Talent Management Moderating the Relationship between Recruitment for the Highly Skilled and HR Policies

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly competitive business environment, organizations seek to improve efficiency through hiring highly skilled employees and managing talent. A corporate goal has always been the avail of clear and applicable HR policies. However, today's successful organization needs to retain talented professionals, manage their development, and provide a systematic work environment where HR policies are transparent and equitable.

The results of this study reveal a number of relationships, but most importantly, the existence of a statistically significant moderating role of the talent management efforts in the relationship between hiring highly skilled employees and HR policies, with a visible difference between genders.

Keywords: HR, Hiring Highly Skilled, Talent Management

INTRODUCTION

Human resource policies are the backbone of any organization. The way in which an organization treats its human capital speaks about its culture and ability to attract the highly skilled. Several authors suggest that human resources are not only vital, but that they are amongst the most relevant resources (Laursen & Mahnke, 2001). The employment market has been known to be rigid (Cipollone, Patacchini, & Vallanti, 2014). Attracting and preserving talent is usually considered the biggest challenge all companies face today, particularly smaller firms that compete with the "big boys" for the same talent consortium (Abraham & Newcorn, 2000, p.32). In the face of tough

economic crisis in the world, government and business leaders are challenged to obtain, develop, maintain, reward, and pass on the knowledge of the finest human capital. Commonly, talent management is usually aligned with efforts to obtain, develop, and maintain this capital (Rothwell, 2012). Managers usually believe that those highly skilled are most productive and promotable to higher degrees of authority. Talent is acquired in two ways, first, it can be developed within the organization or, second, it can be recruited from within the organization or from external sources (Rothwell, 2012). Recruitment must thus consider talent advancement. Talent attainment and talent advancement should therefore have the same foundation based on shared competencies measured by behavioral identifiers or work outputs (Rothwell, 2012). Most studies have discussed the effect of applying HR policies on recruiting employees; however, this research considered the opposite, that is, the effect of recruitment of the highly skilled on HR policies. Thus, the researchers sought to study whether recruiting highly skilled employees changes the HR policies adopted by an organization and to what extent (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Moreover, a third factor was added to the equation, namely managing talent. Moreover, we aimed to assess whether managing talent moderates the relationship between recruitment of the highly skilled and HR policies. In other words, does appropriately managed talent affect the way in which the recruitment of the highly skilled affects HR policies? This research took place in different regions and sectors of the Lebanese labor market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Talent is defined as "special ability or aptitude, with those seen as talented able to demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in mental and physical domains" (Tansley, 2011, p.267). In addition, talent management is defined as "the concept that is often used to emphasize the strategic importance of strong HR practices in organizations" (Nilsson & Ellström, 2012, p.30). Nilsson and Ellström (2012) zoomed in on talent substance and the challenges associated with it. Employability is coupled with aspects other than talent; therefore, it obscures an organization's pursuit, development, and training of talented employees (Nilsson & Ellström, 2012). Beheshtifar, Nasab, and Moghadam (2012) clarified aims, duties, accountability, and responsibility to manage and retain HR, to claim that talent management is "the systematic attraction, identification, development, engaging/retention, and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organization" (p. 229). Consequently, the literature focuses on certain dimensions of talent and its relationship with HR management and employability. Moreover, Rothwell (2012)

formulated a talent management strategy that helps recruit, clarify, evaluate work performance, and analyze future work, postulating that recruitment, as other elements of HR, should be competency-based, where also organization's name brand is essential to external recruitment name. "Tactical talent management is the process of driving talent management efforts into the daily thinking and actions of organisation leader, managers, and even workers" (Rothwell, 2012, p.7). Tansley (2011) aimed to establish a universal meaning of talent. He stressed the importance of talent and the need for consultants to manage talent. "How organizational talent is defined for talent management purposes is a tricky issue, with no consensus in practice as to what such talent is. Some argue that companies don't even know how to define talent let alone how to manage it" (Tansley, 2011, p.269).

Nilsson and Ellström (2012) focused on employability, stating that it is wider than talent and depends on performance. They mentioned individual, institutional, and organizational-social dimension models. They also claimed that a candidate with more talent is more likely to be hired. The earliest definitions of employability tended to be dichotomous (Garrouste & Rodrigues, 2014). People were considered to be either employable or unemployable. Therefore, a person who was able and willing to work in a regular manner was considered employable. Today, we are observing a shift in the concept of successful employment, a change of focus in central components, "from formal technical vocational competence towards defining employability in terms of the potential of individuals to deploy broader behavioral and performative competence, personality, personal characteristics, and soft competence" (Nilsson & Ellström, 2012, p.38). Nilsson and Ellström (2012) and Beheshtifaret et al. (2012) agreed that when assessing talent decision making and the link between leadership and talent in today's organization, we need to transform talent management from a mere support activity to a core competitive focus of activity. Moreover, all the levels of management should be involved in implementing talent management decisions and strategies. Furthermore, the board of directors should be involved in the talent management process to help boost its visibility. However, if the organization does not properly understand and apply the value, the occurrence of success is questionable (Beheshtifar et al., 2012). The fast political, social, and economic transformation in most countries makes decisions concerning managing talent complex and uncertain. Moreover, it challenges researchers due to the insufficient knowledge of work relationships and management practices (Nilsson & Ellström, 2012). Most of the literature agrees that it is impossible to unify a definition that explains talent and talent management in a way that applies to all the organizations. Each organization has to discover a unique definition that will apply to its operations. HR departments have an

essential duty to develop, manage, and find talent, and to align the individual and organizational objectives (Nilsson & Ellström, 2012). Moreover, Vaiman, Scullion, and Collings (2012) claimed that it is of interest for practitioners to design and develop talent management information and decision systems.

Furthermore, Kummerfeldt (2011) assessed the effect of HR polices on companies, organizations, and NGO's. They inferred that job design is an essential tool to improve volunteer self-directed motivation, satisfaction, and involvement. In addition, they recommended that organizations monitor performance to ensure that their volunteers know how to do their work, help reach the mission of the organization, and provide volunteers with feedback upon the completion of every task on individual performance and effectiveness as well as on the overall organizational performance level (Ramirez-Portilla, Cagno, & Trianni, 2014). Katou (2012) took a direct look at HR policies and the resulting organizational behavior. Since the emergence of the concept of HRM in the early 1980s in the USA/UK, many strategies have been formulated to imply a direct relationship between consistent systems of HR practices and the performance of an organization. The objective of these strategies has been to determine how much individual HR practices and/or HR systems improve organizational performance (Katou, 2012). Schuster (2009) tapped into President Obama's stand on the issue. Time, resources, and power moved from the labor relations function to the developing areas of organizational development and talent management and to the business partner roles. Once a critical career requirement, an assignment in labor relation was no longer a necessary rung to move up the corporate ladder (Schuster, 2009). HR-focus (2011) tackles the issue of the disabled and application of policies that benefit them and allows them to benefit the corporations. Initially, employers need to become familiar with their human obligations- if they are not already so - and make sure they understand their duties regarding accommodations and engagement of the disabled in the daily process. "But what happened was that in a lot of the litigation under the ADA in the ensuing almost 20 years, the focus of the defense efforts was on a threshold issue [involving] whether or not the individual had a disability" (HR-focus, 2011, p.3). Laursen and Mahnke (2001) dealt with the ideal knowledge building method in organizations. Each firm plays a unique role in the economy and is involved in differentiated principal activities; therefore, may follow different knowledge strategies. The researchers agree that it is essential to communicate vision and mission statements, recruitment, training, developing employees, talent management, employee relationships, appraisal, recognition, and rewards, to create a successful organization (Upamanyu, 2014). Furthermore, good HR department leaders can decrease costs of establishing HR policies to further

motivate employees. HR management strategies are vital because volunteers have a huge effect on an organization's ability to achieve its mission or to convey its offerings to its target audience. If an organization can initiate HRM practices that lead to effective programs, then both the volunteers and employees on the one side and the organization on the other side will be equally able to benefit from the relationship (Deepa, Palaniswamy, & Kuppusamy, 2014). Katou (2009) and HR-focus (2011) concentrate on the jobs required by the HR department. Katou (2009) reported that HR policies do not directly decrease employee turnover rate thus increase revenues while HR-focus concluded that HR departments should increase revenues by educating managers in order to increase employee satisfaction. Moreover, Katou (2009) postulates that it is very important for managers to know how to deal with employees' requests. The typical problem with managers lies in the ways in which they deal with accommodation requests, such as schedule changes, which normally receive negative reactions from managers. The most influential recent trend is the urge to formulate an organizational knowledge based identity (Laursen & Mahnke, 2001).

Analyzing how companies assess their HR needs and seek the right people, Messmer (2006) noticed that a detailed continuous analysis of the current and expected needs is an important procedure for establishing a department that wholeheartedly supports its organization, particularly in the face of rapid change. Patrick, Pruchno, and Rose (1998) realized that intensive non-probability strategies based on resources are associated with recruitment from existing groups, for example, subject pools, support groups, or formal service agencies (Patrick el al., 1998). Abraham and Newcorn (2000) reported that more than 66.67% of companies recruit online while Mastracci (2009) indicated that an increased pay and higher prospects of job security and promotions increase the probability that talented professionals will work in the public sector [government]. Moreover, Dewey and Keally (2008) assessed diversity in recruiting and reported that organizations are recognizing the importance and benefits of recruiting employees with diverse backgrounds. The diversity imperative provides the framework for putting forth strategies aimed at recruiting the best and brightest candidates from different underrepresented community group segments. A few researchers are concerned with IT and strategies implemented using technological solutions; nonetheless, their findings are similar to Abraham and Newcorn's (2009) discoveries that after an online recruiting website is chosen, and a job prospect is properly posted, the way in which a company portrays itself online is just as important. Additionally, Mastracci (2009) found that IT professionals have attained higher levels of education in general than did the overall

population. In 2009, more than 50% of the IT professionals had earned a bachelor's college degree or more. Furthermore, IT professionals were overall more likely to have attained higher postgraduate education than were U.S. workers (Mastracci, 2009). Dewey and Keally (2008) inferred using a specially created web page where users could discuss accomplishments and share current activities with colleagues regardless of geographical distance. This in turn plays an essential role in luring new talent to the industry (Dewey & Keally, 2008). Finally, when looking at the methods of hiring, "the more a department can integrate recruiting and hiring into its ongoing responsibilities, the more seamless the process will become" (Messmer, 2006, p.44).

Reviewing the literature on the recruitment of the highly skilled employees, talent management, and HR policies, it is obvious that all scholarly research has focused on the effect of HR policies and or talent management on the recruitment of skilled employees, but none have investigated the role of the recruitment of these skilled candidates on change in the HR policies pertaining to salary scales or other benefits. Moreover, talent management is highlighted as a process by itself that scholars perceive as being part of or an addition to the HR effort. However, if an organization is applying the concept of talent management, and it wants to recruit individuals with the best skills, does it need to adapt its HR policies? The question remains to be answered; therefore, the following parts of this study will investigate this relationship (see Figure 1).
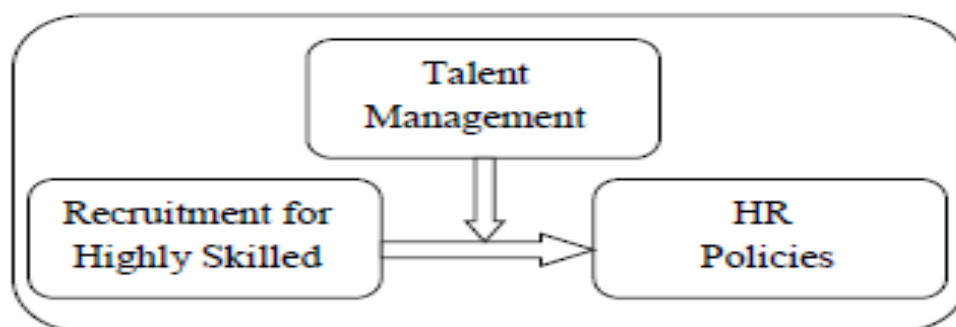

Figure 1 Suggested Model

METHODOLOGY

The study is epistemologically founded on positivism, which entails investigating an observed social situation so that the findings concluded are generalizable and scientific (Remenyi, 1996; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003). The researchers made objective analyses as detached interpreters of the collected data, emphasizing

structured methodology to allow for replication of the study and results (Gill & Johnson, 1997; Saunders, et al., 2003) and quantifiable tools of observation that can lead to statistical analysis. The research team of this study has opted for objectivism as an ontological foundation, as objectivism refers to an existing social phenomenon and its meanings that are independent of the respective social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The research questions will be answered solely based on the collected data. Moreover, the researchers chose to adopt the deductive approach in this study, which relies on rigorous testing of the theory in question (Saunders et al., 2003) with a highly structured methodology leading to higher reliability, scientific rigor, and operationality (Gill & Johnson, 1997; Saunders, et al., 2003).

In this study, the researchers seek to answer the question of whether talent management moderates the relationship between recruitment of highly skilled individuals and HR policies. The researchers are trying to answer the question based on the data collected from the field and statistical test results. Furthermore, the use of survey is recommended when using deductive approach to collect the data in a highly economical way, allowing for standardization and comparability (Saunders et al., 2003); thus, quantitative research is applied in this analytic and explanatory study (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

To investigate the relationship between the recruitment of the highly skilled individuals and HR policies and to determine whether talent management affects this relationship, a questionnaire comprising forty-five questions was developed specifically for the purpose of this study. This questionnaire was divided into four broad sections. The first section includes six questions assessing demographic variables, including gender, age, education, job position, tenure with the company, and tenure with the manager. The second section comprises ten questions relating to recruitment of highly skilled individuals adopted from a study done by Queens University. Five questions assess the frequency of use of different recruitment tools on a three-Likert scale, and five questions assess the effectiveness of these channels in recruiting the highly skilled individuals on a five-Likert scale ranging from 'Not at all' and 'A great deal'. The third part of the questionnaire evaluates HR policies in the company with eleven questions borrowed from "Benchmark Survey of HR Capacity and Practices" (www.professorhickey.com), a similar study that did not include talent management. The questions assess whether the firm applies HR Policies, and responses are delimited by 'Strongly disagree' and 'Strongly agree'. The last section adopted from the "Talent Management Employee Questionnaire" (www.scribd.com) assesses talent management. It comprises five questions that assess the effectiveness of the compensation elements used to attract and retain top performers on a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from 1=Least effective to 5=Most effective. The Likert scale was adopted due to the quantitative nature of the study and its role in quantifying the responses while open-ended questions were avoided due to the difficulty to quantify them. Moreover, closed-ended questions were avoided to avoid leading the respondents in their answers.

A pilot testing of the questionnaire was run on a small number of respondents (15 in total) to determine the ease of understanding and language. To guarantee a widespread cross-sectoral sample, a large sample was sought. The questionnaires were randomly distributed across different age groups and company positions in various economic business sectors. For this purpose, the researchers used a wide network of family, friends, and research assistants, all of whom were trained to collect the data, which took place between November 2013 and April 2014. Respondents included skilled employees; operation level, middle level, and top level managers from the service and retail industries, real estate, hospitality, banking, upper education institutions; as well as NGOs from Lebanon and the Gulf (GCC) Countries. Three thousand questionnaires were distributed to assess the relationship among the three above factors. In total, 1521 (50.7%) completed questionnaires were returned. Among them, 5 questionnaires were missing some answers. They were therefore eliminated from the sample, leaving 1516 usable questionnaires.

The data entry process was simple but lengthy, and it followed a specific data-coding plan. It required two people code the data. One person read the results controlled/reviewed the entered data while the other entered the data using the Excel software. This allowed the researchers to avoid the typing errors. Then, to statistically analyze the collected data, the responses were transferred into the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

RESULTS

Before analyzing the data at hand, the researchers ran a number of systematic tests to test the adequacy of the data. The researchers first ran the KMO test (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) of sampling adequacy, which resulted in an index ranging from 0 to 1, where an index of 0.6 was considered acceptable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The KMO results for the three parts of the questionnaire were acceptable at 0.742, 0,841, and 0.863, respectively. The second tool used to measure data sampling adequacy is the Bartlett's test of Sphericity in which (p < .05) is necessary an appropriate factor analysis consideration. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed significance at p=0.000 for all three parts of the questionnaire measure. Third, the researchers ran the PCA Factor Analysis test (using the Varimax Rotation Method with Kaiser

Normalization) to analyze the Eigenvalues of the scale measure components. The factors with a factor of 1.0 or above are considered valid, explaining significant portion of the variance (Pallant, 2007). Regarding the first part of the questionnaire (recruitment of the highly skilled), the first two items explained 49.866% of the variance while the tenth question explained 2.47%. The second part of the measure assessed the HR policies applied, and the PCA Factor analysis results showed that the Eigenvalues of the first 3 items of the scale explain 65.119% of the variance. As for the last part, the first five measure items explained 70.181% of the variance.

The scale-items are considered valid and reliable. Moreover, as the level of significance was low, we can reject (H0 - Null Hypothesis) that the variables are uncorrelated and report the data is factorizable. The fourth test was the Estimation of Commonalities. This test helps highlight how different factors affect the creation of the variables or "*how much of the variance in each item is explained. Low values (e.g., less than .3) could indicate that the item does not fit well with the other items in its component*" (Pallant, 2007: 196). In this case, only variables with loadings exceeding 0.5 were kept. All the variables were acceptable. Moreover, the reliability test showed that Cronbach's alpha values ranged between 0.785 and 0.894. Fifth, the scale validity was assessed by using the scale was used in data collection for academic studies. The research team pilot tested the scale on 2 different sample groups from different geographical areas to compare the data. The results indicated a high validity of the scale. Finally, the scale's construct validity and the internal consistency were analyzed, although they did not by themselves necessarily validate a construct (Churchill, 1979; Nunnally, 1978). The researchers put every possible effort to satisfy both construct and criterion validity. The team was satisfied with the measure and data for the study.

To interpret the data, the statistical software SPSS was used. Using SPSS, four data analysis tools were used: frequencies, crosstab analysis, correlation, and regression analysis.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age	1516	1.00	5.00	2.4584	1.25295
Gender	1516	1.00	2.00	1.5745	.49458
Educ	1516	1.00	5.00	2.9274	1.08820
TenureCo	1516	1.00	5.00	2.4974	1.32580
TenureMgr	1516	1.00	5.00	2.3054	1.24163
Position	1516	1.00	4.00	2.3034	1.21444

The frequencies (see Table 1) and cross-tabulation tests showed that the respondents included 645 (42.55%) males and 871 (57.45%) females. They were divided into five age groups (see Table 2), 465 (30.67%) were 18-25 years of age (268 males and 197 females), 332 (21.90%) were 26-35 years of age ,(115 males and 217 females), 373 (24.6%) were 36-45 years of age (137 males and 236 females), 251 (16.56%) were 46-55 years of age (80 males & 171 females), and 95 (6.27%) were older than 55 years of age (45 males and 50 females). Regarding education, 195 (12.86%) held a high school degree or less (105 males and 90 females), 256 (16.89%) obtained a Baccalaureate or vocational degree (121 males and 135 females), 644 (42.48%) had a university bachelor's degree (250 males and 394 females), 306 (20.18%) completed a Master's degree (119 males and 187 females), and 115 (7.59%) completed a doctoral/terminal degree (50 males and 65 females). For tenure in the organization, 511 (33.71%) have been working with the same company for 0-5 years (264 males and 247 females), 271 (17.88%) have been working for 6-10 years (136 males and 135 females), 303 (19.98%) for 11-15 years (100 males and 203 females), 331 (21.83%) for 16-20 years (95 males and 236 females), and 100 (6.60%) for more than 20 years (50 males and 50 females). Regarding the time-span of working with the same supervisor, 531 (35.03%) have been working with the same person for 0-5 years (259 males and 272 females), 377 (24.87%) for 6-10 years (211 males and 166 females), 312 (20.58%) for 11-15 years (90 males and 222 females), 206 (13.59%) for 16-20 years (45 males and 161 females), and 90 (5.93%) for more than 20 years (40 males and 50 females). Finally, 567 (37.4%) were regular employees (290 males and 277 females), 277 (18.27%) were operational level managers (93 males and 184 females), 352 (23.22%) were middle level managers (138 males and 214 females), and 320 (21.11%) were top managers (124 males and 196 females).

Third, the researchers analyzed correlations among the data sets (see Table 2). For this purpose, a total index for each component of 'Recruitment of the Highly Skilled', 'HR Policies Applied', and 'Talent Management' was created. The results of the correlations were two-tailed, and they indicated a number of weak and moderate relationships. First, tenure with the company and tenure with the same supervisor were highly positively correlated ($r = .830$; Sig. = .000; $p<.01$). Second, position/title was highly positively correlated with both tenure in the company and working with the same supervisor ($r= .664$, $p =.000$ & $.636$, $p=.000$, respectively).   Third, 'Recruitment of Highly Skilled' had a weak positively correlation with age, education, tenure in the company, tenure with the supervising manager, and position ($r= .143, .275, .174, .198, .227$; all p values $= .000$) while it had a weak negative correlation with gender ($r = -.063$; $p=.014$). Fourth, 'HR Policies' applied in the firm

had a weak negative correlation with gender (r= -.259; p = .000) and positive weak correlation with both education (r = .087; p = .001) and 'Recruitment for Highly Skilled' (r = .281; p = .000). Finally, 'Talent Management' had a weak negative correlation with gender (r = -.184; p = .000), positive weak correlation with education (r= .128; p =.000), moderate positive correlation with 'Recruitment for Highly Skilled' (r = .339; p = .000), and high positive correlation with 'HR Policies' of the firm (r = .607; p =.000).

Table 2 Respondents' Demographic Profile

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative (%)
Age:			
18-25	465	30.7	30.7
26-35	332	21.9	52.6
36-45	373	24.6	77.2
46-55	251	16.6	93.7
55 and above	95	6.3	100
Gender:			
Male	645	42.5	42.5
Female	871	57.5	100
Education:			
High School or Less	195	12.9	12.9
Baccalaureate or Technical	256	16.9	29.7
University (BA/BS)	644	42.5	72.2
Master's Degree	306	20.2	92.4
Terminal Degree	115	7.6	100
Tenure in Company:			
0-5 years	511	33.7	33.7
6-10 years	271	17.9	51.6
11-15 years	303	20.0	71.6
16-20 years	331	21.8	93.4
20 and above	100	6.6	100
Tenure with Manager:			
0-5 years	531	35.0	35.0
6-10 years	377	24.9	59.9
11-15 years	312	20.6	80.5
16-20 years	206	13.6	94.1
20 and above	90	5.9	100
Position:			
Employee	567	37.4	37.4
Operational Level	277	18.3	55.7
Middle Manager	352	23.2	78.9
Top Manager	320	21.1	100

Table 3 Correlation Results

		Age	Gender	Educ	TenureCo	TenureMgr	Position	TotRecrtmt	TotHRPol
Gender	Pear Cor	.140**							
	Sig. (2-tld)	.000							
Educ	Pear Cor	.450**	.080**						
	Sig. (2-tld)	.000	.002						
TenureCo	Pear Cor	.803	.146**	.428**					
	Sig. (2-tld)	.000	.000	.000					
TenureMgr	Pear Cor	.701**	.168	.464**	.830**				
	Sig. (2-tld)	.000	.000	.000	.000				
Position	Pear Cor	.647**	.107**	.516	.664**	.636**			
	Sig. (2-tld)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			
TotRecrtmt	Pear Cor	.143	-.063**	.275**	.174	.198**	.227**		
	Sig. (2-tld)	.000	.014	.000	.000	.000	.000		
TotHRPol	Pear Cor	-.008**	-.259	.087**	.035**	.015	-.034**	.281**	
	Sig. (2-tld)	.760	.000	.001	.177	.558	.188	.000	
TotTalent	Pear Cor	.014**	-.184**	.128	.015**	-.001**	-.044	.339**	.607**
	Sig. (2-tld)	.590	.000	.000	.554	.965	.089	.000	.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The fourth and final data analysis conducted was the regression test of the model. Testing for the moderating role is a two-step process of regression analysis. In the first step, the factor 'Recruitment for Highly Skilled' and 'Talent Management' were entered as independent variables, and 'HR Policies' was entered as a dependent variable. In the second step, a new iteration factor was created because of multiplying the two factors 'Recruitment for Highly Skilled' by 'Talent Management' and centering the data, and it was added to the linear regression (next). This new factor was entered in the second step of the regression as an independent variable while 'HR Policies' variable was entered as a dependent variable. The results (see Table 4) showed that when adding the moderating variable 'Talent Management' to the regression, R^2 increased remarkably (from .399 to .936), with $\Delta R^2 = .537$.

Table 4 Moderation Regression Results.

Variables	Step 1				Step 2			
	b	SE	B	Sig.	b	SE	β	Sig.
Intercept	15.554	1.343		.000	52.622	.546		.000
Recruitment Highly Skilled	.404	.046	.182	.000	-2.061	.026	-.930	.000
HR Policies	.892	.033	.556	.000	.015	.013	.009	.258
Recruitment for Highly Skilled X Talent Management					.038	.000	1.554	.000

Note: $R^2_{Step\ 1} = .399$, $R^2_{Step\ 2} = .936$, $\Delta R^2 = .537$ $p < .05$

RESULT ANALYSIS & IMPLICATIONS

The results of the field study revealed many notable findings. First, although the sample population was mainly young, it is obvious that the female group had higher education in general compared to the male counterpart and that female employees sought higher educational levels more than did males. They were also better users of the social media in communicating their respective accomplishments and sharing their experiences (Dewey & Keally, 2008). This reflects on both their job-career prospects as well as their qualifications and attraction to the work domains (Jiang & Wang, 2014). Managerially, this means that female employees seeking a promotion in their career were more prone to improve their educational level in order to increase their chances of reaching the targeted position through the classical HR employability dimensions (Beheshtifar et al., 2012) and performance-related assessment (Nilssson & Ellström, 2012). Males tend to leave their employers to other firms to get their promotion, as is shown by the average tenure in the company, which decreases after 10 years of service among them. This reflects the systematic talent management practices applied to males with high potential, as reported by Beheshtifar et al. (2012). Second, the tenure of females in general is higher in the same firm. This is due to a number of factors that interact to generate this outcome. Female employees are reflecting higher loyalty and commitment levels, and they also have a high level of patience that help them better endure changing situations, which is in line with Nilssson and Ellström's (2012) shift in employability practices moving from mere technical knowledge to behavioral, personality, and other competences. Moreover, many studies have shown that female employees also seek job satisfaction derived from the convenience of the job (whether in location, work hours, or other) that helps them balance their work and family situations (Akinyele, Epetimehin, Ogbari, Adesola, & Akinyele, 2014). Third, as the female employees showed higher tenure levels as well as longer work experience with the same supervising manager, they have a better chance to adapt to the environment, learning curve, and relationship building on the job, which is in line with Laursen and Mahnke's (2001) suggestion to

build a knowledge-based identity and Schuster's (2009) claim that work assignments alone are not the only criteria for promotion. Thus, they acquire the needed education to grab the looming promotions, as they build a good understanding and positive working relationships with their managers while their male counterparts are moving to other firms for better pay, position, or work environment. The study results clearly show that for many female employees, it is an investment to retain a job, adopt the organizational culture, learn the job, build a career and acquire higher education.

The correlation results varied in their direction and intensity. It is worthwhile to mention that the recruitment process of the highly skilled had weak positive correlations with age, education, tenure, and position. This clearly indicates that management seeks higher qualifications levels among the tenured employees first, but that age is not a main differential factor in the process. However, these two factors were weakly negatively correlated, suggesting that managers are more likely to prefer and seek males compared to females when it comes to recruiting highly skilled workers. Moreover, the study results showed that applying HR policies was weakly negatively correlated with gender rather than performance and competence-based achievements (Rothwell, 2012). This shows that the more firms apply policies, the less they seek to promote the highly skilled female employees. Whether this was caused by discriminant factors or respondents perceptions is still unclear. However, it is obvious and alarming that hiring of the highly skilled is definitely skewed to the male side. Whether this discrepancy in gender hiring is unintentional (Patrick et al., 1998) is left for further investigation in today's business environment that cherishes diversity in recruitment (Dewey & Keally, 2008).

Finally, the talent management process had a weak negative correlation with gender, positive weak correlation with education, moderate correlation with recruitment of the highly skilled, and high correlation with the HR Policy application. This means that companies have a good set of HR policies specifying the qualities of and criteria for employees in managing the available human talent, which represents an improvement in the managerial setting compared to the results reported by Tansley (2011). This clearly suggests that these practitioners have established talent management information and decision systems to help them design and assign jobs (Vaiman et al., 2011). However, the applied process focuses more on the male talent, taking the females for granted in their career tenure, unless the female employees find the jobs designed to be suitable for them in terms of the personal involvement, job-satisfaction, and motivation levels, as reported by Kummerfeldt (2011). Moreover, it is worth noting that the environment under study has a history of paternalistic managerial attitude.

Finally, the linear regression results showed a major shift in variation when the moderating role of Talent management was introduced. This indicates a clear effect of the availability of talent management at the firm level on the recruitment process. The recruitment of the highly skilled is skewed toward male professionals, highlighting an urgent managerial action needed to streamline the process, minimize the effect of gender discrimination, and push toward more equal opportunity employment. Moreover, it clearly indicates that the interplay of both variables (recruitment of highly skilled and talent management) is actually affecting the applied HR policies, forcing or at least putting pressure on certain policy changes, developments, and adaptations. These changes include first institutionalizing HR practices of appraisal based on performance (Katou, 2012). Second, company's vision and mission statement, appraisal results, and the like, along with clear achievement targets and rewards (Kummerfeldt, 2011) need to be communicated to improve organizational performance and effectiveness. Finally, the company's need for talent and skills should be continuously evaluated to initiate a rapid organizational adaptation, as suggested by Messmer (2006).

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

First, the study investigated a population of 4 million inhabitants through the distribution of 3000 questionnaires and a response rate of only 50.7%. Second, the reasons behind the negative correlation between HR policies applied and gender could not be investigated due to the time and cost limitations. Finally, the moderating role of talent management in the tested relationship needs to be confirmed through further investigation and the duplication of the study in different settings.

Regarding the recommendation for future research, the researchers recommend that future studies dwell into the relationship between gender and human resources policies applied. Moreover, the confirmation of the moderating effect of talent management from different geographic settings and frameworks can shed light on the practices of companies, taking into consideration that incurring change in HR policies is difficult and institutionalized, which may actually be the reason why managers tend to 'bend the rules'.

CONCLUSION

This study on the effect of the recruitment of highly skilled workers on HR policies informs scholars and managers alike in several ways. The empirical evidence shows that the way companies manage talent does indeed affect the relationship between recruitment of highly skilled workers and HR policies (Katou, 2008). Before considering the moderating role of talent management, recruitment of the highly

skilled and HR policies focused simply on hiring the candidates that apply to the firm, providing them with remuneration packages that are standardized and follow the policies' guidelines in managing their careers, which is fast changing with the convergence of on-line activity (Abraham & Newcorn, 2000). With the introduction of the talent management perspective, firms may be better able to seek, hire, and retain highly skilled professionals. Thus, we see that recruiting highly skilled professionals requires affecting changes to the applicable HR policies, taking into consideration the scarcity of the skill under consideration and the remuneration packages offered in market for such a skill. From this perspective, HR policies need to be flexible enough to accommodate special people with higher skill levels, where supply and demand play a major role in specifying the remuneration package. Moreover, HR units should focus more on developing the managers' skills to improve employees' satisfaction (HR-focus, 2011).

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