Talent management practices: Perceptions of academics in Egyptian public business schools

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Talent management practices: Perceptions of academics in Egyptian public business schools

Abstract

Purpose – This paper focuses on three out of 24 business schools in Egypt in order to investigate talent management practices of academics there.

Design/ methodology/approach – A total of 350 academics were contacted and 245 of them were interviewed in 49 face-to-face focus groups. The interview length for each focus group is about 45 minutes and is conducted in Arabic, the mother tongue of all respondents. Upon conducting the interviews, the authors used thematic analysis to determine the main ideas in the transcripts.

Findings – The authors did not detect any systematic approach for the management of academic talent in the chosen public business schools. Instead, there were irresponsible unorderly procedures undertaken by these business schools in staffing, empowering, motivating, evaluating and retaining those talents. Furthermore, the authors realized an absence of many cultural and technical dimensions like adaptability, consistency and knowledge sharing which may hurdle academic staff desires to do their best effort in teaching and conducting research. Moreover, these addressed academic members narrow perception of the concept “talent” that includes only musical and sports figures - the matter that reflects their lack of understanding for one of the hottest concepts in HR academic and practical arenas nowadays.

Research limitations/ implications – The focus is only on a single perspective (academics) and a single area (Upper Egypt) - a matter that neglects a variety of views (e.g. minister of Egyptian higher education and schools’ deans). Additionally, the results/findings of this study cannot be generalized to academic settings in other countries because the data is collected only from public business schools in Upper Egypt.

Practical implications – The authors recommend officials in Egyptian public business schools foster constituting academic talents pool which will determine the main academic features, practical characteristics and research focus that academics should address. Moreover, the authors suggest business schools establish continuous academic rapport and feedback reports which would assist in monitoring talented academicians’ level of satisfaction towards their departments’ procedural justice, distributive justice, work-related communication and most importantly, the level of inclusion they feel.

Originality/ value – This paper contributes by filling a gap in HR management, in which empirical studies on the practices of managing talents have been limited so far.

Keywords – talent; talent management; business schools; Egypt

Paper type – research paper

Introduction

Talent management is considered a new organizational priority in managing people, and it has recently been perceived by both academicians and practitioners as an innovation of considerable research interest and debate (Al Ariss et al., 2014). Van Zyl (2017) indicates that talent management is different from traditional HR management as it focuses only on a selective group of employees (normally 10-20% of the organization’s staff), yet it contributes to about 80% of the organization’s success. Moreover, talent management-related strategy is often guided by top management, the aspect that gives it a kind of organizational power. Originally, the study entitled “war for talents”, prepared by Mckinsey consultants in 1997, constitutes the real starting point for the subsequent emergence and spread of the concept “talent
management”. More recently, Egerova (2014) highlights that the idea of multiculturalism and its subsequent values such as inclusion and assimilation besides the on-going demographic changes the world is witnessing due to globalization and immigration have fostered the growing awareness towards the need to recognize talents and know how to effectively use their capabilities for the betterment of socio-organizational life. It is noteworthy to mention here that the international organization for immigration (IOM) indicates the need of the EU for at least 40 million immigrants until 2050 because of the aging population challenge it is facing. Ulrich (2007) claimed that talent management, together with social responsibility, diversity management, inclusion and stakeholders’ involvement, should be treated as an influx of objectives for any organization that cares about sustainability.

Scullion et al. (2010) consider talent management as the process of recruiting, involving, enhancing, retaining and deploying talents. Lewis and Heckman (2006) consider it as a rebranding for the concept of human resources management and a wide umbrella for the acquisition and maintenance of the talent pools needed for the betterment of an organization. Authors like Tansely (2011) and Mousa and Ayoubi (2019) differentiate between an inclusive approach to talent management which targets talents among all employees for the betterment of their organization/workplace and an exclusive approach to talent management which mainly focuses on involving, enhancing and retaining a selective group of employees who have a noticeably profound impact on their organization’s performance and subsequent objectives. Dries (2013) highlights that talent management represents a reflection of the state of harmony between organizational working culture and organizational determined strategy, whereas Thunnissen et al. (2013) add that any managing for talents guarantees collaboration between top management, HR officials, talents and other stakeholders to maintain the best possible fit between the organization’s internal abilities and its strategic orientation.

Admittedly, in the academic context, there is a growing realization of the poorly developed scope and shortage of empirical studies on the topic of talent management (King, 2015; Ciaiazza & Volpe, 2015; Mousa & Puhakka, 2019). Moreover, the majority, if not all, of the studies on talent management were conducted in Western organizational contexts, whereas there is a dearth of research on the same topic in both African and Middle Eastern settings (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2015; Swailes and Blackburn, 2016; Mousa (2018)). Accordingly, authors of this paper aim to fill in a gap in both HR and higher education literature by asking how academics in Egyptian public business schools perceive their schools’ talent management practices. The impetus of addressing academics in Egyptian public business schools is not only the fact that these schools represent a main destination for undergraduate students from Egyptian poor and middle-income families, but also the reality that Egyptian higher educational system has unfortunately been rated globally as one of the worst 10 in 2017’s global competitiveness report issued by the world economic forum (https://www.weforum.org/). The results of this study are considered a step in the path towards reform of HR practices in such context.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the ensuing part includes the literature review on higher education and talent management in Egypt. The methodology follows with a description of the characteristics of the organizational setting in which this study is conducted and the procedures followed in conducting interviews together with the analytical mechanism employed. At last, the authors devote the final part of their paper to highlighting their main findings, discussion and conclusion.

1. Literature review
1.1 talent and talent management

Despite the vagueness of the current literature on talent management as claimed by Collings and Mellahi (2009) and the difficulty some organizations face in conceptualizing “talent” because of their activity and/or the sector to which they are affiliated to, the majority of multinational or even privately limited companies in Western countries have created a separate department for talent acquisition and management. This department has a very specific role and constantly secures identifying, hiring, staffing, empowering, motivating and retaining talents. It also guarantees the existence of what is labeled as “talented employees’ pool” upon which organizations can depend in drawing their present and shaping their future. A talent acquisition department works independently side to side with the HR and personnel department. Needless to say is that any decision making process, concerning an organization’s talents, mostly includes collaboration of top management, HR management, supervisory board and talents themselves (Paauwe, 2004; Mousa, 2017; Mousa & Ayoubi, 2019). Moreover, it is simple to expect higher degrees of talents’ loyalty, organizational commitment, effectiveness and citizenship behavior if they perceive organizational recognition, and this should also be translated into high salary, quick promotion, continuous learning, fair assessment, sense of involvement, knowledge sharing and other aspects of employee-employer psychological contract linkage (Wright & Nishii, 2013).

Reilly (2008) and Ingram (2016) consider talents and their management as not only a motivator of organizational performance but also a resilient block against market changes and economic disturbances. According to Jones (2007) talent can be referred to as person’s knowledge and skills that assist him/her to creatively work and contribute to his or her organization’s success. Morton (2004) defines it as the competence of an employee which can positively be translated into higher performance and better organizational results. Goh (2002) and Lawson (2003) consider organizational culture as an enabler for managing talent. Moreover, cultural dimensions like involvement, adaptability, consistency, trust and knowledge sharing are also seen as main contributors in retaining an organization’s talents (Mousa & Alas, 2016 and Migdadi, 2009). A major challenge is how to operationalize a generally accepted definition of the concept “talent”. Gallardo- Gallardo et al. (2013) question the accepted scope of the concept “talent” and whether it denotes the existence of certain competences (knowledge, abilities and credentials) in a specific individual or group of individuals, or whether it is simply used to describe the individual himself who has a positive effect on an organization’s expected outcomes. Furthermore, it is questionable whether the concept “talent” is limited or conditional to a specific time frame or is a continuous and life-long feature. Other concerns are whether the concept or the feature “talent” can be enhanced over time and whether the person who is described as a talent in a specific organizational setting remains a talent in another setting. And therefore, it is important to know if the concept “talent” reflects a personal ability or an organizational outcome or both. Apparently, the cultural context of the concept talent requires extensive empirical and theoretical investigation to identify answers to all previous questions.

For both academic and professional purposes, the concept “talent management” has become highly visible in human resources management literature and practices over the past decade. Dries (2013) highlights the rising awareness of this concept and its varied scope in organizational public settings and more so in private ones (Stahl et al., 2012). However, not so many empirical studies have addressed this concept (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Vaiman and Collings (2013) elaborate on the need for more empirical research on this topic in different cultural, institutional and societal contexts despite the claim made by Dries (2013) asserting that research on talent management has moved from an embryonic to a maturing stage.
In his model, King (2015) considers that management of talents is an interactive process that includes the following four main factors: top management which is responsible for decreeing a talent strategy (intent, planning and definition of the concept “talent”), supervisors who provide and serve to attracting, develop and deploy talents, talent managers who recognize and select talents, and finally talented employees themselves who support learning and development. In order to effectively undertake and then operationalize the process of managing talent, organization should have a collaborative culture, effective tools and measures, and a reporting structure upon which it can follow, monitor and evaluate talent performance regularly. In this regard, Greenwood (2002) highlights two different types of practices an organization undertakes in managing its talents. The first is the utilitarian practice in which organizations treat talented employees as resources and thus measure and enhance their performance in an ongoing manner with the aim of achieving planned organizational outcomes. The second is the soft practice by which an organization focuses mostly on the emotional part of the talented employees and seeks to fulfill their psychological needs and work rights in parallel to its continuous attempts to attain its planned organizational outcomes.

1.2 Talent management in higher educational institutions

After half a year of searching for any academic papers address talent management practices in higher education institutions, the authors of this paper have found the following few academic attempts. Rudhumbu & Maphosa (2015) have investigated talent management strategies in Botswana higher education institutions and discovered that managers of these institutions lack knowledge and expertise in designing and adopting talents-related plans. The same has been explored before by Kolsaker (2008) when confirming that managers of HEIs feel confused between their managerial professionalism and academic one. Surprisingly, Erasmus et al. (2017); in their attempt to evaluate distance education institution, have highlighted the limited experience of senior managers in operationalizing talent management strategies. This indicates that managerial expertise in identifying, designing and implementing talent management strategies has represented a challenge or maybe a struggle in either African developing HEIs or western developed ones in the past decade.

The aspect of recruiting talents in academia settings has found a space in the studies of (Van den Brink et al., (2013); Alas & Mousa, (2016); Paisey & Paisey, (2016); Mousa & Ayoubi, 2019). Both of these two studies consider that transparency versus autonomy, power of HR versus power of academics and equality versus homogeneity as the 3 main dilemmas facing recruiting talents in various academic settings. Like other private and for-profit corporate contexts, defining talents in academic arena has also gained a currency by Thuunissen & Arensbergen (2015) who conclude that the meaning of the concept talent varies from a specific organizational setting to another and constantly governed by the effect of various internal and external stakeholders’ groups.

Talent management practices have been addressed by Verhaegen (2005) who demonstrate that the extent of satisfaction with talent management current practices in academic contexts varies between different gender, age and ranks of academic members. Moreover, the extent of satisfaction is largely based also on faculties’ legal structures, orientations and academic status. the same has been asserted by Barkhuizen et al. (2014) who highlight that ethnicity, age and rank play a role in academic talented members’ satisfaction when addressing the south African higher education institutions. In the same south African context, Mapesela & Hay (2006) clarify that the new demands of technology, internationalization besides schools’ working conditions have also a considerable role in forming academicians’ level of job satisfaction.
Recently, Egypt looks like an active volcano and a spot of curiosity for both foreign and national researchers and practitioners. However, and through a careful investigation, the authors have been able to realize that the number of conducted studies on the topic “talent management” in the Egyptian, both practitioner and academic arenas, remains very rare. Additionally, the authors of the present paper could not touch on any academic empirical papers demonstrating the real practices for managing talents in Egyptian both public and private organizational settings. For this reason, the authors have decided to investigate the situation there and how these business schools intervene to manage their talents. Moreover, the authors have attempted to get a holistic picture of the main policies and/or practices these schools undertake in hiring, staffing, empowering, retaining and evaluating their young academic talents in an attempt to draw a road map that these schools may follow in managing their talents and subsequently improving their reputation and academic quality.

2. Methodology

As indicated earlier, the authors of the present paper could not locate many papers focusing on talent management practices in public organizational settings. Moreover, the authors, among other scholars (Ross, 2013; King, 2015) realize that talent management is considered an emergent concept in most organization-related literature. Furthermore, the existing literature about talent management falls under the scope of psychology, HR management, information technology as well as organizational behavior. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, no studies on talent management were conducted in the Egyptian context. This may justify, to a large extent, why the authors of this paper decided to do a research on this topic in the Egyptian organizational setting.

2.1 Procedures

Importantly, The research process for this paper started in February 2018 by determining the units of analysis for interviews: participants (teaching assistants and assistant lecturers), time (Fall, 2018), and place (public business schools in Upper Egypt) in addition to the explored behavior (practices of managing talents in Egyptian public business schools). Most importantly, the authors employed a comprehensive count sampling method to target their respondents. The impetus of using comprehensive count method is to include all academics who work in the addressed business schools in their semi-structured focus groups. Worthy to highlight is that employing comprehensive count sampling as a mechanism was aimed to alleviate bias and increase the likelihood of generalizing the study results. All focus groups are in Arabic, and the duration of each interview is 45 minutes approximately.

2.2. Participating universities and personnel

This study involves the participation of academics who works in 3 different public business schools in 3 different public Egyptian universities. Within the Egyptian academic context, students and officials always label the school of business as faculties of commerce or sometimes colleges of management. The three selected universities are in Upper Egypt, the part that represents 25% of Egypt’s total area and that often receives the least media coverage and the poorest infrastructural development plans and share in the Egyptian public spending. Generally, Upper Egypt includes 4 public universities, but the authors of this paper received acceptance for collaboration from only 3 of these business schools. The number of Egyptian public universities is 24. The first selected business school includes 4 academic majors (accounting, management, economics and math) and as mentioned earlier, the authors chose to focus on all academicians.
whose number is 88 but they received acceptance for collaboration only from 45 of them. The second school has 4 academic majors (accounting, management, economics and math). The total number of academic staff in this school is 148; 9 of whom are on leave for different reasons. Moreover, the author received acceptance for collaboration only from 100 of them. The third business school includes the same 4 academic departments (accounting, management, economics and math). The total sample size of the third business school is 122. However, the authors received acceptance for collaboration from only 100 of them.

2.3 Observations

It was observed during the conducted focus groups that some respondents refused to have their interviews recorded when they were informed that the authors would record them. Furthermore, some of them were reluctant to uncover details with regards to the administration of their schools out of fear of giving a negative impression about their colleagues who currently manage academic departments, schools and research centers.

2.4 Analysis of collected data

Upon conducting the focus groups, detailed transcripts are made in which the content of the focus groups is typed out. Only relevant information derived from the transcripts is coded. Owing to the specific focus of this research, questions and answers of the research are related to one of these concepts, namely, talent management, golden workers, academic talents, recruiting, training, developing, deploying, justice, equality, diversity management, work-place discrimination and many others. Within the research, reliability is enhanced via audio recording for some of the conducted focus groups, and authors attempted to target all academics working in the addressed schools. Internal validity is enhanced by cyclical proceedings of data collection and analysis. Furthermore, all interviews are conducted in Arabic which is the native language for both respondents and authors.

3. Findings

The authors first asked respondents about the meaning of the concept talent in general in addition to its meaning in the context of higher educational sector. The majority of respondents consider talents as a concept that should be used only in describing those who have artistic or sporting activities or specializations. Moreover, they mainly see talent as a God gifted characteristic that makes one person better than others in a specific game/competition/activity. This category of respondents believes that academic figures, particularly those specialized in social sciences such as management, accounting, etc., are traditional performers/employees whose job responsibilities require them to teach and conduct research.

"Academics are only a transmitter of knowledge. Moreover, they don’t have any ability to make people happier to be described as talents” Said by one of the respondents. Furthermore, their production of academic research has never and will never change the actual Egyptian business performance. They believe that academic staff members write their publications in order to be promoted within their career journey and nothing more. The second category of respondents, which included only 5 respondents think that talents are those who have the ability to perform better than their colleagues. Hence, talents, as they believe, exist in every workplace and organizational setting. However, the members of this category assert that the Egyptian academic context has no talents nowadays.
One of the respondents, who is an assistant lecturer and has recently completed his Master’s thesis, mentioned that during his thesis defense one of readers asked him about his addition to the accounting field and the respondent answered that he was the first to address his topic in Egypt, to the best of his knowledge. Accordingly, the opponent commented “don’t act like a noble prize winner, we are all forgotten academicians in a forgotten business school in a regional province in a fragile state (Egypt) in an unsettled part of the world called the Middle East ... do you think that this climate will make you the first in anything?”

To hire teaching assistants, business schools constantly appoint the first in rank between its undergraduate students. However, the majority of young academics highlighted that they were lucky because they are Muslims and no sons or daughters of their professors were studying in their schools. They indicated that hiring professors’ sons or daughters is a norm or maybe convention in Egyptian academia. Consequently, the respondents confirmed the existence of organizational nepotism, or “wasta” in colloquial Egyptian Arabic, as an active playmaker in public Egyptian higher education context. This elaborates why the authors hear from a respondent this unforgettable sentence “thanks goodness I have found a job while it is not easy to catch it if one of my school’s professor’s sons was studying at the same major”.

Organization bureaucracy and workplace routine have constituted a rigorous burden on the shoulders of young Egyptian academic staff member as elaborated by 18 respondents. Apparently, there is no electronic link with other Egyptian business schools to explore in which topics they make research in, as understood it is a main condition for every teaching assistant to find a topic that has been addressed before in Egyptian universities to be registered for master and/or PhD. Although this issue sounds abnormal, it represents a main condition in Egyptian academic arena. Moreover one of the respondents voiced “like my colleagues, I have weekly to fulfill 40 hours of teaching and administration (non-academic) work even if I don’t have any practical or professional experience”. Even when the authors got disturbed by this discourse and asked about the extent to which respondents find time for participating and making research, the majority of respondents highlight that raising the academic research capability has no vital space in the Egyptian business schools’ agenda of work. A respondent screamed “I compete against colleagues to find more hours to teach. My monthly salary is about 200 dollars and the school pays me an additional financial rate per every teaching hour”.

The authors touched on a very rare actions/ procedure taken in the regard of empowering academicians there. As appeared in the conducted interviews, both junior and senior academics indicated that they had not perceived any opportunity for training in whatever field. “Empowerment is a personal choice for every academic.” a respondent mentioned. The majority claimed that the Egyptian business schools consider empowerment as a right for every academic member if he has the financial ability to do. However, only 2 respondents asserted that they had a chance to participate in training about “accessing online libraries and databases”, which despite its simplicity was a chance only to those who have personal relationships with the dean of their schools as mentioned by a number of respondents.

A growing feeling of disengagement and lack of involvement was also conveyed in the interviews. The respondents sadly confirmed that they have a very limited chance to participate in their schools’ decision making. A respondent shouted “students have a chance to affect the decisions taken by school council (board) through the student’s union whereas academic staff members have no ability at all”. A number of respondents mentioned that a business school that does not secure computers for its entire academic staff
might not be able to guarantee voice and/or participation for them too. When asked about the mechanism
by which academic staffs collaborate in doing joint research, the respondents confirmed the absence of any
teamwork initiative or multi-disciplinary plan to work together or publish joint work with their professors.
Moreover, the absence of an academic idol is a problem in the addressed schools. “We; as PhD holders;
are not required regularly publish, learn, create, innovate, change, include, involve, share knowledge and
have a clear school of thoughts. It is the mission of young academics” a respondent raised his voice.

One more aspect that should be considered as a main part of these findings is how the staff or talented
academicians are evaluated there. A respondent said “the head of my academic department has the
responsibility of writing a monthly report about every academiqan under his management/supervision.
This report cannot harm the staff academic career but based on it, both the dean of the school and the head
of the department have the ability to cut/deduct up to 7 working days from the total monthly salary of the
academiqan”. Moreover and as mentioned in the interviews, the only criteria on which departments’ heads
rely when preparing a member’s report is the “level of obedience or the extent to which this academic
member accepts and obeys the orders of his head and/or dean without any considerable debate - the matter
that militarize the academic life in the chosen business schools.

4. Discussion

Despite the attempt to investigate only the talent management practices in the 3 chosen business schools,
the authors of this paper have found themselves intentionally or unintentionally touching upon some
traditional HRM practices besides other aspects related to preparation of academic staff. Admittedly and
as mentioned earlier, there were no high optimistic expectations to find a very responsible approach for
managing talents, and the authors did not anticipate the kind of perceived disorganized behavior in dealing
with academicians there.

Having obtained different definitions of the concept talent and narrowing its scope to include only sporting
and artistic figures, as the respondents did, reflects a lack of understanding not only of one of the hottest
concepts in HR organizational academic writings nowadays, but also of the latest developmental changes
in business. King (2015) elaborates that many organizations all over the world have separate units for the
acquisition and management of talents. Moreover, their belief is that they are only performers who will
never be talents indicate, to a big extent, a case of losing their self-confidence which may come through the
frequent repetition of some disturbing thoughts like “you work in a public university in Egypt in the Middle
East and subsequently, no achievements will be attained”. In this regard, Van Zyt (2017) considers
continuous motivation as a main condition for any effective management of talents. Moreover, it is no
longer acceptable particularly in business study and research to claim that a specific curriculum and/or
research has only a local impact.

Much more uncertainty has been perceived about empowering academic staff in the chosen business
schools. The author couldn’t even remotely identify any explicitly undertaken or initiated plan to train,
develop, coach, monitor and enhance academicians’ research capability and professional dynamic. This is
contrary to recommendations of Borisova et al. (2017) who highlight that strategic prospects,
entrepreneurial orientation and multi-cultural initiative constitute the main conditions for building talents.
Moreover, and as indicated by Goh (2002) and Lawson (2003), involvement, adaptability and knowledge
sharing guarantee relevant mechanisms to develop the previous characteristics of talents and at the same
time secure talents’ ongoing desire to continue their organizational membership. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the chosen settings.

Normally and because of the absence of many cultural and technical dimensions like adaptability, the interviewed academic staff not only seek to leave their positions but also tend to do minimum efforts in teaching and research (Khasawneh, 2011). There is extensive discourse about organizational nepotism (Wasta as Egyptians say) which means neglecting or even dismissing/avoiding transparent credentials/experiences when selecting people for specific position/award/privileges. This absence of distributive justice leads to in-out group differentiation and subsequently negative feelings towards colleagues, department and the whole workplace (Mousa, 2017), which is the case there right now. Moreover and while Ridderstrale (2011) asserts the importance of securing safe and sound facilities on which talents can depend to complete their proposed roles, there is doubt regarding the availability of the main tools and IT services needed for academicians’ job-related research and even teaching.

The length of the procedures and period required to register for and then complete graduate degrees was another part of the practices of managing talents there. As heard, every step needs at least 2 approvals. The matter that justifies why Bloom (2008) notices that the managerial decisions which are controlled either by old bureaucratic calibers or managers whose experience is gained from old managerial schools of thought represent a threat for developing and retaining talents. King (2015) outlines that any talent management activity is an interactive process that should not be narrowed or limited to only top management, but it should also include talents themselves, supervisors (HR managers), and managers of talents. Additionally, any talent-related decision should create a harmony between the 4 parties participating in this interactive process.

The fears academic staff expressed when describing the hiring process they experienced represents another questionable behavior business schools’ administrations fall into. The majority of young respondents clarified that they were hired because no sons of their professors were in study colleagues as the schools illegally appoint sons of the professors even if they face some criticism. Moreover, some respondents indicated that Christians often face difficulties being hired as teaching assistants as they see in other schools. This kind of discrimination does not come in line with the calls raised by protesters in the January 2011 Egyptian revolution as social equality and human dignity were two of the demands voiced by Egyptians protesters (Bauer, 2011). However and after 7 years, the revolution has yielded the negative dramatic events of enforced disappearance, absence of socio-political freedom and economic difficulties in Egypt.

Importantly, the following are a couple of suggestions to be considered as implications for public business schools in Egypt: The first is to foster the pool of academician talents. This would enable business schools to determine the main academic features, practical characteristics and research focus areas that academic members should address. This step creates and enhances much more organizability, employability and retainability to the business schools if it secures academicians’ competitive salary, reasonable work hours, work/non-work balance, research training and flexible managerial procedures in registering and completing their post-graduate degrees. The second is to establish continuous rapport and feedback reports. Through these mechanisms, the schools and the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education can run monthly or even weekly email interviews with young academicians to follow up on their level of satisfaction with their departments’ procedural justice, distributive justice, work-related communication and most importantly, the level of inclusion academic members feel. This way, a kind of work coherence, academic integration,
besides feelings of organizational commitment and citizenship behavior will be yielded and maintained - the matter that should positively impact the whole academic performance and reputation of Egyptian public business schools. The following figure provides a clear starting point for the responsible management of academic talents.
Figure 1: challenges of managing academic talents in Egyptian business schools (prepared by the authors)

Challenges hindering talent management practice

**Individual related challenges**
- Limited level of self-confidence
- Lack of understanding of the concept ‘talent’.
- Limited collaboration with colleges in exercising job responsibilities
- Personal empowerment is not listed in the academic agenda.

**School related challenges**
- Organizational nepotism
- Absence of organizational motivation
- Poor infrastructure / info-structure facilities
- Unclear assessment procedures
- Low salaries & financial remuneration
- Doing research is not a priority

A step towards responsibly managing talents in Egyptian public business schools

- Creating a pool of academic talents
- Establishing rapport and regularly monitoring talent management strategy and procedural justice exercises.

Acts to be initiated by Egyptian public business schools
5. Conclusion

To conclude, this study aims to investigate the main talent management practices in public business schools located in the area of Upper Egypt that covers 25% of Egypt’s total land. Unfortunately and after careful analysis, the authors have not touched on any of the responsible approaches to managing academic talents. Instead, there was found irresponsible disorganized procedures undertaken by these business schools in staffing, empowering, motivating, evaluating and retaining those talents. However, the only responsible practices, at least in the chosen public business schools, were the fair systematic mechanism on which these schools rely on hiring academic staff by appointing the first in rank in the graduating class.

Although this research maybe subject to criticism because it focuses only on a single area (Upper Egypt) - a matter that neglects a variety of views (e.g. academic professors, departments’ heads and schools’ deans), it is considered a pioneering attempt in securing future research opportunities for those interested in addressing talents-related aspects in the Middle East region. Additionally, the results/ findings of this study cannot be generalized to other organizational settings in either Egypt or other countries because the data was collected only from public business schools in Upper Egypt. However, the results have come to be considered reasonable or relevant to other Egyptian public business schools due to the same social, legal, political and economic culture they are subject to.

For future studies, the authors suggest asking the same research questions to other academic policymakers such as rectors and academic professors in other Egyptian public business schools. Moreover, doing the same research in Egyptian private business schools and/or other social science schools/faculties may also be considered a suggestion. Finally, a multi-disciplinary study for scholars from HR, organizational behavior, organizational psychology, strategic management and public administration is also suggested to address questions like who talent is and who is not in higher educational sectors, how to measure talents performance and the factors affecting what constitutes the pool talents in different organizational settings.
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