SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: MAPPING THE TOPOLOGY OF A DECADE OF THE TALENT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Talent management (TM) is one of the areas in the human resource management that has continuously attracted the interest of scholars. This paper reviews past TM literature and maps the topology of talent management research in the past 10 years (2004 to 2014). By employing a systematic literature review technique, based on the Australian Business Deans' Council (ABDC) ranking, 72 articles from 20 high quality journals were identified as the main data source to generate information on the past focus of TM topics, the method and data collection techniques employed, and the underpinning theories used in the TM literature within the last decade. The result from this review highlights potential gaps possible for future research.

Key words: Talent management, Human resource management, Systematic literature review

Introduction

Asia is the most densely inhabited region in the world but facing the biggest problem of talent shortage (Horwitz, 2013). The rapid growth of knowledge-based economies especially in Asia pushes companies to recruit highly talented and valued workers with high capability and cognitive competencies. But this has made motivating and retaining them even more complicated as they are aware that companies are in dire need for their competencies more than they need the employment security with single employer. Because of this, there have been continuous attempts by researchers to gain better understanding about this dynamic but intricate human resource management.

Despite decades of research in talent management, nevertheless scholars keep claiming that the study of talent management is still at its early stage; lacking empirical support; and still at the phenomena rather than a theory level. Collings and Mellahi (2009), in reviewing streams of TM literature, highlighted that the talent management is still at its infancy stage and hunger for a significant degree of theoretical development. Whereas Gallardo-Gallardo et. al. (2013) eluded that due to ongoing vague meanings of talent among scholars which probably highly influenced by various theoretical paradigms held by those authors, has obstructed the clarity of construct and eventually lead to a weak theoretical conclusion. Lewis and Heckman (2006) argued that talent as described in literature has no clear meaning as it highlights the strategic importance but without adding to the theoretical perspective into it. Whereas Tatli et. al. (2013) added that despite talent management has been increasingly becoming the central topic, yet it remains to be an underdeveloped research area.

Although the research in talent management has long attracted the interest of practitioners and scholars, little is known on the topology of the talent management literature. This paper's attempt in mapping out the talent management topology is imperative in order to understand and appreciate the geography of the talent management literature within the past decade so that it can serve as a guide for future study. Standing on this gap, the purposes of this paper are to systematically examine a decade of talent management literature from high quality journals and subsequently to chart the topology of the talent management research in term of the past focus of talent management topics, the method and data collection technique employed, and the underpinning theories used. For that purpose, the objective of this systematic literature review is to map out the topology of the past 10 (from 2004 until 2014) years talent management research in terms of topics covered, method and data collection techniques employed, and underpinning theories used.

Methodology

As the intent of this paper is to establish the topology from a decade of talent management research, we argue that the input should be driven from secondary data excavated from the past talent management literature. For this reason, the systematic literature review (SLR) technique is deemed as appropriate to be employed to answer the literature review questions (LRQs) as it allows for an evidence-based approach to identifying, selecting and analyzing secondary data from the most pertinent articles that have contributed to theory building in the research field (Colicchia and Strozzi, 2012). In order to preserve its credentiality, only those articles published in high quality peer-reviewed journals were chosen. For that purpose, the Australian Business Deans' Council (ABDC) journal ranking was used as the reference for the selection of peer-reviewed journals that are categorized as high quality.

Search Strategy

Systematic literature review is regularly being used in the medical and healthcare (for example Meijers et. al., 2006; Sarnes et. al., 2011), as well as information technology (for example Kitchenham et. al., 2009; Connolly et. al., 2012) fields. However, due to its strength in providing the evidence-based review, researchers in management field, for example Parris & Peachey (2013), start adopting it to complement their traditional narrative review of past literature. As such, in order to fulfill the objective of this paper and to establish a more focused literature search, the following strategy was adopted:

       Step 1   - Formulating literature review questions (LRQs)
       Step 2   - Conducting the literature search
       Step 3   - Excluding irrelevant articles using exclusion criteria

Step 1: Formulating literature review questions (LRQ)

Reference from other literature that adopting the systematic literature review in the management (e.g. Parris & Peachey, 2013) as well as other disciplines (e.g. Kitchenham et. al., 2009; Connolly et. al., 2012), the steps in systematic literature review always begins with outlining several provoking questions so that the reviewers can 'pull' the pertinent information, and 'push away' the irrelevant information from the literature as they search and read them through. For the purpose of this research, the following literature review questions (LRQ) were used:

       LRQ1:   What are the talent management topics covered in past decade?
       LRQ2:   What are the method and data collection techniques employed in past talent management literature?
       LRQ3:   What are the underpinning theories used and how they are applied in the past talent management literature?

It should be stressed out here that these questions were solely used as a 'guiding questions' throughout the process of systematically reviewing the past literature.

Step 2: Conducting the literature search

Several electronic journals' databases subscribed by the Universiti Putra Malaysia's library were utilized as the sources for literature search. The selected databases were SCOPUS, Emerald, ScienceDirect, and Academy of Management (AOM). In order to further refine the search, multiple levels criteria were applied to filter the search result. At the first level, several criteria were used to filter the search output which are the keywords (i.e. 'talent' or 'talent management' for the Title, Abstract, or Keyword); publication period (i.e. from '2004' to '2014' to cover the 10 years publications period); documents type (e.g. research article, literature review); and some on topics (e.g. 'Business, Management, & Accounting', Psychology', and 'Social Sciences and Humanities'). Since most of the databases produced large number of journals, hence the second level filter was applied to further refine the search result such as field/subject areas (i.e. 'Social Sciences', 'Business, Management and Accounting', 'Psychology'); refined keywords (i.e. 'talent' and 'talent management'); content type (i.e. 'journal' and 'literature review'); and language (i.e. 'English'). These two level filters enabled the result to be streamed down further to a small number of journals and articles. Afterward, the third level filter was used to choose only those articles that published in top ranking journals in order to get the quality research. For that purpose, the Australian Business Dean Council's (ABDC) Ranking was used as the ranking's benchmark for the third filter. Only the articles that were categorized as 'A*' (i.e. the best or leading journal in its field) and 'A' (i.e. highly regarded journal in the field or subfield) were selected.

Step 3: Excluding irrelevant articles using exclusion criteria

Then, as the last filter, after the result was obtained each article was manually skimmed by the authors which meant to exclude any irrelevant articles that were not related to talent management. Thirty six articles were excluded due to several exclusion criteria such as articles were related to other than talent management field (e.g. related to knowledge management *per se*, project management, etc), articles were duplicated (i.e. the same articles exist in two databases), and materials were non-research nature (e.g. book review, author's opinion, and department's brief). Table 1 depicts the filtering processes and their results.

Data analysis

Relevant data such as the authors, title, journals, respondent/sample, data collection technique, and underpinning theories used were extracted from the articles and were keyed-in into the Microsoft Excel software and presented in matrix form. Each article was then assigned to category based on the dimensions as depicted in Table 1. The purpose of the matrix and categorization process was to ease the data handling and analysis for answering the literature review questions.

Table 1: Categorization dimensions for extracted articles

Data	Dimension/category
Type of article	Literature review (stand alone LR, or systematic LR), Conceptual paper, Empirical (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed), Commentary article, Consultancy report
TM topics	TM philosophy, Issues in TM, Talent pool, Talent identification, Talent optimization, Talent inducement, etc. (The complete list of topics identified is shown in the Table 6).

Result and Discussion

Articles' search result

Table 2 summarizes the steps taken in the systematic literature review procedures and the number of articles and journals retrieved at every level of filtering processes. The final result after the fourth filter led to 72 articles from 20 high quality journals identified as relevant and meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria set earlier, hence appropriate for further analysis. The list of those 20 journals, their source of databases, their ABDC's ranking' category, as well as the number of articles retrieved for each journal is depicted in Table 3.

While most of the retrieved journals were from the general business management and human resource management fields, there were also journals from other fields such as hospitality, psychology, and vocational behavior, included in the result. This shows that talent management research is not confined merely to the business and human resource fields, but also attracts the attention of the researchers in other fields as well. As recommended by Thunnissen et. al. (2013), scholars should embrace the talent management from multiple perspectives in order to enrich the theoretical insight and strengthen the generalizability.

Table 2 : Steps and result of the systematic literature review on past literature

Sources / Criteria	Databases			
	SCOPUS	Emerald	ScienceDirect	AOM
Criteria for the First Level Filter	Search terms: "*talent*" or "*talent management*" in Article Title, Abstract, or Keyword Date range: "*2004*" to "*2014*" Subject area: "*Social Science and Humanities*"	Search terms: "*talent*" or "*talent management*" in Abstract or Keyword 6 Publication date: "*2004*" to "*2014*"	Search terms: "*talent*" or "*talent management*" in Abstract, Title, Keywords Dates range: "*2004*" to "*Present*" Search type: Journals Subject area: "*Business, Management,*	Keyword: "*talent*" or "*talent management*" in Abstract, Title Dates: "*2004*" to "*2014*" Specify journals to search: "*Academy of Management Journal*", "*Academy of Management*

			& Accounting", "Psychology", and "Social Sciences"	Perspectives", and "Academy of Management Review".
Result:	160 journals 3,959 articles	20 journals 674 articles	20 journals 369 articles	*-Not applicable-*
Criteria for the Second Level Filter	Subject areas: '*Social Sciences*', '*Business, Management, and 'Accounting*', '*Psychology*' Source type: Journal Language: English	Keywords: '*Talent management*', and '*talent*' Type: Research paper AND Literature review	Topic: '*Talent*', '*Talent management*', and '*talent development*' Content type: Journal	*-Not applicable-*
Result:	133 journals 239 articles	20 journals 205 articles	11 journals 35 articles	*-Not applicable-*
Criteria for the Third Level Filter	Listed in the Category A journals as per ABDC's Journal Ranking List November 2013			
Result:	20 journal titles 64 articles	3 journals 10 articles	5 journals 23 articles	2 journals 11 articles
Exclusion criteria	4 articles related to entrepreneurial talent, 4 (knowledge management *per se*), 1 (supply chain performance), 1 (music talent), and 1 (technology management)	1 article related to tourism management in China and 1 article related to assessment centre & leadership.	17 articles because duplicated articles as per SCOPUS.	5 articles because of non-research nature (e.g. authors view, book reviews, and department brief); 1 related to organizational identity.
Final result	53 articles	8 articles	6 articles	5 articles
Total	**72 articles**			

Table 3: Database and journals included in systematic literature review

Database	Journal's Title	ABDC's Category	Count
AOM	Academy of Management Executive	A	3
AOM	Academy of Management Journal	A*	1
AOM	Academy of Management Perspectives	A	1
SCOPUS	Human Resource Management	A*	5
SCOPUS	Human Resource Management Review	A	11
ScienceDirect	International Business Review	A	1
Emerald	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	A	3
SCOPUS	International Journal of Project Management	A	1
SCOPUS	Journal of Business and Psychology	A	2
SCOPUS	Journal of International Management	A	1
ScienceDirect	Journal of International Management	A	1
Emerald	Journal of Knowledge Management	A	5
SCOPUS	Journal of Management Inquiry	A	1
SCOPUS	Journal of Vocational Behavior	A*	1
SCOPUS	Journal of World Business	A	16
ScienceDirect	Journal of World Business	A	2
ScienceDirect	Organizational Dynamics	A	2
SCOPUS	Personnel Review	A	3
SCOPUS	The China Quarterly	A	1

SCOPUS	The International Journal of Human Resource Management	A	11
	Total		72

What are the talent management topics covered in past decade?

Table 4 depicts the list of topics in the talent management field that have attracted the interest of researchers. The result shows that there is a diverse and comprehensive coverage of the talent management topics which can be categorized as *TM philosophy*, *TM issues*, *TM activities & functions*, and *TM crossdisciplines*.

Table 4: TM topics according to article's type

Topic	Type of Article / Count			
	LR	Conceptual	Empirical	Others*
TM Philosophy:				
TM general (phenomena, definition, assumption, operationalization, boundaries, concept)	14	1	2	
Talent cluster				1
TM Issues:				
Issues in TM	1	1		
Talent (in)congruence			2	
Talent shortage	1			
Workforce differentiation		1		
Generational talent	1	1		
Global sourcing/ Offshoring				1
Rhetoric obfuscation in TM			1	
Global TM		2	3	
Graduate talent	1			
Talent in MNEs/MNCs/SMEs			4	
TM Activities & Functions:				
Talent pool			1	
Talent identification			2	
Talent optimization (acquisition & acculturation)		1		
Talent inducement			1	1
Talent development		1	4	2
Talent motivation			1	
Talent mobility		2	1	
Talent retention	1	1	2	
Talent outsourcing			1	
Employee engagement	1			
Succession planning			1	
TM crossdisciplines:				
TM and career models			4	
TM and knowledge management	1			2
Team-based talent/virtual team			2	
Place-based knowledge				1
Total	**21**	**11**	**32**	**8**

*Note: i.e. Commentary paper, consultancy report.

a)   Talent management philosophy

The most popular topic in the literature was on the talent management philosophy which mainly focus on the reviewing the past literature in order to explore more about the philosophical paradigm that clouded the talent management phenomena; establishing the operationalizable definition of 'talent' and 'talent management'; introducing new, or challenging the existing assumptions and boundaries of talent management; and clarifying the theoretical or conceptual framework of the proposed talent management model. 18 papers were identified fall in this category.

b)   Talent management issues

In comparison to the philosophical aspect of talent management, 20 articles were found to cover the various issues that shading the talent management phenomena around the globe. Some of the issues were applicable in industry sub-sector's context such as the multinational enterprises, whereas others were regional concern for example exploring the issues of talent management within Arab Gulf countries (e.g. Sidani & Al Ariss, 2014), Germany (e.g. Festing et. al., 2013), and Korea (e.g. Vance et. al., 2013). There were also papers covering intra-organizational issues such as the talent incongruence between the organizational leaders and the talented employees, and rhetoric obfuscation that exploring the organizational language used to communicate talent management message within the company; as well as inter-firms issues of talent management for example global talent sourcing or offshoring.

c)   Talent management activities and functions

The result also demonstrates that past literature have also covered the practices in the talent management with 24 articles found from journals. The topics that focusing on the activities and functions within the talent management such as talent identification, talent motivation, talent retention, employee engagement, and so on; were comprehensively covered in past literature. However, the number of articles representing each topic of the talent management activities and functions was very small which shows that very limited studies were done to explore or clarify those talent management activities.

d)   Talent management cross-disciplines study

Besides the philosophical, issues, and practical angles, there were also brave attempts by researchers to explore the talent management from the perspective of other disciplines, or by integrating it with theories from other disciplines. Result shows that there was a handful number of articles (i.e. 10 articles) found to relate the talent management with the knowledge management theory (e.g. Whelan & Carcary, 2011); career management theories such as boundaryless career (e.g. Dries et. al., 2012) or kaleidoscope career views (e.g. Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005); and self-managed work team models (e.g. Furst et. al., 2004). The existence of these cross-discipinary studies prove that the talent management theories and concepts can be claimed as complementing, rather than substituting, the theories that exist in other fields of study.

What are the method and data collection techniques employed in past talent management literature?

Table 5 depicts the result from the analysis on the types of article that exist in past talent management literature, as well as their method of research, and data collection techniques employed. In term of the types of article, 19 articles (17 adopting narrative literature review approach and 2 using meta-analysis literature review approach) were stand alone literature review papers; 32 papers were empirical papers (15 employing quantitative method, 15 qualitative method, and the remaining 2 mixed modes); and 21 papers fall into other categories (i.e. 11 conceptual papers, 8 consulting papers, and 2 commentary papers).

Out of the 32 empirical papers (i.e. the study that gaining knowledge from empirical evidences which can be analyzed either quantitatively, qualitatively, or using a combination of both), 14 papers employed quantitative data collection technique, whereas 20 using quantitative technique, and the other 3 adopting mixed-method approach.

Table 5: Analysis on the article types, methods and data collection techniques used

Type of article	Method (No. of articles)	Data collection techniques*								
		QTS	CQ	MA	IDI	QLS	O	LI	CA	C
Literature review	Narrative (17)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Meta-review (2)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Empirical	Quantitative (15)	10	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Qualitative (15)	-	-	-	13	3	1	1	2	-
	Mixed (2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Others	Conceptual (11)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Consulting report (8)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Commentary (2)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Remark: Some articles use combination of more than one data collection techniques.

Quantitative Techniques   Qualitative Techniques   Mixed Mode

QTS – Quantitative survey   IDI – In-depth interview   C – Combination of quant. & qual.
CQ – Close-ended question   QLS – Qualitative survey
MA – Meta analysis   O – Observation   Other
          LI – Longitudinal investigation   NA – Not applicable
          CA – Content analysis

What are the underpinning theories used and how they are applied in the past talent management literature?

Out of 72 articles retrieved through systematic literature review search in this study, only 31.9 percent or 23 articles have a theory or multiple theories to underpin their studies. The most popular theory in talent management literature is the psychological contract theory with with seven out of 23 articles using it. Whereas the resource based view and social exchange theory represent the second group of theories frequently used in talent management literature, and followed by the human capital theory; institutional theory, and boundaryless career theory. Other theories that were also used in talent literature such as kaleidoscope career theory, leaders-members exchange theory, organizational theory and so on. Table 6 provides the list of theories which have been used by authors in their talent management research.

In term of the usage of those theories in past talent management literature, our systematic review reveals five ways of how the theories were applied in the research. First, researchers used theories to explain their understanding on certain phenomena which involved talent and talent management issues. For example, Huang & Tansley (2012) use the theory of rhetorical practice to explain the phenomena of 'rhetorical obfuscation' i.e. the intentional use of persuasive language to selectively project and communicate the organizational agenda, such as the talent development program, as a mean to directing and reinforcing relevant stakeholders' commitments and conforming behaviors. For instance, the expressions of 'feeling special' or 'being recognized and appreciated' were commonly deemed by employees as a positive aspect of being regarded as 'talent' (p. 3684).

Secondly, researchers also use theory to support or challenge certain underlying assumption. For instance, Dries et. al. (2012) reversed the assumptions held by the boundaryless career theory and challenged them in the scenario of high potentials, key experts, and average performers in traditional-organizational career. Their finding revealed that traditional-organizational career led to more career satisfaction compared to careers which more displaying boundaryless features. The third way of theory application is to use theory as variables – either as independent, dependant, mediating, or moderating – in the proposed framework. For example, Gruman & Saks (2011) use the social exchange theory and psychological contract theory to explain the situation of employee who repays the organization by engaging themselves with the organization when they perceived their psychological contract has been fulfilled after received certain level of facilitation from the organization. Hence adopting from this understanding, in their proposed framework, Gruman & Saks (2011) adopt the 'engagement facilitation' as one of the mediating variable in the relationship between 'performance management' and 'employee engagement'.

Table 6: List of theories used in past TM literature

| Theories | *No. of article | How the theory(ies) is (are) used and which article(s) using it? | | | | |
		To explain phenomena/ scenario	To support (or challenge) assumptions	As a construct /variable	To explain the relationship	To justify the finding
Psychological Contract Theory	7	Dries & De Gieter (2014); Hausknecht et. al. (2009); Sonnenberg et. al. (2014)		Festing & Schäfer (2014); Höglund (2012); Gruman & Saks (2011)		Hartmann et. al. (2010)
Resource Based View	3		Nijs et. al. (2014); Meyers & van Woerkom (2014)			Hartmann et. al. (2010)
Social Exchange Theory	3	Sonnenberg et. al. (2014)		Gruman & Saks (2011)		Björkman et. al. (2013)
Human Capital Theory	2		Nijs et. al. (2014); Claussen et. al. (2014)			
Institutional Theory	2	Sidani & Al Ariss (2014); Tarique &				

		Schuler (2010)			
Boundaryless Career Theory	2		Dries et. al. (2012); De Vos & Dries (2013)		
Kaleidoscope Career Theory	1		Mainiero & Sullivan (2005)		
Leaders-Members Exchange Theory	1			Gelens et. al. (2013)	
Organizational Theory	1	Thunnissen et. al. (2013)			
Action Theory	1	Thunnissen et. al. (2013)			
Agency Theory	1	Mellahi & Collings (2010)			
Bounded Rationality Theory	1	Mellahi & Collings (2010)			
Theory of Rhetorical Practice	1	Huang & Tansley (2012)			
Signalling Theory	1	Sonnenberg et. al. (2014)			
Person-environment Interaction Theory	1		Meyers & van Woerkom (2014)		
Positive Psychology Theory	1		Meyers & van Woerkom (2014)		
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory	1		Meyers & van Woerkom (2014)		
Job Embededness Theory	1			Mallol et. al. (2007)	
Social Capital Theory	1		Claussen et. al. (2014)		
Herzberg's Theory of Motivation	1				Tymon et. al. (2010)
Theory of Relational Advantage	1				Carnahan & Somaya (2013)
Strategic Balance Theory	1	Sidani & Al Ariss (2014)			
Equity Theory	1			Gelens et. al. (2013)	
People Equity Theory	1				Schiemann (2014)

*Note: Some of the articles use two or more theories in one study.

Researchers also use theory to explain the cause-and-effect relationship. For example, Carnahan & Somaya (2013) use the theory of relational advantage to explain how buyer can gain (or loose) business advantage by establishing a business connection with its suppliers through its former employee (alumni) who works with the supplier's company. Based on this understanding, Carnahan & Somaya (2013) develop the hypothesis that the hiring of outsourced employee (alumni) from a supplier's competitors by a buyer firm may decrease the amount of outsourced business the buyer gives to the supplier.

Lastly, theory is also being used to provide a justifiable explanation on the finding of a particular research. For example Hartman et. al. (2010) found that, while the Chinese highly skilled employees who work with western multinational corporations (MNCs) that operate in China has significantly contributed to the success of most of those western MNCs, the turnover rate of those qualified Chinese employees are still rising. In rationalizing the reason behind this findings, Hartman et. al. (2010) relate the Chinese employees' contribution to the MNCs' success with the resource based theory, whereas the perceived unfulfilled psychological contract (as in the psychological contract theory) between the Chinese employees and their western employers explain the finding of increasing turnover rate.

Discussion and Suggestion

This review was set out to clarify the topology of past decade talent management literature. In term of categories of topics being covered, there were sufficient researches being conducted to clarify the talent management philosophies, issues, and functions. However, minimal attempts being made to conduct crossdiscipline study on talent management. Hence, it is suggested for future research to explore the application of theories from other disciplines since there are evidences from literature that relate the talent management with the concepts from other fields such as employee consumerism as in marketing (e.g. Beechler & Woodward, 2009); internal chain of supply as in supply chain management (e.g. Capelli, 2008); psychological contract as in psychology (e.g. Chabault et. al., 2012), and important relational asset between humans in an organization as in sociology (e.g. Carnahan & Somaya, 2013). In term of method and data collection techniques employed, nearly half of the identified papers were empirical. This contradicts to the claims made by several researchers such as Festing & Schafer (2013) that current talent management research is still lack of empirical evidences. Nevertheless, there is recent call by Dries (2013) for future researchers to explore more advance model for the talent management in order to move the present talent management field into a more mature theory. In term of the theories used, our finding indicates that various theories were used in past literature but most of them relied just on one or two theories. Future research is encouraged to explore the integration of multiple theories since the talent management in organizations involve multiple levels interaction i.e. individuals, organizational, instutional, national, international, and sectoral context as argued by Al Ariss et. al. (2014).

Conclusion

In general, the findings of this systematic literature review divulge many interesting facts. Although talent management research has long attracted the interest of researchers for more than a decade, result from this systematic review reveals that there is only a small 'slice of the talent management cake' has been recorded in high quality journals. The analysis on the talent management topics in previous literature also exposes interesting finding. In spite of the comprehensive topics covered by reseachers in the past talent management literature, the contribution in term of number of articles for every topic was very minimal. This leaves a vacuum of opportunities for future research to explore more on the various aspects of the talent management research. With regards to the utilization of theories that complementing the talent management studies, the brave attempts by researchers to explore the application of the talent management from multiple perspectives, will hopefully become the trendsetter for future research to explore the application of talent management theory into other fields of research such as the supply chain management perspective since talents (or talented employees) had been analogized by Boudreau (2013) as business 'inventory' that an organization owns in whom organization can gain value not only in their present form, but also creating value by transforming them for further refinement for future use.

Contribution, Limitations and Further Research

This work offers methodological contribution to academia. Despite being used extensively in medical and information technology fields, the systematic literature review technique in reviewing past literature is still new in the management fields especially the human resource. The strength of the systematic literature review technique is that it offers an evidence-based review, and if it combines with the traditional narrative review technique, it can provide a more meaningful and convincing literature review result. This meta-review however possesses several limitations. First, the selection of high quality journals was solely based on the ABDC's ranking. There are other worldwide recognized academic rankings which may suggest high quality journals for the journals that are not considered as class 'A' journals in the ABDCs ranking. Second, the sources of literature search were coming from only four databases i.e. SCOPUS, Emerald, ScienceDirect, and Academy of Management. The selection of only those four databases was due to the time limitation of the researchers when conducting the literature search. Future research should include journals from other databases as well, as the data sources for literature search in this meta-study in order to obtain a more robust result. In conclusion, it is our hope that this topology of talent management research may benefit researchers in term of providing a mental map in the field of talent management as well as other complementing fields. Researchers may also capitalize this topology to facilitate the methodological gaps searching that render for rooms of research opportunities in the future.

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