model. The TLI of 0.90 and RMSEA of 0.066 showed a good fit. Considering the results of this analysis, the model possessed good construct validity and was suitable for further analysis.



**Figure 2. Talent management model for the public sector.**



**Table 2. Fit indices**

$X^2/df$	Comparative fit index	Root-mean-square residual	Standardized root-mean-square residual	Tucker–Lewis index
2.66	0.91	0.066	0.044	0.94

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive profile of respondents

As indicated in Tables 3–6, of 357 employees, 62% were men, and approximately equal number aged 30–39 years (39%) and 40–49 years (38%) (mean (SD) age: 39.0 (8.4)). As for the educational level, 55% and 32% gained bachelor's degree and graduated one (MA and PhD), respectively. The maximum year of experience in management (43%) was 10–19 years (mean (SD) experience: 15.0 (8.0)). The demographic data of this study showed that the sample was representative of the employee composition in the public sector, Mashhad, Iran.

### 4.2. Talent management model for the public sector employees

The present study gathered empirical evidence from the public sector workplace to establish a model of Talent Management for employees involved in the governmental organizations. Hooper et al. (2008) report that as for validity, the squared multiple correlation (SMC) obtained for each variable should be more than 0.20. Figure 2 demonstrates that the SMC for each dependent variable in the model was in the range of 0.60 and 0.94. All of them were in the suitable range (>0.20). The SMC estimates for “talent attraction”, “talent identification”, “talent development”, “maintaining positive relations”, “talent engagement”, “talent retention”, and “work-related competencies” dimensions were 0.94, 0.81, 0.90, 0.88, 0.94, 0.86, and 0.91, respectively. These SMC values resupported that using these variables was suitable for the suggested model of Talent Management. To sum up, the findings of this study exhibited good model fitness and its credibility. The conceptual framework for demonstrating the talent's mindset and strategy in the public sector organizations was modified and testified. Accordingly, Talent Management model included 2 dimensions, 7 factors, and 33 indicators.

**Table 3. Respondent profile: Gender**

Gender	N	%
Male	223	62
Female	134	38

**Table 4. Respondent profile: Age**

Age category	N	%
<30	47	13
30–39	140	39
40–49	134	38
>50	36	10

**Table 5. Respondent profile: Education**

Education	N	%
Diploma/High school	13	4
Associate's degree	28	8
Bachelor's degree	197	55
Master's degree/PhD	116	32
Others	3	1

**Table 6. Respondent profile: Experience**

Experience	N	%
<10 years	97	27
10–19 years	153	43
20–29 years	93	26
>30 years	14	4

## 5. Discussion

Notwithstanding the global economic crisis, many scholars identify talent management as the most critical agenda item (Boston Consulting Group, 2007; Skuza, Scullion, & McDonnell, 2013). Employers come to the point that competitive advantage as well as business growth are reached through engaged, skilled, and motivated employees (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016). Nonetheless, most of academic research concerning talent management fails to provide organizations with enough of vision and direction (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014; Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Collings, Scullion, & Vaiman, 2011). Globalization produces a competitive environment, which has characteristic features of dynamic and uncertainty. Thus, those employees, labeled as talent, who can keep pace with this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous ecology, are the indispensable element of organizational success and sustainable growth (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009). In the present study, we developed a model of Talent Management for the public sector, and then tested the model on a data-set collected from 357 employees in 32 Iranian governmental organizations. The chief practical purpose of the present research study was to offer empirical evidence in an attempt to assist the public sector in recognizing the Talent Management practices essential for enhancing distinct measurable outcomes for organizations, such as improved job satisfaction, career success, and reduced turnover. Afterward, these practices were devised within a model undergoing statistical analyses for validity and reliability. It was speculated that the outcome of this study would offer the organization the tactic to productively, reasonably, and meaningfully manage the talent management effectiveness of managers in the public sector. Moreover, in this research study we investigated to develop the nature of the causal linkages among the 10 Talent Management variables. The Talent Management model was analyzed by employing SEM. Measurement model fit deals with the question of to what extent a hypothesized model describes the data, and estimates the validities and reliabilities of the observed indicators (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). The structural model defines relationships among the latent variables, and also between the latent and observed variables which are not indicators of the latent variables (Savalei & Bentler, 2010). The comprehensive Talent

Management structural model was explored for goodness of fit. The findings of this study showed that the model was consistent with the data; put differently, the suggested theoretical Talent Management model demonstrated a good-fitting model. By way of illustration,  $\chi^2$  determines the degree of fit between the conceptual model of the study and the data-set which it is applied to. When the model does not well describe the data, the result does not clearly confirm the model as a whole (Biddle & Marlin, 1987). Accordingly, it is concluded that the model does not acceptably explain the observed covariance matrix. On the contrary, successful fitting of a model does not account for validity (Kelloway, 1998).

On the other hand, the interpretation of CFA findings determines if the theoretical relationships defined in the conceptual model are indeed corroborated by the data. In this regard, this study indicated that there were considerably positive relationships between the exogenous latent variable (i.e. Talent Management) and the endogenous Talent Management latent variables (i.e. Talent Management Mindset and Talent Management Strategy). These provide empirical evidence for the significance of establishing a Talent Management Mindset within the managers in the public sector. More to the point, the SMC values for 'talent attraction' dimension (0.94) was remarkable, exhibiting that the impact of a Talent Management Mindset on this variable is strong. The values of the SMC for the remaining variables, i.e. "talent identification" (0.81), "talent development" (0.90), and "maintaining positive relations" (0.88), were all exceptionally large, implying fundamental influences of a Talent Management Mindset on these variables. This finding was in agreement with the study by Oehley and Theron (2010), although "talent development" was not significantly related to the Talent Management Mindset. Therefore, demonstrating a Talent Management Mindset can be defined for the purposes of this study as "a belief that attracting competent employees, differentiating employees based on performance, providing opportunities, and establishing relationships with employees provide the means in order to outperform other organizations". The significance of establishing a Talent Management Mindset at managerial level has been addressed extensively in the Talent Management literature (Antonucci, 2005; Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Cohn, Khurana, & Reeves, 2005; Fegley, 2006; Handfield-Jones, Michaels, & Axelrod, 2001; Jacobs, 2005; Lockwood, 2006).

As for a Talent Management Strategy, the high values of the SMC for "talent engagement" (0.94), "talent retention" (0.86), and "work-related competencies" (0.91) were indicative of the substantial influence of Talent Management Strategy on these variables. In the same vein, adopting a Talent Management Strategy can be viewed as "an organization's attempt to engage and retain employees through certain competencies to fit workplace culture". This is claimed that the success of an organization's Talent Management Strategy may be contingent on instilling a Talent Management Mindset of managers (Oehley & Theron, 2010). To support this, Antonucci (2005) report a direct negative association between the level of executive commitment to talent management and the incidence of significant leadership shortages within organizations. Likewise, we also found that Talent Management Mindset as well as Talent Management Strategy potentiated the successful implementation of Talent Management practices in the public sector. Hence, the Talent Management model of the present study has met the requirement for model conceptualization.

In accordance with the extant literature, two major conceptualizations of talent management can be observed: strategic talent management (led by Collings and Mellahi (2009)), and habitual side of talent management (developed by Oehley and Theron (2010)). Most of talent definition in empirical papers arises from an exclusive perspective, which includes both excellent input (intentions, competences, and preparedness) as well as outstanding output (performance, intention to quit, and job satisfaction). For instance, Ulrich and Ulrich (2010) show that talent = competence  $\times$  commitment  $\times$  contribution. According to the results of our research study, Talent Management can be described as "all activities of attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, interpersonal awareness, and competencies to create a system, where needs, possibilities, values, expectations, performance, and recognition are integrated". This definition emphasizes on both the inclusive and exclusive talent management approaches. Greenwood (2002) notes that managers are to pay attention to those who are the talents and not yet labeled as talent; that is, all employees

need to be grown and supported with a view toward the strength-based approach (Meyers et al., 2013). This combinational Talent Management approach was the strength of the present study, which enhances the confidence in the proposed model. Another strength of this study was the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values which were high. As for the limitation, the emphasis of this research is on the organizational perspective in the public sector. Also, the evidence of the present study is rather specific to Iran and government organizations. It is worth investigating if these findings can be generalized to other countries and organizations.

## 6. Practical implications

The Talent Management model proposed in this study can be used to develop training programs and education courses in the field of governmental management. Such programs can especially focus on modules according to the seven elements of the model, namely talent attraction, talent identification, talent development, maintaining positive relations, talent engagement, talent retention, and work-related competencies. Therefore, it is suggested that organizations should make an investment in talent management practices in an attempt to have favorable outcomes from human resources, such as strong commitment to the career. The best practices have to be evidence-based and their effectiveness is proven by employees. Learning and using the existing knowledge lead to competitive advantage. In this regard, key employees are the main target for learning progress and applying new ideas, which necessitate the presence of talent management mindset to selectively attract or identify the talents, and then advance the next generation of employees and leaders through the development of effective programs. Development of the talents is partly considered as a response to organizational goals, such as retaining the key knowledge and supporting the future capabilities. Human resource departments in both organizations as well as universities largely require state-of-the-art materials related to the employees' need to arrange not only training programs, but also eligibility criteria for recruitment process. On the other hand, most manpower in the public center consist of youths as shown in the present study. The characteristic feature of this labor force regards their training that managers or employers must take into account to shape them. By applying true talent management practices to all employees, human resource managers can make the best of human resources in their organizations. Furthermore, young employees hold different attitudes and values from their older coworkers. For example, they intend to maintain a balance between work and life instead of preserving life-long employment. This highlights the significance of talent retention practices and thus talent management strategies, which should be adopt based on the current employee tendencies. Noteworthy, work-related competencies can afford to deal with skills shortage for organizations, and accordingly identify new candidates that decrease competition for the talent.

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## Appendix 1

Dimension	Factor	Indicator
Talent Management Mindset (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$ )	Talent attraction	Identifying employee's personality Provision of advantages better than rivals' to attract talented workforce
	Talent identification	Applying talent tests Evaluating level of employee interest Personality test Job knowledge test
	Talent development	Continuous assessment of talent Training and developing talented individuals Attention to career advancement management
	Maintaining positive relations	Cooperation and partnership of top managers Adapting talent strategies to organizational goals
Talent Management Strategy (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$ )	Talent engagement	Proportionality between positions and employees Selecting talented individuals based on organization's needs Training individuals available roles in the organization Creating job opportunities for employees Effective attraction System of proportionality between position description and its requirements
	Talent retention	Motivation and health human resources Holding appropriate relationships with colleagues Holding appropriate relationship with the manager Maintaining a balance between work and life Adequate education Sense of belonging to duty Having an interest in the job and its tasks Having a sense of achievement
	Work-related competencies	Individual competency Individual progression to accept high-level posts People development Satisfaction of talented individuals Increasing added value of the individual employee
		Organizational competency Reaching competitive advantages Keeping pace with global changes Increasing stakeholder satisfaction Increasing organization productivity



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