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How Do Tunisian International Companies Identify Their Talent Pools?

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ABSTRACT

The present work aimed to explore the process for identifying talent pools within Tunisian companies to implement individual development plans, thereby reducing brain drain abroad. Despite the importance of this research topic for the labor market, it remains little explored by practitioners and theorists in the field of talent management. In response to this challenge, we conducted 45 semi-structured interviews with human resources professionals and talent pools from five international Tunisian companies specializing in IT (Sofrecom, Vermeg, and Leoni) and telecommunications (Orange Group and Ooredoo). The data were analyzed using NVivo 10 software based on thematic content analysis. The findings enabled us to present the characteristics of a talented employee and the talent management practices used by human resources managers to identify key individuals in the Tunisian context.

Keywords: Talent, performance, potential, competency, talent review, performance assessment

INTRODUCTION

Coined by McKinsey in 1998, the term "war for talent" underscores the firm's argument that acknowledging talent as a strategic asset is critical for organizations aiming to achieve high performance. (Michaels et al., 2001). In the current context of the war for talent (Volini et al., 2019), human resources (HR) professionals consider talent management to be a key priority for developing and maintaining a strong pool of future leaders (Collings et al., 2019; Mäkelä et al., 2010). A marked increase in talent management literature has emerged in recent years, signaling that organizations worldwide now view this area as a major strategic priority. (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2007; Cappelli, 2008; Miralles, 2007; Mundschau, 2013; Martin, 2014; Peretti, 2009; Pachulski, 2010; Thévenet and Dejoux, 2010). Strong talent management practices are essential to achieving organizational success (Beechler and Woodward, 2009; Iles et al., 2010) and crucial to the survival and sustainability of organizations (Lawler, 2008). Despite the growing popularity of talent management in the literature, the concept of talent suffers from conceptual confusion due to a lack of clarity regarding its definition, usefulness, and overall objectives (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Tansley et al., 2007). There is a lack of theoretical foundation and conceptual development of the notion of talent, which can be attributed in part to the fact that most references in this field are based on practitioners or consultants (Iles et al., 2010; Preece et al., 2011).

This last observation explains why the literature focuses on practices (the "how") rather than on 'who' is considered talented and "why" this concept is used in the world of work. To date, little research has focused on identifying talent pools, a crucial step in successfully implementing effective talent management for companies. The first study that focused on identifying talented employees was published by Davies and Davies in 2010. Our article aimed to establish a talent management approach that recognizes the company's talent pool to be able to develop it, retain it, and compete in the labor market. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: the first part presents the conceptual framework of the notion of talent. The second part outlines the research

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methodology. In the third section, we will present and discuss the results drawn from the empirical study. Finally, the last section summarizes the theoretical and managerial contributions, limitations, and prospects for future research.

Theoretical framework

In English, as well as in other European languages, talent is generally described as an innate ability that manifests itself in a particular field (Tansley, 2011). *The first* meaning of talent found in the contemporary English dictionary refers to personal characteristics (object approach). Talent is considered an above-average ability for a specific function or range of functions. Rather than corresponding to a "normal" ability, talent is defined as a special ability that enables those who possess, develop, and use it to outperform their peers of the same age (Gagné, 2000). Consequently, talent is often equated with excellent performance in a given field. *The second* meaning of talent found in contemporary English dictionaries refers to a talented person or persons (subject approach), i.e., individuals with special skills or abilities. Indeed, the "subject approach" is historically more recent than the "object approach" and coexists with it in human resources management (HRM) literature. In the following sections, we will present the specific features of these two approaches.

Object approach — talent is a characteristic of individuals

This approach conceptualizes talent as a natural ability, one that implements talents as the mastery of systematically developed skills. It associates talent with commitment and motivation, and emphasizes the importance of matching an individual's talent to the context in which they work.

Talent is a natural ability

Most HRM specialists and practitioners believe that talent is innate, at least to some extent. For Hinrichs (1966), talent is a natural aptitude that combines an innate intelligence, the creativity necessary to overcome stereotypes and propose new solutions, as well as relational qualities that facilitate collaboration with all the organization's actors. Thus, Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001) argue that while skills and knowledge are relatively "easy to teach," talent is a much more enduring and unique characteristic. Therefore, according to these authors, talent is virtually impossible to learn or teach. Furthermore, Davies and Davies (2010) argue that, given its innate nature, talent cannot be managed; therefore, they suggest that organizations should focus on developing talent. Silzer and Dowell (2010) note that human resources practices often fail to distinguish between innate and malleable components of talent, instead adopting a more pragmatic approach to talent management. We can therefore make the following proposition:

P1: Talent is defined as an innate ability.

Talent is mastery

Unlike the natural aptitude approach, talent concepts focus on deliberate practice and learning from experience. Ericsson et al. (2007) found through their research across a wide range of performance domains (medicine, auditing, programming, dance, and music) that talent, which they define as expert performance, is almost always developed, not innate. According to Gagné (2000), the difference between competence and talent lies in the fact that competence corresponds to levels of mastery ranging from a minimum acceptable level to well above average, i.e., below the threshold of behavior of "talented individuals" or "experts," and this person ranks among the top 10% of performers in a particular field. We can therefore formulate the following proposition:

P2: Talent is defined as acquired skills.

Talent is a commitment

A third approach to talent focuses on commitment, operationalized as both a commitment to one's work and to an employing organization. In the first sense, talent is conceptualized as something intrinsic to a person, directing their concentration, attention, and dedication (Pruis, 2011). In the second sense, talent is defined as commitment, which refers to employees' willingness to invest discretionary energy in the success of their organization, thereby aligning their personal goals with those of the organization (Ulrich, 2008). We can thus suggest the following proposition:

P3: Talent is linked to commitment and motivation, which must complement acquired and innate skills.

Talent is an adjustment

The adjustment approach plays a crucial role in the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework, which assumes that, in addition to skills and motivation, employees also need opportunities to succeed (Boselie et al., 2005). Therefore, talent does not depend solely on the quality of an individual's competencies; it also depends on the quality of their work. In this regard, some authors in the talent management literature emphasize the importance of matching people to positions (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Assigning the most talented employees to the positions of highest strategic value in the organization ("A positions"), while placing the highest-performing employees in support positions ("B positions"), and eliminating the lowest performers, is known as the portfolio approach to workforce management (Becker et al., 2009). This approach advocates identifying "pivotal positions," which are positions that have an above-average impact on organizational results, rather than identifying talented individuals per se (Ashton and Morton, 2005; Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005), hence the following proposition:

P4: Talent is someone who occupies strategic positions within the company.

"Subject approach" - talent as individuals

In the "subject approach," there is an inclusive approach in which talent is understood as all employees in an organization, and an exclusive approach that defines talent as a subset of an organization's population (Iles et al., 2010).

Inclusive Approach

The inclusive approach to talent management considers the term "talent" to include everyone in the organization. According to this approach, each employee has their own strengths and can therefore potentially create added value for the organization (Buckingham and Vosburgh, 2001). Thus, Peters (2006) states that there is no reason not to consider all employees in the organization as talented. In this sense, O'Reilly and Pfeffer (2000) argue that organizational success stems from capturing the value of the entire workforce, not just a few superstars.

In addition, Crain (2009) points out that in today's business world, it is primarily employees, not technology, factories, or capital, who are expected to create value for organizations; employees themselves are now the main determinant of organizational performance. Silzer and Dowell (2010) claim that in some cases, talent can refer to the entire employee population. Inclusive approaches are based on the power of talent and benefit from what is known as the "brand effect," meaning that treating all employees in the organization as equals creates a more pleasant, collegial, and motivating work environment (Bothner et al., 2011).

In conclusion, an inclusive approach ensures an equal distribution of resources among all employees in an organization rather than focusing on a small elite subgroup, thereby avoiding a decline in morale among loyal employees who are not considered "superstars" (Groysberg et al., 2004). It has been demonstrated that talent management practices can be more or less inclusive (Meyers et al., 2020), depending on the underlying philosophy of talent management as well as contextual factors such as company size (Festing et al., 2013) or national culture (Muratbekova-Touron et al., 2018).

Exclusive Approach

According to Tansley et al. (2007), this exclusive approach is based primarily on individuals who can influence organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential. In terms of performance, Smart (2005) asserts that high-performing employees are the most vital driver of organizational performance because they contribute more, innovate more, work

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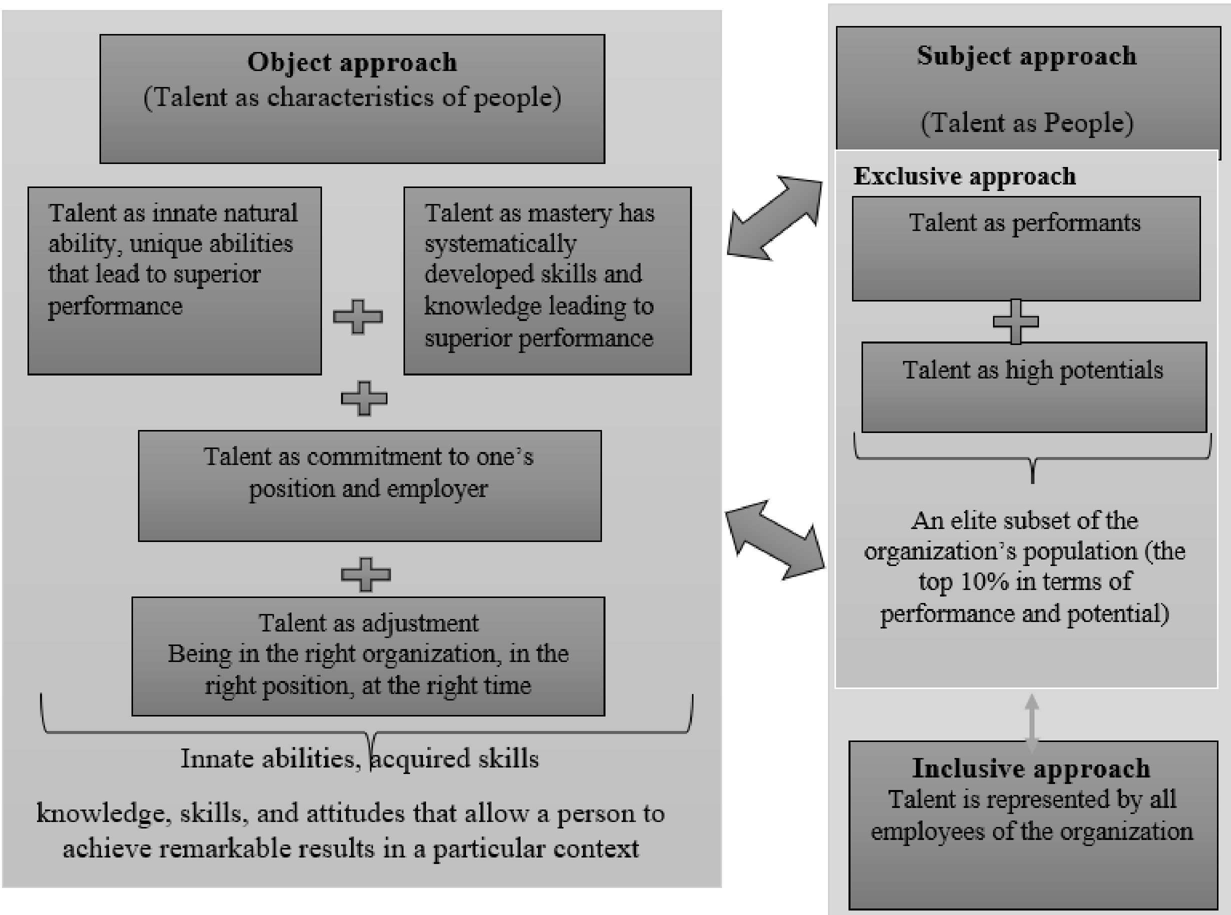
smarter, demonstrate more ingenuity, take more initiative, implement change more effectively, perform higher-quality work, demonstrate greater teamwork, and find ways to do the job in less time and at lower cost.

Thus, Michaels et al. (2001) argue that the best way to outperform competitors is to recruit the best-performing employees at all levels of the organization. In terms of potential, talent can be defined as a select group of high-potential employees. In this context, Silzer and Church (2009) argue that potential can be defined as the possibility of changing unobservable structures that are not yet real but have the potential to develop, the possibility that individuals can become something more than they currently are. Potential implies further growth and development to reach a desired final state. High-potential employees are therefore those who have the potential to advance more quickly than their peers, while demonstrating needs, motivations, and behaviors that differ from those of regular employees (Pepermans et al., 2003). Figure 1 from Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) summarizes the "object approach" and the "subject approach", the two key perspectives on talent in the workplace.

Figure 1: The framework for conceptualizing talent in the world of work



Source: Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013)

In this study, we adopted the subject approach to talent, specifically the exclusive perspective. This theoretical lens serves as the foundation of our framework, guiding the research process and shaping the presentation of our empirical findings. While Tansley (2011) notes that the "object approach" aligns more closely with the etymological origins of the term "talent," our focus remains on the exclusive subject approach, which better supports the aims of this research.

Furthermore, Iles and Preece (2010) indicate that the "subject approach" (talent as a person) seems much more widespread in organizational practice. More specifically, a talent management strategy based on workforce segmentation (Becker et al., 2009), which involves identifying selected pools of high-performing individuals with high potential, appears to be the most common approach (Dries and Pepermans, 2008). The following proposition is as follows:

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P5: The talent pool is identified based on the exclusive theory.

Performance and potential matrix or "9-box grid"

Potential is not an absolute measure, but McKinsey's nine-box grid is a useful tool for identifying employee potential (Davies and Davies, 2010). In this nine-box grid, the horizontal axis focuses on the performance management process and requires judgment on the individual's performance. The vertical axis requires a subjective qualitative assessment of employees' behaviors and potential. The effectiveness of the tool is determined by the level of honest discussion among the management team to place each staff member in one of the nine boxes. Each box represents a level of support and development required. Still individuals in the top right box will have the goal of developing leadership talent and represent the talent pool of the organization. The four types of employees, A, B, C, and D, are identified and mapped onto the nine-box grid shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 : Performance and potential matrix

Leadership Potential	Low performance	Good performance	High performance
strong potential		B Able to grow	**A** **Future exceptional leader**
Good potential		C Solid employee	B transferable skill
Low potential	D High risk Lack of performance		C Expert talent Reliable professional
		Performance expectations	

Source : Davies and Davies (2010)

From this matrix of performance and potential, Michaels et al. (2001) identify the need to differentiate people and take different measures for each category of employee, among which we can mention: For category A employees, it is necessary to invest in players A because this category is identified as the real affairs of the company that constantly provide exceptional practices and inspire and motivate others. Then, for category B employees, it is necessary to affirm and develop actors B. These are considered solid individuals who consistently exceed expectations, but whose performance can be costly or require extensive maintenance. For group C, it is necessary to improve and increase their tasks or withdraw from critical positions. This category represents the backbone of the organization that will take the work but will not lead to change. Finally, the employees of Group D are of very low performance and do not contribute to the company's advancement; therefore, they must be removed from the company, hence the following proposition**:**

P6: The performance and potential matrix is a tool for identifying the pool of talents.

METHODOLOGY

We adopted an exploratory qualitative approach to achieve our objective, which involved identifying the process to follow for detecting the talent pool within the company. As part of our qualitative research, we opted for data triangulation: semi-structured interviews, the collection of internal and external documents, and field observation. The objective of data triangulation was to understand the process followed by human resources managers and other managers to identify talent (Hentz, 2012). The first phase of data collection focused on field

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observation. During our initial visits to international companies, we held meetings with HR professionals, who presented their talent pools and the definitions they used to identify talent. The second phase focused on document collection, which requires examining and interpreting the data to make sense of it and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). These documents provide an overview of the company, its activities, and its progress in talent management, ensuring that the interviews run smoothly. The final phase involved semi-structured interviews, which served as the main source of data collection. During the semi-structured interviews, we used two pre-prepared interview guides. The interviews in our qualitative study lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. The first interview guide consisted of several questions addressed to 20 human resources professionals, including the HR director, talent development manager, talent acquisition manager, career manager, compensation manager, and training manager. These interviews focused on the strategy used by each of the studied companies to identify talent pools, as well as the conceptualization of the notion of talent, which is considered a new phenomenon in Tunisia. A second series of semi-structured interviews was conducted with 25 talented employees from the international companies studied. We selected individuals who are computer engineers (business managers, IT architects, and web developers). The interviews were conducted face-to-face at the companies' premises and online for talented individuals who had relocated abroad.

The interviews were recorded using a tape recorder, which facilitated accurate transcription. The interview guide was structured in two sections: the first gathered general information about the participants (name, age, educational background, and current position), while the second focused on how Tunisian international companies define talent and the practices they employ to identify their talent pools. Our study focused on five international IT companies based in Tunisia. These firms started implementing talent management practices within the past two years. The topic is critical today because Tunisian companies continue to struggle with the loss of talented workers abroad and the limited availability of talent in the local IT market since the January 14, 2011, revolution. Our investigation into how talent pools are identified was conducted with a sample of three IT companies (Vermeg, Sofrecom, and Leoni) and two telecommunications firms (Orange and Ooredoo). Table 2 presents the main characteristics of this sample. After collecting the qualitative data, we conducted a thematic content analysis using NVivo 10 software.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents surveyed

Enterprises	Number of talents Questioned	Number of HR managers Questioned	Software to identify the talent pool
Vermeg	5 respondents	4 respondents	SIRH
Sofrecom	4 respondents	5 respondents	SIRIUS-RH
Leoni	3 respondents	6 respondents	SAP
Orange	5 respondents	3 respondents	PerfEI
Ooredoo	8 respondents	2 respondents	SIRH

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research allowed us to identify two main themes, which will be listed and explained using verbatim quotes from the semi-structured interviews.

Conceptualization of the notion of talent in the Tunisian context

The 45 semi-structured interviews conducted with human resources professionals and talented employees enabled us to identify the characteristics of talent within the company, thereby establishing a process for identifying the talent pool. To begin with, most of the interviewees determine the talent pool based on **the**

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exclusive theory. In this context, one of the HR managers interviewed stated that "*to identify talent at Vermeg, we use the exclusive theory. These exclusive individuals are those who can make a significant difference in the current and future performance of the organization. This concerns only 1% to 10% of employees in terms of selection, evaluation, and recognition of talent.*" MS (HR Director, Vermeg).

Here, we focused on the exclusive approach to talent management, which targets only a select group of employees, particularly those with high potential, high performance, or desirable skills for key positions, and who are therefore designated as "talents" (Björkman et al., 2013; Lewis and Heckman, 2006). This approach is used by most companies (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen, 2016; Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). In other words, this theory suggests that talent management is defined as selective HRM integrated with a selective focus. Just as marketing requires differentiation between customers, talent management requires employees with high potential.

Additionally, more than half of the interviews indicate that the two concepts of potential and performance play a crucial role in identifying talent: "*a person who has talent is not necessarily the person who performs best. To identify talent, there are two essential elements: "performance and potential." It is from these two concepts that we can begin to have talent. In this case, we tend to say that the person who performs best and has high potential in the team is the most talented."* AT (HR Manager, Sofrecom).

Regarding the concept of performance, Smart (2005) states that talent management equates the term "talent" with the highest performers, "the best in the class." Regarding the concept of potential, one of the interviewees stated that *"potential is defined as a bet on the future. It essentially consists of two components: ambition and learning agility."* RT (talent development manager, Leoni). Thus, **ambition** means that high-potential employees are highly driven by their careers. This is why this ambition has a strong correlation with employee **engagement** within the organization.

Additionally, **learning agility** plays a crucial role in the long-term effectiveness and professional success of a talented employee. Individuals who possess **learning agility** have a remarkable ability to learn from their experiences and take on new challenges, which distinguishes them as high-potential employees and enables their rapid career advancement (Dai et al., 2013, 2014). Accordingly, measuring learning agility is the most effective way to assess an individual's potential to learn from experience. To conclude, high-potential employees are therefore those who can advance faster than their peers, while demonstrating needs, motivations, and behaviors that differ from those of "regular" employees (Pepermans et al., 2003).

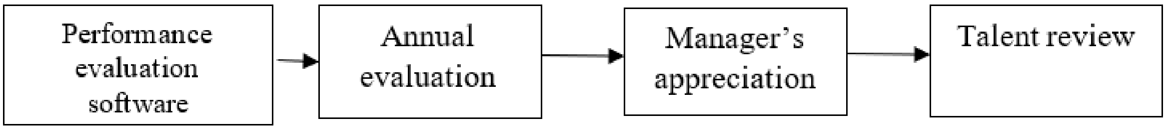
Moreover, all the HR directors of the companies studied indicated that the combination of potential and performance constitutes "**talent mapping**", which identifies the talent pool in the company. "*The performance and potential matrix consists of a vertical axis that focuses on performance evaluation and a horizontal axis based on potential evaluation. When we talk about performance, we talk about people who excel in achieving their goals...*" FA (Talent Development Manager, Orange). In other words, 'talent mapping' consists of regular performance and potential assessments to identify the talent pool and determine the strengths and needs of talent development activities through a mapping of each employee's skills and abilities (Wahyuningtyas, 2015). In the performance and potential matrix, talented employees are positioned at the top right of the grid, indicating that they represent the highest performance and potential within the organization.

Ultimately, a minority of respondents stated that talent represents a set of **innate skills and skills acquired** through learning, practice, or systematic experience. One interviewee emphasized that "*talent stands out based on various criteria; they have strong abilities and skills, especially behavioral ones, that identify them as a talented person*." AH (HR Director, Leoni). This finding is consistent with a previous research by Dejoux and Thévenet (2010, p. 21), who define talent as "*a rare combination of rare skills*." Thus, Roger and Bouillet (2009) consider talent a subset of skills in which the person excels and stands out from others. To identify talent within the company, HR managers should focus on employees with high value-added skills who are difficult to replace.

Identifying the talent pool: performance evaluation and talent review

As part of this research, two talent management practices, performance evaluation and talent review, were used to identify the talent pool in each company. Proper implementation of these practices helps attract and retain talented employees. The talent search process based on interviews conducted in this study is as follows:

Figure 3 : Approach followed to identify talents



First, the results of this qualitative study allowed us to distinguish that the performance evaluation software enables the planning, execution, and documentation of performance evaluations. One of the interviewees stated that "*the tool used for evaluation is the PerfEI software. First, fill in the columns with the objectives assigned to each employee, along with comments on each objective. The manager is responsible for this evaluation at the end of each semester...*" MH (Talent Engineer, Sofrecom). However, the assessment software (such as SIRH, SIRIUS-RH, SAP, and PerfEI) used in this study enables the mapping of the internal talent within the surveyed companies based on the results of performance and potential assessments. In addition, the digitization of this assessment phase helps talent development managers and the chief executive officer (CEO) match their talent pools with new strategic opportunities. To begin with, most respondents indicated that at the beginning of the semester, **managers set objectives for their employees and inform them about the performance assessment software**.

One of the talented engineers interviewed stated that "*the assessment focuses on the agreement on objectives made at the beginning of the year. It involves a meeting between the manager and the various team members to set operational objectives, managerial objectives, cross-functional objectives, behavioral objectives, etc*." KH (Talented Engineer, Orange). This system comprises six distinct cyclical stages: prerequisites, performance planning, performance execution, performance assessment, performance review, and performance renewal and recontracting (Aguinis, 2013). Besides, some interviewees stated that, throughout the semester, employees have the opportunity to access their evaluation document and record comments on the progress of each objective. At the end of the year, the manager and the employee meet to discuss the level of achievement of the goals. In the same vein, one of the interviewees added that *"... our self-assessment is done via a link that is shared with various Sofrecom employees, followed by a face-to-face interview between the manager and the employee. At the end of this meeting, the line manager must determine the percentage achieved for each objective and assign a score to each employee*." KK (Talent Engineer, Sofrecom). However, the purpose of the performance evaluation process is to identify rare skills so that they can be better used within the organization, determine training and internal mobilization needs, and implement **individual development plans** (IDP). Furthermore, Cascio (2006) and Stahl et al. (2007) state that **annual (or semi-annual) performance evaluations** are the most commonly used data for corporate decision-making on whom to include in the talent pool.

Furthermore, more than half of respondents indicated that at the end of the annual individual interview between the line manager and the employee in the companies surveyed, the manager must assign different grades to their employees, for example: A+ (exceptional performance), A (objectives exceeded), B+ (objectives accomplished), B (objectives partially achieved), and C (unsatisfactory performance). One of the HR managers in our research sample stated that "*talented employees are those who achieve exceptional goals; these rare skills represent 7% of Orange Group employees [...], so this assessment is considered a means of identifying exceptional skills and exploiting them."* AB (HR Manager, Orange). According to the results of this research, employees who received A+ and A ratings and achieved exceptional objectives are those who represent the organization's internal talent. This finding aligns with the work of Dejoux and Thévenet (2015), who assert that only a small percentage of staff, around 5%, possess extraordinary talents. Moreover, half of the human resources managers surveyed added that this performance evaluation phase not only identifies the talent pool but also enables the implementation of IDPs that respond to career development aspirations by scheduling training courses when needed.

Indeed, *"...the existence of an appraisal system makes it possible to gather the information needed to develop various programs (promotion, training) and make decisions about employees' careers*." AB (HR Director, Ooredoo). However, IDPs help improve the retention of top employees, as they directly meet the expectations of the high performers: acquiring new skills on the job (Trevor et al., 1997) and receiving individualized attention (Lombardo and Eichinger, 2000). IDPs provide a structure through which employees receive managerial mentoring, ensuring that the objectives of IDPs are achieved. "*Given the situation of our labor market in Tunisia and the brain drain of engineers abroad, evaluation is a factor in attracting and retaining talent, as it is linked to career advancement...*" LM (HR Manager, Vermeg). This practice enhances the retention of top talent by offering the learning and development opportunities sought by top performers (Allen et al., 2010; Wang-Cowham, 2011). In other words, IDPs have strong potential to create company-specific human capital (Coff and Kryscynski, 2011). In addition, some respondents indicated that the evaluation phase also allows for **performance bonuses** to be offered: "*The difference between high and low performers is evident in the variable pay component (the bonus), which the manager assesses at the conclusion of each year. The most talented employees earn the largest rewards, highlighting compensation as a crucial strategy for attracting and retaining talented individuals."* YR (HR Director, Leoni). Thus, this performance bonus encourages talented employees to increase their productivity at work and helps retain them.

In the same vein, Trevor et al. (1997) assert that there is a clear link between high salary growth and low staff turnover in the working group. Indeed, top performers expect to earn significantly more than the average employee. As Baldwin et al. (2013) note, nothing demotivates a star employee more than receiving the same rewards as everyone else, regardless of performance. Finally, a minority of the HR managers surveyed stated that the assessment of potential for talented employees is different from that of other employees. This assessment, which follows the performance evaluation phase, is called the "talent review." It is considered a new talent management practice used by the companies surveyed in this research to identify potential talent pool and determine their positioning in the performance and potential matrix. Indeed, the talent review "*is a talent analysis that takes place during a meeting in which managers discuss the performance of their talented employees and how these talents are positioned in future positions.*" MS (HR Director, Orange).

Managers participating in the meeting must justify whether current talent can fill future positions. This talent review allows HR directors and the CEO to consider the company's future growth. These findings coincide with those of Heinen and O'Neill (2004), who assert that talent reviews are used to highlight individual and organizational capacity issues.

CONCLUSION

Today, companies no longer need employees who carry out missions and tasks; instead, they are interested in hiring individuals with scarce skills and innovative solutions. Nowadays, we no longer discuss competencies but rather talents. In this context, many Tunisian companies are now focusing on implementing talent management practices. These organizations strive to surround themselves with gifted workers who bring added value to the organization. In this context, 45 semi-structured interviews enabled us to shed light on the conceptualization of talent in Tunisian international companies and the strategy used to identify the talent pool. Indeed, to our knowledge, this research, is the first in Tunisia to focus on the field of talent management, which has been experiencing a shortage of skilled labor in the job market since the Tunisian Revolution.

In conclusion, the present work proposes a clarification of the concept of "talent" based on the exclusive theory. More specifically, this theory comprises an elite subset of the organization's population, corresponding to the top 10% of employees in terms of performance and potential (Galardo-Galardo et al., 2013). Furthermore, the results showed that this talent pool could be identified by determining their levels of performance and potential within the company. Based on this qualitative study, we found that the companies surveyed rely primarily on the score assigned during the annual evaluation phase and the potential identified through the talent review. The results of these two evaluation phases must be mapped in the performance and potential matrix. In this matrix, talented employees are those who demonstrate the highest performance and potential. This performance and potential matrix not only identifies internal talent within the company but also helps HR managers implement talent-specific development plans to enhance company performance and effectively address the competition.

As with any research, this article has its limitations. It was conducted in a country with a distinct work culture and economy, as well as unique characteristics in terms of talent management. It is challenging to generalize the relevance of talent management to other contexts, particularly developed countries. To overcome this limitation, it would be compelling to conduct a comparative study in a developed country with a culture different from that of Tunisia. Besides, it would be interesting to examine other sectors of activity.

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