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Exploring the role of management in the implementation of talent management

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Abstract. The South African public sector institutions are faced with the challenges of proper implementation of talent management. The aim of this research is to explore the role of management in the implementation of talent management within the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in the Limpopo Province. The inability by management to properly show their role in the management and implementation of talent management at all levels in the public sector has brought poor performance of duties by employees due to lack of motivation and low morale. A qualitative research approach was used. Purposive sampling was adopted using semi-structured interviews to gather data from participants. The findings revealed that challenges like career development, skills development, motivation, succession planning and remuneration packages including benefits allowances were the main limits which mainly prevented proper implementation of talent management in the Department.

Keywords. Competitive Advantage, Management, Talent, Performance, Public Sector

Introduction

Talent management is found to be important for modern organizations because of the advent of the knowledge economy, new generations entering the workforce and the need for businesses to become more strategic and competitive, which implies new ways of managing human capital (Yllner & Brunila, 2013). The above is supported by Patrick (2014) and Kehinde (2012) that new ways of managing human capital in both the public and private sectors are at the centre of service delivery to the general public and customers (Vandenabeele, Leisink & Knies, 2013; Vlădescu, 2012). There is consensus amongst the researchers and scholars that their human capital, as employees are the most important resource and asset in any organization (Allen, 2010). Bhatti, Rehman, Waris and Zaheer (2011) suggested that the successful utilization of individual capabilities can contribute positively to performance and enhance organizational image. The Human Resources Development (HRD) Strategy for the Public Service noted that people are the common denominator of success within and across the different departments (Koketso & Braam Rust, 2011).

This study sets out to explore the role of management in the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Provincial Government, in the implementation of talent management and the effects of variables like organizational commitment on intention to

motivation, employee engagement, development and training, compensation and employee retention. This research is further motivated by the fact that skilled government employees are becoming a scarce resource within the South African public sector. Therefore, talent management is a critical and an important aspect that needs to be addressed through research. The aim of this research was to determine the role of management in the implementation of talent management. The results of this investigation should assist with the creation of a suitable human resource development plan of talent management in the Department. Practically the research will help Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to improve the role of management in their implementation of talent management by creating favourable work environment for employees which will yield benefits for the institution, employees and improved performance of the institution. This research highlights the current state of the role of management in the implementation of talent management. The research will provide practical guidelines and talent management strategies which should be adopted by management in order to fulfil their role in the implementation of talent management in the institution.

1. Problem statement

South African public sector institutions continue to face talent management challenges. Currently limited research exists on the implementation of talent management in the public sector within the South African context. Challenges of employee turnover, lack of employee recognition and retention continue to hurt the public sector institutions, posing a negative impact in the delivery of essential services to the general public. Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure spends huge amounts of money on recruitment in order to replace the employees who have left the institution for other opportunities. Currently, the real problem is not to search or manage the talents but to provide commitment for retention of employees who are in the employ of the Department because from the strategic management view, it is important to make performance sustainable, permanent and high and it is only possible with employee commitment. The importance of employee commitment and loyalty has never been more significant than in today's context, where the 'war for talent' is rife, and skilled employees have a greater choice of employment, both locally and globally (De Villiers, 2006). It is against this background that this study was conducted.

2. Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study was to investigate talent management in the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province and how the Department should work with talent management in order to retain and manage experienced staff and provide with a career path. This will go a long way to increase morale of employees at all levels which would result to improved performance of the Department.

3. Research methodology

The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach and used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Qualitative semi-structured interviews are based on a set of predetermined questions, which make the foundation for a dialogue between interviewer and interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Purposive sampling was used and twelve participants comprised of two senior managers, two middle managers and eight lower level employees employed in Department. The interviews were conducted in the Department's boardroom which afforded participant's privacy. Of the twelve participants, five were males and seven were females. Their age were as follows: three were in their late twenties, five were in their thirties, two were in their late forties, one was in the early fifties and lastly, one in the

late fifties. All participants indicated that they only know the public sector environment. This indicated that all participants were able to share their views and previous experiences.

The Head of the Department granted the first author permission to conduct research. The participants first signed informed consent forms for participation in this study, in which they were notified of the responsible persons (contact data), the purpose of the research, a description of the duties and requirements of the participants, the duration of their participation, any compensation, dangers and benefits, the voluntary nature of participation and protection of privacy. The interviews were conducted by the first author who guaranteed the anonymity of the participants. The first author also ensured that confidentiality was maintained at all times during data collection. The interviews were recorded with audio recorder and later transcribed verbatim in order to ease the analysis of them. Furthermore, a note-taking technique was also utilised to complement tape recording with an attempt to keep accurate data from the original primary source giving the first author and the participants an opportunity to clarify any uncertainty during the interviews (Tracy, 2013).

Lastly, the transcription was performed because authors wanted to keep the original formulations of the participants in order to limit premature or unconscious interpretation of the answers of the participants. The interviews lasted for approximately 45 minutes each, and were held with one interviewee at a time. Analysis of the interviews was performed by reading and rereading and looking for common denominators and patterns in the transcriptions. The analysis of the interviews was made after the literature research had been completed, meaning that authors had prior knowledge of the talent management field before embarking on the analysis. Selected passages of the transcribed empirical material was then structured thematically such as quotes regarding performance management, morale, career path, etcetera, and investigated by looking for e.g. similarities and differences between the answers of the participants. Furthermore, the empirical material was compared to and analyzed with the literature in the literature review. The empirical material was then adapted to text for the major part of the chosen passages, but authors kept the quote form for the passages that were especially interesting, to reflect the thoughts and ideas of the participants with as much objectivity as possible. All the interviews were conducted in English as well as the responses in the form of quotes.

4. Literature review

Demystifying talent management and its benefits

Talent means many things to many people (Boštjančič & Slana, 2018; Claussen, Grohsjean, Luger & Probst, 2014) interchangeably with human capital management and employee management system but that is not correct. Each of these terms have key differences. A common understanding is that talent refers to those employees who are identified as having the potential to reach high levels of achievement (cf. Boštjančič & Slana, 2018). The word talented could be compared with its synonyms e.g., gifted (cf. Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2010), highly capable, genius, extraordinary, exceptional, above average, etc., All of these descriptions of talent can be divided into four subcategories, aptitude, creative thinking, social intelligence and task orientation. Thus, talent represents an important area of competition and one of the main sources of competitive advantage (Wellins, Liu & Qiuyong, 2010). Research on the definition of talent has also focused on the specific skills needed to guide and manage talented employees, as they are oriented toward recognizing potential in employees so that they will be able to take key strategic (often leadership) positions within the company (Boštjančič & Slana, 2018).

Claussen et al. (2014) identified the characteristics required for effective management into four areas: experience, expertise, social capital, and social network. Talent management has become a subject that has attracted everyone's attention as a tool for fulfilling talent demand worldwide (Sanjula & Anju, 2014). The above is also supported by Hongal and Uttamkumar (2020) that research proves that organization can build its sustainable competitive advantage by investing in talented workforce today. Organizations intending to apply talent management have to strategically analyze its relevance. In organizations, talent management has become one of the most pressing topics and the competition for talent will define organizational settings for a couple of decades to come (Hongal & Uttamkumar, 2020; Olivier, 2010). However, Barkhuizen (2015) found that talent management rarely appears to be a strategic operation in South African organizations. Research findings also revealed that management in every institution has an active role of ensuring that people carry out their duties and that they are inspired to do their duties willingly (Tiwari, 2014; Raja & Kumar, 2015).

It is important for the senior management to ensure that talent management strategies are aligned and integrated with other human resource functions to improve on the implementation of talent management in the Department. Saadat and Eskandari (2016) indicate that when talent management is correctly aligned to the strategic objectives, the organization will be able to effectively manage and retain its talented employees and gain competitive advantage. Kocketso and Rust (2011) support the above that, their research found that poor implementation of talent management had a variety of causes, ranging from job misplacement, political interference, union and management not agreeing on the employees to be promoted, and the size of the Western Cape Municipality, all of which made it difficult to implement and monitor talent management. Kibui, Gachunga and Namusonge (2014) postulated that if talent management is poorly implemented it can result in high staff turnover.

Robyn and Du Preez (2013) note that organizations will have to acquire an interest in more than mere profitability should they aim to be dominant in a global economy and such interests will include attraction, development and retention of talent. Talent management activities are customised and applied differently in organizations, and the reasons for this are associated with the fact that organizations pursue different strategies and goals (Šiaučiūnaitė and Vizgirdaitė, 2015; Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Various researchers and writers, such as Aibieyi and Henry (2015), Barkhuizen, Mogwere & Schutte, (2014a). Supervisors have the responsibility of motivating and retaining employees by providing (2014), and Šiaučiūnaitė and Vizgirdaitė, (2015), have mentioned the different activities of talent management, ranging from recruitment, human resource planning, training and development, performance management, succession planning and retention strategies which be utilized as part of strategic tool towards ensuring that, key employees are retained (Silzer & Dowell, 2010). The retention of key or knowledge workers, will go a long way ensuring that talent management processes and practices are aligned strategically, to offer organizations with competitive advantage above competitors, though this process is a key challenge for organizations to implement (King, 2015; Schuler, 2015).

Research on talent management shows that from recruitment process, which Jocelyn (2011) defines it as the process of acquiring applicants who are available and qualified to fill vacant positions in an organization, strategic planning and execution, to recruit knowledge workers or 'right persons' for the job is the key (Bidwell, 2017; Maamari & Alameh, 2016; Torrington, Hall, Atkinson & Taylor, 2017)). This strategic process will inform the human resource planning practices. Human resource process has been regarded as a tool for the implementation of talent management, to successfully plan for the attraction and retention of the required number of employees who possess the right set of skills, knowledge and

competence to execute the strategic and operational goals of the organization, both currently and in the future. (Armstrong, 2009; Hughes and Rog, 2008; Jackson, Schuler & Werner, 2009; Werner, 2012).

Wu, Nurhadi and Zahro (2016) indicate a four-point approach to human resource process in talent management. The four processes include, first, the determination of the type of talent that is needed in the organization. This will include planning for the total number of employees that will be required to perform the day-to-day tasks of the current and future operation. Secondly, the skill gaps that exist between the number of employees in terms of skills, knowledge and experience need to be assessed. Thirdly, Grobler and Diedericks (2009) state that developmental requirements must be determined during the selection and appointment processes. Lastly, management must be able to establish an action plan and finances must be available for the funding of talent management initiatives, including career progression (Wu et al., 2016). Grobler and Diedericks (2009) indicate that, even if the organization concerned developed its employees, they were not provided promotional opportunities, and this may have a negative impact on the creation of a talent pool.

Measuring the effectiveness of talented employees

Boštjančič and Slana (2018) posited that the talent management literature does not indicate any particular differences in the measuring of effectiveness between employees and high-potentials, i.e., talented employees. In practice, organizations usually measure the effectiveness of high-potentials through performance appraisal interviews, superiors assess various aspects of the employees' performance and offer them feedback on their performance evaluations (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Satisfied, highly-motivated and loyal employees represent the basis of competitive company. The growth of satisfaction is to be reflected in the increase of productivity, improvement of the products' quality or rendered services and higher number of innovations. Satisfied employees form positive reference to the employer and thus increase its attractiveness for potential job seekers and strengthen its competitive position in the market. Management of the company does not often know opinions of own employees and underestimates dependence between satisfaction of employees and total successfulness of the company in the market (Gabčanová, 2011). When measuring work effectiveness, the majority of organizations focus on the reaching of performance goals, which they assess using key performance indicators (KPIs) (Boštjančič & Slana, 2018). This approach is associated with management by objectives, in which superiors and subordinates agree on work duties and responsibilities for a certain period, define the specific targets, measure those targets and set out a time frame (Gladisa & Susanty, 2018). Trends are moving toward identification of competencies as part as the performance management. Development appraisal could be incorporated in the performance appraisal, but literature review shows that many firms are not appraising competencies in the performance appraisal process (cf. Abraham, Karns, Shaw & Mena, 2001).

Training and development

Šiaučiūnaitė and Vizgirdaitė, (2015) state that training and development are important initiatives for talent management, as they are used to enhance an employee's skill to successfully perform his/her current job and to develop skills for future needs and promotion. Career development opportunities are important factors that attract younger generations to organizations (Barkhuizen, 2015; Barkhuizen et al., 2014a, 2014b). Supervisors have the responsibility of motivating and retaining employees by providing them with other career path

opportunities through mentorship in order that they may occupy senior positions based on good performance and proven managerial skills.

Performance management

Individual performance assessment is a tool employed by the employer to assess the performance of each employee on a quarterly and yearly basis. The system is carried out by assessing and evaluating the performance of employees against a predetermined performance standard (Altinöz, Çakiroğlu and Çöp, 2013). Turner and Kalman (2014), state that performance management is concerned with the clarification of the employee's performance expectations and standards and the provision of tools for measuring performance. Vlădescu (2012) indicates that management should not neglect performance management, as it is closely related to talent management. Performance management is the foundation for talent management initiatives (Kulick, 2010; Saadat et al., 2016).

Succession planning

Succession planning is an organization's effort to identify key positions, and to plan developmental activities to ensure that their qualified employees are available to occupy leadership or management positions (Patidar, 2016; Varhegyi & Jepsen, 2017). Succession planning requires the human resource and the management of the institution to have an operational plan to be successful in implementing succession policy. Patidar (2016) again says that succession planning is a key human resource strategy to retain and build a pool of talent by formally identifying and providing training, mentoring and coaching to employees who show potential to occupy leadership or critical positions.

Retention strategies

Institutions must understand the reasons for an employee's resignation by engaging in an ongoing investigation to establish the cause of attrition and in order to formulate effective retention strategies, (James & Mathew, 2012). Research studies show that there were problems that led employees to tender their resignations. This includes lack of career advancement, poor salaries, lack of training and development, and a poor management style and work environment, including organizational policies (Anantharaja, 2009; James & Mathew, 2012; Turner & Kalman, 2014).

5. Results and discussions

The primary objective of the research was to explore the role of management in the implementation of talent management at the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province. The findings indicate which policies and procedures are in place to drive and support the talent management programme at the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province. The research questions were used to answer and support the specific research objectives of this study. Interviews were conducted to gather data about the role of management in the implementation of talent management in the Department. The findings were corroborated by direct quotes from the participants. This was followed by an analysis of the active policies, procedures and documents used by the Department in their process of implementing talent management strategies.

Theme 1: Talent management conceptualization

Participants shared their different views of what talent management is. Their views indicated that talent management is a critical process for the institution to achieve its strategic

goals through having the right skills at the right time and at the right place. Retention of scarce skills was one of the key objectives of talent management which came up. One participant said:

Talent management is identifying the qualities employees have, exposing them and nurturing them for the benefit of the institution and the employee (P1).

Employees were of the opinion that skills development is important for enhancing the capability of the institution to deliver against its business obligations. The availability of skills at the Department to meet its business objectives and to enable effective talent management in the organization was also raised. One participant said:

“Talent management is about identifying talent that will align with the business in meeting the strategic objectives of the organization” (P3).

The participants also gave as an example that the Department’s current focus is to complete building new inland roads and new government state of the art buildings that will contribute to the extension of the organization’s ability to supply public sector institutions with office accommodation and communities with roads. The participant further indicated that talent management should be utilised to retain the identified talent, at least until the project is seen to completion, not only by financial rewards but also by affording employees opportunities to do meaningful work. Some participants said:

“Talent management is a well-structured strategy of measuring your own employees’ development” (P4).

“Employees could be retained by improving their working conditions and opportunities to grow within a defined space that is determined by business needs and career paths facilitated by mentorship and coaching programmes” (P7).

“The organization should not take it for granted that professionals always know what to do, especially young ones; talent management should be a guide for employee development and meaning contribution to the organization” (P2).

“It was indicated that one other way of retaining employees is to provide opportunities for development and career growth within the confines of the organization’s defined talent management policy...Talent management is mainly about identifying the qualities employees have, exposing them and nurturing them” (P5).

One participant viewed talent management as a process for effecting career guidance, career mobility and planning to ensure required skills development in critical positions. The participant said:

“Talent management is about finding the right people for the right jobs at the right time to deliver on the business objectives” (P6).

Another participant said:

“The talent management process allows the organization to understand its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats” (P3).

The talent management process was also described as a process that has various aspects, such as succession planning, performance management, development of skills and mentoring. The participants attempted to define talent management. McDonnell, Lamare, Gunnigle, and Lavelle (2010) acknowledged that there is need for consistency in identifying the topics that must be covered in talent management, for instance workforce planning, talent gap analysis, talent acquisition, staffing, training and development, retention, and succession planning. It was perceived from observation of the participants that their understanding of talent management was based on their experiences in their current surroundings. Collings and Mellahi (2009) argued that organizations should not rely only on high-performing individuals, as it is impossible for an organisation to only have high flyers, and they advocate that all employees in the organisation should be developed for the success of the organization. These findings correspond with the work of Lacey and Groves (2014) which embraced all employees as talent that should be developed and nurtured, as opposed to a specific focus on a select few.

Theme 2: Talent management responsibility

In order to understand how the talent management strategies are executed within the Department, the researcher had to establish the staff member who is responsible for the implementation within the Department. Participants' opinions varied when they were asked where the responsibility to deliver successful talent management lay. Some of the participants said:

"Talent management belongs to the Director, Corporate Services, who ensures that talent management is implemented" (P1).

"Human resource division is accountable to ensure the implementation of talent management" (P2).

"Line managers should take responsibility to deliver talent management successfully in their divisions as they work closely with employees" (P4).

Participants' responses yielded the following opinions: two participants agreed that line managers were taking on talent management accountability; four other participants indicated that human resource practitioners were the main driver of talent management in the institution. One participant was of the opinion that *no one had taken responsibility for ensuring that talent management was implemented* (P3). Others said:

"The Head of Department as the accounting officer is accountable for the implementation of talent management in the Department" (P5).

"The Human Resources division is accountable to ensure the facilitation of the implementation of talent management in the Department" (P6).

Ellehuus (2012) indicated "that leadership does need human resource assistance to make a shift from being business leaders to talent leaders, where they are capacitated to take accountability for their talent to enhance their capability to deliver on business imperatives".

Theme 3: Training and development

All participants indicated that there is still a huge gap for employees who were not being given opportunities to receive training aligned to their job profiles. Some participants also mentioned the need for financial support to attend training courses as managers sometimes raise the issue that there are no funds to attend training in the current financial year. Participants also indicated their need to have sufficient time to attend training development courses. The findings show that participants were not given sufficient time and sometimes lack funds to attend training courses. They indicated that their need and expectation in this case is more time for training.

Theme 4: Performance management and management's leadership role

Aguinis, Gottfredson and Joo, (2012) highlighted "the significance of performance management as one of the critical success factors in managing talent and ensuring an organization's ability to meet its objectives and to maintain its competitiveness in the marketplace". A participant admitted that there are talent management and performance management processes in the institution were not implemented properly.

"A human resource practitioner indicated that performance management is an important aspect of talent management which needs to be implemented carefully in an institution" (P4).

Another participant went further to say that through performance management; managers are able to identify top achievers. Aguinis et al. (2012) acknowledge that it is through properly managed performance interventions that organizations will be in a better position to develop internal skills that facilitate talent which can deliver in alignment with the strategic organizational goals.

Participants again shared their views about the role of leadership in the implementation of talent management. Some said:

"The career development practitioner said that the implementation of the talent management activities, such as employee development and career aspiration discussions were identified as important during the implementation of talent management and such discussions should be initiated by management" (P4).

"Leaders in the Department should champion the talent management process, prioritise employee development, and be prepared financially to invest in skills development that will contribute to meeting organizational objectives". "Skills development awareness programmes should be conducted quarterly" (P9).

Bartlett and Ghoshal (2013) argue that managers have realised that there is a great need for the organization to progress from a marginal management style and revolutionise towards adopting a leadership style that recognises its role as going beyond operational technical roles and moving toward empowering employees.

"Some participants at managerial level agreed that as leaders, they must support the implementation of talent management to enable the achievement of the institution's set objectives" (P8).

Hughes and Rog (2008) supported the above response that leaders have important roles to play in an organization.

Theme 6: Challenges with the proper implementation talent management

Participants made the following points regarding challenges that are hampering successful implementation of talent management at their institution. One participant pointed out that the recruitment process was an example of a challenge hampering successful implementation of talent management as the minimum requirements stated in an advertisement of a vacant post are not always adhered to. One finds that the appointment is made and a person who does not meet the specified requirements occupies the position. Therefore, there is lack of accountability and adherence to human resource policies.

“One participant indicated that there is non-alignment of the human resource processes that contribute to talent management failures, such as an absence of succession planning, lack of commitment to individual development plans, budget limitations”(P11).

“No talent management awareness in the organization for employees” (P12).

Another participant suggested that talent management awareness should be conducted by managers and human resource practitioners so that all employees were aware of their responsibilities with regard to the management of talent in their Department. The failure of the talent management process in the institution is the result of many changes the institution has undergone with the consequence that not much attention was given to talent management. Furthermore, other participants identified lack of skills development for employees and lack of interest from management as contributing to a non-effective implementation of talent management. Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, (2011) identified that a great need to align human resource policies and procedures which are relevant to talent for effective management of talent in an organization. Participants also highlighted the failure to align human resource policies and procedures as a challenge towards successful implementation of talent management.

6. Discussions

The main objective of this research was to explore the role of management in the implementation of talent management at the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in the Limpopo Province. Armstrong, (2006) indicated “that talent management means creating a reputation for the organization, which would turn it into a “desirable employer”, offering a “wonderful job”. The findings obtained through the data collected from the questionnaires will be discussed. The specific research questions were interpreted. The findings indicated that every employee wants the employer to invest in their careers. The study found out that employees have a passion to work and become professionals in their respective fields. It was pointed out by one participant that no employee wants to remain on the same level until retirement age. Employees expect employers to help shape their careers through career developments and engagement. However, employees do understand that there may be financial constraints, like unavailability of a budget for training purposes, or unavailability of desired courses or training service providers within the Limpopo Province. Data collected highlighted the following indicators which management may take into consideration during the implementation of talent management at the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in the Limpopo Province.

Training and career development

One participant indicated that training and career development played an important role in job satisfaction. Employees also mentioned that they would like to receive career development training at least once or twice a year. The result of employees receiving training timeously would enhance their performance. Vlădescu, (2012) stated “that the first way to improve performance within this fiscal and political havoc is to invest in talent, so that the productivity of each employee maximizes and can be maintained at the highest possible level”.

Employee engagement

The findings revealed that managers do not engage employees regularly. Schmidt, Corey and Keyes (2003) indicated that, the well-being of employees is in the best interests of communities and organizations”. The workplace is a significant part of an individual’s life that affects his or her life and the well-being of the community. Markos and Sridevi (2010) also assert that if an employee sees the stated values of an organisation being lived by the leadership and colleagues”, a sense of trust in the organisation is more likely to be developed, and this “constitutes a powerful enabler of engagement. Therefore, when employees are engaged, they become more committed to the institution and this may minimise their aim to leave the institution.

Succession management

Findings indicated that there are no arrangements for grooming employees for future managerial positions or for any other positions within the institution. Patidar (2016) asserts that organizations have two options for filling vacancies, either to recruit outside the organization or promote internal employees. Patidar (2016) further stated that succession planning is a key human resource strategy to retain and build a pool of talent by formally identifying and providing training, mentoring and coaching to employees who show potential to occupy leadership or critical positions.

Working conditions

Participants indicated that the working environment also affects their well-being. Therefore, the Department should create a favourable working environment for employees. Lack of building infrastructure leads to overcrowding in offices which is demotivating to employees, resulting in minimal production output as employees will spend most of their time chatting. Lockwood (2007) cited human resource leaders, as well as managers, have the mission to build and sustain a workplace environment that fosters engagement and is also attractive to potential employees. Welch (2011) postulated that organization engagement is a dynamic, changeable psychological state which links employees to their organizations, manifest in organization member role performances, expressed physically, cognitively and emotionally, and influenced by organization-level internal processes.

Employee retention

In order to retain the qualified employees in the workplace, management should give support to employees on a regular basis, by giving feedback on a particular task performed and recognizing employees’ efforts, as suggested by one participant during this research. New employees in the Department should undergo induction programmes and there should be regular in-service training to upgrade the skills level of employees. The Department, through the human resource development division should ensure that the employees receive sufficient support from management. As employees need certain resources for the performance of their jobs to perform

at their peak, the Department should take responsibility for ensuring that such resources are acquired and made available for the use of employees. Managers should be preoccupied with the development of the employee's talent, highlighting the strengths whilst at the same time identifying effective actions to compensate for acceptable weaknesses (Vlădescu, 2012).

Performance management practices

Findings showed that there are challenges with the implementation of individual performance management systems. The study sought to explore the role of management in the implementation of talent management. Aguinis et al. (2013), define performance management systems as a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with strategic goals of the organization.

Managerial implications

The findings should assist management of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in dealing with the challenges facing the proper implementation of talent management in their institution. The concept of talent management involves maximizing the potential of employees, promoting people on their achievements and investing in their development.

Practical implications

The findings indicated Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province, through the human resource development division, should have a talent management programme developed for proper implementation by all divisions for the benefit of all employees and the institution. Employees are demoralised to such an extent that they do not care what is happening in their Departments or about the organizational output. The results of this investigation should assist with the creation of a suitable human resource development plan of talent management in the Department. Practically the research will help Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to improve the role of management in their implementation of talent management by creating benefits for the institution, employees and improved performance of the institution.

7. Limitations of the study

The study was carried on in the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province. Therefore, the results can only describe the situation for employees in the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province. The results of this study covers the period in which this study was done and the findings are only applicable to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province and cannot be expanded to the other eight provinces. Only seven participants participated in the research. Furthermore, the research only focused on a sample size of twelve participants, which could be seen as a limitation to the study. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to apply to the general population.

Recommendations for future research

It is recommended that this research should be expanded to other provinces to enable the comparison of findings in the future. New research should also focus on the analysis of the existing policies on talent management available. The findings of this research can lead to the development of effective, clear and easy to implement talent management policies.

Direction for further research

As this research was conducted on a small sample due to time constraints, it can also be conducted in future using a large sample. Again further research is recommended to investigate the impact of poor implementation of talent management practices in the public sector.

8. Conclusion

The focus of this study was to explore the role of management on the implementation of talent management at the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure in Limpopo Province. There is very little evidence of a talent management strategy at the Department. It was also discovered that talent management policies are not effectively implemented at the Department. The findings indicated minimal implementation of a talent management strategy in the Department. Furthermore, the findings have shown that talent management in public sector institutions is still not regarded as important for the attraction and retention of talented employees.

Without effective implementation of a sound talent management strategy, the situation concerning employees in the public sector will get worse. In the course of examining the talent management challenges in the public sector, it emerged that recruitment, remuneration, development and management style were some of the key challenges faced both nationally and internationally. Individual performance management was also singled out as a valuable contributor to talent management. Lack of top leadership commitment in the implementation of individual performance management was cited by participants as another barrier against the implementation of talent management in the department.

It also emerged that there are human resource division and human resource policies which were not implemented fully in order to retain employees. Participants indicated that the human resource policies are inadequate, vague and lax which makes them difficult to interpret and implement, resulting in employees not being motivated to remain with the Department for longer periods. Again, some participants also indicted that they were not fully engaged in decision-making concerning their key performance areas and functions. Poor management style was also highlighted as an area which required management to improve as this area has a direct impact on the performance of employees. It also affects their decision either to stay or leave the institution for other opportunities elsewhere. It was also discovered that ineffective implementation of a talent management strategy has stood in the way of retaining highly qualified employees. The traditional human resource practices of rules are not sufficient for managing employees. Rather, seeing employees not only as the greatest assets of the Department, but as contributors to the success of the Department. Other participants also highlighted the issue of unavailability of financial resources. Again, the findings indicated that career and managerial development of employees has not been achieved through an integrated process, but driven by employees' aspirations.

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