

Chapter 1

Introduction

Marian Thunnissen^a and Paul Boselie^b

^a*Utrecht University School of Governance/Fontys University of Applied Sciences,
The Netherlands*

^b*Utrecht University School of Governance, The Netherlands*

Abstract

Talent management in higher education institutes is an underexplored topic. Only a small portion of talent management publications is focussed on describing talent management in higher education institutes. In this chapter, we give an overview of the most important topics in the talent management literature in general and link it to what is known about these issues in higher education. It discusses the definition of talent and talent management, the talent management process and the multilevel outcomes of talent management, the fairness and justice issues related to talent management and the importance of embedding the analysis of talent management in its broader organizational and institutional context. In the final part of this introduction chapter, we will explain how the talent management topics are discussed in the subsequent chapters of this book.

Keywords: Talent; talent management; academia; university; context; performance; outcomes; talent management practices; Open Science; Recognitions and Reward

Talent Management in Higher Education, 1–18



Copyright © 2024 by Marian Thunnissen and Paul Boselie. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. These works are published under the Creative Commons

Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of these works (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

doi:[10.1108/978-1-80262-685-820241001](https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80262-685-820241001)

Introduction

The days of the university as an ivory tower are over. More and more institutes in higher education are called up to play their part in society (Frank & Meyer, 2020), because the level and standard of education and research activity are critical determinants of the innovation capacity, the economic prosperity and well-being of a nation or a region (Dutta et al., 2020). In many universities, societal impact and public value creation have become part of the strategic goals, integrated in research and education, and as an outcome of research and education. More recently, Open Science programmes are becoming an essential characteristic of higher education, aimed at, for example, open access of research output and publications, the sharing of high-quality data management and the involvement and engagement of citizens and stakeholders as knowledge producers (European Commission, 2019). The worldwide Covid-19 crisis has forced societies and academia to search for alternative ways of cooperation, co-creation and knowledge sharing in a joint fight against one of the biggest global challenges of our time.

For universities, the people (human resources (HRs)) are the most valuable asset for the success of the organization (Thunnissen, 2016). Although in some disciplines (in particular science) the laboratories and machines are essential, in the end, academic work is very labour intensive, and it's the people who shape universities through research and education. Therefore, academic performance depends on the devotion and specific characteristics of the academic and support staff. For performance in research, teaching and societal impact the availability of talented, creative, innovative and motivated academics, and support staff is essential. The competition for highly educated and academic talents is fierce; also other knowledge-intensive organizations are involved in this 'war for talent' (Holley et al., 2018; Stahl et al., 2012). The attraction and retention of qualified and highly motivated staff are key objectives of universities operating in a global competition for talents. Furthermore, the aforementioned Open Science programmes and its operating principles such as involving society, teamwork, open access of output, sharing data, cooperation and academic leadership are also related to people management issues and therefore the HRs of academia.

Up until now, research on human resource management (HRM) in higher education institutes in general and on talent management in specific is scarce. A review of empirical talent management research by Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo (2017) shows that only a small minority of talent management publications is focussed on public sector organizations, and within that small portion, an even lesser amount of publications is aimed at describing talent management in higher education institutes. This raises the question on what do we know on how universities attract, develop and retain their talents and how do they support their staff to stay employable and qualified to face the global and local challenges?

In the next section, we will give an overview of the most important topics in the talent management literature in general and link it to what is known about these issues in higher education. In the final part of this introduction chapter, we will explain how the talent management topics are discussed in the subsequent chapters of this book.

The Meaning of Talent and Talent Management

Talent management is often described as the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of talents (e.g. CIPD, 2006; Scullion et al., 2010; Steward & Harte, 2010). Within their talent management definitions, authors adopt different terms for ‘talent’, for example, ‘excellent abilities’, ‘key employees’, ‘stars’ or ‘high potentials’. Since the rise of the topic of talent management nearly 25 years ago, there has been an intensive debate on the definition of talent. Even up until now, new academic publications appear with novel insights regarding the conceptualization of talent (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2019; Skuza et al., 2022; Vardi & Collings, 2023). In 2013, Dries (2013) gave a solid ground to the debate by identifying five tensions in the literature regarding the definition of talent. The first tension refers to object versus the subjective perspective on talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). The subject approach focusses on the identification and development of talented people, while in the object approach, talents are identified as characteristics of people (referring to skills and qualities). The second tension in the literature discusses whether or not to differentiate in the workforce and highlights the difference between an inclusive versus an exclusive approach. The inclusive approach is based on the assumption that all employees are talents or have talents valuable to the organization and the whole workforce should benefit from talent management investments. The exclusive approach is aimed at a select group of employees, namely those individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance (Tansley et al., 2007), and assumes that only this select group should benefit from the talent management inducements. The third tension – input versus output – refers to the distinction between skills, motivation and effort, on the one hand (input), or on the outcomes in terms of excellent performance and success, on the other hand (output). The fourth tension focusses on the question whether talent is innate (‘you either have talent or you don’t’) or, on the contrary, can be acquired and/or further developed. Finally, the fifth tension deals with the discussion of whether a talent is universal and transferable to each context or whether talent is context dependent and that talents in one context are not necessarily relevant in the other context. The academic literature has been criticized for offering a binary conceptualization of talent (Vardi & Collings, 2023). The ‘either/or’ approach as becomes apparent in the aforementioned tensions is not recognized by organizations in practice, as we see that next to the single inclusive and the inclusive approaches also more hybrid or mixed forms exist within organizations. We call for a more nuanced approach to the topic and build insights from paradox theory, encouraging a transition from ‘either/or’ perspectives to ‘both/and’ perspectives. (Dries, 2022; Skuza et al., 2022; Thunnissen et al., 2013; Vardi & Collings, 2023) and urge scholars to do more research on this nuanced or balanced approach to talent management. They have two arguments for that: on the one hand, a balanced approach is more in line with the plural occurrence of talent management in practice; on the other hand, the ‘either/or’ single approach to talent definition makes the company vulnerable as it is not using the full potential of talent management.

In short, for organizations, the main question regarding talent is whether the organization needs to differentiate its workforce (inclusive vs exclusive approach) and on what basis (people or characteristics; potential or performance; etc.). We see two main approaches that integrate some of the tensions mentioned before. Although the inclusive approach could be focussed on people (subjects), we see that the accent is put on the object approach, in particular highlighting the importance of strengths. Strengths are personal characteristics that allow employees to perform well or at their personal best, and in this case, talent management can be interpreted as the identification, appreciation and use of the strengths of employees, assuring that all employees work in a context and organizational climate that enables them to use and develop their talents (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014; van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015). The strength-based approach is mainly aimed at empowering and motivating employees and enhancing employee well-being and commitment. The exclusive approach, on the other hand, is more performance oriented, with the assumption that high-performing employees will increase organizational performance (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Regarding the exclusive approach, the conceptualization of talent management by Collings and Mellahi (2009) is dominant. In their 2009 article, Collings and Mellahi argue that the starting point of talent management should not be the identification of talent but the identification of the key positions that are crucial to the survival and performance of the organization. Once these pivotal positions are determined, talent management is aimed at identifying the best-performing employees and creating talent pools to develop and prepare them for fulfilling these positions.

The academic literature available on talent management in higher education shows a preference for the exclusive talent management approach (Björkman et al., 2022; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). The scarcity of positions but also the inherent system of competition within academia emphasizes the importance of performance, and only the most excellent academics will be selected for a tenure and an academic career. We notice a fundamental debate in line with Open Science and Recognition and Rewards transformations on the concept of 'excellence'. In itself, the concept of 'excellence' implicitly assumes some kind of high performance linked to specific goals, for example, research success in terms of publications, citation impact and received research grants. In their publication on talent management in business schools, Björkman et al. (2022) take a subject approach to talent, as they identify two groups of faculty that are most likely to be at the centre of 'business schools' exclusive talent management activities: faculty on a tenure track career path and 'star' tenured faculty with exceptionally strong track records. The tenure track scholars represent the future of the business school, and the tenure track offers these excellent scholars the succession plan to become a full professor once they fulfil the criteria for tenure. The tenure track is regarded as the best way for the university to enhance their performance and professional development and to keep this group engaged and motivated (Björkman et al., 2022). The 'stars' are, according to Björkman et al. (2022), the most experienced, tenured faculty, who outperform their peers in research and, in the context of business schools, also in executive education programmes and in

a high media profile. In contrast to Björkman et al. (2022), Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen (2015) have taken an object approach to talent and tried to identify the main characteristics of a talented academic. They also found the dominance of an exclusive performance-oriented talent management approach. A talented academic excels because of the traditional academic abilities (i.e. scientific understanding and academic expertise) but also offers extra, non-scientific skills: nowadays an academic talent is able to communicate, enthuse and inspire others, is proactive and able to market his or her ideas and research (Thunnissen & Van Arensbergen, 2015). Also, a strong passion for science, a high motivation and the ability to work very hard is of importance and will help you to survive the rat race in academia. High (proven) performance is up until now the most distinctive feature of academic talent and in particular outstanding research performance visible in many top-ranking publications and a high rate in acquiring research funding. The study of Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen (2015) shows that the precise operationalization of talent is highly subjective and contextual: the several stakeholders within academia – HR, management, employees – each have their own interpretation of what makes someone talented, and the operationalization of talent differs between the academic disciplines. However, at critical moments – such as career promotions or granting a research grant – the best track record in research performance is decisive (van Arensbergen et al., 2014; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012).

A Multiactor and Multilevel Perspective on Talent Management Practices

The conceptualization of talent is important because it has implications for the talent management practices induced by the organization (Meyers et al., 2020; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014; Skuza et al., 2022). According to Meyers and Van Woerkom, (2014), the fundamental underlying assumptions and beliefs about the nature, value and instrumentality of talent held by an organization's key decision-makers are essential determinants of the specific shape of HR practices. For example, an inclusive and developmental perspective would imply investments in learning and development practices available to all employees, as an exclusive and stable talent philosophy could lead to putting accent on attracting the best top talents available on the labour market (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014). The idea of talent philosophies affecting the implementation of talent management also implies that talent management is more than an objective and rational process. The individuals' cognitive representations of the world affect how they perceive and act upon things (Meyers et al., 2020). Several recent talent management publications have focussed on the impact of mental models or talent philosophies of HR professionals on the development and implementation of talent management strategies (Dries, 2022; Meyers et al., 2020; Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014). The usual suspects in talent management research are top and middle managers and/or HR professionals, as they examine their perspectives regarding the intended talent management strategy and its presumed contribution to organizational performance. Stahl et al. (2012) and Anlesinya et al. (2019) claim that that successful

companies are aware that the talent management process includes multiple owners: not just HR and top management but managers at all levels. Only a handful of publications include line managers as research participants (Bos et al., 2020). More recently, we see a growing number of studies investigating the perceptions and experiences of another important stakeholder: the employee (De Boeck et al., 2018; King, 2016). De Boeck et al. (2018) did a review on research on employee reactions to (exclusive) talent management and found mixed signals in the literature. On the one hand, they found that, in the exclusive approach, employees labelled as talents were more committed, engaged and willing to perform, but, on the other hand, these studies could not give a clear proof of these outcomes being related by talent management practices as control groups with ‘non-talents’ were absent in these investigations. Moreover, they also found negative effects of being labelled as talent: it rises expectations and demands put on talents and could lead to turnover (De Boeck et al., 2018).

Wright and Nishii (2007, 2013) have developed a multilevel HRM process model, in which they identified these multiple actors as well as their role in the different stages in the HRM process. The first stage refers to the intended HRM practices: the development of the policies and decision-making regarding HRM often developed by HR and top management. The actual HRM practices, the second stage in the talent management process, concern the implementation of HRM by line managers in different levels in the organization. The activities of the line managers have a signalling effect on the employee perceptions and experiences with talent management: the perceived HRM practices. These perceptions and experiences influence employee behaviour, which in turn affects the outcomes on the team and organizational level. In the ideal world, there is full alignment between the intended, actual and perceived HRM practices resulting in HR contributing to excellent organizational performance, yet in practice, there are often significant differences between the intended, actual and perceived practices due to mediating factors inside and outside the organization and the involvement of stakeholders. This deviance can hinder the effectiveness of the HR strategy. Within the academic field of talent management, the attention was, as we mentioned earlier, put on investigating the development of intended talent management strategies (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2017). Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo (2017) were the first to adapt a multiactor and multilevel perspective on talent management. Although research on the multilevel talent management process is scarce, during recent years, the implementation of talent management is getting more attention as well as talent management being the collective responsibility of multiple stakeholders (Anlesinya et al., 2019; McDonnell et al., 2023).

Regarding the implementation of talent management in the context of higher education, research shows that the accent is put on the identification and attraction of talent (Thunnissen et al., 2021). Although human development and training are core activities for universities there is little attention for talent development and retention for the academic staff (Björkman et al., 2022). For the early career scholars, investments in training and development are offered, but for the senior staff, there are hardly any specific development practices and they mainly develop themselves ‘on

the job' (Björkman et al., 2022; Thunnissen, 2016). For the senior positions performance, appraisal is a key talent management activity (Thunnissen, 2016). Björkman et al. (2022) point at two crucial decisions in attracting talent: the initial decision to offer an applicant an assistant, professorship position and the tenure decision. These decisions are mainly based on formal performance systems, which most universities have (Björkman et al., 2022). Nonetheless, research by Van den Brink (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014; Van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009) revealed that the recruitment and selection process was, despite the regulations and protocols in the formal performance systems, highly informal and not transparent. Her research in particular pointed at a gender bias in the selection of professors, due to closed procedures (which are not open to competition), scouting via the informal, male academic networks and the limited number of females in the selection committees, and a lack of transparency in selection procedures and practice. Skuza et al. (2022) state that the increasing role of managers in talent selection has the risk of subjective bias. Van den Brink (Van den Brink et al., 2013; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014) affirms this and calls academic managers (i.e. professors in supervising or management roles) gatekeepers, because they determine who may enter (or not) the academic community and who can pursue an academic career. At each stage in the academic career, this gatekeeping process is present, and in each stage, excellence is re-assessed and rewarded with a temporary position. The early-career academics who will stay in academia first have to accept a number of temporary contracts as post doc researcher or assistant professor (Van Balen et al., 2012), with each time the insecurity whether he or she will be able to continue the research activities. In the last decades, this job insecurity also includes the senior academic positions (Thunnissen, 2016), having a negative impact on their well-being (Thunnissen et al., 2021). Björkman et al. (2022) also state that the exclusive talent management approach might be visible in higher rewards and benefits for the talents than for the non-talents. The authors expect all higher education institutes to experience the pressure to offer the going market rate for outstanding academics, although this might be more difficult for public schools. They also expect more individualized star faculty work arrangements to attract and retain the talented academics.

Fairness and Justice Issues Regarding Talent Management Implementation

With its accent on the exclusive and performance-oriented approach to talent, the most important decision in the academic talent management approach is the decision whether or not the academic staff member obtains tenure, as the career path structure is 'up or out' (Björkman et al., 2022). A substantial part of the literature on talent management in higher education is focussed on the perceptions of academic staff regarding their academic career and the obstacles they are confronted with while developing and deploying their talents and pursuing an academic career (van den Besselaar & Sandström, 2015; Waaijer et al., 2018). On the one hand, we see publications that investigate the stress, frustration and disappointment attached to these obstacles but also the perseverance to continue the academic career despite the obstacles (Mattijssen et al., 2021; Van Balen

et al., 2012; van der Weijden & Teelken, 2023). On the other hand, studies show career changes and turnover of academics because they experience a psychological contract breach and wish to pursue a career outside academia (Teelken & Van der Weijden, 2018; Van der Weijden et al., 2017).

These findings hint at issues regarding the (perceived) fairness in these crucial decisions, and the ethical issues related to excluding certain groups of the workforce. Exclusive talent management denies a large portion of the workforce the opportunity to realize their potential, to become star performers and to flourish as valued employees (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Kwon and Jang's (2022) critical review on talent management literature identifies four themes underpinning the dysfunctional aspects of exclusive talent management and workforce differentiation practices. The first theme is organizational justice, referring to a fair treatment with due consideration for the employee's well-being. A distinction between the fairness of outcome distributions and allocations (i.e. distributive justice), the fairness of the procedures used to determine the outcomes and distributions (i.e. procedural justice) and the importance of the quality of the interpersonal treatment people receive while procedures are implemented (i.e. interactional justice) can be made (Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1990). Kwon and Jang (2022) state that talent identification is the most sensitive stage in terms of its effects on employees' perceptions. Employees identified as talents may get extra benefits because of their talent status, resulting in higher commitment and engagement of the talents but also causing perceptions of injustice in talent identification procedures by the non-talents which may make them cynical and less productive (De Boeck et al., 2018; Gelens et al., 2013; Kwon & Jang, 2022). The second and the third themes identified by Kwon and Jang (2022) refer to ethics and internal competition. The competition inherent to exclusive talent management may cause a 'burning out culture' that pushes talents to take high responsibilities and to be available for work constantly. It may also diminish internal collaboration and threaten a learning climate in the organizations because of the overestimation of the talent's abilities and underestimation of the abilities of those employees not labelled as talents (Kwon & Jang, 2022). Recent research shows that a fair, learning and caring-ethical organizational culture contributes to positive employee reactions (i.e. the perception of being able to develop and use their talents) (Helfenrath et al., 2023). Finally, the search for specific talents may lead to homogeneous workforces, which overlooks the increasing diversity on the current national and international labour market. Anlesinya and Amponsah-Tawiah (2020) plea for a responsible talent management construct that addresses the concerns of all stakeholders, including employees and society. This responsible approach includes inclusivity, corporate responsibility, equity and equal employment opportunities for all employees, in order to achieve sustainable outcomes such as decent and quality work, employee well-being and organizational well-being. The question raises whether the current exclusive talent management approach, and its dysfunctional aspects, will stand with the current developments in academia such as the rise of movements such as Open Science and Recognition and Rewards.

The Impact of Contextual Factors on Talent Management Policies

An important critique on academic research on talent management is the lack of contextual awareness (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). In the past, questions have been raised regarding the dominant focus of talent management scholars on defining talent and talent management based on research that mainly took place within the private sector and in particular in large multinational corporations. Knowledge on talent and talent management in that specific context may not be suitable for other kinds of organizations such as small- and medium-sized enterprises and public sector organizations (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017; Skuza et al., 2022; Thunnissen et al., 2013). In a review of the empirical literature on talent management, Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo (2019) found an increase on research being conducted in a broad variety of contexts (i.e. countries and organizations), yet they point at a neglect of the impact of internal and external contextual factors on the conceptualization and implementation of talent management. This indicates a gap in academic interest (Anlesinya et al., 2019) and also makes it difficult for practitioners to identify valuable research applicable to their specific organizational context (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006).

Michael Beer was one of the first scholars to explain HRM outcomes and the relevance of context (Beer et al., 1984, 2015). His Harvard model has had two major contributions. First, based on multiple stakeholder theory and situational factors, the model incorporates multiple stakeholders such as managers, shareholders, trade unions, employees and government in combination with acknowledging contextual factors that are assumed to affect the shaping of HRM and its impact on performance. Second, performance is defined as a multidimensional construct acknowledging (1) organizational effectiveness, (2) employee well-being and (3) societal well-being as equally important long-term consequences in the value chain of an organization. In the talent management literature the importance of talent management for the organization and organizational well-being is highlighted: increasing efficiency, flexibility, profit and competitive advantage (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2017). Several scholars call up to broaden the objectives of talent management beyond the shareholder perspective, at least to employee benefits but also to outcomes beneficiary to society (Collings, 2014; Farndale et al., 2014; Thunnissen et al., 2013).

This multilevel approach to talent management might even be more important for public sector organizations, since they continuously have to meet the needs of multiple stakeholders. Therefore, the shaping of HRM and the effects of HRM in a public sector context is complicated and often fuzzy. In 2013, Vandenabeele et al. (2013) used, among others, the HR process model (Wright & Nishii, 2007) and the Harvard model (Beer et al., 2015) to build an HRM process model that fits the complexity of the public sector. Boselie et al. (2021) adapted this model for the specific context of talent management in public sector organizations (see Fig. 1.1).

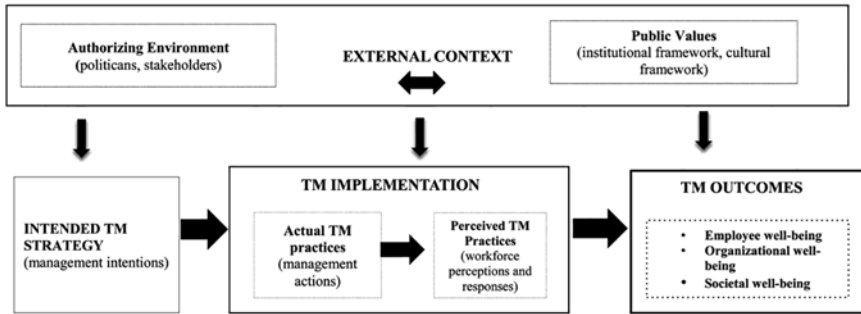


Fig. 1.1. Talent Management Value Chain for the Public Sector. *Source:* Adapted from Boselie et al. (2021).

In line with the model of Vandenaabeele et al. (2013), the upper half of the model shows that contextual factors directly and continuously have an impact on the development and implementation of talent management practices in public sector organizations. The authorizing environment consists of politician and stakeholder influences. The stakeholders can be situated outside or inside the organization: for example, governmental policymakers, political parties and unions, audit offices and governmental advisory bodies, as well as managers and public service workers within the organization. Public values refer to the public sectors' contribution to society (e.g. service to society as a whole, social cohesion and sustainability), and how public sector organizations and their employees should behave in relation to their environment such as politicians and citizens, referring to values such as loyalty, responsiveness, accountability, honesty and integrity (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Vandenaabeele et al., 2013). The public values are determined by the existing institutional and cultural framework. The lower half of the model shows a simplified version of the already explained HRM process model of Wright and Nishii (2007) and the multidimensional performance construct of Beer et al. (1984, 2015) at the right-hand side of the figure.

Also in academia, the talent management practices cannot be disconnected from its broader, institutional context. And it is this broader context that is changing rapidly, having its impact on the academic organization and academic work. We are living in an era of big societal challenges related to, for example, climate changes, growing inequality, migration, ageing populations and digitalization. The urge to play their role in society and to open up and to contribute to the exploration of key societal issues such as climate change and sustainability leads to, for example, a shift from individual academic work to collaboration in multidisciplinary teams, sharing data via open science with other researchers, and more involvement of external actors via stakeholder and public engagement in research as well as triple- and quadruple-helix collaboration. The global Covid-19 crisis, for example, has shown that different scientific disciplines

(including Virology, Epidemiology, Psychology, Sociology and Economics) can play a role in understanding society and contributing to finding solutions for the pandemic. This implies a redefinition of relevant academic skills and talents required for the academic job, in particular cooperation (teamwork) instead of individualism and multidisciplinary activities instead of mono-disciplinary tasks.

Moreover, the aforementioned Open Science programmes and its operating principles such as involving society, teamwork, open access of output, sharing data, cooperation and academic leadership are also related to people management issues and therefore the HRs of academia. A related issue is the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) movement which started in 2012. This movement asked for recognition for the need to improve the ways in which scholars and the outputs of scholarly research and education are evaluated. This worldwide initiative covering all scholarly disciplines and all key stakeholders, including funders, publishers, professional societies, institutions and researchers, started, at least in large parts of Europe, a discussion on what skills and talents are relevant in current academia, and how can that be acknowledged and rewarded ([European Commission, 2019](#)). In the alternative and new rewards and recognition approaches that are part of the European and national Open Science programmes, we see, for example, the following HRM shifts that emerge ([VSNU et al., 2019](#)):

- From the individual employee towards teamwork and cooperation.
- From one-dimensional performance orientation (mainly research outcomes in terms number of publications, impact and grants) towards narratives and meaningful metrics at team level.
- From research dominance towards acknowledging research, education and societal impact.
- From a result orientation towards an employee development orientation.
- From one-size-fits-all towards context sensitivity and strategic choice (e.g. related to research assessments).
- From supervision as a necessary task towards leadership, hands-on and value-driven.

These developments raise questions regarding talent management in higher education. It could point at a shifting perspective within the aforementioned dominant exclusive approach within academia: ‘who are the real stars and how are they managed? Are new competences and new types of positions needed?’ ([Björkman et al., 2022](#), p. 141). Or do these developments indicate a shift from the performance-oriented talent management approach based on research output to a more strength-based inclusive talent management approach in which the strengths and output of all involved in academia are appreciated? The HRM discipline and its talent management scholars have looked at and studied many different sectors, both private sector organizations and public sector organizations. Yet, so far, these studies have not embedded the talent management activities in

these sectors in the institutional context and historical heritage regarding work and HRM labour in a specific sector, such as higher education. Talent management in higher education in this book is like looking in the mirror to ourselves as a research object.

Overview of This Book

This book aims to provide an overview of how talent is defined in higher education, the implementation of talent management practices, how this is perceived by employees and its impact on academic performance. It is based on a multilevel and multiactor perspective (Beer et al., 2015; Vandenabeele et al., 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2007) and intends to position the contemporary talent management issues of universities in the broader institutional context (Paauwe, 2004) in which universities are constituted and the historical developments regarding HRM and talent management policies. According to Deem (2001), the institutional context of higher education institutes can differ between countries and regions. Therefore, we will focus on the context of European universities in general and in some chapters in specific on the context of Dutch public universities.

This book will start two chapters focussing on the macro context of higher education and describes the development in the organizational context and the stakeholders involved and how these developments affect academic jobs, academic work and academic recognition and rewards in terms of talent and talent management. In Chapter 2, Joop Schippers describes the historical developments in higher education and how these developments affect academic jobs and academic work. He sketches the four major developments of higher education: (1) growth and the related development from a small-scale elite institution to broad training (and research) institutes; (2) a struggle over control of higher education; (3) the professionalization of higher education; and (4) the rise of the open science movement. Additionally, this chapter discusses how these developments affect academics and academic work and consequently the conventionalization of talent in academia, throughout history. The opening up of academia for society points at a shift from an elite approach to a talent management approach that is more inclusive and embracing the diversity – yet, not all diversity – within the student and staff population.

Chapter 3, authored by Judith de Haan, Paul Boselie, Marieke Adriaanse, Sicco de Knecht and Frank Miedema, examines the emergence of open science as a transformative force in the academic world. Open science has an immense impact on the perceptions and ideas regarding ‘what a university is for’, widening the scope of academic performance. The authors stress the urgent need to realign our system of recognition and rewards, and accordingly talent management, with the premises of open science. By highlighting the disconnect between current recognition mechanisms and the values of universities, this chapter emphasizes the necessity of transformative changes at institutional and systemic levels. To provide higher education institutes inspiration and concrete insights into the

implementation of these changes, this chapter explores a case study of Utrecht University.

Subsequently, in Chapter 4, Bianca Kramer and Jeroen Bosman make a connection between the external developments and subject of this book: talent management. They explore what the changes in the academic landscape mean for the assessment of academic performance and academic talent management. This chapter describes how assessment in academia traditionally has been focussed on individual research performance and, within that, on (journal) publications as measurable output. In recent years, open science practices as well as research integrity issues have increased awareness of the need for a more inclusive approach to assessment, broadening assessment to reward the full spectrum of academic activities and, within that spectrum, deepening assessment by critically reflecting on the processes and indicators involved. According to Kramer and Bosman, the developments reflect a shift from an exclusive, subject-oriented talent management approach with the aim of selecting the best individual performers, to an inclusive, object-oriented talent management which gives room to the qualities, expertise and competences needed at the team level to reach its strategic goals.

Chapters 5–8 are focussed on talent management practices regarding the attraction, development and retention of talent and employee perceptions of those practices. In Chapter 5, Loes van Beuningen critically assesses the factors that influence doctoral students' well-being. She explores the perceived job demands and resources, and motivations of a sample of 25 PhD students in the Netherlands, in order to recommend adequate talent management strategies to improve PhD work conditions at universities and to reduce the increasing levels of ill-being. The study proposes a collegial model, focussing on the enjoyment of work, instead of the current managerial model, which focusses on strengthening knowledge and skills, and stimulating performance-orientated behaviour. Van Beuningen stresses the need for a differentiated approach, offering customized talent development for each PhD student in order to respond to their specific qualities, improving general well-being. This radical shift in talent management is needed to counter the mental health crisis in the early academic career.

Although an increasing number of PhD holders will pursue a career outside academia, we know little about their further career prospects. To develop a better understanding of how this group constructs and justifies a successful career outside academia, Christine Teelken, Inge van der Weijden and Stefan Heusinkveld conducted semi-structured interviews with 47 PhD graduates who have obtained elaborate experience working outside academia. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter 6. It shows that the PhD holders experience four key tensions (related to society, colleagues, work and personal development) when deciding on such career transitions. Balancing the disadvantage sides and attractive aspects of both academia and the 'outside' ultimately leads to a decision in favour of pursuing a career outside academia. The PhD holders especially appreciated their contribution to society, their permanent contract and multidisciplinary

collaborations. Thus, while discontinuation of an academic career may easily hold a pejorative connotation, the study revealed rewarding opportunities in pursuing a career in other sectors.

In Chapter 7, Sanne Nijs, Christina Meyers and Marianne van Woerkom discuss talent development in the context of higher education. They present empirical data that detail how the participants of a focus group study perceive talent development in higher education. The data show the importance of a contextualized reading of talent development, as the competitive context results in a performance-centred, instead of a development-centred, approach to talent management, where outperforming others in narrowly defined areas (e.g. publication record) is the main goal. The authors show that in such a context, the development of competitive talent is rewarded, and the development of communal talent is not. The focus on performance instead of (inclusive) development becomes more pronounced when employees move through their career and is believed to have several negative consequences. Mostly, women perceived that such a non-inclusive approach to talent development hinders the development and deployment of their talents and obstructs their career progression.

Little research is devoted to how salary allocation processes interfere with gender inequality in talent development in universities. Administrative data from a university indicated a substantial salary gap between men and women academics, which partially could be explained by the unequal distribution of men and women in the academic job levels after acquiring a PhD, from lecturer to full professor, with men being overrepresented in the higher job levels, as well as in the more senior positions within each job level. In Chapter 8, Marloes van Engen and Brigitte Kroon demonstrate how a lack of transparency, consistency and accountability can disqualify apparent fair, merit-based salary decisions and result in biased gender differences in job and salary levels. This chapter reflects on how salary decisions matter for the recognition of talent and should be an integral part of talent management.

The Open Science and Recognition and Rewards movements require innovations in how to attract, develop and retain talent in academia. Universities as a single employer cannot make this happen on their own. In Chapter 9, we therefore zoom out as we take a look on the collaboration of universities regarding talent management. The goal of this chapter is to deframe and unwrap the nature of collaborations, alliances and cooperation in higher education, in particular linked to HRM transformations such as the worldwide recognition and rewards movement in academia. Cooperation at local, sectoral, national and international levels affects the recognition and rewards transformation. It can be beneficial through institutionalization and social legitimacy, but it can also be effective in a joint academic talent effort. This chapter provides an overview of different types of collaboration in the academic recognition and rewards transformation focusing in particular on talents and talent management.

This book comes to a conclusion in Chapter 10 in which we critically review and discuss some specific issues concerning talent management in the context of higher education raised in the chapters of this book. This chapter also presents recommendations for practice and further talent management research.

References

- Anlesinya, A., & Amponsah-Tawiah, K. (2020). Towards a responsible talent management model. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 44(2/3), 279–303.
- Anlesinya, A., Dartey-Baah, K., & Amponsah-Tawiah, K. (2019). Strategic talent management scholarship: A review of current foci and future directions. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 51(5), 299–314.
- Beer, M., Boselie, P., & Brewster, C. (2015). Back to the future: Implications for the field of HRM of the multistakeholder perspective proposed 30 years ago. *Human Resource Management*, 54(3), 427–438.
- Beer, M., Spector, B. A., Lawrence, P. R., Mills, D. Q., & Walton, R. E. (1984). *Managing human assets*. Simon and Schuster.
- Björkman, I., Smale, A., & Kallio, T. J. (2022). Talent management in the business school context. In D. Collings, V. Vaiman, & H. Scullion (Eds.), *Talent management: A decade of developments* (pp. 127–145). Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds.
- Bos, P., Thunnissen, M., & Pardoën, K. (2020). The missing link: The role of line managers and leadership in implementing talent management. In S. Swailes, (Ed.), *Managing talent: A critical appreciation* (pp. 87–105). Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds.
- Boselie, P., & Thunnissen, M. (2017). TM in the public sector: Managing tensions and dualities. In D. G. Collings, K. Mellahi & W. F. Cascio (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Talent Management* (pp. 420–439). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boselie, P., Thunnissen, M., & Monster, J. (2021). Talent management and performance in the public sector. In I. Tarique (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to talent management* (pp. 201–214). New York: Routledge.
- CIPD. 2006. *Talent management: understanding the dimensions*. London: CIPD.
- Collings, D. G. (2014). Toward mature talent management: Beyond shareholder value. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 25(3), 301–319.
- Collings, D. G., & Mellahi, K. (2009). Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management Review*, 19(4), 304–313.
- Colquitt, J. A., Conlon, D. E., Wesson, M. J., Porter, C. O., & Ng, K. Y. (2001). Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 425.
- De Boeck, G., Meyers, M., & Dries, N. (2018). Employee reactions to talent management: Assumptions versus evidence. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(2), 199–213.
- Deem, R. (2001). Globalisation, new managerialism, academic capitalism and entrepreneurialism in universities: Is the local dimension still important? *Comparative Education*, 37(1), 7–20.
- Dries, N. (2013). The psychology of talent management: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4), 272–285.
- Dries, N. (2022). What's your talent philosophy? Talent as construct versus talent as phenomenon. In *Talent management: A decade of developments* (pp. 19–37). Emerald Publishing.
- Dutta, S., Lanvin, B., & Wunsch-Vincent, S. (2020). *Global innovation index 2020: Who will finance innovation*. Cornell University/INSEAD/World Intellectual Property Organization.
- European Commission. (2019). *Open science*. https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-12/ec_rtd_factsheet-open-science_2019.pdf
- Farndale, E., Pai, A., Sparrow, P., & Scullion, H. (2014). Balancing individual and organizational goals in global talent management: A mutual-benefits perspective. *Journal of World Business*, 49(2), 204–214.
- Frank, D. J., & Meyer, J. W. (2020). *The university and the global knowledge society*. Princeton University Press.

- Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Dries, N., & González-Cruz, T. F. (2013). What is the meaning of 'talent' in the world of work? *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4), 290–300.
- Gallardo-Gallardo, E., & Thunnissen, M. (2019). Talent management: Disentangling key ideas. In *The SAGE handbook of human resource management* (pp. 164–178). Sage.
- Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Thunnissen, M., & Scullion, H. (2020). Talent management: Context matters. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(4), 457–473.
- Gelens, J., Dries, N., Hofmans, J., & Pepermans, R. (2013). The role of perceived organizational justice in shaping the outcomes of talent management: A research agenda. *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4), 341–353.
- Greenberg, J. (1990). Organizational justice: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Journal of Management*, 16(2), 399–432.
- Helfenrath, K., Bos, P., Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., & Thunnissen, M. (2023). Organisatiecultuur als onzichtbare kracht achter talentmobilisatie: Een verkenning van relevante aspecten. *Tijdschrift Voor HRM*, 26(2), 45–72.
- Holley, K., Kuzhabekova, A., Osbaldiston, N., Cannizzo, F., Mauri, C., Simmonds, S., Teelken, C. & van der Weijden, I. (2018). Global perspectives on the postdoctoral scholar experience. In *The postdoc landscape: The invisible scholars* (pp. 203–226). London: Academic Press.
- Jørgensen, T. B., & Bozeman, B. (2007). Public values: An inventory. *Administration & Society*, 39(3), 354–381.
- King, K. A. (2016). The talent deal and journey: Understanding how employees respond to talent identification over time. *Employee Relations*, 38(1), 94–111.
- Kwon, K., & Jang, S. (2022). There is no good war for talent: A critical review of the literature on talent management. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 44(1), 94–120.
- Mattijssen, L. M., Bergmans, J. E., van der Weijden, I. C., & Teelken, J. C. (2021). In the eye of the storm: The mental health situation of PhD candidates. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 10, 71–72.
- McDonnell, A., Skuza, A., Jooss, S., & Scullion, H. (2023). Tensions in talent identification: A multi-stakeholder perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 34(6), 1132–1156.
- Meyers, M., & Van Woerkom, M. (2014). The influence of underlying philosophies on talent management: Theory, implications for practice, and research agenda. *Journal of World Business*, 49(2), 192–203.
- Meyers, M., van Woerkom, M., Paauwe, J., & Dries, N. (2020). HR managers' talent philosophies: Prevalence and relationships with perceived talent management practices. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(4), 562–588.
- Paauwe, J. (2004). *HRM and performance: Achieving long-term viability*. Oxford University Press.
- Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (2006). *Hard facts, dangerous half-truths, and total nonsense: Profiting from evidence-based management*. Harvard Business Press.
- Scullion, H., Collings, D. G., & Caligiuri, P. (2010). Global talent management. *Journal of World Business*, 45(2), 105–108.
- Skuza, A., Woldu, H. G., & Alborz, S. (2022). Who is talent? Implications of talent definitions for talent management practice. *Economics and Business Review*, 8(4), 136–162.
- Stahl, G., Björkman, I., Farndale, E., Morris, S. S., Paauwe, J., Stiles, P., ... Wright, P. (2012). Six principles of effective global talent management. *Sloan Management Review*, 53(2), 25–42.
- Stewart, J., & Harte, V. (2010). The implications of talent management for diversity training: An exploratory study. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 34(6), 506–518.

- Tansley, C., Turner, P., Foster, C., Harris, L., Stewart, J., Sempik, A., & Williams, H. (2007). *Talent: Strategy, management, measurement*. CIPD.
- Teelken, C., & Van der Weijden, I. (2018). The employment situations and career prospects of postdoctoral researchers. *Employee Relations*, 40(2), 396–411.
- Thunnissen, M. (2016). Talent management: For what, how and how well? An empirical exploration of talent management in practice. *Employee Relations*, 38(1), 57–72.
- Thunnissen, M., Boselie, P., & Fruytier, B. (2013). Talent management and the relevance of context: Towards a pluralistic approach. *Human Resource Management Review*, 23(4), 326–336.
- Thunnissen, M., & Buttiens, D. (2017). Talent management in public sector organizations: A study on the impact of contextual factors on the TM approach in Flemish and Dutch public sector organizations. *Public Personnel Management*, 46(4), 391–418.
- Thunnissen, M., & Gallardo-Gallardo, E. (2017). *Talent management in practice: An integrated and dynamic approach*. Emerald Publishing.
- Thunnissen, M., & Gallardo-Gallardo, E. (2019). Rigor and relevance in empirical TM research: Key issues and challenges. *BRQ Business Research Quarterly*, 22(3), 171–180.
- Thunnissen, M., & Van Arensbergen, P. (2015). A multi-dimensional approach to talent: An empirical analysis of the definition of talent in Dutch academia. *Personnel Review*, 44(2), 182–199.
- Thunnissen, M., van Arensbergen, P., & van den Brink, M. (2021). Talent management in academia. In I. Tarique (Ed.) *The Routledge companion to talent management* (pp. 215–226). New York: Routledge.
- van Arensbergen, P., van der Weijden, I., & van den Besselaar, P. (2014). Different views on scholarly talent: What are the talents we are looking for in science? *Research Evaluation*, 23(4), 273–284.
- Van Balen, B., Van Arensbergen, P., Van Der Weijden, I., & Van Den Besselaar, P. (2012). Determinants of success in academic careers. *Higher Education Policy*, 25, 313–334.
- Vandenabeele, W., Leisink, P., & Knies, E. (2013). Public value creation and strategic human resource management: Public service motivation as a linking mechanism. In P. Leisink, P. Boselie, M. van Bottenburg, & D. Hosking (Eds.), *Managing social issues* (pp. 37–54). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- van den Besselaar, P., & Sandström, U. (2015). Early career grants, performance, and careers: A study on predictive validity of grant decisions. *Journal of Informetrics*, 9(4), 826–838.
- Van den Brink, M., & Benschop, Y. (2012). Gender practices in the construction of academic excellence: Sheep with five legs. *Organization*, 19(4), 507–524.
- Van den Brink, M., & Benschop, Y. (2014). Gender in academic networking: The role of gatekeepers in professorial recruitment. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(3), 460–492.
- Van den Brink, M., & Stobbe, L. (2009). Doing gender in academic education: The paradox of visibility. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16, 451–470.
- Van den Brink, M., Fruytier, B., & Thunnissen, M. (2013). Talent management in academia: Performance systems and HRM policies. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 23(2), 180–195.
- Van der Weijden, I., De Gelder, E., Teelken, C., & Thunnissen, M. (2017). *Which grass is greener? Personal stories from PhDs about their careers within and outside academia*. <https://phdcentre.eu/en/practices/portraits.html>
- van der Weijden, I., & Teelken, C. (2023). Precarious careers: Postdoctoral researchers and wellbeing at work. *Studies in Higher Education* 48(10): 1595–1605. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2253833>.

- van Woerkom, M., & Meyers, M. C. (2015). My strengths count! Effects of a strengths-based psychological climate on positive affect and job performance. *Human Resource Management, 54*(1), 81–103.
- Vardi, S., & Collings, D. G. (2023). What's in a name? Talent: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management Journal, 33*(3), 660–682, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12500>
- VSNU, NFU, KNAW, NOW, & ZonMW. (2019). *Room for everyone's talent: Towards a new balance in the recognition and rewards of academics*. <https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/recognitionandrewards/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Position-paper-Room-for-everyone%E2%80%99s-talent.pdf>:
- Waaijer, C. J., Teelken, C., Wouters, P. F., & van der Weijden, I. C. (2018). Competition in science: Links between publication pressure, grant pressure and the academic job market. *Higher Education Policy, 31*, 225–243.
- Wright, P., & Nishii, L. (2007). Strategic HRM and organizational behavior: Integrating multiple levels of analysis.
- Wright, P., & Nishii, L. (2013). Strategic HRM and organizational behaviour: Integrating multiple levels of analysis. In J. Paauwe, D. E. Guest, & P. M. Wright (Eds.), *HRM and performance: Achievements and challenges* (pp. 97–110). Chichester, UK: Wiley.