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The Effect of Talent Management on Service Quality
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by

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Introduction

The biggest challenges for HR executives today, are talent acquisition, diversity inclusion, compensation, and creating a work environment where everyone feels comfortable. Talent acquisition refers to the need to attract and retain the top talents in all levels of the law firms. The successful recruitment of talented staff, associates, and partners is imperative to the long term success of the firm. The "War on Talent" has not passed by the law firm industry. The HR executive must ensure that everything is being done to recruit the best and in doing so must be open to utilizing strategies that may not have been used by law firms in the past. In some way these strategies may be dictated by the different markets that the law firms are in, but law firms need not feel restricted by old recruiting practices that will not yield the top talent they need.

In today's law firm, proactive and innovative recruiting strategies must be employed. Law firms need to do more to create a pipeline between institutions of education and the law firm, to ensure that people are aware of the opportunities, and to the extent that they adequately prepare to take on those opportunities, by being enrolled in the right classes or exploring those things that might be presented to them in a law firm. In many ways, law firms must be competitive with other organizations because they are looking for the same talent; after the same kinds of people. (Stangl et al, 2008, p44)

Research Problem

The research tackles the relation between talent management and service quality, in addition to determine the impact of talent management components on service quality.

The research problem is summarized in answering the following inquiries:

- 1- To what extent is the organization philosophy successful in attracting, recruiting and retaining the required talents?
- 2- Does the organization succeed in creating organizational culture that supports the view that everyone has potential and is worth developing?
- 3- How responsive is the employees to clients needs? Does the organization meet or exceed the client's expectations?
- 4- Does the organization reward the firms that support staff for quality performance?
- 5- Does the organization search for those who have the talents and required skills and provide them with the proper training and mentorship programs?
- 6- To what extent does the firm provide constructive review and performance tips?
- 7- Do the employees feel that they have a future in the organization?
- 8- In what way does the leader support his employees? Does he encourage employees to stretch their skills? Does he pursue the professional development of individuals' capabilities?

Research Objectives

This research aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. Identifying the strength of the relationship between talent management and service quality.
2. Measuring the degree of service quality in the light of organizational talent management.
3. Making a comparison between the leading companies in the law sector in the field of legal disputes, regarding the effect of talent management on quality of service.
4. Understanding the firm's definition of quality of service, and its policy toward recruiting talents?

Research Significance

The nature of this current research stems from the following factors:

1. There are a limited number of researches that deal with the relationship between talent management and service quality, to the researcher knowledge.
2. There has been a strong interest lately regarding the benefits of talent management in contributing to a better service quality, in which can differentiate an organization competitive position from another in the service industries.
3. The importance of Service Quality in the Arbitration Field, as the delivery of quality services on a timely basis, is essential to the success of today's law Firms.

Research Variables

The Independent Variable

Talent management

This variable includes a number of sub variables as shown below:

1. Strategic Employee Planning
2. Talent Acquisition and retention

3. Performance Management
4. Learning and Motivating
5. Compensation
6. Career Development
7. Succession Planning

The Dependent Variable

Service Quality

This variable includes a number of sub variables as shown below:

1. Tangibles
2. Reliability
3. Responsiveness
4. Assurance
5. Empathy

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of Talent management and Service Quality.

The hypothesis is divided into the following sub hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of Talent management and Responsiveness.
2. There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of Talent management and Assurance.
3. There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of Talent management and Empathy.
4. There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of Talent management and Reliability.

5. There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of Talent management and Tangibles.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference for the dimensions of Talent management in terms of demographic variables.

1. There is no significant difference for the dimensions of Talent management in terms of experience.
2. There is no significant difference for the dimensions of Talent management in terms of Job type.
3. There is no significant difference for the dimensions of Talent management in terms of gender.

Theoretical Background

Talent Management

Talent management (TM) can be defined as a holistic approach to human resource planning aimed at strengthening organizational capability and driving business priorities using a range of HR interventions. These include a focus on performance enhancement, career development and succession planning. The concept of TM has evolved into common management practice and while originally focused on recruitment, it is now recognized as a much broader concept aimed at attracting, retaining, developing and transitioning talented employees. (D'Annunzio-Green, 2008, p1)

Many HRM practitioner publications advocate the differential treatment of employees identified as having exceptional talent (High potential or high performing employees), individuals who have the capability to make a significant difference to the current and future performance of the company. Aligning the organization's business strategy with its workforce is called talent management, and it involves aligning the

right person with the right role with the right tools. (Nassef & Zenati, 2008, p 382)

The Seven Components of Talent Management

Talent management includes seven components that, when implemented strategically, combine to keep an organization on the leading edge.

1. **Strategic Employee Planning** Developing the organizational goals and strategic plan is the first step. Next is thinking about how to reach those goals and implement the plan. More specifically, the organization must identify the key roles and personnel who will achieve the predetermined goals. Some organizations may already have the positions and people in place, or they may need to adjust the current structure to fill the gaps.
2. **Talent Acquisition and Retention** Bringing new talent into an organization is important, yet equally so is recognizing and cultivating the talents that are already in house. Hiring from within the organization is more cost effective, so when working at talent pooling, the organization has to look internally as well as externally.
3. **Performance Management** Aligning the right person with the right role is the heart of performance management. Its ultimate goal is to ensure that roles align with business strategy to achieve goals. It enables the organization to ensure that is aligning a talented employee with the role that suits them, develops goals for success, supports their development, and moves the organization forward.
4. **Learning and Motivating** Semantics become important here, because learning is more than training. Learning is the acquisition of information and skills, which yields knowledge and experience.

It is important to implement learning programs that include activities and tasks that support the organization's culture and initiatives. When

employees see how their growth impacts the organization, they'll see just how valuable their role is.

5. **Compensation Alignment** remains the important concept. Aligning strategic goals with incentives means recognizing employees, rewarding contributions to success, and acknowledging their value to the organization.
6. **Career Development** This ties back to the talent retention component and the notion that hiring from within is not only an option, but often preferable. Thus it is important to nurture potential leaders by providing professional development tools that can advance their career.
7. **Succession Planning** Knowing the talent within the organization is a start. Knowing the key roles essential to its success is equally vital. Which roles are critical to success? Who currently fills those roles? What happens when those positions become available?

Having a plan in place means that the decisions are already made and that the organization will continue to run smoothly, if a key position must be filled quickly. (Moore, 2011, p5)

Talent management framework

TM is of strategic importance and can differentiate an organization when it possesses a core competence and when its talent significantly improves strategy execution and operational excellence.

There are certain crucial components and a useful model for defining Talent Management. This model suggests thinking in these key words:

1. **Ethos** - embedding values and behavior, known as a "talent mindset." to support the view that everyone has potential worth developing.
2. **Focus** - knowing which jobs make a difference and making sure that the right people hold those jobs at the right time.

3. Positioning - starting at the top of the organization and cascading throughout the management levels.
4. Structure - creating tools, processes and techniques with defined accountability to ensure that the work gets done.
5. System - facilitating a long term and holistic approach to generate change. (Ashton & Morton, 2011. p4)

It is unlikely that organizations lack the processes, tools and techniques for talent management. A more likely explanation is that talent management goes against a natural desire in most people to avoid conflict. The tricky business of evaluating and differentiating employees, which is the essence of talent management, is riddled with potential conflict and emotive pitfalls that can never be fully reflected in a rational business process.

Talent management is different from other business initiatives because it involves managing some underlying tensions. These include:

- 1- The need to differentiate employees in terms of their performance in order to make investment decisions versus the need to treat employees equally to promote solidarity and cohesion.
- 2- The need to invest in formal processes and infrastructure to ensure that talent management is independent of any one person versus the need to build individual capability in managers, individuals and human resources professionals.
- 3- The need for simplicity versus the need for robustness to ensure fairness.

The need to utilize talent to meet present business challenges versus the need to build talent to meet future challenges. (Uren & Samuel, 2000, p12)

In summary, talent management is a multi-faceted concept that has been championed by HR practitioners, fueled by the war for talent and built

on the foundations of strategic HRM. It may be viewed as an organizational mindset or culture in which employees are truly valued; a source of competitive advantage; an effectively integrated and enterprise wide set of sophisticated, technology enabled, evidence based HRM policies and practices; and an opportunity to elevate the role of HR practitioners to one of strategic partner.

Talent management is therefore defined here as both a philosophy and practice. It is both an espoused and enacted commitment shared at the highest levels and throughout the organization by all those in managerial and supervisory positions to implementing an integrated, strategic and technology enabled approach to HRM, with a particular focus on human resource planning, including employee recruitment, retention, and development and succession practices.

This commitment stems in part from the widely shared belief and explicit recognition that human resources are an organization's primary source of competitive advantage: an essential asset that is becoming increasingly in short supply. Apart from the benefits that are implicit in the preceding discussion, talent management is important for at least two primary reasons. The first is that effective talent management ensures that organizations can successfully acquire and retain essential talent. The second has to do with the extent to which these employees are engaged. "Talent management is integral to engaging employees in the organization". The ability to effectively address both of these issues has become a primary determinant of organizational success and in some cases, even survival. (Hughes & Rog, 2008, p6)

Service Quality

Service Quality has received major attention from academic researchers in the last two decades. Despite the importance of service quality, there is no clear definition of service quality or its dimensions to

understand and measure. Most of the suggested definitions focus on meeting customer needs and requirements. (Elseidi, 2009, p31)

It is defined as a measure of how well the service delivered matches customer expectations. (Elseleety, 2004, p 81) It is also defined as the client expectations of quality of services and how they perceive it, through comparing the gap between their expectations of what the service company should offer with their perception of the companies' service performance from the actual service performance. (Shehata. 2006, p382)

Owing to the abstract nature of the concept of service quality and the characteristics of the service, measuring service quality appears to be a complicated and difficult task (Parasuraman et al.. 1988; Carman, 1990). Service quality can be generally defined as meeting customer expectations or providing service levels that meet their requirements. Parasuraman, et al. (1985, 1988) proposed a well known framework for measuring service quality, the SERVQUAL scale, which has been used in various sectors.

The original SERVQUAL comprise of ten determinant service factors, which following extensive statistical analysis in 1988, revealed significant correlations between several of the factors as the ten service factors collapsed into five. The five suggested service quality dimensions are (Parasuraman et al., 1988):

1. Tangibles (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel);
2. Reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately);
3. Responsiveness (willingness to help and provide prompt service);
4. Assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire confidence); and

5. Empathy (caring and individualized attention the firm provides its customers).

The SERVQUAL model has been found to be a useful tool for understanding the notion of service quality, as defined by the customer. It allows researchers to measure the gap between customers' expectations of service and their perceived service experiences. (Munhurrun & Naidoo, 2010, p. 336)

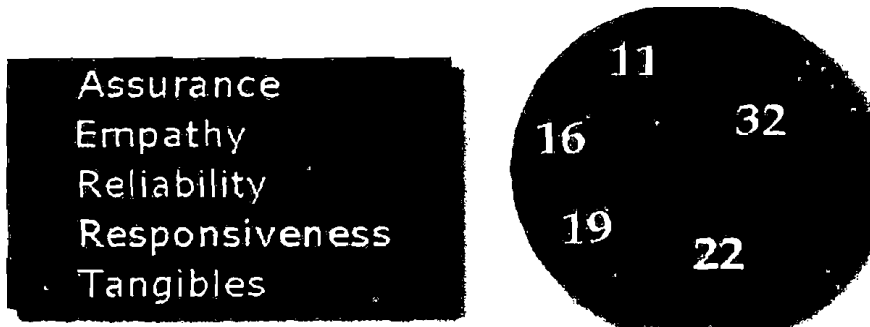
Not All Dimensions Are Equal

All dimensions are important to customers, but some more than others.

Service providers need to know which are which to avoid majoring in minors. At the same time they can't focus on only one dimension and let the others suffer.

SERVQUAL research showed dimensions' importance to each other by asking customers to assign 100 points across all five dimensions.

Here's their relative importance to customers.



Significance for service providers

Some researchers have suggested the following rules for utilizing the five service dimensions.

Rule No #1: Just Do It

RELIABILITY: "Do what you say you're going to do when you said you were going to do it".

Customers want to count on their providers. They value reliability. Providers also want to find out what customers value.. ‘it is three times more important to be reliable than have shiny new equipment or flashy uniforms”.

Service providers have to supply service employees with ragged uniforms and to be reliable. But providers’ first and best efforts are better spent by making their service reliable, whether it is periodic on schedule, on site response within Service Level Agreements (SLAs), or Work Orders completed on time.

Rule No #2; Do It Now

RESPONSIVENESS: Responses should be made quickly, promptly, rapidly, immediately, instantly.

Waiting a day to return a call or email does not make it. Even if customers are chronically slow in getting back to providers, responsiveness is more than 1/5th of their service quality assessment.

Service providers benefit by establishing internal SLAs for things like returning phone calls, emails and responding on site. Whether it is 30 minutes, 4 hours, or 24 hours, it is important customers feel providers are responsive to their requests. Not just emergencies, but everyday responses too.

REPORTING RESPONSIVENESS

Call centers typically track caller wait times. Service providers can track response times, and their attainment of SLAs or other Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of responsiveness. This is great performance data to present to customers in Departmental Performance Reviews.

Rule No #3: Know what one is doing

ASSURANCE: Service providers are expected to be the experts of the service they are delivering. It is a given.

SERVQUAL research showed it is important to communicate that expertise to customers. If a service provider is highly skilled, but customers do not see that, their confidence in that provider will be lower. And their assessment of that provider's service quality will also be lower.

“RAISE CUSTOMER AWARENESS OF EMPLOYEE COMPETENCIES”

Service providers must communicate their expertise and competencies before they do the work. This can be done in many ways that are repeatedly seen by customers, such as:

- Displaying industry certifications on patches, badges or buttons worn by employees
- Including certification logos on emails, letters and reports
- Putting certifications into posters, newsletters and handouts
- Communicating competencies, providers can help manage customer expectations, and influence their service quality assessment in advance.

Rule No #4: Care about Customers as much as the Service

EMPATHY: Services can be performed completely to specifications. Yet customers may not feel provider employees care about them during delivery. And this hurts customers' assessments of providers' service quality.

SERVICE DELIVERY MATTERS

Providers' service delivery can be as important as how it was done. Provider employees should be trained how to interact with customers and their end users. Even a brief session during initial orientation helps to understand their impact on customers' assessment of service quality.

Rule No#5: Looking Sharp

TANGIBLES: Even though this is the least important dimension, appearance matters, but not as much as the other dimensions.

Service providers will still want to make certain their employee's appearance, uniforms, equipment, and work areas on site (closets, service offices, etc.) look good. The danger is for providers to make everything look sharp, and then fall short on **RELIABILITY** or **RESPONSIVENESS**.

Customers' assessments include expectations and perceptions across all five **SERVQUAL** dimensions. Service providers need to work on all five, but emphasize them in order of importance. If sacrifices must be made, use these dimensions as a guide for which ones to rework, will help a great deal.

Also, providers can use **SERVQUAL** dimensions in determining specific customer and site needs. By asking questions around these dimensions, providers can learn how they play out at a particular location bid opportunity. (Arlen, 2008)

The delivery of quality services in a timely basis is essential to the success of today's law firms. Many law departments have been involved in corporate wide quality improvement programs.

Client survey is one quality improvement technique that has proven invaluable in identifying internal corporate client (management) perceptions about the law department and areas of service that require improvement is the client survey.

In the past, many corporate counsels thought of corporate clients as a captive audience with no alternatives for legal services. This mistake proved distressful for some counsels. For others, this oversight was fatal.

Corporate counsel is service providers subject to client needs, requirements and demands just as any professional service provider.

Ignoring, being insensitive to, or simply not knowing the clients' needs almost always leads to unhappy clients. What they say about the law department's service can spell success or failure in most organizations.

More law departments are realizing the value of soliciting client feedback in many areas, including work product, timeliness/responsiveness, overall service attitude and staffing of the law department. A proven method of soliciting client opinions is to conduct a client survey. It is a relatively easy exercise that always provides helpful results. Once assured of confidentiality, clients are generally open, constructive and candid. Most often they are cooperative, constructive and sincerely interested in improving the complex relationship between the law department and the business units. (Altman & Weil, 2007, p 35)

Research Population

The research population includes the law firms located in Greater Cairo and working in the International Arbitration Field and Dispute Resolution. It has been excluded the small sized organizations which have less than 50 employees, due to their dispersion geographically and as they might not represent the research population.

The following table shows the leading law firms included in the research population, accordingly to the number of employees and the geographical location.

Table No 1

Law Firms in the Arbitration Field

| Firm Name | No of Employees | Geographical Location |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Shalakany Law Office | 200 | Cairo |
| Hafez | 200 | Cairo |
| Al Kamel Law Office | 100 | Giza |
| Ibrachy & Dermarker | 62 | Giza |
| Baker & McKenzie | 60 | Cairo |
| Trowers & Hamlins in Association with Nour Law Office | 50 | Cairo |
| SNR Denton | 50 | Cairo |
| DL AMatouk Bassiouny | 50 | Cairo |
| Total | 772 | |

Resource: The legal 500 is a worldwide coverage currently available on legal services providers, in over 100 countries. Martindale Hubbell Directory contains profiles for over one million Sawyers and firms in the United States, Canada and 160 other countries, serving as a fundamental legal resource and marketing tool.

Research Sample

The researcher utilized a Random Sampling Techniques for small samples as the items are spread geographically with the greater Cairo

.Research sample includes Senior Lawyers, Lawyers and Business Services Staff as they are the main source of talents forming the service quality.

The size of the sample will be identified according to the following Rule:

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP (1 - P) + d^2 (N - 1) + X^2 P (1 - P)}{4d^2}$$

s = required sample size.

X² = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

Therefore

$$s = 256$$

Source: Small-Sample Techniques. The NEA Research Bulletin, USA, December 1960.

Research Methodology

Descriptive study: The researcher depended on the descriptive method which tackles with human sciences, and an analytical method in analyzing the relationships among variables. This information is available to the researcher through referring to libraries, studies, periodicals, conferences papers, internet, etc.

Field study: The required data were gathered and recorded from its primary sources through questionnaires and then the necessary statistical analysis was applied to test the research hypotheses.

The questionnaire consists of two parts:

First Part:

This part measures the components of Talent Management.

Second Part:

This part measures the components of Service Quality.

Statistical Techniques:

For testing the research hypotheses, the data were treated by statistical analysis with the usage of the computer by using some statistical methods that are presented by statistical programs for social sciences (SPSS). These techniques are:

1. The degree of validity and reliability
- 9- The degree of consistency: coefficient Alpha
- 10- The degree of reliability: coefficient of internal consistency.
2. - Descriptive statistical methods
- 11- The arithmetic mean.
- 12- Standard deviation.
3. Statistical methods
- 13- One-way analysis of variance.
- 14- Tuckey's multiple comparisons.
- 15- Pearson simple correlation coefficient.
- 16- Pearson multiple correlation coefficient.
- 17- Simple regression analysis.
- 18- Multiple regression analysis.
- 19- Gradual regression analysis

Previous Studies

In this section, the researcher explores some of the research that has been done in both talent management and service quality.

A. Talent Management Studies English studies

1. In his study entitled "Disentangling false assumptions about talent management: the need to recognize difference", Cunningham (2007), aimed at finding ways in which organizations can take a more balanced stance on talent management. He found that talent management development is more complex than just identifying supposedly talented young people and developing them.
2. Utilizing a mixed method of research design, Bhatnagar (2007) based his study on two phases of survey and interviewing. He entitled his research "Talent management strategy of employee engagement in Indian ITES employees". He reached the conclusion that at the first phase intermediate stages of employment, there are high engagement levels, but the interview data reflected that this may mean high loyalty, but only for a limited time. In the second phase, organizational culture, career planning along with incentives were indicative of high attrition.
3. In her paper "Managing the talent management pipeline". D'Annunzio-Green (2008) explores a sample of managers views on the challenges and opportunities around the talent management in hospitality and tourism organizations. She finds clear commitment towards the value of TM, but some policies areas were felt to be underdeveloped. Approaches to TM were driven by internal expertise and available resources. Organizations would fit and tailor their TM approach to their own context.
4. Another article that tackles talent management was written by Hughes and Rog (2008), of the University of Guelph in Canada. Reviewing talent management literature, the authors aimed at clarifying talent management and its effective implementation. The article entitled "Talent Management, a strategy for improving employee recruitment, retention and engagement within hospitality

organizations" revealed that there is a strategic and integrated relationship between talent management and human resources management, it also emphasized that is senior management understanding and commitment is of particular importance as a driver and restraint for talent management.

5. Dynamic simulation tool was used has been devised and used to analyze the policies which allow the flow of professionals, Calvo and Rodriguez (2010). aimed at finding a connection between the management of professionals and the achievement of the company's goals. The article entitled "Talent Management in professional services firms". Revealed that the lack of flexibility within the organization tended to lead to a reduction in potential intellectual capital, and increased excess workload, together with a decline in the company's competitiveness.

Arabic Studies

- 1- In the study entitled "Talent Management as a strategy for improving organizational belongingness for the teaching Staff in the Egyptian Universities". Nassef & Zenati (2008). aimed at understand the nature of talent management in the Egyptian universities and the strategies implemented for development and recommending a model for retaining and motivating them. They suggested a model for talent management that emphasize the importance of self-evaluation of staff members and recommended strategies for improving their capabilities and keeping them constantly motivated which will increase their feeling of belongingness.

B. Service Quality Studies

English studies

- 1- In his paper "Service quality: beyond cognitive assessment", Edvardsson (2005), of the University of Karlstad in Sweden focused

- on the role of customers' emotions in service experiences. He suggested six propositions related to service experiences when consuming services and emphasized on the role of emotions in customer perceived service quality.
- 2- Utilizing brainstorming and sorting exercises, Jabnoun and khalifa (2005) based their study on a 30 item questionnaire comprising the five dimensions of SERVQUAL and two other dimensions called values and image. They entitled his research "A customized measure of service quality in the UAE' They reached a conclusion that only personal skill and values were significant in determining service quality in Islamic banks.
 - 3- Using a mixed method of research design, Chowdhary and Prakash (2007), School of Management, University of Mizoram in India based his study on two a two stage analysis free listing and two step cluster analysis. He entitled his research "Prioritizing Service Quality Dimensions'. He reached a conclusion that generalization of quality dimensions was not possible among all types of services.
 - 4- In their paper "A proposed model for measuring service quality' in secondary education", Ramseook & others (2010), aimed to examine educators' perceptions of service quality in secondary schools. They proposed a model for measuring service quality in secondary education and concluded that into service quality in a secondary educational context very little has been conducted from the educators' perspectives.
 - 5- In the study entitled "Service quality dimensions of hybrid services", Ganguli and Roy (2010), aimed at identifying the dimensions of service quality in the case of hybrid services. They identified nine service quality dimensions in the hybrid services - customer service, staff competence, reputation, price, tangibles, ease of subscription,

technology security and Information quality, technology convenience, and technology usage easiness and reliability.

superiority, zone of tolerance and underlying dimensions” revealed that there is perceived services were lagging behind the desired services and attributes of service quality.

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