

## A Model of Talent Management in a Faith-Based Institution: A Case Study

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### Abstract

Talent management (TM) is conceptualized as an organization's ability to acquire and retain skilled employees for academic competitive advantage. Both organizations and employees tend to have a competitive advantage when organizations attract the right employees and develop strategies to meet the organization's vision and mission. However, there is a dearth of studies on TM models for faith-based Higher Educational institutions (HEIs). Therefore, this study aimed to develop a TM model because many organizations emphasize effective TM to retain high value for organizational productivity and employee efficiency. The study is anchored on attractive quality theory. A qualitative single-case study design was employed to understand how faith-based HEIs identify and retain talented employees. Purposeful sampling was used to select ten participants, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews conducted in person, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim. The data were analyzed by coding and grouping codes into categories and themes using Yin's (2016) data analysis framework with the assistance of HyperRESEARCH, a qualitative data analysis software. The findings suggest that faith-based HEIs attract and retain talented employees through an appealing institutional mission and effective advertising. TM practices for attracting and retaining employees include equal employment opportunities and diversity, accountability, employee motivation, and interpersonal relationships. The proposed model for faith-based HEI also includes institutional policies and scholarship. The study recommends that faith-based HEI administration use their position for positive influence without abuse of power to attract and retain talented employees. Future studies could empirically test the proposed model in faith-based HEIs.

**Keywords:** Talent management, model, faith-based institution, higher educational institutions, single case study

### Introduction

For almost two and a half decades, the concept of talent management (TM) has attracted academic and business entities' interest owing to its helpful practices in identifying, attracting, retaining, and developing employees for companies to be ahead of labor market competition (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Chambers et al., 1998; Gohar & Qureshi, 2021; Iles et al., 2010; McDonnell et al., 2017; Vitor, 2015). TM is conceptualized as the ability of organizations to acquire and retain skilled employees for competitive advantage. Both organizations and employees tend to be at a competitive advantage when they attract the right employees and develop strategies to meet the organization's vision and mission (Al Aina & Atan,

2020; Dahiya & Rath, 2021; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Thunnisen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2017). The key to attracting and retaining employees is often part of the human resource department. For instance, Hughes and Rog (2008) found that the human resource department is increasingly running out of talented employees; therefore, attraction and retention strategies must be implemented. Moreover, Veloso et al. (2014) found that organizations need to understand the influence of macroeconomic scenarios on the job market before implementing a talent retention strategy. Therefore, an adequate understanding of employee attraction and retention implementation strategies would lead to sustainable organizational performance and employee

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engagement (Al-Qeed et al., 2018; Mohammed, 2015; Mwanzi et al., 2017; Vitor, 2015).

Organizations desire talented employees due to their significant contribution to organizational performance (Cassio & Collings, 2022). Organizations with adequate implementation of talented employees are considered to have organizational support and less intention to leave (Mensah, 2019). The implementation of TM is often easier said than done. A survey by McKinsey and Company (2018) found that organizations that successfully implement TM outperform their competitors by 99% compared with those that have not. Furthermore, organizations often face several challenges in implementing TM strategies, particularly in areas of talent attraction and retention, due to factors such as a shortage of skilled employees due to retirement, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a lack of organizational work-life balance (Dychtwald et al., 2006; Kigo & Gachunga, 2016; Oladapo, 2014). Hence, fills a knowledge gap (Miles, 2017) by exploring how faith-based higher educational institutions (HEIs) attract and retain talented employees by proposing a model to enhance TM. Faith-based HEIs have a dual mission: to prepare students for both earthly and spiritual success (Knight, 2005). This requires a commitment to hire highly qualified personnel who can provide innovative education that meets societal needs, while also nurturing students' spiritual growth and encouraging their commitment to their faith (Knight, 2015).

### Literature Review

The concept of TM has been studied based on various paradigms and theoretical foundations. However, three of the most referred TM models are Dries (2013), Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2015), the differential model of giftedness and talent (DMGT) (Gagné, 2000; 2004), responsible talent management (RTM) (Anlesinya et al., 2020), and the integrated and dynamic TM model (Thunissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2017). While several theoretical foundations have been proposed (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Gelens et al., 2013) in the TM discipline, this study uses

attractive quality as its theoretical foundation. This section discusses the three identified TM models and the theoretical foundation of this study.

Gagné's (2000; 2004; 2020) differentiated model of giftedness and talent (DMGT) consists of four aptitudes: foundation, natural abilities, and high aptitudes. The natural ability comprises intellectual, creative, socio-affective, and sensorimotor (Gagné, 2004). However, the highest aptitude is based on a gift. Gagné (2004) asserts that talent is the product of individual learning and the desire to master skills (Vitor, 2015). Gagné (2000; 2020) argued that individuals are not born talented. They, however, are born gifted: "One cannot be talented without first being gifted. The reverse is not true, however" (p. 2). The model emphasizes that talent is developed by individual employees. Nevertheless, everyone is born with certain gifts that qualify them to be talented once developed in a conducive working environment (Gagné, 2000; 2004; 2013; 2015; 2020).

The responsible talent management model (RTM) provides substantial benefits to organizations, employees, and practitioners (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). The RTM is conceptualized based on TM practices and approaches, with a duty to identify, develop, and nurture all employees' unique and diverse talents. This is achieved by expanding access to available talent development opportunities, fairly managing their weaknesses, and recognizing their contributions, while giving them equal opportunities to flourish as valued employees. This ensures their commitment to the organization and the achievement of mutually sustainable outcomes for employees (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). The RTM is conceptualized based on organizational justice theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001; Gelens et al., 2013) and postulates how employees perceive their workplace procedures, synergy, and the fair nature of its outcome. The central idea of RTM is based on corporate responsibility (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010), equity (Pritchard, 1969), and equal employment opportunities (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). However, the RTM could not be used as a

model for faith-based HEI, thus leaving a gap to be filled (Riccio, 2010).

The integrated and dynamic TM model is conceptualized based on an extensive literature review from 2006 to 2016 (Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo, 2017) on the concept of TM by leading scholars on talent. The model seeks to direct and assess the nature of TM in an organization. The enablers, such as external and internal context, are the direct nature of TM that would lead to outcomes “that can contribute both economic and non-economic well-being at the individual employee level, and the organizational and societal level.” (p. 113) Additionally, the three identified models have sought to contribute to individuals (employees), organizations (results), and society (corporate responsibility). However, the models failed to integrate into a single aspect of how organizations seek to attract and retain talented employees, which seems to be a significant factor in TM development (Jyoti & Rani, 2014; Vitor, 2015).

Finally, the attractive quality (Kano et al., 1984) served as the theoretical foundation for the study. The theory was developed to explain the role of various customer quality attributes accurately. The attractive quality includes a methodology that allows businesses to classify and understand the effects of various quality attributes for customers (Kano et al., 1984; Witell et al., 2013). In contrast, organizations have different types of customers: internal (employees) and external (users and stakeholders) (Pawar, 2014; Raza & Hanif, 2013). The attraction and retention of internal customers are based on motivation-hygiene factors that bring about satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959; Witell et al., 2013). This study aimed to investigate how faith-based HEIs attract and retain talented employees, identify best practices for talent attraction and retention in these institutions, and develop a model for TM to enhance employee attraction and retention in faith-based HEIs.

## Methodology

A qualitative research approach with a single case study design was employed for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016) to understand how faith-based HEIs identify and retain talented employees. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a case study provides a thorough description and examination of a specific defined system. Yin (2016) suggested that a single case study can be particularly valuable when it focuses on a typical, critical, exceptional, or revelatory case, offering insights into a phenomenon based on the experiences of participants. In this instance, the defined system is the attraction and retention of talented employees at a particular faith-based (HEI), with the insights gained to improve talent attraction and retention strategies.

The study was conducted in a selected faith-based HEI in the Philippines, Asia. The study participants were chosen purposefully (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) from faith-based HEIs who were willing to participate in the study. Data were collected from ten participants, composed of administrators and employees (faculty and staff) who voluntarily chose to participate in the study (Saunders et al., 2019). Participants included individuals who had been working at the selected HEIs for the past three years. The data were gathered through in-depth interviews and audio recordings and then transcribed verbatim. The data were analyzed following Yin's (2016) framework, which involves compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. The process included coding, categorizing codes into groups, and assembling themes using the HyperRESEARCH software. The trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were used to ensure rigor. Collaborative data collection, which included member verification, peer review, debriefing, and data analysis, established credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

The study also used the ethical frameworks of Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) to ensure ethical consid-

erations. The framework comprises informed consent, confidentiality, informing participants about the data, ensuring participants' safety and privacy, and ethical reporting of the data. Data collection was based on semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to allow for in-depth interviews. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted. The interview was audio recorded with the participant's permission using a cell phone. Each participant's interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes. Further, field notes were taken for reflection and analysis. The names of the participants were substituted with pseudonyms for confidentiality.

### Results

The results of this study emerged from different themes in the data. These themes addressed the research questions of this study. The themes are presented and discussed in the following subsections. Two themes emerged from the first research question.

Attracting talented employees to a faith-based HEI follows an institutional mission and advertisement. Faith-based HEIs send external and internal advertisements to attract talented employees. In addition, they look for talented people through personal contact and word of mouth. External advertisements are often sent to sister institutions as institutions seek talent. Augustine's administrator noted *personal contact and scouting are key in identifying talents. You must look for people – talented people would not apply on their own. The best practice is person-to-person contact. You cannot contact someone who you don't know.* This attracts talented employees who buy into the institutional mission, image, and values.

Faith-based HEIs seek to attract talented employees who uphold the mission and vision of the institution to produce qualified academicians with a heart for service by making a positive impact. Faith-based HEIs attract talented employees who perceive institutional images and institutional values positively. They uphold the faith-based HEI philosophy with a high profile

based on years of experience and administrative responsibilities in past assignments. These individuals should be candidates who stand for the mission and vision of the institutions that seek to develop worldwide leaders. Augustine asserted that *people who come here are looking for something other than positions. They come for a quiet place to do their intellectual, scholarly work.* Deborah, an administrator, stated, *the mission of the institutions to prepare leaders . . . is intriguing. It caught our eyes when we were first approached... the mission where you prepare leaders . . . is an honor to be part of.* Hence, the organizational mission attracts the best talents for the institution's strategic plan outcomes.

Two themes emerged from the second research question: Equal employment opportunities and diversity. These are some of the best TM practices for employee attraction and retention. Employee attraction and retention practices that promote equal employment opportunity with a diverse workforce and free from nepotism are encouraged in faith-based HEIs. Lucinda, a faith-based HEI employee, aired with concern, stating that *sometimes I observed that if your father works here, your children will also work here. Sometimes, instead of looking for more skilled workers outside, they still employ their children. Even when those children are not talented, they will still choose them since their parents work here. That is one thing I observed in this institution and almost in faith-based HEIs. However, if these children are talented, we could give them a chance; if not, I think we could provide an opportunity to others.* Thomas, a faculty emphasized that *we should not handpick talents from the audience with whom we are acquainted... sometimes you will be surprised to know that so and so is related to so and so. So, how come only those people who are known to so and so are coming to work, but not people from other regions or countries? The world has two hundred-plus countries. Why do we find the majority from a specific country? Does it mean the rest of the countries lack personnel you can attract?* Therefore, faith-based HEIs should



consider equal employment opportunities critical in attracting talent.

Diversity in talent selection is encouraged to promote a positive work environment. Thomas, an administrator, stated that *this is an institution born from a faith-based HEI, and diversity should exist and continue to exist because it reminds us of a promise of people from all tongues, languages, and kindred coming together to feast with Jesus when He comes to take His children home. There should not be a point where people feel discriminated against or disadvantaged by where they come from.* A diverse environment where employees have healthy relationships with colleagues, administrators and age and gender balance is ideal for faith-based HEIs. Augustine stated that *I would want to see, 15 years from now, a mix of very seasoned and younger people in every group – in business, education, and public health departments. I want to see a mix of diversity. I want to see “tech-savvy” people because technology is playing a more significant role; it will play a major role in teaching in the years to come.* Diversity should also include gender. Lucinda, a staff stated *I see fewer women in the certain departments as teachers.* Diversity of talents that includes gender should be embraced in every HEI.

Three additional themes emerged as TM practices in faith-based HEIs, namely accountability, employee motivation, and interpersonal relationships. There should be accountability in exercising tasks in assigned jobs without abuse of power. In addition, accountability and transparency in talent recruitment should be part of the best-designed TM practices in HEI. Thomas, an administrator, alluded to this by stating *we have seen people who want to use their veto power to manipulate others because of their positions. They take advantage of others because of their position. It should not be. Those things need to be ironed out.* He continued, *you don't have to go just hand-picking or sometimes practice nationalism or racism or what you call nepotism as part of an institutional design in identifying talents.*

Furthermore, employee motivation plays a vital role in any institution, particularly when employees are appreciated, their voices heard, their services recognized, and their spiritual growth elevated. Augustine stated that *several people had shared with me before they left the institution that their work was not being recognized. So, I would say employee motivation through recognition would retain talented employees here.*

Promoting respectful interactions between administrators, employees, students, and faculty should be upheld as a best-designed TM practice. Thomas asserted that *I would also want to say, at this point, that when you see people leave an organization, they do not just leave it. They leave individuals in those organizations. So, the relationship part of it, especially how the administration relates with the employees, is very important in maintaining or retaining employees. You may be recruited; once you are recruited, that is the end of the with administrators. They do not care about what is going on in your life. Those are some dynamics that may need to be addressed. You also need to think about a friendly atmosphere among the employees and the administration. When you begin hearing the employees talk about them and us when they are referring to administration as [they], then you already know there's something wrong.* Therefore, programs to nurture a friendly atmosphere should be part of institutional design to attract and retain talents.

Institutional policies and scholarship were indispensable themes that also emerged from the findings. Participants mentioned that fair policies that foster employee development and compensation should be considered a priority in faith-based HEI. Thomas asserted that *we may also need to compare how we remunerate our employees in relation to other sister institutions. Why do our employees leave us to go to other sister institutions? What are they doing better than us? Can we benchmark with them so that we adopt best practices and be as competitive as they are?* Scholarship is a vital element for HEIs and individuals who accept to teach in HEIs.

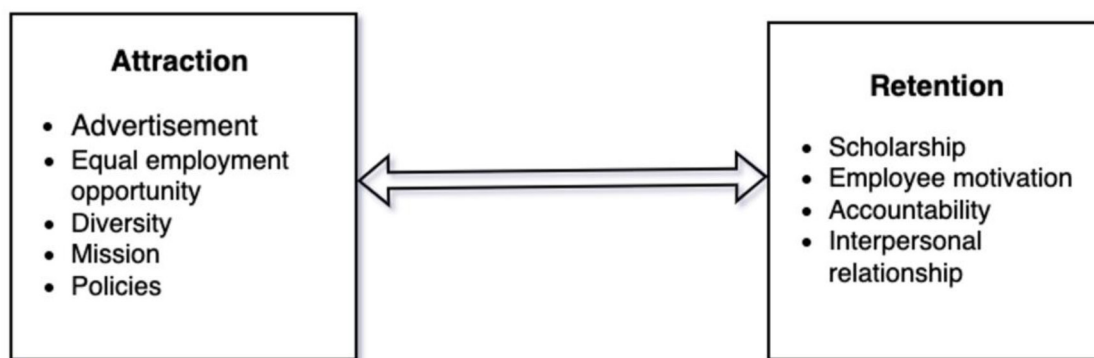
One participant noted that scholarship through collaboration among colleagues and students is evident in their career; however, more needs to be done. Thomas emphasized *you develop faculty by giving them an opportunity to interact with other scholars, especially in international forum*. Furthermore, the participants stated that there was an element of knowledge sharing and creativity.

### TM Model for HEI

From the data, the themes that emerged composed a proposed TM model for faith-based HEI in attracting and retaining talents. The model shown in Figure 1 includes institutional mission, advertisement, equal employment opportunity, diversity, accountability, employee

motivation, interpersonal relationships, institutional policies, and scholarship. It emphasizes that attracting and retaining talented employees should align with the institution's mission, supported by external and internal advertising processes. According to Gallup (2024), younger employees are drawn to organizations that effectively communicate their mission, objectives, and culture, supporting individual and organizational success. Therefore, faith-based HEIs should provide equal employment opportunities to individuals eager to contribute to a diverse work environment free from nepotism.

**Figure 1:** *Categorized Model of Talent Management in Faith-Based HEI*



Moreover, faith-based HEIs must be accountable for their recruitment practices to ensure that they do not misuse their authority to maintain employee motivation. This can be achieved by fostering strong interpersonal relationships among administration, employees, students, faculty, and staff beyond the classroom setting. Ultimately, faith-based HEIs should uphold policies that ensure equitable compensation for talented employees, enabling them to continue their academic and professional pursuits.

Additionally, this study explored strategies for attracting and retaining talent within selected Asian faith-based HEIs—the research aimed to develop a model that illustrates best practices for enhancing talent attraction and retention. Figure 1 presents a categorized model showing the key

strategies that the selected faith-based HEIs could use to attract and retain talented individuals effectively. This model offers actionable insights for improving human resource management in the unique context of faith-based HEIs in Asia.

### Discussion

Several studies support the TM model in Faith-based HEI. For example, Musakuro (2022) found that developing talent management is a process that encompasses essential workforce planning, including rewarding, recruiting, selecting, and developing employees. Faith-based HEIs should leverage knowledge management and create a supportive working environment to identify, attract, retain, and maintain talented employees effectively.

Attracting and retaining talent in HEIs requires proper recruitment, which includes advertisements that align with the mission of faith-based HEIs. An advertisement is defined as the communication used to market a product, brand, or service to an audience to generate interest, engagement, and sales (Adjust, 2024). Despite its significant benefits in attracting individuals to adhere to what the organization is communicating, advertising to attract talent has been a challenge for HEIs, hospitals, and the public sector in different places. Kissoonduth's (2017) study suggests that to attract and retain highly skilled academics, especially those from black backgrounds or people of color. Educational administrators should prioritize allocating resources toward effectively managing the innate potential of black academics in hierarchical positions. Chang and Tanford (2018) found that job advertisements should be designed to attract individuals who want to join the organizations. However, Onah and Anikwe (2016) posited that despite good advertisement, attracting and retaining academic staff in HEIs is an issue due to brain drain, gender disparity, unappealing wage packages, and insufficient training and development. Thus, to avoid misinformation, when seeking to attract talented employees, HEI should strive for transparency in advertising position benefits and rewards (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Another mechanism that helps in attracting and retention is the attraction theory, which seeks to attract internal and external customers (Pawar, 2014; Raza & Hanif, 2013).

While few studies have directly examined institutional mission as a key factor in attracting employees, existing research suggests a significant connection. Beyono (1978) and Terkla & Pagano (1993) highlight the positive correlation between a strong institutional mission and community engagement, which can indirectly enhance an institution's ability to attract and retain talent. This aligns with our findings, which indicate that prospective employees of faith-based HEIs are particularly drawn to organizations that genuinely uphold their stated mission and values. It emphasizes

mission alignment, in contrast with the more fragmented literature focusing on institutional images as influencers of students' behavior (Alves & Raposo, 2010; Azeem, 2020).

Equal employment opportunities and diversity are interconnected concepts that promote employment opportunities in various organizational domains and facilitate diversity by recognizing and accepting employees of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and races (Daniel, 2019; Wax, 2020). Fostering an equal employment opportunity and diverse workforce is not just a legal obligation but also a moral imperative for faith-based HEIs (Wanjala, 2013). By embracing inclusivity and valuing the unique perspectives and contributions of all individuals, faith-based HEIs can unlock the full potential of their workforce, drive innovation, and create a more just and equitable society (Ardyanfitri & Wahyuningtyas, 2018). Building a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to succeed is essential for creating a thriving and sustainable future for students and employees in faith-based HEIs (Too, 2013).

In conclusion, faith-based HEIs should implement the institutional mission, equal employment opportunity, diversity, accountability, employee motivation, interpersonal relationship institution policies, and scholarship as best practices to attract and retain talented employees. Thus, a clearly defined and widely accepted institutional mission is essential. In addition to reflecting the religious identity of HEIs, the mission statement should emphasize the organization's commitment to community involvement, academic success, and inclusivity (Daniels & Gustafson, 2011; Woodrow, 2006). An engaging mission statement attracts talented employees and prospective students who align with the institution's goals and values (Daniels & Gustafson, 2011).

Attracting and retaining talented employees from diverse backgrounds requires commitment to equal employment opportunities and the development of an inclusive workplace (Rodgers, 2019). Implementing inclusive hiring practices,

providing diversity training, and enforcing strong equal employment opportunity policies demonstrate a commitment to justice and equity, which helps attract a broader range of talented candidates (US, 2008). Similarly, establishing transparent and unequivocal accountability systems fosters confidence and enhances workplace productivity. This includes implementing clear performance standards, conducting regular performance evaluations, and providing accessible channels for grievances. Research (O'Connor & Netting, 2008) on faith-based organizations indicates that maintaining employee morale and trust hinges on transparency in decision-making processes and accountability to a diverse range of religious and secular stakeholders. Finally, Martínez-Ariño and Teinturier (2019) posit that encouraging faculty research and scholarship enhances the school's reputation and attracts potential talented employees and students who value intellectual pursuits. Commitment to research and publication elevates the HEI's overall academic prestige and increases its appeal as an employer.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was based on interviews with 10 participants based on their perceptions and experiences. Only one HEI was included in the study. Perhaps more participants from other faith-based HEIs could shed more light. The participants also considered this to be a sensitive topic, since the study was conducted when the institution was experiencing a high talent turnover. Therefore, they were careful in answering the questions. This could limit the depth of the data.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study aimed to understand how a selected faith-based HEI in Asia attracts and retains talented employees by proposing a model to enhance attraction and retention. As the world faces talent shortage, there is a notable scarcity of qualified individuals with relevant experience. The study concludes that there is a need to create employment opportunities that reflect the diversity and absence of nepotism. Maintaining a workspace free from harmful politics,

while allowing for remote work autonomy and fostering creativity, would help attract and retain cutting-edge talent and knowledge. The findings suggest that positive collaboration between administration and employees can foster good interpersonal relationships. Moreover, developing fair policies that include employee development and compensation will attract, motivate, and retain talent in faith-based HEIs. Finally, the generalizability of the findings should be based on the context of the study given that organizational TM practices may yield different results. Further qualitative multiple case studies may be conducted in different faith-based HEIs in Asia to improve the proposed model. In addition, a quantitative study can be conducted to test the proposed model.

### **Note**

An earlier version of this research, employing a different qualitative methodology (Appreciative Inquiry), was presented and published in the full proceedings of the 11th International Scholars Conference, hosted by Universitas Advent Indonesia (UNAI). The present paper differs from that version in its methodological approach and the proposed TM model. The authors gratefully acknowledge the conference organizers and participants for their valuable feedback.

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