

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF KOREAN EMPLOYEES IDENTIFIED AS TALENT

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Talented individuals are those who are identified as talent and participate in talent management initiatives provided by their organizations. Despite the apparent popularity of talent management, talented individuals have received little attention in the literature and a small number of talent management studies have placed them as the primary interest of research.

Talented employees' acceptance of talent management is critical because their perceptions of talent management are likely to have an impact on their attitudes and behaviors that are important for the success of the organization. Therefore, it is important to acquire a solid understanding of the perceptions and experiences of talented employees prior to considering how to effectively execute individual talent management initiatives.

This dissertation sought to gain a deep understanding of talented employees' perspectives on and experiences with talent management in Korean corporations. Within the qualitative inquiry paradigm, this study utilized a phenomenological approach. I adopted the purposive criterion sampling strategy and recruited ten talented employees in South Korea. And I used semi-structured, open-ended questions to interview the participants. For data analysis, I employed Moustakas' Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data.

Analysis of the data resulted in four main themes, which represented how participants perceived and experienced talent management. In this study, talented

employees' experiences with talent management could be described in terms of (a) an immediate but temporary effect on attitude, (b) a lack of understanding of the goals, processes, and initiatives of talent management and expected roles as talent, (c) minimal influence on roles, responsibilities, and careers, and (d) concerns about the effectiveness of talent management. This study also revealed the talented employees' desire for frequent transparent communication and continuing support, which have been seldom explored in the literature. This study concludes by providing implications for practices and suggestions for additional studies for those who are interested in this line of research.

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Contributors

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Professor Dr. Jia Wang [advisor] and Professor Dr. Michael Beyerlein of the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development, Professor Dr. Patricia Goodson of the Department of Health and Kinesiology, and Professor Dr. Sarah Gatson of the Department of Sociology.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Talent is a “seductive” word in business (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Beth, 2001, p. viii). Organizations perceive their employees as some of the most crucial assets for building a competitive edge in today’s globalized and knowledge-based economy. Many organizations identify a group of employees who possess knowledge, demonstrate high performance, and have potential to grow in the future. This group of people is called talent, and talent management is one intervention for organizations to select, develop, manage, and retain this special group of employees.

In recent years, talent management has been considered a key to an organization’s success. As human capital is known as the most critical asset of competitive advantage, organizations around the world have recognized the importance of having a talented workforce; thus, they have established talent management systems to maximize the capability and potential of their talented workforce (Athey, 2008). Talent management is a multi-faceted concept that has been championed by the function of Human Resources (HR), built on the foundation of strategic HR, and fueled by the dynamic, competitive business environment (Hughes & Rog, 2008).

Enthusiasm for talent management is based on a changed perception toward human resources. In the past, human resources were considered to be the same as other components like financial resources or physical resources because what mattered was the work itself. However, with the changes that have occurred in the contemporary world,

organizations have come to realize that their competitive advantage no longer comes from the physical and financial sources they have, but their employees, especially those they consider as talent, who are renewable but not easily copied (Dries, 2013; Iles, 1997).

Literature on talent management has blossomed steadily and it is now an actively discussed topic in the academic world. A significant amount of attention given by academics and practitioners to high potentials or high performers reflects a keen interest in developing talents needed for today's dynamic competitive environment. Stemming from the widely-shared belief that employees are the primary source of competitive advantage, talent management is an enacted commitment geared toward integrated, strategic human resource management (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Hughes & Rog, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Despite its apparent popularity, the topic of talent management remained under studied in the academic world. This is evidenced by the lack of information on its practices in the business and professional literature (Iles, Chuai, & Preece, 2010; Lewis & Heckman, 2006). While the total number of publications on talent management has rapidly increased, the scholarly peer-reviewed literature is meager (Dries, 2013; Iles et al., 2010). The number of publications focusing on talent management between 1990 and 2013 are more than 7,000 articles; however, only around 100 of them were published in academic journals and identified "talent management" as a keyword (Dries, 2013).

Moreover, the mainstream literature on talent management has largely focused on its concept, initiatives, and effectiveness; and most of the studies are not firmly grounded in research, relying on anecdotes or best practices (Dries, 2013; Iles et al., 2010; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Thunnissen, 2016; Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013). Additionally, about 70% of talent management articles published in the academic journals are conceptual (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

Along with the meager empirical evidence that rigorously and directly supports talent management, there is a concern that the majority of the academic literature is built on the managerialist orientation. The main focus of the research is on the link between talent management and strategy, as well as its contribution to firm performance and competitive advantage (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

While the main focus of talent management in the academic world is to improve job performance of employees with the ultimate goals of improving productivity, quality, and profitability of the organization (Dries, 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013), some critical questions have not yet been answered. For example, how do the talented individuals perceive talent management? And, does talent management have the impact that it aims to on talented employees?

Talent management is considered an intervention specifically designed to better serve those who are actually defined as talent by their organization and experience talent management on a daily basis in the workplace (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Downs & Swailes, 2013; Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010; Powell & Lubitsh, 2007; Mäkelä, Björkman, & Ehrnrooth, 2010; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). However, there are very few,

if any, empirical studies that have sought to understand the perspective of talented employees and their experiences with talent management (Björkman, Ehrnrooth, Mäkelä, Smale, & Sumelius, 2013; Dries, 2013). In the academic papers, the stakeholders involved in talent management include HR managers, line managers, middle managers, board members, CEOs, external consultants, headhunters, policy makers, and employee representatives (e.g., Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Farndale et al., 2010; Guthridge, McPherson, & Wolf, 2008), and talented individuals are viewed as subjects to *be managed* in order to meet the organizational outcomes (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

Talented employees' acceptance of talent management is critical because individuals' perceptions of talent management are likely to have an impact on their attitudes and behaviors that are important for the success of the organization (Björkman et al., 2013; Boxall & Macky, 2009; Wright & Nishii, 2007). It is important to acquire a solid understanding of the perceptions and experiences of talented employees prior to considering how to effectively execute individual talent management initiatives.

In addition, there is also a concern about the lack of diverse perspectives in the talent management literature (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Thunnissen, 2016). Beechler and Woodward (2009) argued that many of the current talent management initiatives are built on a belief system that is firmly rooted in the American culture. Although research supports the pivotal role of the context in determining individual and organizational performance (Groysberg,

McLean, & Nohria, 2006), little effort has been made to examine talent management in the non-US context (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Thunnissen, 2016).

Meyers, van Woerkom, and Dries (2013) suggested that talent management studies involving cross-cultural comparisons would be insightful since perspectives on talent may be influenced by cultural variables.

Purpose and Research Questions

Understanding how the talented workforce perceives talent management is a starting point to effectively design and implement initiatives in order to accomplish the goals of talent management. The aim of my dissertation is to contribute to the advancement of talent management research by providing a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of employees who were identified as talent and involved in talent initiatives provided by their organizations in South Korea. South Korea is specifically chosen for this study. South Korea is considered one of the major countries in the global community of HRD (Lim, Song, Choi, & Kim, 2013) yet talent management in Korean organizations has been hardly explored. In this study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What was it like to be a talent identified by an organization?
2. How did talented employees describe their experience with talent management initiatives?
3. How did talented employees perceive the impact of talent management initiatives they experienced?

Theoretical Framework

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of talented employees with talent management. There is a lack of empirical studies that shed light on employees' perception of talent management as well as the impact of talent management on the life of employees.

Since no particular theoretical approach was considered suitable for talent management (Hambrick, 2007), the theoretical framework for this study linked talent management to the social exchange relationship in the HRM discipline and possible selves in vocational psychology, which are considered the most relevant theoretical perspectives for the study of talent management (Dries, 2013).

The social exchange theory employs the idea of a generalized moral norm of reciprocity to understand the relationship between the employee and organization (Loi, Hang-Yue, & Foley, 2006). This theory explains that employees are motivated to benefit their organizations when they perceive corporate actions as positive and beneficial (Cole, Schaninger, & Harris, 2002; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). The theory of possible selves proposes that individuals have their own ideas about what they want to become or avoid in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Such images represented in one's possible selves guide individual decisions in a way to control the direction of their future life in order to develop self or to reduce loss (Smith & Freund, 2002). The interaction between these two perspectives encompasses the perceptions and experiences of individuals who were identified as talent.

Overview of the Methodology

Considering that this study aimed to generate new knowledge about the lived experiences of talented employees, phenomenology was selected as the appropriate methodology. The goal of phenomenology is to understand the meaning and nature of the everyday experience from the point of view of the experiencer (Hultgren, 1989; van Manen, 1990).

This study focused on describing the meaning of talent management for employees who had experienced this phenomenon. The nature of such focus made a phenomenological approach appropriate for this study. Employing phenomenology as a methodology, I aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of talented employees.

A phenomenological study requires in-depth data collection typically involving the long interview (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, interviews were the primary data collection method and other data sources (e.g., a reflective journal) were used to a limited extent as a supplement for an exhaustive analysis. The collected data were analyzed employing the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method modified by Moustaka (1994). Detailed descriptions of research methods are provided in Chapter III.

Boundaries of the Study

This study was conducted within two boundaries. First, this study was bounded in the Korean context. The cultural characteristics associated with this context might lead to talent management perceptions and practices that were unique, interesting, and meaningful. The culture-oriented perspectives would expand our current understanding

of talent management and contribute to talent theory building in different contexts. Lessons learned from this study might be transferable to similar contexts. Readers who consider adopting talent management in their organization can learn vicariously from my narrative description and, as Erickson (1986) pointed out, the general lies in the particular, and what people learn in this study can be transferred to similar situations.

Second, this study was intentionally bounded to a specific population of selected talented employees. This phenomenological study focused on the lived experiences of talented employees, so it relied on their level of self-awareness as talent and ability to verbally describe their perspectives on and experiences with talent management. Also, this study involved the corporations that participated to identify individuals that each company selected as talent. Each organization might have utilized different definitions of talent and therefore, there might be variations of characteristics of talent within the pool of participants. Each individual's experience and contextual point of reference would be different but would add to the richness of the data being collected. The lived experiences of talented individuals being studied allows a deeper understanding of the impact of talent management on the lives of employees. Findings of this study might be seen as guiding themes that introduced a new area of inquiry and the phenomenon of what experiences with talent management influenced the lives of employees.

Significance of the Study

Despite increasing business needs for the effective management of talent, few studies have attempted to listen to the voice of talented employees who are the main actors in talent management. This study offered an opportunity for the advancement of this line of inquiry by examining talent management through the eyes of those identified as talented and their experiences with talent management initiatives in organizations.

First, this study provided valuable insights into critical issues for organizations to consider when designing talent initiatives that would benefit both the individuals and organizations. Second, this study expanded the knowledge base of talent management by illuminating talented employees' experiences in rich narratives. The sensitive qualitative approach is considered to offer new insights and directions for an applied field of study (Frankel & Devers, 2000; Merriam, 2009). Third, this study might aid theory-in-use (Argyris, 1982) by increasing HR practitioners' understanding of what talented employees experience and might lead them to adapt or modify their approach as a result. Finally, this study may suggest roles and responsibilities of HRD in talent management. Considering that talent management is an emerging area of interests in HRD (Duttagupta, 2005; Iles, Preece, & Chuai, 2010), HRD scholars and practitioners may find this study helpful in assisting talented employees with their development and career building.

Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter I provides an introduction to talent management and identifies the need for the study, the purpose of the study, research questions, and overview of the

theoretical framework and research methodology, boundaries of the study, and its significance. Chapter II presents an extensive literature review related to the study, including the literature and empirical studies about definitions of talent and talent management, the talent management process, and theoretical frameworks informing this study. Chapter III describes the methodology of the study, including a detailed description of the research design, identification of participants, methods for data collection and analysis, the issue of trustworthiness, and the researcher's role. Chapter IV presents the phenomenological essence of the experiences of talented employees in a descriptive manner as it was customary with qualitative research methodology. Chapter V is comprised of detailed, in-depth discussion and interpretation of the findings in relation to the literature and my interpretations of the findings. It concludes with study implications, recommendations for future study, and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate talented employees' perspectives on and experiences with talent management in Korea. In order to establish a context for this study, this chapter is devoted to a review of the literature related to talent management. Literature provides scholars and practitioners with the opportunity to build upon precedent, analyze relevancy, and create additional research of value that serves to connect disjointed areas within research (Creswell & Miller, 1997).

Throughout this literature review, I examined five main areas of literature nested within talent management research. The chapter begins with a discussion about the definition of talent that has important implications for the understanding of talent management, followed by a review the definition of talent management. Next, the review describes the standard process of talent management. I then compare talent management to traditional HR practices. Finally, I introduce a theoretical framework for this study, followed by a discussion of talent management applied to the framework.

Who is Talent in Organizations?

When we mention talent, what do we mean by the term? Originally, talent was considered a group of managers when it was coined in the book, *War for Talent*, written by Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod published in 2001. As talent management has become one of the most interesting topics among scholars, practitioners, and

business leaders since its introduction, the scope of talent has expanded in a broader and more inclusive way.

There is no single or universal definition of talent, but the contemporary meanings tend to refer to the top few people with high performance and high potential who bring a great deal of competitiveness to organizations regardless of their department or position (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Downs & Swailes, 2013; Farndale et al., 2010; Mäkelä et al., 2010; Powell & Lubitsh, 2007; Tarique & Schuler, 2010). For instance, Berger and Berger (2003) described talent as a very small group of individuals who have superior accomplishments and who embody the core competencies and values of the organization. Athey (2008) referred to talent as individuals who drive a disproportionate share of their company's business performance and generate extraordinary value for customers and shareholders, adding that these people are not necessarily at the top of an organization. The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2014) defined talent as individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest level of potential.

Rather than attempting to create a universal definition of talent, a number of scholars took different approaches in defining talent. In the work of Powell, Duberley, Exworthy, Macfarlane, and Moss (2013), the definition of talent is divided into all inclusive (all employees) or an exclusive (a select group) approach. Several authors (Becker, Huselid, & Beatty, 2009; Boudreau &

Ramstad, 2005; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Lewis & Heckman, 2006) argued that key or pivotal positions with strategic significance should first be identified as they make a differentiated impact on the competitive advantage of the firm. Cheese, Thomas, and Craig (2008) used talent as an all-encompassing term to describe the human resources that organizations want to acquire, retain, and develop in order to meet their business goals.

Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, and González-Cruz (2013) conducted a literature review of the definitions of talent in the business context and related workforce differentiation (inclusive/exclusive) and subject/object distinctions to generate a fourfold typology as illustrated in Table 1. In the inclusive approach to talent, every employee can be a talent. In contrast, the exclusive approach is aimed at a specific segment of employees in the organization. In the subject approach to talent, the employee as a person is considered as a talent while the objective approach perceives talent characteristics or attributes of a person, not an individual as a whole.

According to Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), the inclusive approach to talent as a subject neither makes distinctions between groups of employees nor creates subdivisions of employees based on their current and future performance. The inclusive objective approach allows every employee to reach his or her potential and to maximize their performance through the development of the outstanding abilities of all employees.

The exclusive subjective approach concentrates on those employees who have above-average abilities, profound knowledge, and/or differentiated competencies, which often refers to high performers or high potentials of the organization. In addition,

Table 1

Approaches to Talent Management (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, and González-Cruz, 2013)

Exclusive	Exclusive Subjective Approach Only a specific segment of employees of the organization is talent – high potentials and/or high performers	Exclusive Objective Approach The focus is on specific strengths that are needed in a key position of the organization.
	Inclusive Subject Approach Every individual is a talent	Inclusive Objective Approach Every individual can reach his or her potential and exhibit highest performance.
	Subjective	Objective

commitment, engagement, motivation, and aspiration may be added to the concept of talent in this approach (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Tansley, 2011). The exclusive approach to talent as an object focuses on specific strengths that are needed in a key strategic position. And only employees who possess these specific strengths are selected as talent.

Tansley (2011) explained talent at three levels: (a) talent at the individual level, which describes those who are recognized as a complex and dynamic mix of key characteristics such as skills, knowledge, ability, and behavior that lead to high potential and high performance; (b) talent at the group level, which includes

leadership talent, key talent group, core talent, and peripheral talent; and (c) talent at the organization level at which companies formulate their own meaning of what talent is based on their unique and particular context rather than accept prescribed definitions.

A number of scholars emphasized the impact of the context on the precise description of talent, arguing that talent is not absolute but relative and subjective (Ashton & Morton, 2005; Downs & Swailes, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; McCauley & Wakefield, 2006; Tansley, 2011; Thunissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013). Examples of context factors for the definition of talent suggested are: characteristics of the organization (e.g. sector, organization goals, labor market, customer orientation) and the nature of the job (e.g. knowledge-oriented, routine), and the internal and external circumstances of an organization across time. Tansley (2011) stated that contemporary meanings of talent are specific to an organization and are highly influenced by the nature of the work undertaken, therefore, the definition of talent differs depending on the context of the organization and a shared organizational language for talent is of importance.

In this study, I will adopt the definition of talent as the individuals being studied. I am aware that the meaning of potential and performance of the individuals being studied may vary depending on their unique internal and external contexts.

What is Talent Management?

As talent is defined in many ways and the conceptualization of talent has a great influence on defining talent management, a wide range of different standpoints, scopes, and emphases exists on how talent management is described. Some examples of

definitions are presented in Table 2. As there are a great deal of assumptions and confusions between outcomes and processes and decision alternatives (Lewis & Heckman, 2006), the terms “talent management,” “talent strategy,” “succession management,” and “human resource planning” are often used interchangeably (Barnett & Davis, 2008; Chuai, Preece & Iles, 2008; Croteau & Wolk, 2010; Doherty, Viney, & Adamson, 1997; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; McCauley & Wakefield, 2006). Tansley (2011) contended that a clear definition of talent is important because it is vital for robust talent management policies and initiatives that are shared across the organization and for employee development to design and plan training and development interventions while Thunnissen, Boselie, and Fruytier (2013) asserted that, like the case of talent, to create a universal definition of talent management is simply impossible as it depends on the context of an organization.

Lewis and Heckman (2006) pointed out three distinct perspectives toward talent management. First, talent management is considered a collection of traditional, typical HR activities such as recruitment, selection, development, and career and succession planning, but does it faster or across the organization rather than within a department or function. The second views talent management as a concept of talent pools, that is, a set of processes designed to ensure an adequate flow of employees into jobs throughout the organization. Similar to succession planning or human resource planning, this approach focuses on projecting staff needs and managing the progression of employees through positions. The last

Table 2

Examples of Definitions of Talent Management

- “In the broadest possible terms, talent management is the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization. Its purpose is to assure that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time based on strategic business objectives” (Duttagupta, 2005, p. 2).
 - “Talent management is the process through which employers anticipate and meet their needs for human capital” (Cappelli, 2008a, p. 1).
 - “Activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization’s sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization” (Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p. 304).
 - “Talent management is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organization” (Davies & Davies, 2010, p. 419).
 - “Global talent management includes all organizational activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles (those roles necessary to achieve organizational strategic priorities) on a global scale” (Scullion & Collings, 2011, p. 7).
 - “A distinct strategic business activity because it calls for a greater focus on employees and positions that have the greatest differential impact on business strategy. It takes the view that there are some people who have greater potential to add real value than others and these should be working in positions that provide the greatest impact on the business objectives” (McDonnell, 2011, p. 170).
 - “The systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those individuals who are of particular value to an organization, either in view of their ‘high potential’ for the future or because they are fulfilling business/operation-critical roles” (CIPD, 2014, para. 3)
-

perspective is to see talent generically without regard for organizational boundaries or specific positions. Within this perspective, talent management is to manage talent primarily according to performance levels (e.g., “A” for top, “B” for competent, “C” for bottom performers) and to seek, hire, and differentially reward top performers regardless of their role or the organization’s needs.

Consensus in the main elements and scope of this practice are yet to be reached (CIPD, 2014), but the mainstream view of talent management is characterized by the focus on the effective management of talent. In other words, talent management consists of a set of processes for succession planning and accelerated development paths, typically for executive level roles, aimed at those employees with the highest potential who also demonstrate a capacity for high performance (Cappelli, 2008b). In this sense, Mellahi and Collings (2010) provided an indicative landscape which maps out the key streams of talent management research and practice, including the identification of key positions for the creation of competitive advantage, the construction of talent pools, and the rewarding of talented people. The importance of talent management is reflected not only in its strategic contribution to an organization’s overall competitiveness (Collings & Mellahi, 2009), but also in an organization’s ability to build, manage, and sustain its knowledge base (Scullion, Collings, & Caligiuri, 2010).

Despite different interpretations of talent management, it is generally considered to be beneficial to both organizations and individuals. For talented

employees, they can take advantage of a strong commitment to the strategic activities of their company, have more opportunities to grow and develop, receive greater support from the organization (Byham, Smith, & Paese, 2002), and obtain generous rewards with respect to job satisfaction, promotion, and compensation (McDonnell, 2011; Michaels et al., 2001). At an organizational level, the talent group is viewed as a present core asset which contributes to the competitiveness of the organization and as a future growth engine which keeps the organization sustainable (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Hiltrop, 1999; Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Talent management assures a stable supply of the right people for jobs at the right time based on business strategies and objectives (Chuai et al., 2008). Good talent management should help an organization understand the desired type of talent by describing the values, competencies, and behaviors on which it focuses (D'Annunzio-Green, 2008).

Similar to the definition of talent, talent management varies depending on an organization in terms of its strategies and initiatives. In my dissertation, I will accept the characteristics of talent management described in the individuals and organizations being studied, recognizing that differences exist.

Talent Management Process

The talent management process was first developed in the late 1990s (Guthridge, Komm, & Lawson, 2008). As presented in Figure 1, the talent management process typically consists of four steps— acquisition, deployment, development, and retention (Athey, 2008; Berger & Berger, 2003; Chuai et al., 2008; Rothwell, 2011; Scullion &

Collings, 2006). At the beginning, organizations primarily focused on recruitment (Michaels et al., 2001; Yarnall, 2011) and HRM took the major responsibility (Dries, 2013; McCauley, & Wakefield, 2006). Although the four components in the process are equally essential for successful talent management, deployment and development are often neglected while acquiring and retaining are central (Athey, 2008; Yarnall, 2011).

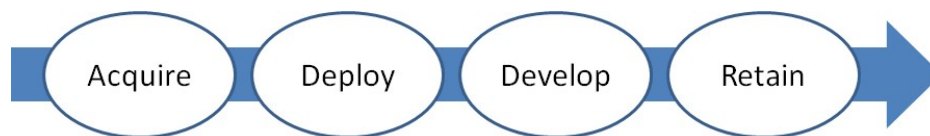


Figure 1. The traditional talent management process

Talent Acquisition

The economy of the USA was blossoming when the concept of talent emerged in the 1990s (Michaels et al., 2001). Companies continuously looked for more workers as they expanded their size and business areas in the booming economy. New graduate students were the main target for talent hunting and sources of future manager tracks in organizations. However, the limited supply of students resulted in harsh competition among companies, and the primary interest of organizations became hiring as many talented individuals as possible. Talent management started with acquisition of external talent and it is still the main talent strategy today (Athey, 2008; Grigoryev, 2006; Yarnall, 2011).

There are some advantages in the external recruitment strategy. Transfused *new blood* may evoke various perspectives and experiences that can break the status quo, provide groundbreaking ideas to resolve challenges, and propose new ways of doing business. Their influence can be huge, especially if the filled position is at a high level in the organization (Michaels et al., 2001). Taylor and Collins (2000) claimed that an organization's success is directly linked to the talent it can recruit in the present day, arguing that talent acquisition is important not only for sustained competitive advantage but also for basic organizational survival. With efficient talent recruitment strategies, employee engagement improves and so does productivity. Team engagement, motivation, and retention are maximized through talent acquisition (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008). A talent resourcing process, that is well-defined and well-executed from start to finish, can bring companies a competitive advantage in the war for talent (Ronn, 2007).

In order to attract talent, companies are changing their hiring strategies and developing new, creative channels. One of the popular strategies is employer branding (Michaels et al., 2001) as people want to work for good brands. Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2008) argued that the employer brand image is associated with the unique characteristics of the organization in its role as an employer, so a positive employer image through positive brand power can attract job applicants.

Networking is also a preferred method of recruiting top job candidates (Michaels et al., 2001; Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008). Employees are encouraged to recommend their organization to their acquaintances. The hiring department may host formal and

informal meetings or conferences and invite potential candidates to provide an opportunity to meet with the employees of the organization. The hiring department may sponsor social groups whose interests are closely related to the company's business in order to reach potential employees. Unlike in the past when companies selected individuals from a large group of people, today's organizations market themselves and put all their strengths towards reaching the right talent (Michaels et al., 2001; Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008).

Talent Deployment

Deployment is about matching the right people to the right job (Athey, 2008). Good strategies for deployment utilize the full ability of talent for whom many companies spend a fortune to bring in from outside. When it comes to key individuals, deployment becomes even more serious because of their direct impact on the organizational performance (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

When considering talent staffing, the identification of key roles, positions, and functions in the organization is as critical as the decision about who to deploy. Key roles, positions, and functions have the greatest impact on the organization's competitive advantage, and the organization should define pivotal jobs first and then fill them with talented people (Athey, 2008; Burbach & Royle, 2010; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Hartmann, Feisel, & Schober, 2010; Huselid, Beatty, & Becker, 2005; Iles, Chuai, & Preece, 2010; McDonnell, 2011).

The staffing process is critical because it is one of the effective means to promote development. By matching talent with positions in a way that optimizes

development, all the potential talent throughout the company have opportunities to grow. Michaels et al. (2001) claimed that good deployment strategies should consider highly skilled individuals not as team unit assets but as corporate assets, and this approach makes it possible to freely move people to the most attractive opportunities across the organization.

The typical approach to talent staffing is to place them to climb the corporate ladder a little faster than ordinary employees. The corporate ladder is an image for the way in which people move through companies by level such as the move from subordinate to manager or from middle to senior manager. For generations, this was the way in which a career was built and being a manager was considered the end-statuses of one's career (Michaels et al., 2001). Based on this concept of career building, many organizations place talent in a manager position with little consideration of their career path, which is critical for both individual development and organizational performance in the long term.

Talent Development

In today's uncertain market, people have learned that job security is no longer guaranteed but it rests in their own knowledge, skills, and experiences. For that reason, talented people prefer companies that will help them develop and grow (Michaels et al., 2001). In addition to the benefits that talent development has for its own sake, a good talent development strategy is also a good strategy to attract and retain highly skilled people. Therefore, it is critical for companies to improve their ability to cultivate the potential of their people.

Talent development is considered beneficial to talent management. Collings and Mellahi (2009) stressed the development of a talent pool as the key for a strategic talent management system. Croteau and Wolk (2010) argued that professional development is critical for retaining high performers. Barnett and Davis (2008) contended that talent development can maximize the chance to promote the right people for new positions because the organizations can prepare individuals for the expected roles by assigning new or expanded job responsibilities or stretch assignments.

Most proposed interventions in the literature are job stretching, different kinds of job challenges, special project assignments, coaching, mentoring, career counseling, and training programs (Barnett & Davis, 2008; Croteau & Wolk, 2010; Hartmann et al., 2010; Iles, Chuai, & Preece, 2010; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Michaels et al., 2001; Yarnall, 2011). Many organizations attempt to weave development into the fabric of the organization and to expand the development boundary into challenging job experiences and coaching (Michaels et al., 2001).

Talent Retention

In the era of the Talent War, many corporations make a significant effort to keep top talent. Highly skilled individuals frequently receive attractive offers from outside, and therefore, they have a higher tendency to leave the organization than do ordinary employees (Athey, 2008; Croteau & Wolk, 2010; Sturman, Trevor, Boudreau, & Gerhart, 2003; Perry, 2001). Many organizations introduce new attractive compensation systems to retain talent. According to a

Towers Perrin report, 42% of the companies they surveyed created targeted programs to retain top performers (Berger & Berger, 2003).

Financial benefits are considered a key method to keep talent (Hiltrop, 1999; Mcdonnell, 2011; Pfeffer, 2001; Sturman et al., 2003). In order to retain talent, companies change their compensation systems so that they can pay the talent pool significantly more than ordinary employees. The new systems are designed to pay people according to the amount of value they create (Michaels et al., 2001).

Compensation benefits are the most visible and frequently offered, and include high salaries, an Employee Stock Purchase Plan (ESPP), relocation packages, separation packages, signing bonuses, stock options, and regular and special bonuses. Literature commonly recommends firms to pay talented people well (Mcdonnell, 2011). Michaels et al. (2001) stated that these benefits are not expenses but investments, and suggested that organizations break or rewrite the rules for the talent pool.

How is Talent Management Different from Traditional HR?

As there is no clear agreement regarding the delineation of talent management, it has long been subject to academic and professional debates on whether or not it differs from traditional HR functions, and if so, on what basis? Some commentators like Abrahamson (1996) and Lewis and Heckman (2006) contended that talent management is just one of the numerous management fads which have gained popularity through fashion rather than through relevance and value. Adamsky (2003) viewed talent management as a repackaging of old ideas under a new name—old wine in new bottles, and it is just “a concept whose time has come” (para. 1).

In this perspective, talent management is considered a simple repeat of what HR has always done. Many of the key ideas for effective talent management suggested in academic literature or practitioner-oriented publications (e.g. validated selection instruments, challenging goal setting, assessment centers, 360 degree feedback, succession planning, or job rotation for development) may require additional new skills for HR practitioners but they do not fundamentally change the principles underlying such activities or provide any incremental understanding. They are already the province of HR and talent management is nothing but the application of such HR practices, therefore, the term can be exchanged with employees of the organization (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

Behind this criticism, there is a significant concern about talent management being not well grounded with little empirical research, not distinct from traditional HR, and is supported mainly by anecdote (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). In addition, talent management is not a new or unknown concept as related issues have long been discussed in the field of strategic human resource management (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

On the other hand, several authors argued that talent management is separate from typical HR (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Chuai et al., 2008). From this standpoint, compared with traditional HR practices, a distinguishing feature of talent management is an emphasis on: (1) recruiting ahead of the curve over a vacancy led recruitment strategy; (2) proactive preparation of pools with the

potential to fill key positions; (3) systematic identification of knowledge, skills, and capabilities that will be required for future business; and (4) recruiting the right people, finding the right positions for them, and encouraging their performance and development (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Huselid et al., 2005; Sparrow, 2007; Stahl et al., 2007). Collins and Mellahi (2009) argued that traditional HR focuses on managing positions and salary budgets while talent management is more interested in identifying and leveraging management and staff knowledge as the organization's human capital and highlighting the importance of a differentiated HR architecture for talented employees.

In their empirical study, Chuai et al. (2008) argued that talent management is different from traditional HR in that it incorporates new knowledge. Their findings revealed that both talent management and typical HR share key functional areas in managing and developing people to integrate them with organization goals, but as one part of HRM, talent management (a) is a more directed and detailed focus upon certain groups of people (segmentation) while traditional HR manages all staff (egalitarianism), (b) requires the support of the senior management team, and (c) makes a difference to the success and competitive advantage of the organization.

Talent management of the organizations being studied for my dissertation focuses on a certain group of employees or a talent pool, is supported by the top leadership team, and is believed to contribute to the greater organizational outcomes now and in the future. Therefore, following the argument of Chuai et al. (2008), talent management is considered separately from typical HR in this study.

Theoretical Framework

One of the challenges that talent management literature faces is a lack of rationale and theories that are rigorously and strongly supported by empirical evidences for talent management (Iles et al., 2010; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Unfortunately, existing conceptualizations offer little agreement with respect to the underlying policies, initiatives, and assessments of talent management, and this limits our ability to examine how talent management can contribute to both talented individuals and organizational goals.

Thunnissen et al. (2013) conducted an extensive review on talent management in the academic literature and found three dominant topics: (1) the definition of talent, (2) the intended effects and outcomes of talent management and (3) talent management practices. Her study showed where the interests of the mainstream literature on talent management lie--its contribution to achieve organizational goals.

A classic top-to-bottom managerial approach in the talent management literature leaves little room for the researcher to take in employees' involvement, employee agency, or employees' experiences with talent management (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Only a handful of studies have attempted to investigate the experiences or active roles of employees: employees identified as high potentials (e.g. Björkman et al., 2013; Dries & Pepermans, 2008, Dries, 2013) and the consequences of workforce differentiation for advantaged and disadvantaged employee groups (e.g., Marescaux, De Winne, & Sels, 2013).

Talent management needs to strengthen their theoretical foundations based on a more extended, multi-aspect scope. Perceptions and experiences of talented employees are a critical area for further research. With respect to this, Dries (2013) identified through a comparative review of talent management in the academic literature, a number of relevant theoretical perspectives that can serve as a basis for future research. Two theoretical perspectives from her suggestions, which are individual-oriented and best fit the purpose of this study, were selected as a theoretical framework for this study: (a) the social exchange relationship between organizations and their employees in the HRM literature and (2) possible selves in vocational psychology.

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory was formally advanced in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the work of Homans (1961) and Blau (1964) and the work of Thibaut and Kelley (1959). The primary interest of this theory is the relationship between the employee and organization, drawn from a generalized moral norm of reciprocity--a pattern of mutually contingent exchanges of gratification between two parties with a belief in reciprocity (Loi, Hang-Yue, & Foley, 2006). Social exchange tends to be long term, involves less tangible or symbolic resources, and is unclear in terms of the time frame and nature of the expected future return.

Social exchange theory focuses on the perceived organizational support in the workplace setting, which is a global belief concerning the extent to which an organization values employee contributions and cares for their welfare (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Maurer, Pierce, & Shore, 2002). Employees

perceive the organization's benevolent or malevolent orientation toward them based on the favorable or unfavorable treatment received by them. A favorable relationship is characterized by high levels of trust, interaction, support, and formal and informal rewards (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Maurer et al., 2002).

The social exchange process suggests that when corporations invest in their employees, they are likely to contribute the investments in positive ways (Mitchell, 2005). In other words, employees should be motivated to benefit their organizations to the extent that they perceive mutual organization support based on a feeling of mutual obligation and trust (Cole, Schaninger, & Harris, 2002; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010).

An organization's effort to develop high-quality relationships with employees can pay off. Previous empirical studies have shown that employees interpret corporate actions, especially HRM decisions (Guzzo & Noonan, 1994; Rousseau & Greller, 1994), as commitments or reciprocating support on the part of the organization. And when employees perceive corporate actions as positive and beneficial, they exhibit positive job attitudes, organizational behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005), job satisfaction (Stamper & Johlke, 2003), and job performance (Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999) that support the achievement of organizational goals.

Social Exchange Theory and Talent Management

The social exchange theory offers a useful lens through which to understand the mechanisms involved in how talented individuals interpret and

react to talent management (Björkman et al., 2013). In fact, this perspective has been employed as a theoretical framework for a number of talent management studies (see Björkman et al., 2013; Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Gelens, Dries, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2013; Gelens, Hofmans, Dries, & Pepermans, 2014; Wang-Cowham, 2011).

When the organization invests in the employment relationship through talent management initiatives such as identifying an employee as a talent and offering development opportunities, the individual is likely to perceive it as a signal that his or her contribution to the organization has been valued and as a result, the employer is likely to invest in his or her future career. And the social exchange process would imply that this, in turn, is likely to internally motivate the talented employee to feel obligated to positively enhance his or her work behaviors in response to the investment made by the organization and act in a way to meet organizational interests and goals (Björkman et al., 2013; Höglund, 2012). Therefore, talented employees are likely to show greater commitment to interests that are critical to their organization, to experience more job satisfaction, and to have lower turnover intention than those who are not identified as talent.

Possible Selves

In the vocational psychology literature, the fulfillment of talent is considered a continuous process through which people develop and evolve the concept of vocational self-concept crystallization (Dries, 2013). The vocational self-concept crystallization is the process of a clear and stable self-perception of one's enduring goals, interests, and talents over the course of one's career (Dries, 2013; Ibarra, 1999). The study around

possible selves developed within a context of the self-concept crystallization, in particular, offers an interesting perspective from which to examine talent and talent management (Dries, 2013).

The concept of possible selves was introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986) and is defined as the representations of “individuals’ ideas about what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming” in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Possible selves concern three issues: the concept of self, motivation, and the social and cultural-based meaning individuals use to interpret the world around them (Erikson, 2007).

The concept of self. Possible selves are viewed as complements to current conceptions of self-knowledge (Markus & Nurius, 1986). They are specific and vivid images or concepts of one’s self in the future state (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Also, they are self-directed and goal-oriented embodiments of self that depict how individuals produce their own development (Lerner, 1978). This differentiated, dynamic self-system is highly individualized based on individuals’ specific-relevant meaning based on self-knowledge about how they think about their potential and about their future (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

This type of self-concept drives people to pursue images that they hope for and strive to avoid images that they fear (Erikson, 2007; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Packard & Nguyen, 2003). The highly personalized images represented in one’s possible selves guide individual decisions about which goals to construct

and pursue, where to expend time and effort, what to avoid or resist, and what to abandon in order to achieve particular future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Smith & Freund, 2002). Individuals change their possible selves in response to changes in their position in their life span (Bolkan, Hooker, & Coehlo, 2015; Cross & Markus, 1991) to try to control the direction of their future life in order to improve or maintain self or to minimize loss (Smith & Freund, 2002).

Motivation. The concept of possible selves has been enriched by the emphasis on its function in motivation (Erikson, 2007). Possible selves were constructed to understand how individuals' future images motivate behavior and guide their career (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Packard & Nguyen, 2003). When certain current self-conceptions are challenged or supported, the nature of one's set of possible selves often determines how the individual feels and what subsequent action will be taken. As possible selves provide self-relevant motivation that serves to organize and energize action and behavior to achieve the desired outcome (e.g., they are selves to be approached or avoided) (Bolkan et al., 2015; Oyserman & Markus, 1990), they mediate long-term motivation to achieve the desired goal (Wurf & Markus, 1991).

A number of studies demonstrated that possible selves enable an individual to focus on specific, task-relevant thoughts and feelings, to allow the individual to take the necessary steps and strategies, and to organize action to accomplish the goal (Inglehart, Markus, & Brown, 1989; Markus & Nurius, 1986). According to Oettingen, Marquardt, and Gollwitzer (2012), visualization of the ideal self in a certain area of life, such as work, results in performance improvement in that area. Therefore, the concept of

possible selves makes a more direct connection among motives and specific actions and the goal-setting process (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

The social and cultural-based meaning: Possible selves are the ideal selves that individuals would like to become. These aspects of future-oriented self-knowledge reflect not only one's specific experiences in the past but also the more general experiences and expectations conferred by social and cultural contexts (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). They are not only dynamic and responsive to situations but also stable and contextually grounded (Cross & Markus, 1991; Frazier, Hooker, Johnson, & Kaus, 2000; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Meanings are constructed from a social and cultural context. The social and cultural environment influences individuals' everyday concepts of the world and of human nature (Erikson, 2007). Individuals use the social and cultural-based meaning to interpret the world around them. Such influence of the social and cultural context on individuals' future images is recognized in the concept of possible selves (Dries, 2013; Erikson, 2007). Possible selves are constructed with an eye to the relationships among self-concept and motivation and social and cultural understanding of the world around individuals. For instance, the meaning of a possible self of being successful is given its meaning from a social and cultural context in which success is defined in terms of making a large amount of money or obtaining a high position in a large and famous company.

Possible Selves and Talent

Scholars who study the concept of possible selves are likely to assume that talented individuals have highly personalized images in their possible selves. Such images encourage talented employees to search for available opportunities in their organization and to make an effort to grab them to build their career paths. Also, their vivid and elaborate possible selves may increase the likelihood that a talented workforce accepts work with more desirable job attributes and has greater confidence in their job decisions. The level of these individuals' satisfaction with their work may be higher than that of other employees.

Chapter Summary

This review of the literature examined the understanding of talent management, the existing literature, and the gaps that are not addressed in the literature. The term talent is defined in many different ways, which leads to many different working definitions and approaches toward talent management. Despite the various perspectives toward these two terms, the process of talent management generally consists of talent acquisition, deployment, development, and retention. Scholarly discussions about how talent management is distinguished from traditional HR functions continue in the academic world.

Organizations provide talent management support for employees they identify as talent and expect them to accomplish organizational goals. However, very few studies have investigated the perspective of talented employees although they play a pivotal role in talent management. Further research is needed to investigate the talented employees'

points of view toward talent management and the influence of talent management on talented employees. Adopting the social exchange relationship and possible selves as theoretical frameworks, this study attempted to fill these voids.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to investigate how talented employees perceived talent management in the context of South Korea. In this chapter I discuss the philosophical perspective that underpins the qualitative methodology used for this study. Following that, I describe in detail the methods for data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with strategies for ensuring trustworthiness of the findings and the role of the researcher. Prior to conducting the study, I obtained the approval for the design from the university's Institutional Review Board (Appendix A).

Restatement of the Purpose and Research Questions

This study aimed to explore how talented employees described their experiences with talent management. Despite its popularity, talent management as an academic research area faces several challenges, such as the scarcity of rigorous empirical studies (Iles et al., 2010; Lewis & Heckman, 2006), the performance-focused approach based on the managerial perspective (Thunnissen et al., 2013), the oversight of its relationship with individuals (Björkman et al., 2013; Dries, 2013), and the lack of diverse perspectives (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). With regard to talented employees in particular, while they experience talent management in their workplace and are expected to achieve the goals of talent management, research focused on this population group is minimal. Therefore, this study was a timely effort to fill knowledge gaps regarding

individual employees' experiences with talent management. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What was it like to be a talent identified by an organization?
2. How did talented employees describe their experience with talent management initiatives?
3. How did talented employees perceive the impact of talent management initiatives they experienced?

Qualitative Research Methodology

Choosing a research design, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods, requires a researcher to carefully consider the type of research questions asked, the control he or she has over actual behavioral events, and the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena (Yin, 2009). The discussion about establishing appropriate theories to capture talent management's distinctive features or causal relationships with its expected outcomes still continues. Since talent management has just moved from the stage of infancy (Lewis & Heckman, 2006) to adolescence (Collings, Scullion & Vaiman, 2011), it falls into the criterion of a phenomenon (Hambrick, 2007). To study a complex phenomenon within its unique contexts, the qualitative research design provides useful tools for researchers (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

A qualitative approach suggests that people understand the world in which they live and work while making meaning from their individual circumstances and lived experiences (Creswell, 2009). By understanding

meaning - how people view the world, how they make sense of their lives, what they experience, and how they interpret them (Merriam, 1991), the primary goal of qualitative research is to understand a whole phenomenon through the lens of those who actually live and make sense of an event.

Originating from the Greek expression, *phainomenon*, phenomenology is a process by which something can be brought to light (Heidegger, 1977). The goal of phenomenology is to explore the hidden meanings of experience from the subjective first person point of view and to clarify the essence of the experience, which are the foundations of what is actually revealed (Hultgren, 1989). Phenomenology is primarily concerned with the personal stories of the participants in relation to the phenomenon. According to van Manen (1990), the fundamental question a phenomenology study seeks to answer is “What is this or that experience like?” (p. 9). The intent is not to analyze and explain but to understand and describe what appeared to be the participants’ sense of their experiences.

In this sense, a phenomenological approach aligns well with the purpose of this study because it allows for an in-depth investigation of the meanings of talent management as experienced by the selected employees from their unique personal views. Talented employees are a selected group who experience talent management initiatives in their organization on a daily basis. Their perceptions built on such experiences are their realities. Considering that talent management viewed from talented individuals has rarely been investigated, the phenomenological approach enabled me to

gain a rich understanding of the reality to be examined in a way that incorporated the views of the *actors* in the talent management phenomenon.

Phenomenological research is designed to capture the meaning of the experience of talented employees while at the same time maintaining a holistic perspective toward talent management. It is a useful approach to exploring the detailed and in-depth experiences of individuals' lives in their own words and on their own terms (Patton, 1986). This approach enabled me to provide a thick, rich description of a complex phenomenon such as talent management, which could not be captured adequately through a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2007). With an extensive and in-depth description of the phenomenon of talent management based on talented employees' real-life situations, the knowledge gained by this methodology provides readers with deep and fresh insights and meanings that can expand their understanding of these experiences.

Sampling Procedures

Purposeful sampling is used to select research sites and individuals for qualitative studies so that researchers can purposefully provide an understanding of the problem and the central phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007). In this section, I discuss the sampling procedures I followed at two levels—research site and study participants.

Site Selection

I began the sampling process by identifying organizations that had implemented talent management. Given the goal and nature of my study, it was critical for me to

recruit organizations that had been actively involved in talent management. My initial step was the search for a list of large corporations in Korea. My 7-year work experience in the HR field in Korea told me that large companies were likely to implement talent management because large companies adopted the most recent HR activities (Park, 2011). I compiled a preliminary list of large Korean corporations from a report, *Fiscal Year 2015 Large Business Groups in Korea*, published by the Korea Fair Trade Commission under the auspices of the Government of South Korea. Then, I visited each of their official websites and searched for their talent management information.

Along with this, I gathered information about corporations with talent management by searching for related articles from popular publications. Articles that featured talent management in an organization were found in business newspapers, HR journals, books, and scholarly papers in Korea. Also, in many cases, companies that implemented talent management introduced this practice on their official website to underscore their commitment to the development of employees. While public publications provided only brief information, they were useful for deciding which companies could or could not be included for this dissertation. The company information found was added to my preliminary list.

Additionally, I contacted HR professionals whom I knew personally and asked them if they could recommend any companies that would meet my sampling criteria. These professionals were knowledgeable about which companies had invested in talent management and how they implemented it through various venues such as the HR communities, conferences or forums, or business meetings. The companies referred

might or might not appear on my preliminary list but as long as they met my criteria, they were included in my final list. All of these efforts helped me to establish a completed prospect list of 22 corporations that had engaged in talent management for more than five years, officially notified individual employees of their identification as talent, and therefore, met the criteria to be a potential site for my dissertation research. I contacted the 22 corporations via email or through my personal network and four companies agreed to participate in my study.

Participant Selection

Unlike quantitative research seeking a sample that is statistically representative, qualitative research employs the characteristics of the population as the basis of selection; and this feature makes it well suited to small-scale, in-depth studies (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). Considering that my dissertation was a phenomenological study, possible participants were identified through purposeful sampling in order to yield “insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). As a useful approach to deeply examining the experiences of a specific population, purposeful sampling ensures that the proper characteristics required for the exploration of the phenomenon are available (Moustakas, 1994).

There are a wide range of methods for purposeful sampling suitable to qualitative inquiry, depending on the aims and coverage of the study. Patton (2002) identified quite a few, such as extreme or deviant case (outlier) sampling, intensity sampling, maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, typical case sampling, critical case sampling, snowball or chain sampling, criterion sampling, convenience sampling, and

theory-based sampling, to name a few. For this study, I employed the criterion sampling strategy.

Criterion sampling is effective for a phenomenological study of “multiple individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 112). Criterion sampling is “situational, rather than demographic, representativeness” is sought (Horsburgh, 2003, p. 311), and it engages participants in the research based on their knowledge, abilities, and experiences. This sampling method covers all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter (Ritchie et al., 2003) and assures the ability of participants to answer the research questions with rich, in-depth information (Merriam, 1998), so it is very strong in quality assurance (Patton, 2002). This method of sampling enabled the identification and selection of participants in the population of employees who were considered talent and experienced talent management in their organization.

Participant Selection Criteria

Samples for a phenomenological study need to be selected to ensure the inclusion of relevant constituencies and characteristics salient to the phenomenon being studied (Ritchie et al., 2003). Criteria for this study were created to meet this “symbolic representation” (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 83). Following a criteria sampling technique suggested by Ritchie et al. (2003), I considered (a) a review of relevant literature that identified characteristics that were known to influence the talent management phenomenon and (b) subsets of the population that should be excluded. Also, the criteria for this study were developed in order to provide (c) a comprehensive and inclusive

basis to define a select desirable research sample and (d) a sufficient number of participants to allow for a high-quality selection.

Everything considered, the criteria for identification of potential participants included the following.

- (a) The participants must have been employed by a corporation which had engaged talent management for more than five years. Five years would provide ample time for the company to have talent management interwoven into the organization strategy, HR philosophy, and the overall system;
- (b) The participants must have been identified by the company as talent and been officially informed by HR or their manager that they were in a talent pool. Their self-awareness as talent was likely to allow them to be in a position to relate to talent management to tell their story as they perceived it;
- (c) The participants must have been in a talent pool for at least three years; and
- (d) The participants must have been engaged in talent management initiatives provided by their organizations.

With criteria (c) and (d), I expected the participants to be able to provide ample, in-depth answers based on their firsthand experiences. In addition, I followed Ritchie et al.'s (2003) advice that emphasized diversity in the research sample. They asserted that diversity within the boundaries of the defined population is important for two reasons. First, the diversity of characteristics increases the chances of identifying their different contributory influences that are associated with a phenomenon. Second, diversity “allows some investigation of interdependency between variables such that those that are

most relevant can be disengaged from those of lesser import” (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 83).

To obtain a diversity of participants, I gathered demographic information of potential participants during participant screening as well as during the interview process. Considerations included the following: an industry (e.g., IT, retail, manufacturing), a company (e.g., a large company, an online company, a multinational company), work role (e.g., engineer, marketing, HR), title (e.g., senior leader, manager), years of employment, age, and gender. Talented employees from various backgrounds were selected to generate findings that were meaningful in understanding the nature of how talented employees perceived talent management across different backgrounds. The above criteria guided me to recruit the participants who could provide thick and rich descriptions about their lived experiences as talent and achieved data saturation in the data collection process.

Sample Size

A qualitative study aims to describe experiences and to reveal the particular based on the extensive, detailed information that is gathered; the goal is not to determine statistically significant discriminatory variables and to generalize the information (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Ritchie et al., 2003). Due to this nature, samples for phenomenological qualitative research are small in size. The small number of sample allows for an in-depth and detailed exploration of the essence of people’s experiences with the phenomenon being studied (Moustakas, 1994). Also, there is a point of saturation of data in the interview process where new evidence is no longer obtained

from each additional interview or fieldwork (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ritchie et al., 2003).

Although the appropriate sample size for a phenomenological study is determined by the purpose of the study and the researcher's judgment during data collection and analysis, a very general rule of thumb is between five and 15 participants for a single phenomenological inquiry (Creswell, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Morse, 2000). Therefore, my target sample size was between five and 15. I aimed to interview at least five participants, which, I believed as the researcher of this study, was the minimum number to obtain in-depth, rich meaning and understanding of the research question. By the time I interviewed the tenth participant, I noticed that many of his responses belonged to the common themes that I had developed in the data analysis. Also, I found that the data from the interview did not add new information to my understanding of the perspectives and experiences of talented employees with talent management (Seale, 1999). I realized that I had reached the point of data saturation; as a result, I stopped collecting additional information.

Participant Recruitment Process

As mentioned earlier, I employed the criterion sampling method to recruit talented employees who worked for organizations that had implemented talent management as potential participants. To do so, I followed the process described below.

First, as described above, I first identified potential organizations for this study. The next step was to recruit talented employees who worked for one of these identified companies. I used my personal network of individuals I knew who worked in the HR

department of the listed companies. For the listed companies with which I did not have any connection, I made the initial inquiry to the HR team by phone or via email, explained the purpose of my study and what I hoped to learn, and asked if they were interested and willing to introduce this study to their talented employees.

For those who agreed to help me find participants for this study, I gave them the participant selection criteria and asked for their recommendations for potential participants. If possible, I asked them to recommend talented employees with particular characteristics such as gender, age, position, or role and responsibilities so that I could obtain a diversity in potential participants. The recommendations were gathered and screened to create a list of potential participants for this study.

The organizations on my list informed a talented individual that he or she was selected as talent, but they preferred to keep it private between the talented employees, their managers, and HR. So they felt uncomfortable about my directly contacting prospective participants. They wanted to act as an agent between their talented employees and me and to be involved in communications for the data collection such as participant selection, introduction to the study, and interview scheduling. Some HR teams were fine with me personally contacting their talented employees, but they wanted to initially contact the prospective participants and introduce this study before I got in touch with them. For this reason, I asked my contacts on the HR teams who helped me with recruiting to introduce potential participants to the study and to ask if they were interested in participating. Finally, I compiled the names of talented employees provided

by HR teams from four corporations and develop a list of ten potential participants. Then, I contacted them to confirm their willingness to participate.

Data Collection

A qualitative study enables an investigator to explore complex social units that may hold critical factors in understanding the phenomenon (Yin, 2009), therefore, it is important to carefully select a data collection method which is sensitive to the underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data (Merriam, 2009). In this phenomenological study, interviewing was the primary data collection method as suggested by Moustakas (1994). And a reflective journal was used to a limited extent for the purpose of data triangulation (Creswell, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990).

Interviewing

Interviewing is a primary method used to learn about multiple realities in a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). It is an interactive process between researchers and participants (Berg, 1989) and allows for deep and rich exploration of the phenomenon under study (van Manen, 1990). Interviews are a useful means of obtaining information to understand how individuals view their world, their perceptions and experiences, and how they make meaning of such experiences (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 2006). Therefore, interview questions must be designed in a way that they create the context as the story unfolds (King, 1994).

For this study, the interview questions were designed to understand (a) participants' lived experiences with talent management, (b) their perception of the impact of talent management on their development and performance, and (c) their expectations of talent management. I included both main interview questions designed to be directly related to topics of inquiry and probing questions (follow-up questions) that facilitated obtaining more details and asked participants to elaborate, clarify, or contrast an issue (Patton, 2002). The combination of main questions and probes enhanced the question-topic fit and clarity, depth, and detail of the questions (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The major part of the interviews was created to gather the participants' perspectives on a phenomenon of talent management in their own words (Patton, 2002). It included acquiring information about unique experiences, descriptions of an episode, or an explanation related to talent management.

Fruitful interview data requires a strong advance plan and a highly skillful handling of the interview situation to obtain critical information from interviewees by asking the right questions. To facilitate the obtaining of rich and substantive descriptions of the participants' experiences with talent management, Moustakas (1994) suggested developing a general interview guide or topical guide. For this study, I used an interview guide with a set of pre-developed questions (Appendix B). The interview questions were open-ended (Creswell, 2007) and semi-structured (Patton, 1990). Being open-ended allows for capturing in-depth understanding and being semi-structured helped the interview remain focused yet still flexible enough for probing purposes (Patton, 1990). However, I was highly aware of the possible need for me to make changes and

adjustments to my pre-developed interview questions during the interview, depending on the responses of each participant.

Prior to the actual interview, demographic information of each participant was gathered using the pre-designed demographic information sheet (Appendix C). It included the participant's code name, age, gender, relationship status, education, employer information (e.g., industry, products or services, number of employees, years of implementing talent management initiatives), title, current work role, years of employment with the current organization, years of being talent, and talent management initiatives participation. Demographic information obtained provided the context of the participants' experiences and was valuable in assisting in data interpretation. All participants' data were treated as confidential and were stored in a secure location in my home office.

With each participant, I conducted one-on-one, face-to-face interviews for five reasons. First, talented employees needed to be reached individually. The participants knew that they were identified as talent but they did not know other talented employees as the corporations did not make the list of talent public to the whole organization. Second, the individual participants could select an interview place which they preferred and an environment familiar to them, which eased tension with the interview process as well as ensured confidentiality (Seidman, 2006). Third, when engaged in a one-on-one conversation, the participants might be more willing to share their thoughts and experiences freely and openly without the concern of being judged by peers. Fourth, individual

interviews allowed me to fully focus on the story of one individual participant, which might encourage the sharing of the essence of the lived experiences in the participant's own words (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Last, I had the flexibility to ask additional or follow-up questions, probed for more data, and managed the time for each interview. All things considered, one-on-one, face-to-face interviewing was an effective method for obtaining rich, vital, substantive descriptions of the experience as it was lived (Moustakas, 1994), which was needed for my phenomenological study.

Each interview took about an hour, as suggested by Seidman (2006) and Hill and Williams and Thompson (1997). All interviews were conducted in the Korean language since both participants and I were native Koreans and participants might feel it difficult to communicate in English. By interviewing in Korean, participants could express their thoughts and feelings much better than in English and I could better understand their responses in the Korean cultural context.

Interviews were digitally recorded using a digital voice-recorder with the interviewees' written permission. The recording helped me keep track of the communications that occurred during the interview and to preserve and cross-check the collected information, as well as to ensure the accuracy of the transcription during the data analysis process (Boyatzis, 1998; Creswell, 2005).

At the end of each interview, I transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim. The transcripts were stored in Microsoft Word on my personal laptop and were encrypted with an encryption password. I was the only person with access to the recorded and transcribed data. I did not use any digital transcription software. The transcription work

required me to carefully listen to the interviews and to focus on what was typed word by word. I read each transcript while listening to the recording to check for accuracy, spelling, and punctuation (Merriam, 1998). I believe that this labor inspired me as a researcher to recall the interview and review the interview data with a deeper insight.

Interview Preparation. I began by initiating communication with talented employee participants via email. As the participants had already heard about my study from the HR team and had agreed to take part in the study, I sent the introductory letter (Appendix D) via email, confirming their participation in this study. Along with this email, I also sent two documents. One was the participants informed consent form (Appendix E) detailing the background and purpose of the study, as well as the participants' responsibilities and rights as study subjects. The other was the interview guide prepared for my participants in the Korean language. Providing participants with interview questions in advance gave them the opportunity to reflect on their experience and prepare their responses (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In this email letter, I requested the participants to select a date, time, and location that was convenient for them to do the interview.

During the research process, each participant was provided a schedule confirmation letter via email three times. An interview schedule was delivered to each participant on the day that he or she responded to me with their available timeframe for an interview. I sent the second email reminder the day prior to the scheduled interview and a third reminder on the morning of the interview day. Keeping an active

communication with my participants helped me eliminate any confusion regarding interview appointments.

Prior to each interview session, I was at the meeting place 30 minutes before the appointment to prepare for the interview. I had the interview materials with me, including (a) a hard copy of the interview guide (Appendix B), (b) a hard copy of a demographic information sheet (Appendix C), (c) a hard copy of the introductory letter that explained the research purpose and procedures (Appendix D), (d) a hard copy of a written consent form (Appendix E), (e) my digital voice-recorder, and (f) a notebook for my reflective journal (Appendix F).

I reminded myself of the purpose of this study, which was written on the first page of my reflective journal. I tested the recording system for the quality of the recording (Patton, 2002) and prepared notebooks and extra batteries for the recorder (Leong & Austin, 1996). Also, I filled out the information section in the interview guide with the date, time, location, and individual to be interviewed. Then, I went through interview questions and reviewed my reflective journal. This preparation helped me get ready for the interview.

Interview Session. When a participant arrived at the meeting place on the day of the interview, I greeted him or her. Then, I introduced myself and had an informal, social conversation with the participant so that he or she could feel comfortable in a relaxed and trusting atmosphere (Moustakas, 1994). Following this, I presented the participant an overview of the study and the interview procedure, and handed him or her a hard copy of the introductory letter (Appendix D). The interviewee was given the following

information: the purpose of the study, the expectations for participant involvement, the time frame allotted for the interview, the informed consent form (Appendix E), the interview procedures, and the confidentiality of the data collected. The interviewee was also informed that his or her participation in this study was voluntary and he or she had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. In addition, the participant was asked if audio-recording the interview was acceptable. The participant was also informed that the interview was part of my dissertation and would be published. Finally, the interviewee was asked if he or she had any questions or concerns before the interview started.

When the explanation was completed and the participant reviewed and signed the informed consent form (Appendix E), he or she was provided a hard copy of the interview questions that had been sent with the schedule confirmation for their reference. I turned on my digital voice-recorder and located it in front of the interviewee. Then the data collection process began, following the interview guide (Appendix B). During the interview, I took notes of the participant's main points, physical expressions and behaviors.

Interview Follow-up. Upon completion of each interview, I stayed for another hour at the meeting place to compose reflective journal notes (Appendix F). Such notes needed to be written within 24 hours after the interview took place (Lofland & Lofland, 1999) while the interview was still fresh in my mind. I documented my overall impression of the interview, my observations, feelings,

the participants' non-verbal communications, lessons learned, areas that needed to be further explored, or questions that needed to be revised or added. Doing this reflection helped me to determine if follow-up was needed with the interviewee.

After I completed the transcribing of the recorded interview verbatim, I sent the transcript to the interviewee for member checking (Appendix G). Member checking increases accuracy by allowing the interview data to be reviewed and revised by the interviewee (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). The participant was asked to review their transcripts and provide feedback. I contacted the participant for additional information to clarify his or her responses or to correct or edit transcript statements. When each interviewee reviewed and validated his or her individual transcript, the collected data were ready for analysis.

Finally, I filed each interview case in a separate binder and stored every item related to a participant in the interview participant files. The materials included a demographic information sheet (Appendix C), an informed consent form signed by a participant (Appendix E), and copies of email correspondences between the participant and me.

Reflective Journal

The researchers' role as interpreters in qualitative research requires them to be sensitive, skeptical, and reflective in practice (Stake, 1995). To serve the given role, I kept a reflective journal (Appendix F) as they were essential tools for supplementing the interview (Lofland & Lofland, 1999) as well as an important step toward data analysis in the phenomenological process (Groenewald, 2004).

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, a reflective journal was employed for the following three purposes. First, it provided a venue for me to reveal, acknowledge, and capture my biases, prejudices, thoughts and assumptions. Such reduction of researcher bias, or the epoche process (Moustakas, 1994), was helpful to increase the integrity of the study (Gallagher, 2006).

Second, it was a means of corroboration of data by capturing the key ideas and stories from the interview. I recorded not only my impressions, emotions, and thoughts about the interview but also participants' non-verbal communications and behaviors (e.g., facial expressions or body language) or any other observations that might be clues to capture the essence of the talented employees' experiences with the phenomenon of talent management.

Last, I used the reflective journal to gain a deep understanding of the data. I took notes about the meaning of the data, ideas about major or common themes and patterns that emerged during my conversations with participants and their relationships, a preliminary analysis of what I had learned so far, and what could be further explored.

I took notes of my thoughts and questions during the data collection and analysis process and explored possible answers and meanings of the data. Then, they were assigned code names to ensure participants' confidentiality and stored in the respective interview participant files.

Data Analysis

In a phenomenological study, data collection and data analysis occur concurrently and continuously throughout the research process (Erlandson et al., 1993;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Phenomenological data analysis “involves taking constructions gathered from the context and reconstructing them into meaningful wholes” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 333). It is a descriptive, interpretative, and iterative process to understand the parts (data) and the whole (understanding of the phenomenon) and to identify both what appears and how it appears that way (Bontekoe, 1996; van Manen, 1990).

The collected data for this study included interview transcripts verified by each participant and a reflective journal. All the gathered data were in Korean, so I analyzed them as they were for accuracy and clarity. Then, the findings of the study were translated into English, reviewed by a Korean who could read and translate English with a high level of proficiency, and were reported in Chapter IV.

Data Analysis

In this study, the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method modified by Moustakas (1994) was employed as the primary data analysis method. The analysis of each individual transcript was guided by the following nine steps.

Step 1. Described my personal experiences with the talent management phenomenon.

The data analysis in a phenomenological study begins with a researcher’s full description of the participants’ experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This step is known as epoche or bracketing. Epoche is the process of identifying and setting aside biases, assumptions, preconceived notions or beliefs, prejudices, and judgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990).

The epoche process allows researchers to be less biased by their own knowledge, to understand the interviewee’s experience as described, and to look at the phenomenon

with a fresh perspective without projecting ideas onto it (Moustakas, 1994). It allows researchers to see the world through the lens of the participants and to logically articulate their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, the epoche process is a critical aspect of data collection and analysis in phenomenological research.

In this regard, I used a reflective journal as the major method for the process of epoche (Creswell, 2007). Before I started the data collection, I wrote a narrative that described my perceptions, experiences, and knowledge about talent management. I identified my potential biases, prejudgments, and assumptions regarding the talent management phenomenon. I stated them in the Boundaries of the Study section in Chapter I. I also bracketed them during the data collection and analysis processes so that the participant's experiences, not my prejudgment about his or her experiences, could be documented (Creswell, 1994).

I continued to reflect on my role in the data collection and analysis processes and observed how my knowledge, experiences, and biases might influence this study. The epoche process assisted me in facing the talent management phenomenon as much as possible on its own terms (Patton, 2002).

Step 2. Read and re-read the transcription of an interview in an effort to clearly understand the experience described.

Step 3. Treated each statement differently depending on its significance for description of the talent management phenomenon (e.g., a participant's statement about lessons learned from a training program for talent was considered more significant than the statement of his or her work role.).

Step 4. Identified and recorded all relevant statements (e.g., it included not only statements which were directly related to talent management such as compensation but also statements about their relationship with a manager or their perception toward their organization.).

Step 5. Eliminated overlapping and/or repetitive, and vague statements not related to the research (e.g., when participants used fillers such as “like, like, like..”).

Step 6. Considered the remaining statements as “meaning units of experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122)

Steps 2 through 6 were the process of horizontalization of the data for “phenomenological reduction” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). Statements in the interviews or other data sources about how employees experienced talent management were broken down into the smallest pieces of information that depicted an independent thought concerning the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Each interview transcribed into a Microsoft Word document was converted to a Microsoft Excel sheet. The transcriptions were divided into the smallest unit of independent thought. And each thought had an individual cell in the Excel sheet. By the end of this work, the entire interview data were compiled into one Excel sheet and each cell in the sheet presented a different unit of an independent thought. Also, a corresponding data code (e.g., demographic information) was added to the sheet for reference purposes. Then, each unit of data was printed on an index card. Sample index cards are presented in Appendix H. Throughout the process of reviewing interview transcripts multiple times, this activity facilitated the organization of data from the interview into significant statements, meaningful units, and a structural

description of the experience that spoke directly to the talent management phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990).

Also, this activity allowed me to reduce the data into manageable pieces so that the process to assess the text relevant to the analysis, to identify key phrases, words and ideas, and to group them into common themes became simplified. It was an iterative process to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the data. As a result, I was able to obtain the categories, themes, and patterns which emerged inductively from the data.

Step 7. Grouped or clustered the related meaning units of experience into common themes.

Step 8. Synthesized the meaning units of experience and themes into a textural description.

As the interview questions were open-ended and issue-oriented, rich context-bound information obtained from the interviews led to patterns and themes that explained how talent management was perceived by talented employees. Steps 7 and 8 were the process of the iterative sorting, grouping and conceptualizing ideas that had similar patterns, and inductively forming categories (Miles & Huberman, 1984) to obtain overarching themes that emerged from and are common to all of the data. The two steps involved interpreting the meaning of identified categories or meaning clusters (Miles & Huberman, 1984), inspecting the meanings for repeated features of talent management (Moustakas, 1994), extracting meaning

units of experience that were directly related to the experience, and providing an initial summary description (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990).

I employed the card sorting process suggested by Erlandson et al. (1993), including the following: With a stack of index cards with the individual unit of data, I read the first card and identified a category. Next, I read the second card. The second card either was added to the first category or another category was created. I continued the process until all of the cards had been read. A card which did not belong to any category went to a miscellaneous group. Then, I designated a category name or descriptive title for each stack of cards. Finally, I repeated the process to make sure that all of the cards were reexamined and properly categorized. In this stage of the process, I shared my work with my colleague debriefer in order to identify my assumptions as a researcher.

Also, imaginative variation was applied (Moustakas, 1994). Imaginative variation is the process in which phenomenological researchers explore all possible meanings of each major theme from multiple perspectives and consider alternative interpretations. “Variation is targeted toward meanings and it depends on intuition as a way of integrating structure into essences” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98). The goal of imaginative variation is to develop the essential structure of the specific themes from the experience and the underlying dynamics of the phenomenon that account for what is being experienced (Moustakas, 1994).

Following Moustakas’ (1994) suggestion for imaginative variation, I reflected on the participants’ thoughts and emotions with respect to the talent management

phenomenon (e.g., time, space, physical concerns, materiality, causality, relation to self, or relation to others). I approached the talent management phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions in order to imagine a variety of possible meanings behind the textural meaning described by the participants. In addition, I looked for examples that not only vividly demonstrated the invariant structural themes related to talent management but also facilitated the development of a structural description of the phenomenon.

Step 9. Wrote a composite description of the talent management phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions.

When eight steps were completed, the identified overarching themes were documented and presented in the form of a composite textual-structural description of the talented employees' experiences. A textural description is a description of *what* the participants in this study experienced with the talent management phenomenon and a structural description is about *how* the experiences happened, reflecting on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced (Creswell,2007). The composite data were finally constructed to answer the stated research questions. It was illustrated with examples from the interviews (Moustakas, 1994) and gave voice to the talent management phenomenon as a unified whole from a composite view of the participants.

Trustworthiness

Regardless of the types of research methodologies, study quality and trustworthiness are basic key elements. Explaining that trustworthiness is

established when research findings as closely as possible represent the meanings as described by the participants, Lincoln and Guba (1985) advised researchers to employ a variety of strategies to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research. For this study, I employed five methods: (a) an audit trail; (b) member checking; (c) iterative questioning; (d) triangulation; and (e) examination of previous research findings.

Audit Trail

An audit trail is an important part of establishing rigor in qualitative work as it describes the research procedures (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). By keeping an audit trail, I recorded unique research decisions that I made as the study progressed and provided justification for each decision based on critical thinking. The audit trail helped me provide thick and detailed information on the research procedures in Chapter III of the dissertation.

Member Checking

Member checking allows participants to review findings from the data analysis in order to confirm or challenge their accuracy (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998). This is an important strategy to establish trustworthiness as it manages the threat of bias with the agreement of participants (Padgett, 1998).

The first member checking took place during the interview. I rephrased or interpreted what the participants said and asked if they were understood correctly. Then, when the interview finished, I wrapped up the dialogues and asked the interviewees if they agreed with or wanted to make changes to their responses. Finally, I sent participants the written transcripts within a week upon completion of the interview to

verify the accuracy of the interview data. Doing so provided the participants with an opportunity to identify areas that might have been missed or misinterpreted (Appendix G).

Iterative Questioning

Iterative questioning is where researchers revisit issues previously raised by a participant and obtain related information through rephrased questions (Shenton, 2004). By conducting this process during the interview, I was able to see contradictions, detect falsehoods, and make a decision about whether or not to discard the suspect data in the data analysis process.

Triangulation

Triangulation may involve the use of different methods that are beneficial to enhance researchers' strengths and to avoid their individual limitations (Guba, 1981). I sought for triangulation by recruiting a diversity of participants from multiple workplaces. Participants in this study represented diversity in terms of age, gender, title, department or team, and years of employment. In addition to participant triangulation, I also triangulated research sites by selecting diverse companies in terms of sector, products or services, customers, and business size. The various contexts reduced the concern about local factors unique to one individual or one work site. When similar results emerged from a variety of perspectives, findings had greater credibility.

Examination of Previous Research Findings

Silverman (2000) stated that one of the key criteria for evaluating qualitative work is the ability of researchers to compare their findings to an existing body of knowledge. I examined my findings in relation to current literature on talent management.

The Researcher's Role

Qualitative research examines how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meanings they attribute to their experiences (Merriam, 1991). To meet this goal, a great emphasis is placed on the role of researchers as interpreters. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that in order to understand the whole phenomenon under study, researchers cannot be distant from what is being studied. Rather, as considering themselves as the primary instrument, researchers are encouraged to be closely involved with what or who is being studied, to share in the worlds of the researched, and to interpret their experiences in the research context (Merriam, 1991). Also, researchers are expected to allow their own perceptions to mediate in delineating the process of meaning-making and to analyze and synthesize what they have learned, all the while realizing their own consciousness (Stake, 1995). Subjectivity is promoted as an essential element of understanding in qualitative research (Stake, 1995).

As a researcher, I was aware of my dual roles as both an insider and an outsider. I am a Korean who lived in Korea for 30 years, so I had a deep knowledge of the Korean culture, both at the national and organizational levels. In this sense, I shared some commonalities with my study participants. In addition, as an insider, I was able to read between lines during the interviews and caught unspoken or unrecognized messages

from the participants' non-verbal cues, which could be deciphered in the Korean cultural context.

Also, I had seven years of work experience as an HRD practitioner in large corporations in Korea, and my major job responsibility was talent management. I designed strategies for the development of talented employees, implemented training programs for talent, and was involved in designing talent compensation packages. My work experience equipped me with sufficient knowledge of the general policies, processes, and initiatives for talent management. My ethnicity, nationality, and work experience allowed me to better capture critical information during the research.

However, like a double-edged sword, these advantages might also be disadvantages for me as a researcher because they might have given me a biased perspective which might impact the way I conducted research and collected and analyzed data. Instead of avoiding or denying the bias or subjectivity that I held, I tried to embrace them and make them explicit. I kept a research journal in order to be sensitive, skeptical, and reflective in practice (Appendix F).

In this study, I also assumed the role of an outsider. I studied HRD in the USA and my knowledge of talent and talent management was built primarily upon the west-based literature. While this allowed me to explore talent management in Korea from a fresh perspective, it also put me at risk of making inaccurate or culturally inappropriate interpretations.

Chapter Summary

Chapter III addressed the methodological issues. It started with a description of the phenomenological design I selected. It then moved on to a detailed discussion about the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. The chapter concluded with strategies for ensuring trustworthiness and articulation of my role as researcher.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This phenomenological study described the experiences of Korean employees who were identified as talent and participated in talent management initiatives provided by their organizations in Korea. Each participant shared his or her personal story of being a talent, experiences with talent management initiatives, and their impacts on his or her work and career.

A total of ten talented employees (nine men and one woman) were identified by means of purposive sampling and took part in this study. I collected data through open-ended, semi-structured interviews, using an interview guide (Appendix B) in an effort to ensure consistency of data collection from different participants (Patton, 1990).

I conducted in-person and face-to-face interviews at a place selected by the participants and the duration of the interviews ranged from 50 to 100 minutes. All interviews began with me briefly explaining the study, collecting some demographic information (Appendix C), and obtaining each participant's signature on the consent form (Appendix E). I audio taped and transcribed all interviews and offered all participants a copy of their transcribed interview by email. For data analysis, I used Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data, which included epoch, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. Details of data collection and analysis are provided in Chapter III.

This chapter presents the findings of the study. I begin with a brief description of participants in order to help readers understand the composition of the participants upon which the findings are based. Then, I report the main themes that emerged through the data analysis process to describe the phenomenon. In order to provide structure to the reporting of findings, this chapter used the main themes which were drawn from the data analysis of the talented employees' narratives and descriptions of their experiences with talent management as headings. Direct quotes from the interviews are included to accurately portray the essence of individual lived experiences. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Sites

Four different companies (hereinafter referred to as C1, C2, C3 and C4) that met the site selection criteria agreed to provide the names of their talented employees and to recommend and contact potential participants who satisfied the participant inclusion criteria. The four participating companies are among the top 30 Korean corporations listed in Fiscal Year 2016 100 Large Business Groups in Korea, compiled by *The Korea Economic Magazine* (2016). Brief information on these four companies is presented in Table 3. Among the four organizations, C1 was in manufacturing that led the automobile market and C2 was a high-end display market at the global level. C3 and C4 were in the IT industry that achieved dominant positions in offering a variety of online services in Korea. The number of employees of these companies varied between 2,000 and 65,000. These organizations each had made a considerable investment in managing and developing talented employees for 10.75 years on average.

Table 3

Company Information

Name	Industry	Number of Employees	Years of Implementing TM Initiatives
C1	Manufacturing	60,000~65,000	15+ years
C2	Manufacturing	30,000~35,000	15+ years
C3	IT	2,000~2,500	2012
C4	IT	2,000~2,500	2009

Study Participants

From four different corporations, ten talented employees—nine men and one woman—were purposefully selected and agreed to participate in the interview process for this study. Women experience difficulties in being selected as talent in organizations (Bierema, 2009), so such gender composition of talent in organizations was reflected in this study. In addition, gender differences were not the focus of this study, so it seems to be a better approach to keep the imbalanced ratio of the gender composition of the participants than trying to achieve an equal number of men and women by constraint.

P1

P1 is a 41-year-old, single woman. She was hired by C1 as a talented employee five years ago and has been included in the pool since then. She earned a doctorate degree in organization behavior one year before the interview. She was a manager of an HR team. She thought her work was meaningful as she stated, “I believe that my work truly develops employees and the organization.”

The talent management initiatives in which she participated were a leadership development program, an internal MBA course, and coaching. The leadership development program was provided as an off-site, five-day-long training program at the company's learning center. She attended the program in her first year as talent. The program included the goal and mission of the organization, its business strategy, and employee management and development. The internal MBA course, a two-year, off-site program at the learning center, was created by the HR team to satisfy the needs of the organization. The program opened four times a year with a different topic each time such as accounting, finance, marketing, and HR. For about a week, she took part in the intensive curriculums and multiple business projects. Finally, she started the coaching program soon after she was selected as talent. She was coupled with the director of a different department and met with the director every other month or once a quarter.

P2

P2 was 41 years old and studied HR at a university. He entered C2 13 years ago and has been in a talent pool for eight years. As a talented employee, he was on a fast track and worked as a junior manager on an HR team. With respect to talent management initiatives, P2 experienced job rotation. He was responsible for employee development planning on the human resource development team but last year, he was assigned to move to the human resource management team and take a new role in selection and hiring. He also did job shadowing of his team leader and since then, he worked as an interim leader when his team leader was away. He also participated in a leadership development program in his third year as talent. It was a week-long, off-site

program at the company's Employee Development and Learning Center. The program included communication, performance evaluation, teamwork, and project management.

P3

P3 was a 42-year-old man who worked as a junior manager on a marketing team. Right after he completed his master's program in electronic engineering at one of the top graduate schools in Korea, P3 entered the R&D center of C2 12 years ago. Two years later, he moved to the marketing team and was identified as talent the following year. For nine years, as talent, P3 attended a business strategy program, an intensive language course (Chinese), was an expatriate in China, and attended a two-year MBA program in China. The business strategy program was held at the company's employee development and learning center. For two weeks, P3 learned strategic management, competitive advantage, external and internal analysis, competitive positioning, and strategy implementation. Also, he was away from his work for eight-weeks and attended an off-site, intensive Chinese course. Soon after coming back from the language training, he was assigned to work in China as an expatriate for five years. He also had an opportunity to take a two-year MBA program in China with a full support of tuition and stipend from the organization.

P4

P4 was a 44-year-old, junior manager on a production team. He studied engineering at a university. C2 was his first company and he has worked there for 13 years. While he had been in a talent pool for six years, P4 experienced individual development planning with senior leadership and mentoring. An individual development

plan was a form that talented employees filled out with what they wanted to do in order to develop competencies related to their work and career in a short and long term. The plan might include opportunities for specific training, job rotation or shadowing, or desired projects or tasks. The talented employees were asked to submit the form to the director of their department every June and December. Then, the talented employees had a meeting with their senior leader and discussed the plan and how to execute it together. He was in the mentoring program, too. The director of the department that P4 belonged to was assigned to him as a mentor in the first year of being selected as talent. The mentoring took place on an informal and irregular basis and the company supported the expenses for mentoring, such as lunch. P4 had met with his mentor several times but they no longer meet for mentoring.

P5

P5 was a 38-year-old man and C3 was his second company. He studied engineering at a university and entered his previous company as an engineer. However, he became interested in HR so transferred to an HR team. He moved to the HR team at C3 five years ago and then was promoted to a junior manager on the team. It had been four years since he was identified as talent. As talent, he had an opportunity to visit an international branch office located in Istanbul, Turkey, in his second year as talent. He looked around the office, met with the local employees, and took part in the meeting to introduce the company's business in Turkey. Also, when P5 started his master's program in HR at graduate school, C3 fully supported him in completing his education by providing tuition and flexible work hours so that he could take courses. In addition, he

was in the mentoring program. Soon after he was informed that he was identified as talent, a manager of a different team was assigned to him as a mentor and C3 supported the expenses for mentoring. P5 had been meeting with the mentor regularly and the discussion topics varied and included his work and career, the organization, and the business.

P6

P6 was a 40-year-old man who worked as a junior manger on a software program team. He experienced many different organizations before joining C3 five years ago. He had been in a talent pool for three years in C3. As talent, he attended a leadership development program, mentoring, and talent meetings with leadership for business agendas. A leadership development program that he attended consisted of multiple sessions which included business trends, marketing, strategy, communication, employee management and development. The same sessions opened four times a year and each session was a three to four-day long, off-site program. He could select sessions to attend each time but was required to take all the sessions within three years. The mentoring program P6 attended was very similar to the one attended by P5. The organization coupled him with the manager of a different team for mentoring and financially supported the mentoring activities. P6 had met with his mentor a few times but they do not meet any more. He also attended talent meetings with leadership. He and other talented employees were invited to attend meetings to discuss business agendas and to share their thoughts with the senior leadership in the meeting.

P7

P7 was a 43-year-old man and worked as a junior manager on an architecture team. Before he joined C3 four years ago, he was a founding member of a start-up company. But the business was not successful and he wanted to learn and build a network in a large company so decided to move to C3. He was identified as talent in his second year at C3. For three years, he was in a leadership development program, talent meetings with leadership for business agendas, career plan coaching, and an international education program. The leadership development program and talent meetings with leadership for business agendas that P7 attended were the same programs as those offered to P6. P7 also took part in career plan coaching. He met with the head of his department for about an hour and discussed possible career plans that he might have in the organization. The director shared his perspectives and experiences and advised him on what to learn, develop, and consider for career planning. In addition, P7 was selected for an international education program which was a six-month long, off-the-job learning opportunity. In 2015, P7 completed the program at an educational institution in the USA which was famous for its curriculum related to his work.

P8

P8 was a 38-year-old junior manager on a mobile program team. He joined C3 four years ago and was selected as talent three years ago. P8 had a passion for his job and recently published a book about new technical knowledge in his field, which made his name known as an expert. Like P5, P8 visited an international branch located in Istanbul, Turkey, and was paired with the manager of a different team for mentoring. But

he met with his mentor only a couple of times and the mentoring did not last long. P8 also took part in a leadership development program that P6 and P7 attended. P8 had just completed all the sessions provided for leadership development.

P9

P9 was a 39-year-old junior manager on a software program team at C4. He studied computer science at a university. After he entered C4 eight years ago, he successfully led multiple projects focusing on user experience. He had been in the talent pool for six years. As talent, he received monetary compensation and technology education. The monetary compensation was a reward for his big success with a project. About five years ago, he had a project idea to improve user experience, so he created a team and led the project. The project was a great success and he received a considerable monetary reward, which was divided into fourths and was paid to him over four years. Technology education was supported by the company when he attended external training programs or conferences related to his work. The company supported his flexible work hours and the expenses for enrollment, tuition, hotels, meals, and transportation.

P10

P10 was 40 years old and worked as a team manager on an internal information system development team. It had been 10 years since he joined P4 and 7 years since he was identified as talent. He had many experiences regarding information system setups and operations. He received monetary compensation and participated in peer group study. The monetary compensation that P10 received was the same benefit that P9 was provided. With the success of a project that he initiated and led, P10 received a monetary

reward that was divided into fourths and was paid over four years. The peer group study was a meeting of talented employees to study new knowledge and skills. In the group, P10 studied with other talented employees who shared the same interests, shared their knowledge, or listened to an invited external lecturer who was an expert in the specific technical knowledge or skills that they wanted to learn. Time, place, expenses (e.g. books, lecture fees) and other resources were supported by the organization.

Table 4 provides the demographic representations of the participants. The participants' ages ranged from 38 to 44 years with a mean of 41 years and the levels of education were a bachelor's degree or higher. All but one of the participants were married. All the participants held mid-level positions and worked in a variety of functional areas ranging from HR, engineering, R&D, to marketing and production. Their years of employment at their current companies ranged from 4 to 13 with an average of 8 years. The number of years as talent varied from 3 to 9 years with a mean of 5.4 years. As talent in their organization, the participants took part in a variety of talent management initiatives, including a leadership development program, MBA education, job rotation, mentoring, and monetary compensation, to name a few.

Presentation of Findings

The lived experiences and stories were unique to each participant and four main themes emerged from the data analysis. There were certain experiences that might be applicable to more than one main theme, but to avoid duplication of data, I placed those phrases in the main theme that most closely represents the essence of what the

Table 4

Participants' Demographic Information

No	Company No.	Gender	Age	Relationship Status	Education	Work Role	Title	Years of Employment	Years of Being Talent	Talent Management Initiatives Participation
P1	C1	Female	41	Single	Ph.D.	HR	Team Manager	5	5	Leadership Development Program, Internal MBA Course, Coaching
P2	C2	Male	41	Married	B.A.	HR	Junior Manager	13	8	Job Rotation, Job Shadowing, Leadership Development Program, Fast Track
P3	C2	Male	42	Married	M.S.	Marketing	Junior Manager	12	9	MBA Education, Expatriate, Intensive Language Course, Business Strategy Training

Table 4 Continued

No	Company No.	Gender	Age	Relationship Status	Education	Work Role	Title	Years of Employment	Years of Being Talent	Talent Management Initiatives Participation
P4	C2	Male	44	Married	B.S.	Production	Junior Manager	13	6	Individual Development Planning with Senior Leadership, Mentoring
P5	C3	Male	38	Married	M.A.	HR	Junior Manager	5	4	International Branch Visit, Mentoring, Graduate Education Support
P6	C3	Male	40	Married	B.S.	Engineer	Junior Manager	5	3	Leadership Development Program, Mentoring, Talent Meetings for Business Agendas

Table 4 Continued

No	Company No.	Gender	Age	Relationship Status	Education	Work Role	Title	Years of Employment	Years of Being Talent	Talent Management Initiatives Participation
P7	C3	Male	43	Married	B.S.	Engineer	Junior Manager	4	3	Career Plan Coaching, Talent Meetings for Business Agendas, International Education
P8	C3	Male	38	Married	B.S.	Engineer	Junior Manager	4	3	Mentoring, International Branch Visit, Leadership Development Program
P9	C4	Male	39	Married	B.S.	Engineer	Junior Manager	8	6	Monetary Compensation, Technology Education
P10	C4	Male	40	Married	M.S.	Engineer	Team Manager	10	7	Monetary Compensation, Peer Group Study

participant experienced. The first main theme captured the positive but temporary influence of talent management. The second main theme represented the lack of information about talent management provided to the participants. The third main theme mirrored the small impact of talent management on the participants' work and career. Finally, the fourth main theme reflected the questions that the participants had about talent management. Each of these themes and their subordinate themes are described and elaborated in this section using quotations from the interview transcripts to support the findings. Table 5 presents each main theme and their subordinate themes.

Table 5

Main Themes and Their Subordinate Themes

Main Themes	Subordinate Themes
1. Reaction: Instant and temporary effect on attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately increased loyalty and motivation • Felt benefited from initiatives and work relationship when experienced • After the early stage, became indifferent
2. Goal and process: Lack of understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not informed of the reasons for being selected • Insufficient communication about goals, process, and initiatives of talent management • Confusion about expected roles as talent
3. Initiatives: Limited experience that influenced role, responsibility, and career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unchanged role and responsibility • Loosely connected training and development • Mismatched career development
4. Effectiveness: Concerns about the value of talent management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally, unclear selection criteria and process, lack of continuous care and support, questionable outcomes • Externally, decreased teamwork, conflicts, and disharmony at an organization level

Reaction: Instant and Temporary Effect on Attitude

All the participants remembered the moment when they received an official email from HR to inform them of their identification as talent. Feeling happy, rewarded, proud, and recognized, they immediately became highly motivated and eager to do their work and be part of the organization. They felt benefits from talent management when they participated in initiatives, were supported by their manager, and were recognized as an expert. However, this positive influence did not last long and soon the participants lost interest in talent management and perceived talent as just a title given by the organization.

Immediately increased loyalty and motivation. All the participants stated that being selected as talent instantly increased their loyalty toward their company. There were several reasons that they as talent felt more engaged and loyal to their organization. P4 shared:

A few years ago, a special present for talent was delivered from the company with the name of the CEO on it. As the company intended, my wife and I were really surprised. I usually do not talk about my work with my wife and on that day, she learned that I am in the talent group. She was very happy about it although it did not do anything good for her. It was one thing that I liked about being talent.

P9 felt proud and motivated when special care was given to him. He said, “As talent, it is not my direct supervisor but the head of my department who takes care of my development and career.” P2 had the feeling, “When I received the email about being selected as talent. I felt recognized and proud of myself. I also thought I should work

harder and make more contributions to the organization.” P8 remarked, “I liked the learning opportunities such as mentoring and various training courses.” P7 recalled the experience, “Because the company selected me as talent, I felt, as talent, I should get myself more involved in the work of my team and take care of people whom I work with.”

Felt benefited from initiatives and work relationship when experienced. Six participants said they experienced benefits from talent management initiatives.

Regarding talent management initiatives, P3 was the one who made the most from the learning and development opportunities. He commented:

As talent, many opportunities have been given to me. For instance, I attended business strategy courses and an off-the-job intensive Chinese language course for three months and was sent to China as an expatriate. I was also selected for a two-year MBA program in China and will leave with my family for China early next year. All the education has helped me become an expert in marketing in China.

Other statements included:

Personally, I like the training programs offered to talent. I am curious about new things. As I am in technology, it is not easy to be exposed to the market trends, changes in the industry, and business strategies. Talent management training offers me chances to learn about them. [P6]

As talent, my influence became unintentionally larger in the organization. The experience related to talent management inspired me to think harder and more

critically when I make decisions in the workplace. And such efforts ultimately cause me to develop. [P7]

There was a program to send talented employees to an international branch office. The purpose of the visit was to see the branch with our own eyes and help in understanding international business. I took a tour of the office located in Turkey and had a meeting to discuss the localization of some specific technical functions, the development of local employees, and marketing challenges. I really liked the program and got some cultural insights. [P8]

Building a network is the one thing that I achieved as talent. The talent management initiatives provided opportunities to network among talented employees [through training programs and regular meetings] or senior leadership [through mentoring and irregular meetings]. I can take advantage of these work relationships, for instance, when I need their cooperation. [P6]

Seven participants found benefits as talent when they worked with colleagues. In case colleagues happened to know that they were talent, P2 stated that, “I feel that colleagues value my opinions, giving me credit as an expert in my work.” And P5 noted, “My supervisor takes my opinions seriously and supports my opinion.”

After the early stage, became indifferent. All the participants indicated that the positive effects of talent management such as increased loyalty, boosted motivation, and the feeling of being benefited did not last long. P2 explained it by saying:

It is true that the title “talent” motivates. However, does it continue in the long term? I don’t think so. The moment I learned I was talent, I felt good, proud of

myself, and more engaged in my work and organization. But this is it. It is all. It was not connected to anything. It soon led to nothing.

P5 made a similar statement, “The very first year that I was identified as talent, I was highly motivated and willing to work really hard for the organization. But as I went through the second, third, and fourth year, nothing has changed.”

As a result, it did not take long for the participants to become uninterested in talent management after they experienced the program for a few years. They perceived talent management as an unattractive title which only required additional work. To P6, “Talent is just nothing but a title. It does not mean anything to me. I am not interested in it.” In the same vein, P10 mentioned that, “I just think that my name is listed on one document in HR.”

P4 elaborated:

I forget that I am talent except during the evaluation season when I must do some additional paperwork as talent, like a talented individual development plan and meeting with the director. And there is always a lot of work to do and such paperwork is a burden to me as it is neither helpful nor pleasant to do.

P1 said, “I heard that there are many things related to talent management, but personally, I have little interest in them. As talent, specialized opportunities are given to me and I may need to do something in exchange, but I just don’t care.” P3 reported, “Talent does not guarantee success in the organization. It is just a starting point when you want to achieve something, no more, no less.” P9 noted, “Regardless of whether or not I am talent, I just do what I do. I don’t care about talent management.”

Goal and Process: Lack of Understanding

The participants reported that after feeling pleased and proud of themselves about being selected as talent, their second thought was why and how they became talent. All the participants indicated that they were never officially notified about the reason they were selected and did not receive any information like the goals, criteria, process, and initiatives related to talent management and what the organizations expected from talent. This lack of understanding of talent management caused the participants' confusion about their roles and responsibilities as talent.

Not informed of the reasons for being selected. Regarding the question why they are talent, all the participants did not provide clear answers for the reasons they were selected but only assumed them. They were surprised at the selection, and, as no concrete reasons were given, they were confused, not convinced, and still doubt their qualification as talent. P7 stated:

It leaves much to be desired. No one told me why I was selected or through what process. I heard it by word of mouth that I was identified as talent as my team leader recommended me, but he never communicated with me about the reasons and which processes were taken. So, I have no idea why I am talent. At a team meeting one day, I told the team members that I was identified as talent. The members asked me why and how and I answered, "I don't know." Also, I was lucky to be able to attend an international education program related to my work this year as talent but I don't know why and how the opportunity was given to me.

P10's experiences were very similar:

Out of nowhere, my team leader said that he would recommend me, without any explanation. I asked him not to do it because I thought there were colleagues who performed better than me and new faces with good abilities and skills who could be better than me. Moreover, an additional title means additional work and I did not want to do it. But my opinion was ignored. I don't know about the criteria but I heard the criteria required a good performance evaluation and I was the only one who satisfied them.

Other supporting statements included:

To be honest with you, I have no idea. I don't think my performance is greater than others...I just guess...I was selected based on some kind of selection criteria. When I received the notification email from HR, I wondered what it was.

I did not know about it so I was confused and needed an explanation. [P4]

I really don't know. One day I received an email about the talent identification and my team leader told me to participate in the talent management initiatives so I followed his order. I really don't know why I was selected as talent. [P6]

Insufficient communication about goals, process, and initiatives of talent management. All the participants understood that there might be some kind of criteria and process for talent management but were not sure whether or not the information they had was correct. Feeling confused and uncertain, five participants were in need of more frequent and open communication about talent management with the organization. Moreover, as the information was not shared with other employees, six participants were

concerned about the misunderstandings around talent management and felt bad that they could not resolve the misunderstanding because they simply did not know what information was correct and reliable.

P5 echoed this feeling:

As the process of talent selection was not communicated... some people say that talented employees are selected because they curried favor with their boss. I assume that there are some criteria to identify talent but as that information is not available...there are some rumors and misunderstandings around talent management...So I am reluctant to tell people I am talent.

Other similar comments were:

I don't think they [the criteria and process for talent selection] are transparent. So it is important to make them open to the whole organization. I think that there is a need for more frequent and open communication. [P7]

I have attended a couple of activities related to talent management and I think it is necessary to understand where such initiatives are headed...I mean...The goals of talent management itself. [P6]

It may be difficult to openly explain detailed talent management initiatives that were given to individual talented employees but I think the organization can communicate about the criteria or process for talent management. [P10]

I just hope there are some sessions to explain about talent management...like...how the processes are undertaken and what goals are to be

achieved by implementing it [talent management]. But I don't know about them...I don't know what talent management initiatives are available. [P4]

Regarding this, P1 made an important point:

If the company selected people as talent, explained the vision or goals of talent management, suggested options for career and development, and asked for opinions of talent, then, based on the given information, I could have taken time and thought seriously about what I could do with it.

Confusion about expected roles as talent. As the information regarding talent management was not clearly communicated, all the participants did not know their expected roles and responsibilities as talent. For instance, four participants worked for the same company (Company 3) but their understanding of the role as talent was different. P5 perceived it as a candidate for manager and P6 assumed it was a communication channel. P7 considered it as a think tank and P8 said that he did not know. The participants felt lost and although they were willing to do something, they didn't know what to do. They are not sure what the company can provide them through talent management and what they can provide the organization in return for its special care and attention. P6 noted, "I am confused about what the company expects of me and, likewise, I don't know what I can take away from talent management. As I am not sure about it, I don't know what I am doing with talent management." P7 said:

I just thought that I should do something as the company selected me for some reason, although I don't know what I should do as talent. As I don't know what the organization expects of me, I am curious if the company has achieved what

they wanted from me or the talent group. There was no communication or discussion about them [roles or expectation as talent] and I became talent without any knowledge about them [roles or expectation as talent] so personally, I don't think that talent management is meaningful to or fruitful for me.

P8 asserted, "I have never thought about what the company expects of me through talent management. There may be something that I should do as talent..." P4 explained it this way by saying:

For now, talent management is just additional paperwork to submit an individual development plan to the head of the department. It is not easy to write it as I don't have enough information. When I was asked to fill out the form, I thought, "What do I need to write?" Hmm...ok, Let's just write this or that...anything that comes to my mind at the moment, without any serious thinking.

Initiatives: Limited Experience that Influenced Role, Responsibility, and Career

The participants stated that talent management had limited influence on their roles, responsibilities and careers. Eight participants did not experience changes as talent in their work and felt that the talent management initiatives did not support their learning effectively. With respect to career development, eight participants agreed that a gap existed between what talent management suggested and what they actually wanted to accomplish through their work.

Unchanged role and responsibility. All the participants reported that they did not feel any pressure for greater performance as talent. Their roles, responsibilities and the relationship with the team manager and colleagues remained unchanged and there

was little chance for them to feel their identity as talent when they worked. P7 remarked, “I don’t feel any difference at my work after being selected as talent. I don’t feel any pressure or burden as talent. I just continue doing what I have done.” P4 made a similar statement, “There was no change or pressure at work after I was selected as talent. I just do what I do and there is little chance that I feel I am talent when I work.” P6 commented:

There is no difference after I was identified as talent. When I attend training programs for talent, it is difficult to focus on other than my work [which is the training] but I don’t feel any impact of talent management on my work.

Similarly, the names of talented employees are not announced at the organization level, so I don’t feel pressure at work because I am talent.

P8 stated:

I don’t think there is any change after I was selected as talent. There are some burdens though since I must leave work and attend training programs for talent. It makes me busier to do both work and training but it only happens occasionally.

Except in such a case, nothing changed personally in my workplace.

Loosely connected training and development. Seven participants expressed that a variety of training and other learning opportunities were somewhat helpful but it was difficult to say that they effectively supported their development directly and immediately. Although they agreed that the training was carefully planned and the quality of each program was high due to the efforts of the organization and HR, seven participants did not feel the need for such training. It was because (a) the contents were

no more than just good-to-know and were not instantly applicable to their work, (b) the present approach of the training was not effective for learning, and (c) each individual's different needs and learning style for development was neither discussed nor reflected in the training. As they did not see value in the training, the participants questioned its outcome.

P8 offered the perspective:

I attended a mentoring program. I was matched with a manager from a different team with whom I was not acquainted. At first, I was not comfortable... and did not know what to talk about...but as a result, mentoring was helpful...not a big help but it was good to have the advice of senior managers and to broaden my horizons...and the networking was also helpful when I needed cooperation. And half of the training that I attended was good, useful, and interesting but the other half was boring like...what am I doing here? Or why am I here? It is really difficult to explain exactly what in the training were good and helpful to me...well...rather than a direct and instant help...it is more like many little helps...the training for talent is mainly about the company, leadership, or culture...and not directly connected to my work...so it is just...not bad...for me.

P9 explained:

The company sends talented employees to training programs which costs thousands of dollars per person...but...I doubt the effectiveness of the training. Off-the-job training for teaching knowledge related to my technology field, which has a lecturer, a blackboard, and teaching and learning in the traditional

and cram-style education, is no longer cost-effective. There is a saying in my field that a great engineer never takes off-the-job training. It means...countless good learning sources are already well established and available online for learners. Engineers can learn on their own from these sources, books, or studying well-made codes. Training offered by the organization may be helpful for new employees or beginners but not for experienced engineers. Many knowledgeable engineers find their own way to learn and study. So I think it is more effective to buy talented engineers books for \$100 and tell them to study on their own.

P7 reflected on the training:

Well...It is complicated. There must be a purpose and curriculum established for the training for talent, and I am interested in whether the organization has actually achieved its goals and if so, then how... because the training does not come home into my heart. There were many training programs for talent and each program is great. For instance, there are programs that invite famous and expensive lecturers from outside and are open only to talent, excluding other ordinary employees. I am not sure if the training needs to be understood as a benefit or a reward. Each individual is different in the talent group in terms of work, characteristics, and needs. But there was no research or assessment to understand the differences and expectations and to reach consensus on the training. I don't think I am the only one who was not informed of the training and talent management itself. If there was any official session about them, I would attend it. Without such sessions and a consensus about the training, I was told to

participate in training programs as a must. Well, as the training is provided in this way, I became reluctant to take the training. It is true that I learned some from the training but...the lessons were only learned from each training and were not connected to other training programs. Training is not continuously or steadily promoting an individual's...[learning and development] ...and it is the same to me. I don't think the training has been fruitful.

P6 said:

I only attend the minimum amount of training that I have to do as talent. If I was in the talent pool for only a year, I would not know this but the same training repeats every year so there are not many things that I can take away from it. The training itself...is good...I feel that a significant effort was made to provide quality education...for instance, a program with a famous guest lecturer from outside or options to select various topics related to business. However, how the training is connected to talent management is a different story. I just perceive the training as information sharing about the direction that the organization is heading or the situation the organization is in.

P3 described:

I know that we as talent have different needs and expectations around talent management. In my case, I have taken many advantages from talent management initiatives and the training I attended was closely related to my work so it has been really useful for my development and career. But I am also aware that there are many talented employees who do not feel the same way. For those who want

something else than learning opportunities, the current talent management initiatives provided by the company are not appealing.

Mismatched career development. The participants perceived that talent management might be helpful to get on a fast track for promotion and to be a manager because the related initiatives seemed to lean toward leadership development. However, eight participants wanted to grow as an expert in their field because they simply enjoyed their job and believed staying in the field and growing as an expert is the way to prepare for their future. They believed managing people would be a burden, taking them away from their sense of work and knowledge, and they would eventually fall behind. As a result, they expressed the rejection of such career paths that seemed to be suggested by talent management. In addition, there was a concern about talent management regarding career building that did not reflect the reality and overlooked the needs of the participants.

P8 explained it by saying:

Some people may believe that talent management is important and promotion [the fast track] matters so they are ambitious to be great in order to achieve them [to be talent and to get promoted]. But in my case, I don't have such desire. The reality is...Ok. So I got the title of talent and received talent management initiatives. But does such a title and experience directly develop my work knowledge and expertise? No. The thing is...the experiences as talent may provide me with some insights but I doubt that such experiences are essential for

my development and career. The organization is probably doing something, but personally, I am not a person who devotes everything to a company.

P9 expressed his thoughts about whether or not he is interested in a manager position:

If the main role of the position focuses on management, then it is the last thing I want to do. I want to continue my career as an engineer who has expertise in technology...I set my career plan for it and with such a career plan, I can work when I get old.

When asked the same question, P6 responded:

I think managers are the most important group for the success of the organization and therefore, it is critical that talent management develops talented employees' competencies that are required to be a great manager. I don't think I am either confident enough or ready to be a manager.

P4 elaborated:

Twice a year, talented employees are required to meet with the head of their department and to discuss their development opportunities and career plans. To me, the meeting was somewhat helpful, not because a chance was given to me as talent to speak up about what I want for my development, but because I can understand their thoughts at the meeting in person. The problem is...I just wish there was some way to align what the company wants and what I want prior to the meeting. Then I think I could have some time to think [what is necessary for my development and career] and plan [accordingly]. Without such alignment, I

am told to meet with the head, and I think, “Oh...Here it comes again.” I think it is not right. Without time to think and plan about my future in detail, I am asked to fill out the development plan or to communicate with the head about what I want to do for my career...so out of the blue...well...It can be a career change or learning opportunities...but there is always a lot of work that needs to be done and no time to think seriously about my future...So when it is time to fill out the form, I usually write the development of my language skills...I don't know...I am not sure whether it will be helpful for my work...It was good to listen to the advice of predecessors at the meeting with the head for talent development...although compared with the investment, I think the effect was not great and the effect does not have to go with the title of talent.

P5 said:

Each individual has different strengths. Employee A may be a great engineer but not a good manager. But the company selects him or her as talent, trains him or her in management and leadership skills, and appoints him or her as a team manager.

Effectiveness: Concerns about the Value of Talent Management

The participants experienced talent management initiatives which were not given to ordinary employees. Despite such special treatment, seven participants did not advocate talent management concerning the value and effectiveness of talent management. The concerns included an unclear selection criteria and process, lack of continuous care and support, and questionable outcomes. They also asserted that talent

management may discourage teamwork, trigger conflicts among employees between those selected and unselected, and cause disharmony in the organization.

Internally, unclear selection criteria and process, lack of continuous care and support, questionable outcomes. Eight participants raised many questions regarding talent management. Questions varied including questionable outcomes, vague criteria and processes, a lack of attention to the needs of talented employees, and follow-up by the organization.

With respect to selection criteria, P8 said,

I think that the criteria for talent identification are not clear. Well...let's say that there are three employees who qualify on the team...but only one seat is assigned, so the team leader has to select one, then how does he or she select...?

Based on what criteria?

P10 made a similar statement,

The impression that the employees receive from talent management is like...the top one percent versus the other 99 percent. It would not matter if I am in the one percent, but if not, the employees think, "Why was I not selected?" What on earth are the criteria? Do all the employees who receive an S [the highest grade] in their performance evaluation become talent? No. If one employee who gets an S asks why he or she is not selected as talent, no one can provide a satisfactory answer. They are not convinced. It seems that there are no criteria. The selection criteria are ambiguous and even if they are clear, they cannot satisfy everyone.

P7 stated:

For those who want to be talent, I think the organization is responsible for providing adequate information on what they can do to become talent. Also they should transparently explain to others why and how a particular employee is identified as talent. It is not simply to say that talent is recommended by managers. If so, then an additional explanation about how an individual can be recommended should be communicated so that he or she understands and makes efforts accordingly.

About the performance evaluation, which was one component of the criteria, P2 offered his perspective:

It is impossible to give talented employees the highest rate all the time and it should not be. Employees are evaluated on their performances each year and each employee demonstrates his or her performance differently each year. Talented employees are those who exhibit steadily great performance. When we take a look at only performance, there are employees who are not talent but who have a great performance.

P5 had a similar opinion:

A percentage of talent [talented employees out of the total number of employees] is fixed and, with the HR principle of equitable treatment, departments or functions receive an equal distribution of seats for talent. Based on the percentage, the number of seats for talent is calculated and each team has to identify that number of talented employees. But I am skeptical about such an artificially-set percentage. Well...The thing is...Team A may have more

employees who are qualified than the seats given and Team B may not. So what happens is some employees do not get the [talent] title although they meet the talent criteria and some are identified as talent just to fill the seats, although they are not qualified. The 'one-size-fits-all' approach of talent management does not reflect reality.

In addition, P3 commented about training:

The organization provides a group of talented employees with learning and training opportunities...but as a matter of fact, the effectiveness of such raining depends on the characteristics of the team managers [team managers' interest in employees' development] or the willingness of a talented employee to learn and develop...HR may provide some options for talented employees to select. I see that there are plans and options but they are only worth something when talented employees or their team leader want to make the most of them. I know many talented employees who don't want to study. Each talented employee has a different level of motivation and talent management needs to consider it.

Six participants asserted that the organization should make a continuous effort to make talent management more effective and meaningful for both talented employees and the whole organization. They argued that it was necessary to promote talented employees, to be strongly aware of their identities as talent, and to heavily invest in them based on their needs. P6 noted:

I don't know how the organization defines talent management but it is necessary to strongly encourage talented employees to view themselves as the defined

talent. The saying “Actions speak louder than words” applies in operating talent management. Actions may be an education opportunity or in other forms. Once talented employees are identified, the organization should make an effort to accomplish the goals of talent management through them. The goals may be an increased loyalty, a positive attitude and perspective toward the organization, or a communication agent. This would make a good run for the company’s money.

P9 shared his perspective:

Everyone would feel happy to become talent and be proud of himself or herself. But I think the reaction should be explosive...like...Wow!! I AM SELECTED! Being talent should be considered a great honor and a great chance to be greater. And it would inspire other employees to make an effort in order to enter the talent group. This would develop both individual employees and the organization as a whole. This is only possible for the organization to carefully select talent and to heavily invest in each individual. However, the reality is different. For instance, only one seat is available for an international MBA program among the talent pool. I am totally fine if I am excluded from the group. But I do hope that the organization makes talent management more meaningful and influential. For now, a lot of talented employees around me say nothing is special. No one in the talent pool feels special and no one outside of it feels motivated.

P3 commented:

[Once the organization identifies talent,] I hope the organization takes a close look at the selected employees...for instance, communicate or follow up to see if

talented employees face any issues related to talent management. If they [the organization, HR, or team managers] have clear goals to achieve through talent management, it may be good for them to have a continued interest and to get more actively involved in it.

Externally, decreased teamwork, conflicts, and disharmony at an organization level. Seven participants expressed a great concern about the differential treatment of the talent, arguing that it could discourage other employees, decrease teamwork, and cause disharmony at the organizational level. The participants valued cooperation and placed the good of the entire organization above the benefits given to individuals. Rather than feeling proud, the participants felt sorry for their colleagues about the inconvenience and additional work caused by their absence to attend the talent management initiatives. Raising doubts about its benefits to the entire organization, seven participants did not support talent management.

P5 explained:

As a person who experienced talent management...frankly speaking...I am against it. People may think differently but from my perspective, talent management causes disharmony in the organization. Ok, there is a talent management thing in the company. Then what about me? Some complaints are shared on the online bulletin board on the intranet. If I were in their shoes, I would feel the same. Let's say that I think I am better than A, but A is talent and I am not, then I would be upset. It seems that the company is aware of the disharmony between talent and others so they implement talent management

initiatives quietly. But they don't know such an approach causes more rumors and misunderstandings among employees.

P8 reported:

Personally, I liked visiting an international branch in Turkey as talent...but I am not sure about its effectiveness or outcomes in terms of an organization as a whole. Talent management is good for individual talented employees, but I think it has a negative impact on the organization as ordinary employees feel left out. Because of this concern, I kept my trip to Turkey as quiet as possible. The organization should consider not one out of ten but nine of ten so talent management needs to reflect it although I don't know how. One of the lessons I learned from my work experience is that it is not right to invest big money in one extraordinary individual employee. In addition to the concern that he or she may leave the company, it takes opportunities away from others. So it is a loss as a whole.

P2 said:

Employees who are selected as talent may think it is right to get paid more and be recognized because they work harder and better. But employees who are not selected may think talented employees get paid more only because they are selected as talent. It does not matter to them whether or not talented employees work really hard and perform better. This gap in thinking breaks teamwork...Each organization has its own way of doing business...but from my view, it is right that all the members of an organization speak their opinion so the

organization becomes smarter as a whole. Talent management is not for today's business environment, which requires companies to start or expand business based on a variety of creative ideas. So the talent management initiatives that take special care of talented employees and causes disharmony in the organization should be discouraged.

P7 commented:

Talent management may be helpful for me as an individual but I think it is not constructive for the organization as a whole. Because...there may be some employees who are not talent but are eager for such opportunities. I cannot say that I yearned for them. The opportunities were just given to me as talent. I felt sorry for my colleagues on my team when I became talent and attended talent management initiatives. I would leave work to take an international education program for six months and my absence would affect my colleagues. I hope the organization is aware of it and is concerned about it.

P1 explained:

The company emphasizes the importance of teamwork. A lot of companies implement talent management mainly as a succession plan for team leaders and above. Under the name of talent management, a small number of people who are identified as talent enjoy special care like training and compensation while others feel excluded and complain, and this breaks teamwork. Talent management may be good for a company whose system lets a few smart people take care of all the rest of the organization. But this company values teamwork more than anything.

There are a lot of discussions and communications among colleagues and among teams, and everyone works hard. So if talent management treats employees differently, I think the organization cannot succeed.

P10 stated:

There are a lot of smart people who perform very well in the company and they are not in favor of talent management. Those who think they are doing great but are not selected will be discouraged from working hard. Then...consideration needs to be taken whether it is really worth it to implement talent management...for the benefit of the organization at the expense of letting them down. People know who demonstrates exceptional performance and those who demonstrate exceptional performance demonstrate it in all places at all times regardless if they are given the title of talent. Therefore, I don't see the value or effectiveness of implementing talent management.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study about how talented employees perceive and experience talent management initiatives. A purposefully selected ten talented employees in four different companies were interviewed using semi-structured, open-ended questions. The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews and were analyzed inductively, using Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data. Four themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) instant and temporary effect on attitude, (b) a lack of understanding of talent management, (c) limited experience that influenced role, responsibility, and

career, and (d) concerns about the value of talent management. The narrative that participants offered in interviews was utilized to accurately portray the essence of individual lived experiences.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I briefly present a summary of the study and then discuss the findings in relation to the relevant literature and the theoretical framework presented in Chapter II. I conclude this chapter with implications for practices and suggestions for additional studies for those who are interested in this line of research.

Study Summary

Talent management has been widely practiced in many organizations as one approach to maximize the potential of employees in the workplace. In spite of the intensive attention from both business and academia and a considerable amount of literature available on this topic, current research on talent management frequently suffers from a lack of evidence-based understanding (Dries, 2013; Iles et al., 2010; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Thunnissen et al., 2013), a profitability-oriented approach (Dries, 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013), and a lack of diverse perspectives (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Meyers et al., 2013). Moreover, few talent management studies place employees, those who actually experience talent management, as the primary subjects of research (Björkman et al., 2013; Dries, 2013).

This study attempted to fill in some of the voids identified above. With a specific focus on the recipients of talent management initiatives, which have been neglected in literature, I desired to develop a deeper understanding of how talented employees

perceive and experience talent management activities offered to them in the South Korean context. The following research questions guided my study:

1. What is it like to be a talent identified by an organization?
2. How do talented employees describe their experiences with talent management initiatives?
3. How do talented employees perceive the impact of the talent management initiatives they experienced?

To address the above questions, I adopted a phenomenological approach as it allowed for an examination of the individual lived experiences with a complex phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994) such as talent management. I employed both purposive and criterion sampling to recruit ten Korean employees who were officially informed by the HR Department in their company that they were talent and had stayed in the talent pool for at least three years. These employees participated in talent management initiatives provided by their organization in Korea that had been involved in talent management for at least five years. To collect rich, in-depth data, I used face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to create a more conversational format for participants to share their experiences with talent management. After completing and transcribing the interviews, I analyzed the data using Moustakas's (1994) Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data.

Discussion

This study sought to explore the perspectives and experiences of Korean employees who were identified as talent and were provided talent management initiatives in Korean organizations. I identified four main themes from the participants' stories about talent management. Based on findings from the study, talented employees' experiences with talent management could be described in terms of (a) an immediate but temporary effect on attitude, (b) a lack of understanding of the goals, processes, and initiatives of talent management and expected roles as talent, (c) minimal influence on roles, responsibilities, and careers, and (d) concerns about the effectiveness of talent management. Below, I discuss each main theme in relation to the literature.

The first finding was the instant and temporary effect on talented employees' attitude. A considerable number of talent management studies employed the social exchange theory and used the theory's basic idea—a social norm of the feeling of mutual obligation and trust—to explain the relationship between talented employees and the organization (Björkman et al., 2013; Dries, 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Informed by this theory, talent management can be understood as an action of an organization that shows special treatment and differentiated care for a small number of selected employees. Building on the social exchange perspective, talented employees would perceive such specialized treatment as an indication of their employer's support for and commitment to them (Björkman et al., 2013; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). As a result, talented employees are likely to demonstrate enhanced positive work behavior, greater performance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Bethke-

Langenegger, Mahler, & Staffelbach, 2011; Björkman et al., 2013; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Hiltrop, 1999; Oehley & Theron, 2010). Findings from this study are consistent with the literature that has documented the positive effect of talent management on employees' loyalty and commitment. The talented employees in this study felt an immediate increase in loyalty and an obligation to contribute to their organization when they were first informed about the talent identification.

However, my study also revealed that such positive feelings lasted for only a short period of time. As they went through the early stage, the talented employees in this study became indifferent to any activities related to talent management and finally perceived their status as talent as just another title that was neither significant nor valuable. In addition, except for the temporary effect on attitude, this study did not support the relationship between talent management and the improved performance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions of talented employees (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Björkman et al., 2013; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Hiltrop, 1999; Oehley & Theron, 2010).

The social exchange theory focuses on employees' perceptions of how they are treated by the organization and explains that employees are motivated to benefit their organization when there is a stable and mutually beneficial relationship (Cole et al., 2002; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). My findings showed that the talented Korean employees knew that the various talent management activities they attended were high-quality, expensive, and customized for them, but they did not consider these initiatives useful. Based on this finding, I can safely argue that, despite an organization's good intent and

investment, talent management initiatives are not perceived as beneficial by talented employees and, as a result, do not consistently lead to the expected outcomes such as performance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011; Björkman et al., 2013; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Hiltrop, 1999; Oehley & Theron, 2010).

The second subordinate theme revealed that talented employees experienced a lack of understanding of the talent management of which they were a part. The participants in my study were not told the reasons for being selected, not informed of the company's talent management system such as the goals, the selection criteria and process, and initiatives, and were not communicated with about their expected roles as talent. The findings of this study provide concrete evidence to support the literature that argued for the need for information sharing and communication with talent (Bhatnagar, 2007; Hughes & Rog, 2008).

Based on my findings, the participants desired to know why they were selected as talent by their company. Sharing this information is important as it will help the talented appreciate their own strengths and thus build upon them. Goals, the selection criteria and process, as well as various initiatives of talent management are also critical information that talented employees should know as participants. However, when asked about these questions, none of my study participants could provide clear answers. In fact, lacking such information caused them to feel more confused about their qualifications as talent; thus, they had to assume their role as talent in their organization. For instance, four participants (P5, P6, P7, and P8) worked at the same company (C3) but each of them had a different idea about their role as talent. In order to for the talented

employee to see the big picture, it is crucial that they first fully understand why they were identified as a talent and why there is a need to implement talent management in their organization. Also, having a clear understanding of the roles expected from talent and the opportunities available to help them perform such roles, the talented employees will be better positioned to achieve the desired outcomes set for them.

In addition, due to a lack of communication, employees who were excluded from the talent group might wonder why they were not identified as talent, what selection criteria were applied, and which processes were implemented. This may cause rumors and misunderstandings within the organization, leading to decreased morale among employees. This was confirmed by a study participant, P5, who shared that his colleagues in C3 thought talented employees were selected because they curried favor with their bosses. Therefore, open and frequent communications would allow both talented and ordinary employees to better understand their company's intent through talent management.

The third main theme across the ten participants was the limited impact that talent management initiatives had on their job roles, responsibilities, and careers. Previous research on talent management suggested that providing a variety of talent management initiatives are likely to increase employee recruitment and retention rates, enhance employee engagement, and improve the organization's operational and financial performance (Hughes, & Rog, 2008). However, the findings from my study do not support the literature. The participants in this study experienced various initiatives, for instance, leadership development programs, international education, a fast track,

mentoring, and monetary compensation; nevertheless, most of them did not experience changes in their roles and responsibilities. For my participants, many training and development programs were interesting but they were loosely connected to their work and career goals, causing a glaring gap between individual needs and the organization's interventions. This led to a conclusion that the current talent management initiatives did not reflect the needs of talented employees in its practice.

The theory of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) may explain the conflict between the needs of the talented employees and talent management initiatives. Possible selves involve specific images of one's self in the future state (Oyserman & Markus, 1990) that motivate the individual to take or avoid specific action to accomplish the goal that is believed meaningful in the individual's social and cultural context (Erikson, 2007).

The talented employees in my study had vivid and elaborate possible selves, which were to be experts in their fields. In order to become experts, they were motivated to acquire new knowledge/skills and did not hesitate to change jobs within the same field to pursue new learning opportunities. And they believed that being an expert would make it possible to enjoy their work, to work longer, and to make enough money to support their families. Interestingly, authority, title, and money were not mentioned as their priorities.

As revealed by the findings of this study, the participants felt that the talent management initiatives they experienced did not reflect their needs. Participation in the initiatives were neither productive, nor helped them move closer to what they

envisioned. Due to the mismatch between what the talent wanted and what the organization offered, I was not surprised that the participants in my study described their talent management experiences as disappointing and unnecessary for their work and career. Such negative perceptions and experiences led them to question the effectiveness and outcomes of talent management.

The fourth subordinate theme in my findings was associated with talented employees' concerns about the value of talent management. Because the participants personally did not see the value of talent management, most of them questioned its effectiveness for not only individual talented employees but also the entire organization. While seeing the gap between the considerable amount of resources in terms of staff, time, and money invested in talent management and its outcomes that they felt and experienced at work, most of my study participants were skeptical about the outcomes of talent management.

The talented employees in my study struggled with the lack of a clear understanding of the talent selection criteria and talent management process, as well as a lack of continuous care and support. Talent selection has been criticized in the literature as a subjective judgement by decision makers (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Mäkelä, Björkman, & Ehrnrooth, 2010; Grey, 2005), containing innate errors and biases (Swales, 2013), and the result of the influence of politics (Wright & McMahan, 1992). And this study supports such criticisms through talented employees' negative perspectives on talent identification.

Another critical finding is the participants' need for continuous care and support. The talented employees in this study pointed out that to make talent management efforts fruitful, organizational leaders must consider talented employees' needs and expectations and be willing to tailor talent initiatives in a way that will benefit both the employees and the organization. However, talented employees' expectations for continuous care and support has been rarely explored in the literature.

Furthermore, the study participants were worried about the negative impact of talent management on the entire organization. The majority of talented employees in this study were concerned that talent differentiation might decrease teamwork, cause conflicts between the selected and unselected, and break the harmony of the organization. Considering the influence of context on talent management (Gallardo-Gallardo, Nijs, Dries, & Gallo, 2015; Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2016; Plucker & Barab, 2005; Thunnissen, 2016), the participants' concern can be understood from the national cultural perspective. Downs and Swailes (2013) noted that talent should be understood as a socially constructed phenomenon that has different meanings depending on different contexts and therefore, there are organizations and national cultures where talent management's workforce differentiation may be problematic.

This study was conducted in South Korea and the interviewees were all Koreans who worked in Korean organizations. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), Korea is a collectivistic society that fosters strong relationships where everyone looks after the fellow members of their group. Koreans highly value group harmony over eccentric or individual behaviors, even

if that means that individual goals suffer. Korean organizations emphasize solidarity and cooperation among colleagues and strong family-like teamwork (Hemmert, 2012).

Influenced by the Korean culture, the participants in my study considered their colleagues as an in-group with whom they feel the same as family, so they might have felt uncomfortable with the special treatment and felt sorry for their colleagues instead of feeling proud and rewarded. Similarly, the talented employees placed the harmony of the group that they belonged to ahead of their individual interests. They might view the division between inclusion and exclusion as a potential threat to the harmony of the organization.

Implications for Research

Further dialogues are needed in order to clearly identify which approaches are most effective or are considered best practices for developing and managing talented employees. This study attempted to provide insights for researchers by uncovering the perspectives and experiences of the recipients of talent management initiatives in the South Korean context. Due to its nature, a phenomenological study does not allow generalizations of findings to a large population (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). However, the findings and issues illuminated by this study can present more opportunities for future research on this topic. The following reflects several major areas that can be addressed in future research.

The first and most important priority is to further explore the perspectives of talented employees. Since little is known about talent management from the employees' perspective, it is necessary to increase the number of participants in a variety of contexts

and to determine if the findings of this study can be transferrable to other populations in other contexts. This study focused on ten talented employees in four South Korean companies. The participants were diverse in terms of age, functional unit, years of employment, and years and experiences as talent. More diversity may be achieved by including participants from gender, different races, ethnicities, national cultures, organizational cultures, organization characteristics (e.g. profit, non-profit, international, government, and military), and organization size (e.g. large, medium, or small). Doing so will help generate additional empirical evidence to enrich the understanding of talented employees' experiences.

Especially, women's experience as talent may offer a different aspect of talent management. Considering women tend to become marginalized in male-dominated organizations (Bierema 2009; Mason, Wolfinger, & Goulden, 2013), exploring how talented women feel and experience talent management may contribute to understanding in gender difference in talent management.

Another area for future research would be to examine talent management from the perspective of employees who are not identified as talent. This group of people has not been empirically examined although some researchers found that they might get depressed, discouraged, less engaged, and perceive the differences as inequitable (Pfeffer, 2001; Swailes, 2013; Zenger & Marshall, 2000). The findings of this study partly support such observations by revealing talented employees' experiences of conflicts, misunderstandings, and rumors about talent management among unselected employees. However, this study only provided limited and indirect information in this

area. Therefore, I encourage researchers to look at the same phenomenon from the perspective of excluded, ordinary employees in order to capture different insights into talent management.

A third recommendation for future study is to explore the influence of a national culture on talent management. This study focused on one specific geographical region. Participants were recruited only from South Korea. As a result, the perspectives and experiences of the participants cannot be free from the influence of the Korean national culture. While this study shed light on the talent management experiences of employees in Korea, it remains unclear whether geographical and national differences affect individual experiences. This calls for an examination of the role of the national cultural context in which talent management is practiced by exploring talent management in a variety of nations and comparing the experiences of other talented employees.

Next, future research can build upon the findings of this study by using them as a guide for empirical studies. This study focused on understanding the individual experiences of talented employees with talent management. Considering that the perspectives and experiences of talented employees have rarely been explored in the literature, my findings can be used to develop a quantitative survey study in order to examine if they can be generalized. In addition, there is an opportunity for qualitative longitudinal studies in which interviews are performed in the first year and again in the second, and the third year in order to track talented employees' perceptions over a long period of time. As shown in the findings of the study, talented employees experienced changes in viewpoints and feelings toward talent management. Therefore, longitudinal

studies may be helpful in understanding the changing needs of individual talented employees for their work and career over time.

Finally, future researchers may find this study useful for theory building. There is a great need for particular theoretical approaches that are considered suitable for talent management (Hambrick, 2007), and the findings of this study can contribute to talent management theory building. Specifically, talented employees' need for frequent and transparent communication and continuing support may be important factors to be considered in talent management theories.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study have practical implications that may contribute toward enhancing talented employees' positive experiences with talent management. In this section, I offer five suggestions for HRD professionals.

First, before implementing talent management, the following two questions need to be answered: "When does TM add value in a company?" Addressing these questions is the first and also most important step because the answers set the stage for talent management and influence the criteria for selection, the goals for talent management, and the specific activities for talent development. Each organization has its own unique context in terms of business environment, products and services, business strategies, customers, workforce characteristics, organization culture, and HR policies. The context in which the organization is situated should be carefully considered when deciding whether to employ talent management and, if so, how to customize it so that it is suitable for the specific organization.

Second, keep the criteria and process of talent selection fair and transparent; and share the related information with the whole organization. Open communications prevent assumptions, misunderstandings, and rumors. When properly and adequately communicated, the employees who have been chosen as a talent will feel proud about earning this status rightfully, and those who have not would also gain a clear understanding and accept the corporate decision with respect. Moreover, when clearly communicated, employees who desired to become talent would also know how to prepare themselves to reach that goal.

Third, as soon as talented employees are identified, formally and clearly communicate with them about the reason they were selected, the goals of talent management, the expected roles as talent, and initiatives and resources that they can use. Providing such details may help talented employees recognize and reinforce their strengths at work and consider what they can do to accomplish the goals of talent management. Well-informed talented employees are likely to fulfil the expected roles and responsibilities and to utilize talent management for their development and performance, which ultimately benefits the organization.

Fourth, provide appropriate initiatives tailored for talented employees and the organization. Before adopting popular and common talent management initiatives, it is critical to find out what talented employees actually want from talent management and then provide customized programs that will best satisfy their needs, the intent of talent management, HR philosophy, and the organizational culture. Like the participants in this study, it may not necessarily be special care, expensive training, or monetary rewards. In

addition, care and support should not be a one-time action; instead, they should be continuous so that talent management activities evolve in a way so that its benefits to the talented employees can be maximized. Such an effort by the organization would boost trust between talented employees and the company, and ultimately lead to development of both sides through talent management.

Finally, focus on the group of team leaders or managers as much as the talented employees, empower them with talent management as intended, and encourage them to serve as agents for communication. The organization should help team managers fully understand the strategic intent of talent management, to strictly follow its criteria and processes, and to work closely with the identified talents to guide them on how to make the most of the provided talent management initiatives for both the talented individuals and the organization. The team leaders should also be committed to communicate related information clearly and frequently with both talented and ordinary team members. Such an effort by team managers may lead to employees' positive experiences with talent management.

Conclusions

In their book, *War for Talent*, Michaels et al. (2001) placed a great emphasis on talented employees in developing a competitive and sustainable organization. Since its introduction 15 years ago, talent management has become a widely accepted, popular phenomenon. The academic world has continued the debate on its concept: its definition of talent, its differentiation from general HR, its desirable approaches, and its outcomes. Such strong interests and constructive discussions have warranted continuing research

on talent management. However, what has been left largely neglected is the voices of those who have been engaged in talent management as the talent.

This study is one of the few that focused on the perspectives and experiences of talented employees with talent management. In this study, talented employees perceived that talent management had a positive but temporary effect on attitude, was loosely connected to their work and careers, with little value and unachieved outcomes. This study also revealed the talented employees' desire for frequent transparent communication and continuing support, which have been seldom explored in the literature. It is hoped that this study has stimulated more scholarly interest in academia and more critical reflection from organizations and talent management practitioners in the world of practice.

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APPENDIX A

Approval by the Institutional Review Board

DIVISION OF RESEARCH



DATE: July 27, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jia Wang
TAMU - College Of Education & Human Dev - Educational Adm & Human Resource Develop

FROM: Dr. James Fluckey
Chair, TAMU IRB

SUBJECT: Expedited Approval

Study Number: IRB2016-0454D
Title: THE STORY OF TALENTED EMPLOYEES THAT HAS NEVER BEEN TOLD: THEIR ACCEPTANCE AND INFLUENCE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

Date of Determination:

Approval Date:

Continuing Review Due: 06/15/2017

Expiration Date: 07/15/2017

Documents Reviewed and Approved:

Only IRB-stamped approved versions of study materials (e.g., consent forms, recruitment materials, and questionnaires) can be distributed to human participants. Please log into iRIS to download the stamped, approved version of all study materials. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in iRIS, please contact the iRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area.

Submission Components			
Study Document			
Title	Version Number	Version Date	Outcome
Recruitment Material	Version 1.1	06/22/2016	Approved
20160418_Proposal_Minjung Kim	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
citi training completion report	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
recruitment material	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
letter of cultural evaluation	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
interview questions	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
a letter of assurance	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
company contract_sk	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
company contract_nhn	Version 1.0	06/22/2016	Approved
consent form (Korean)	Version 1.0	07/17/2016	Approved
consent form (English)	Version 1.0	07/17/2016	Approved

Document of Consent: Waiver approved under 45 CFR 46.117 (c) 1 or 2/ 21 CFR 56.109 (c)1

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- Comments:**
- This IRB study application has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. Research may begin on the approval date stated above.
 - Research is to be conducted according to the study application approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
 - Any future correspondence should include the IRB study number and the study title.
-

Investigators assume the following responsibilities:

1. **Continuing Review:** The study must be renewed by the expiration date in order to continue with the research. A Continuing Review application along with required documents must be submitted by the continuing review deadline. Failure to do so may result in processing delays, study expiration, and/or loss of funding.
2. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research study (including data collection and analysis), a Completion Report must be submitted to the IRB.
3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Unanticipated problems and adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
4. **Reports of Potential Non-compliance:** Potential non-compliance, including deviations from protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.
5. **Amendments:** Changes to the protocol and/or study documents must be requested by submitting an Amendment to the IRB for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form or information sheet, the IRB stamped approved version must be used. Please log into IRIS to download the stamped approved version of the consenting instruments. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in IRIS, please contact the IRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area. Human participants are to receive a copy of the consent document, if appropriate.
7. **Post Approval Monitoring:** Expedited and full board studies may be subject to post approval monitoring. During the life of the study, please review and document study progress using the PI self-assessment found on the RCB website as a method of preparation for the potential review. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate study records and making them available for post approval monitoring. Investigators are encouraged to request a pre-initiation site visit with the Post Approval Monitor. These visits are designed to help ensure that all necessary documents are approved and in order prior to initiating the study and to help investigators maintain compliance.
8. **Recruitment:** All approved recruitment materials will be stamped electronically by the HRPP staff and available for download from IRIS. These IRB-stamped approved documents from IRIS must be used for recruitment. For materials that are distributed to potential participants electronically and for which you can only feasibly use the approved text rather than the stamped document, the study's IRB Study Number, approval date, and expiration dates must be included in the following format: TAMU IRB#20XX-XXXX Approved: XX/XX/XXXX Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX.
9. **FERPA and PPRA:** Investigators conducting research with students must have appropriate approvals from the FERPA administrator at the institution where the research will be conducted in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) protects the rights of parents in students ensuring that written parental consent is required for participation in surveys, analysis, or evaluation that ask questions falling into categories of protected information.
10. **Food:** Any use of food in the conduct of human research must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M4.02.
11. **Payments:** Any use of payments to human research participants must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 21.01.99.M0.03.
12. **Records Retention:** Federal Regulations require records be retained for at least 3 years. Records of a study that collects protected health information are required to be retained for at least 6 years. Some sponsors require extended records retention. Texas A&M University rule 15.99.03.M1.03 Responsible Stewardship of Research Data requires that research records be retained on Texas A&M property.

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX B

Introductory Letter (English)

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is Minjung Kim, and I am a doctoral student at Texas A&M University. I would like to thank you for your interest in and your agreement to take time to participate in this study.

This study attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of employees who are identified as talent and are provided talent management initiatives by their organizations. Understanding how the talented employees perceive talent management is a starting point to effectively design and implement initiatives in order to accomplish the goals of talent management.

I would like to conduct a one-on-one, face-to-face interview with you that will last approximately one to two hours. Each interview will be audiotaped and transcribed with your consent. The risks involved with participating in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily faced in everyday life. During the interview, if you want to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. Further, you may choose not to discuss any questions you do not feel comfortable with, and even choose to withdraw from the study without any penalty.

This study is only for academic purposes, and your privacy and rights are protected. Your interview data will remain confidential and I am the only person who will have access to them. These data will be used only to develop a better understanding of talented employees' experiences with talent management. The information collected through the interviews, including your name, affiliation, and any other identifiable information, will not be revealed in the final report.

I know you are very busy and I value your time. Please let me know when is the best time for you to do the interview. I can meet you any place and any time you're available at your convenience. I will explain the overview of this study and interview in detail when we meet.

For your reference, an informed consent form and a sheet of interview questions are enclosed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact me at mjkim37@tamu.edu. Thank you and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Minjung Kim
GPHR. Ph.D. Student
Educational Administration & Human Resource Development

511 Harrington Tower, 4226 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77842-4226
Tell. 010-6497-0311(Korea) / 469-607-9122 (USA)
Email. mjkim000@gmail.com / mjkim37@tamu.edu

** This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Introductory Letter (Korean)

(연구참여자) 귀하

안녕하십니까. 저는 미국 텍사스 A&M 대학 인력개발전공 박사과정을 수학 중인 김민정입니다. 먼저 귀하의 소중한 귀한 시간을 본 연구의 인터뷰에 내어 주셔서 감사드립니다.

이번 연구는 회사에서 운영하는 핵심인재제도에 대한 직원분들의 생각과 의견을 여쭙고 그 내용을 바탕으로 회사와 직원 모두에게 보다 도움이 되는 제도를 제공하고자 함에 그 목적이 있습니다.

인터뷰는 개별, 면대면으로 약 1-2 시간 정도 진행될 예정이며 귀하의 동의 하에 인터뷰 내용은 녹음되고 기록됩니다. 이번 연구와 관련한 위험 요소는 일상생활에서 경험하는 스트레스 및 위험 정도로 크지 않습니다. 인터뷰 내용을 녹음하고 싶지 않거나 인터뷰 자체를 그만두고 싶을 경우 편하게 알려주십시오. 또한, 귀하께서 불편하게 느끼시는 질문은 답을 하지 않아도 되며 불이익 없이 이 연구에 대한 참여를 철회 할 수 있습니다.

이 연구는 학술적 목적으로 실시되며, 귀하의 비밀과 권리는 보호됩니다. 인터뷰 내용은 비밀이 보장되며 연구자인 저만 귀하의 인터뷰 자료를 관람할 수 있습니다. 인터뷰 자료는 핵심인재제도를 느끼고 경험하는 임직원을 이해하기 위한 목적으로만 사용될 것입니다. 인터뷰를 통해 수집된 자료들 (예. 이름, 소속, 신원에 관한 기타 정보 등)은 최종 보고서에는 포함되지 않습니다.

다시 한 번 인터뷰에 참가해 주셔서 감사드리며, 인터뷰가 가능한 편안하신 시간과 장소를 알려주시기 바랍니다. 이번 연구의 전체적인 내용과 인터뷰 관련한 세부사항은 인터뷰 시 다시 알려드리겠습니다. 연구 동의서와 인터뷰 질문을 유첨으로 함께 보내드리오니 참고하시기 바랍니다. 이번 연구와 관련하여 궁금하신 내용이 있거나 연락이 필요하실 경우, 저에게 mjkim37@tamu.edu 로 연락주시기 바랍니다. 그럼 인터뷰 시 인사드리겠습니다. 감사합니다.

김민정 드림

텍사스 A&M 대학교 박사수료생, GPHR.

Educational Administration & Human Resource Development
511 Harrington Tower, 4226 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77842-4226

Tell. 010-6497-0311(한국) / 469-607-9122 (미국)

Email. mjkim000@gmail.com / mjkim37@tamu.edu

** 이 연구는 텍사스 A&M 대학의 Human Subjects' Protection Program Office 가 확인하였습니다. 연구참여자로서 귀하의 권리에 대한 질문이 있다면 1-979-458-4067 혹은 무료전화 1-855-795-8636, 이메일 irb@tamu.edu 로 연락하시면 됩니다.

APPENDIX C

Consent Form (English)

PROJECT TITLE:

The story of talented employees that has never been told: Their acceptance and influence of talent management

You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Texas A&M University. You are being asked to read this form so that you know about this research study. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

Understanding how the talented workforce perceives talent management is a starting point to effectively design and implement initiatives in order to accomplish the goals of talent management. The aim of this study is to contribute to the advancement of the study of talent management through an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of employees who are identified as talent and provided talent initiatives by their organizations.

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You are being asked to be in this study because you (a) have been employed by a corporation which has engaged talent management for more than five years; (b) have been identified by the company as talent and been officially informed by HR or your manager that you are in a talent pool; (c) have been in a talent pool at least three years; and (d) have experienced talent management initiatives provided by your organization.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

Five to fifteen people (participants) will be enrolled in this study.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO BEING IN THIS STUDY?

This is not a treatment study, so the alternative is not to participate in the study.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study will last up to approximately 1-2 hours, and includes 1 visit. The procedures you will be asked to perform are described below.

Visit 1

This visit will last about 1-2 hours. During this visit, you will be asked to be interviewed and to explain your perspectives and experiences with talent management. It is a face-to-face, one-on-one, and semi-structured interview.

WILL VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BE MADE OF ME DURING THE STUDY?

The researcher will make an audio recording during the study so that she may use a short portion of audio recording for illustrative reasons in presentations of this work for scientific or educational purposes, but only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

What you will be doing have no more risk than you would come across in everyday life.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?

There is no direct benefit to you by being in this study. What the researcher finds out from this study may help other people with relevant insight on what aspects are considered important and need to be properly addressed with respect to talent management.

WILL THERE BE ANY COSTS TO ME?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

WILL I BE PAID TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid for being in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

WILL INFORMATION FROM THIS STUDY BE KEPT PRIVATE?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Minjung Kim will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in computer files protected with a password. This consent form will be filed securely at Minjung Kim’s home office.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. Minjung Kim is the only person who have access to your information. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

WHOM CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

You can call the Principal Investigator to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator Minjung Kim (a doctoral student) can be called at 469-607-9122 or emailed at mjkim37@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the Texas A&M Human Subjects Protection Program office.

- Phone number: (979) 458-4067
- Email: irb@tamu.edu

MAY I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT PARTICIPATING?

You have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study, there will be no effect on your status. You can stop being in this study at any time with no effect on your status.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire, signed consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Date

Consent Form (Korean)

TEXAS A&M 대학 연구 동의서

프로젝트 제목:

처음 들어보는 그들의 이야기: 핵심인재가 말하는 핵심인재제도의 영향

귀하는 텍사스 A&M 대학에서 실시하는 연구에 참가요청을 받았습니다. 연구에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 본 서류를 읽어 주시기 바랍니다. 제공되는 정보는 이번 연구의 참가여부를 결정하는데 도움을 드리고자 함입니다. 만약 연구 참가에 동의하신다면, 이 동의서에 서명하여 주시기 바랍니다. 만약 참가를 거절하여도 어떤 처벌이나 불이익이 없습니다.

이 연구를 왜 하는가?

보다 효과적인 핵심인재제도를 기획, 구성, 제공하는데 있어 그 제도를 직접 경험한 핵심인재들의 의견은 아주 중요한 부분입니다. 이 연구는 회사에서 핵심인재로 선발되고 다양한 핵심인재제도를 경험한 직원들의 생생한 경험을 깊이 이해함으로써 핵심인재제도 연구에 기여할 것입니다.

이 연구 참가를 요청 받은 이유는?

귀하께서 이 연구 참가자로 선발된 이유는 (ㄱ) 핵심인재제도를 5년 이상 운영한 회사에 근무 중이고, (ㄴ) 회사에서 공식적으로 인사팀이나 상사를 통해 핵심인재로 선발되었음을 공지 받았으며, (ㄷ) 최소 3년 이상 핵심인재로 있었고, (ㄹ) 회사에서 제공하는 핵심인재제도를 경험하였기 때문입니다.

몇 명이 이 연구에 참가하는가?

5-15 명이 이 연구에 참가할 예정입니다.

이 연구에 참가하기 위한 대안은 무엇인가?

실험연구가 아니므로, 대안은 참가를 하지 않는 것입니다.

이 연구에서 나의 역할은?

이 연구 참가는 방문 1회, 약 1-2 시간 정도 소요될 예정입니다. 해 주실 내용은 다음과 같습니다

1회 방문

이 방문은 약 1-2 시간 정도 진행됩니다. 이 시간 동안, 귀하는 핵심인재제도에 대한 의견과 경험을 설명하는 인터뷰를 하게 됩니다. 개인적으로 하는 면대면 인터뷰입니다.

이 연구는 촬영이나 녹음이 되는가?

이 연구는 귀하의 허가가 있을 때만 녹음될 예정입니다. 이는 과학적 혹은 교육적인 목적으로 이 연구 내용을 발표할 때 설명자료로 녹음부분을 일부 사용하기 위함입니다. 귀하의 결정을 아래 빈 칸에 표시하여 주시기 바랍니다.

_____ 이 연구에 참가하는 동안 녹음에 동의합니다.

_____ 이 연구에 참가하는 동안 녹음에 동의하지 않습니다.

이 연구의 위험요소는?

이 연구와 관련한 위험요소는 미미하며, 일상 생활에서 마주치는 위험 정도와 비슷합니다.

이 연구에서 얻는 이익은?

이 연구 참여를 통해 직접적으로 얻는 이익은 없습니다. 하지만, 귀하의 참여로 핵심인재와 관련하여 어떤 측면이 중요하고 또 적절하게 대응해야 하는 가에 대한 통찰력을 제공할 수 있을 것입니다.

내가 지불하는 비용이 있는가?

시간을 제외하고는 이 연구 참가에 소용되는 비용은 없습니다.

이 연구에 참가하는데 돈을 지급 받을 수 있는가?

이 연구 참가하는데 돈을 지급받지는 않습니다.

이 연구 정보는 사적으로 보관되는가?

이 연구 기록은 사적으로 보관될 것입니다. 이 연구와 귀하를 연관 짓는 어떠한 요소도 출판되는 모든 보고서에 포함되지 않을 것입니다. 연구 기록은 안전하게 보관될 것이며, 오직 연구자 김민정만이 귀하의 기록에 접근할 수 있을 것입니다.

이 동의서는 Jia Wang 교수 사무실인 Texas A&M 대학 [Harrington](http://Harrington.com) 561 호에 보관되며 그 외 수집된 귀하에 대한 정보는 패스워드로 잠긴 컴퓨터 파일로 저장되어 김민정의 자택 사무실에서 안전하게 보관될 것입니다.

귀하에 대한 정보는 법이 허락하거나 정한 기간 동안 극비로 보관될 것입니다. 당신의 정보에 접근할 수 있는 사람은 연구자 김민정 뿐입니다. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) 와 같은 규제기관이나 the Texas A&M University 인권보호 프로그램의 대표자들이 귀하의 기록을 열람하여 이 연구가 정확하게 이루어졌고, 정보가 적절한 방법으로 수집되었음을 확인할 수 있습니다.

추가 정보를 위해 연락할 곳은?

연구자 김민정에게 연락하여 연구와 관련한 우려나 불만을 이야기할 수 있습니다. 김민정의 연락처는 이메일 mjkim37@tamu.edu 입니다.

연구 참가자로서의 권리에 대한 질문이나 연구에 대한 의견이 있을 시, 혹은 이 연구에 대한 질문, 불만, 혹은 우려사항이 있을 경우 Texas A&M 대학의 Human Subjects Protection Program office 로 연락하시면 됩니다. 연락번호는 1-979-458-4067 혹은 무료전화 1-855-795-8636 이며 이메일 주소는 irb@tamu.edu 입니다.

참가에 대한 결정을 바꾸어도 되는가?

이 연구의 참가여부는 선택할 수 있으며, 참가 중이라도 언제든지 그만둘 수 있습니다. 참가를 거절할 경우에도 귀하의 신분에 아무런 영향이 없을 것입니다. 연구 참가 기간 중에 그만둔다 하더라도 귀하의 신분에 아무런 영향이 없을 것입니다.

동의서

이 연구 참가에 동의하며, 이 서류에 서명해도 내 법적 권리는 유효함을 확인합니다. 과정, 위험, 이익 부분에 대한 설명을 잘 들었으며, 내 궁금한 사항도 답변을 받았습니다. 이 연구에 대한 새로운 정보는 유용하게 될 때 나에게 제공될 것이며, 내가 만약 이 연구에서 제외되어야 한다면 연구자가 나에게 알려줄 것을 인지하였습니다. 내가 원한다면 더 많은 질문을 할 수 있습니다. 나는 이 서명된 전체 서류의 복사본을 받을 수 있을 것입니다.

참가자 서명

날짜

참가자 이름

날짜

연구자 선서:

연구자 본인 혹은 연구자의 기관은 참가자에게 이 연구에 대하여 잘 설명하였습니다. 내가 알고 있는 한도 내에서 이 동의서에 서명하는 사람은 참가와 관련한 연구의 성격, 요구사항, 이익과 위험요소에 대해 안내 받았음을 증명합니다.

연구자 서명

날짜

연구자 이름

날짜

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

Participant Code Number: _____

Location: _____ **Start Time:** _____

Interviewer: _____ **Finish Time:** _____

Date: _____

Main Questions

1. How did you feel when you were informed that you were selected as talent?
2. Why do you think you were identified as talent in your organization?
3. What is it like to be a talent?
4. What specific talent management initiatives have you attended as talent?
5. What have your experiences with talent management initiatives been like?
6. What do you think about talent management implemented in your organization?
7. How did the talent management experience affect you?

Additional Assistance

1. What are your most impressive experiences with talent management?
2. What have you learned from your experiences with talent management?

APPENDIX E

Participant Demographic Information Sheet

Code Name	
Age	
Gender	
Relationship Status	
Education	
Title	
Work Role	
Years of Employment	
Years of Being Talent	
Talent Management Initiatives Participation	
Employer information: Industry	
Employer information: Product or Service	
Employer information: Number of Employees	
Years of Implementing Talent Management Initiatives	
Additional notes	

APPENDIX F

Excerpt from Reflective Journal

Below is an excerpt from the reflective journal I wrote throughout the research. I mainly used my personal laptop to maintain the reflective journal and sometimes paper memos that I later moved and added to the journal in my computer.

혹은 그렇게 상사가 회사의 핵심인재 선발 기준에 맞추어 인원을 뽑았다 하더라도 정작 핵심인재 본인들은 그 이유를 잘못 알고 있거나 모른다. 왜 선발되었는지 모르니 본인도 혼란스럽고 동료들은 저 이는 되는데 나는 왜 안되나 의구심이 생기고 회사 시스템에 대한 신뢰가 떨어짐. 따라서 선발 기준을 투명하게 전사에 오픈하여 모든 직원이 알 수 있고 공감할 수 있도록 하고.. 그래야 핵심인재가 되고자 한다면 자신은 어떻게 하면 되는지 알겠거나 아니면 최소한 아 그냥 살마는 이런 면으로 핵심인재가 되었구나 인정하고 협업을 하겠지 그리고 상사도 투명한 선발기준과 선발과정이 오픈되니 자신의 선호도보다는 기준에 맞추어 하려고 노력하겠고 왜냐면 그렇게 하지 안하면 팀 내 방발 혹은 의문을 제기할 것이기에.

그리고 핵심인재 본인에게도 자긍심이 더 해 지겠지 이러한 나의 강점이 회사에서 인정을 받는구나 이 강점을 더 살려야겠다 뭐 이런거. 만약에 무슨 기준으로 핵심인재가 되었는지 모른다면 무엇을 강화할 것인지 모르니까. 이 말은 핵심인재가 되었을 때 기대하는 바도 명확히 해 주는 것이 좋다는 것. 어떤 이유로 선발이 되었고 회사에서는 어떤 역할을 기대하며 그 역할 수행을 위해 필요한 교육 혹은 개발계획은 이렇게 있다라고 접근하는 것이 효과적일 것임.

비교적 다들 높은 업무, 직장 만족도를 보였음. 회사에서 인정해 준다는 점에서 로열티와 프라이드가 높고 그래서 개인입장 뿐 아니라 회사 입장을 한 번 더 고민하게 된다고 함. 성과에 대한 압박은 사실 그렇게까지 느끼지 않음. 본래 하던 일을 충실히 하는 것이지 갑자기 조직이나 상사가 높은 성과를 기대한다거나 하지는 않는 것으로 보임.

대부분 자기가 왜 핵심인재로 선발되었는지 모르고 핵심인재가 되면서 무엇을 어떻게 해야하는지 기대하는 바가 무엇인지에 대해 알지 못함. 회사에서 실제 핵심인재 제도를 운영하면서 거두기를 바라는 목표와 핵심인재가 회사가 그런 목표를 가지고 있을 것이다 라고 막연히 생각하는 데서 차이가 있었음.

APPENDIX G

Sample Transcript Member Check

Below is an example of the interview transcript which was sent to and reviewed by the participant.

Researcher: 처음에 핵심인재라는 이야기를 들었을 때 왜 선정이 되었다고 생각하세요?

Participant: 그게 참 제가 아쉬웠던 부분인데요. 어떻게 어떤 과정으로 인해서 선정이 되었는지..를 아직도 아무에게도 못 들었어요. 그냥 얼핏 듣기로는 팀장님의 추천으로 [선발] 되었다고 하는데 팀장님도 어떤어떤 이유로 저를 추천했고 어떤 과정을 거쳐서 선발이 되었는지.. 이런 피드백은 받은 적이 없어서 저는 좀 아쉬워요 저도 좀 영문을 모르고 된 듯한 그런 느낌이 좀 있구요.

Researcher: 혼자 스스로 생각하시기에는 뭔가 팀장님께서 매니저님을 추천한 이유가 있을거잖아요 그게 어떤 점이라고 보세요?

Participant: 열심히 하니까?..웃음.. 약간 그런 거는 있어요. 팀장님의 팀을 운영하는 방안이나 그런 것과 그다음에 그..동료들 사이에서 제가 약간 교두보 같은 역할을 했어요. 그러니까 제가 하려고 했다가 보다는 팀장님이 지금 팀장님하고 그 때 당시 팀장님하고 다른 팀장님인데요 제가 프론티어 그룹에 선정이 되었을 때의 그 예전 팀장님은 성격이..좀 강하신 분이었어요. 강하고 직설적이고...그런 성향에서 약간 과업지향적이신 성향이신데아제 밑에.. 저희 회사의 특성이 경력직 사원들이 많아서 다양한 문화를 겪은 사람들이 모이다 보니까 그런 약간 하향식 문화에 대해서 사람들이 되게 힘들어 했어요. 그런 부분에 대해서 제가..저는 이 회사 오기전에 약간 그..창업을 해서 스타트업을 몇년을 했었어요 거기서 약간 겪은 경험들을 바탕으로 그런 분들도 약간 케어 해 드리고 그분의 입장을 대변도 해 드리고 뭐 이런 관계를 하면서 이제 제가 또 맡은 일은 나름 열심히 해서 그런 것을 좀 좋게 봐 주신게 아닌가 그런 생각은 들어요. 그런데 그게 투명하지 못한 것에 대해서 저 스스로도 약간 의문이고 회사에 대해서도 약간 의문을 가지는 부분이 많아요.

APPENDIX H

Sample Data Analysis

Below are two sample index cards that I used for data analysis. Each unit of data was printed on an index card.

Card No. 14	Participant 5	Male	<p>음..솔직히는..사실..저는 반대해요. 정말 솔직히 말씀드리면, 저는 핵심인제재도에 반대해요. 이제 이거는..사람마다 의견차이가 있겠지만 저의 주관적인 생각에..여러가지가 있는데 첫번째는 그.. 일단 위화감이 생각보다 많이 조성이 되더라고요 회사에서 프론티어를 더 키워간다는데 그럼 나는? 이렇게 되더라고요. 이게 저는 개인적으로 느낀건 아닌데 사내 게시판이나 익명 게시판 같은 게 있어요 그런 것들을 보면 참 불만이 많지요. 제가 그런데 반대로 생각해봐도 그럴 것 같아요. 저 놈 나보다 별론데 뭔가 프론티어래 이러면은..이게 프론티어 뭐야. 그리고 또 그런 일이 있으면 회사에서는 이걸 몰래몰래 하려고 하더라고요. 위화감 조성을 안 하려고 그러면 이제 사람들이 더..그럼 재들한테는 연봉도 더 많이 준다더라 사실 그렇지 않은데. 그런 오해들이 조금씩 있는 것 같아요.</p>
Card No. 23	Participant 8	Male	<p>그리고 사실 그걸[핵심인재] 하나 받는다고 해서..그런거죠 내가 프론티어 그룹을 했어 그런데 내 전문지식이나 전문성이 느냐? 아니거든요 그러니까 다른 인사이드는 있겠지만 내가성장하는데 플러스가 있나 사실 이걸 퀘스천이거든요.</p>