Analysis of Talent Management And Succession Planning In The Iranian Educational System, From The Views of Secondary School Principals

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Abstract

In today's competitive world, a key factor for educational institutions success is the talent management and succession planning of human resources. The purpose of this study was to analyze talent management and succession planning in the Iranian educational system, from the views of secondary school principals. Data were collected from127 principals (by conducting Cochran's formula), by use of a questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using SPSS/Windows. The findings revealed that the score of four of seven dimensions of succession planning and three of five dimensions of talent management were less than the middle of scale spectrum. The findings of comparative analyses showed differences and similarities on respondents' views regarding current status talent management and Succession planning dimensions in educational system. According to the results some recommendations were suggested to reach to the proper and desirable status of talent management and succession planning.

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Introduction

Educational systems are major engines of economic growth, wealth and social progress. Education shapes the world we live in by developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, preparing people to become and remain competent workforce and active citizens (OECD, 2022). On the educational level, the position of the school principal is one of the most important administrative jobs (Abdellah, 2021). Principals play significant roles that are critical to school success and make improvements in areas such as teacher satisfaction and retention, improved student attendance, and student motivation and achievement (Bartanen, 2020; Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012). Recruiting, supporting, satisficating and retaining effective and efficient principals has received attention in the literature (Roza et al., 2003)

On the other hand, strategic human resource management has been shown to be positively related with the improved and progressed performance of different organizations (Delaney & Huselid, 1996). So, a key element in business and organizations in general and in educational organization in particular, is the talent management and succession planning of human resources.

Talent management defined by Gay and Sims (2006) as: "facilitating the development and career progress of highly talented and skilled individuals in the organization, using formalized procedures, resources, policies, and processes". The talent management process is a key element to develop employees for the future of the organization (Gay & Sims, 2006). Lewis and Heckman (2006) and Collings and Mellahi (2009) define talent management as a culture and organizational system that: (1) develops a talent pool of high potential and high performing human resources to fill these positions; (2) identifies key positions that add value to the organization's competitive advantage; and (3) develops human resource systems to facilitate the alignment of organizational strategy, key positions, and talented individuals.

The history of talent management has shown that since the McKinsey consultants' groundbreaking research study in 1997 which was followed by the 2001 publicized book 'The War for Talent' (Axelrod et al., 2002) made the subject known globally. Since then, the subject of talent management has reached significant attention globally both in theory and practice. This shows a paradigm shift from traditional human resource related sources of competitive advantage (Miller et al., 1998), and strategic human resource management (Huselid et al., 1997) to manage talent relevant to today's changing competitive business environment (Musakuro, 2018). Talent management is one of the most important and key strategic issues facing managers in the complex and modern-day business environment (Silzer and Dowel, 2010). It focuses on improving and developing high potential employees for the future leadership positions at the organization (Riccio, 2010). Talent management in the educational level and among principals refers to identifying and employing effective principals for all schools, and equipping them with the management and leadership skills required to significantly improve the students' success (Ghvidel Bajgiran & Nasirpour, 2019). So, talent management can be viewed as a suitable and appropriate framework to enable educational institutions to transform their current human resources systems into the position that is strategically enabling (Bradley, 2016).

Succession management refers to the process through which the human resource capacities of organizations are identified for key positions in the future and are prepared through specialized planning for these positions (Kim, 2007). It is a

process of identifying critical management occupations and positions (Ahmad et al., 2020). So, succession planning is a proactive process that ensures continuing leadership and management committed to the organization's mission, value, and strategies plan by intentionally developing human resources within the organization for advancement (Jamye et al., 2013). Rothwell (2005) identified and developed a succession planning model included seven steps for systematic succession planning and management, which were (1) commitment, (2) assess present work/people requirements, (3) appraisal individual performance, (4) assess future work/ people requirements, (5) assess future individual potential,(6) close the development gap, and (7) evaluate the succession planning program.

Succession planning has been suggested as one of the key factors in winning the 'war for talent' in today's competitive markets. Some researchers (Hor et al., 2010) predicted that succession planning would be one of the key and predominant practices in the next coming decade (Musakuro, 2018), ensuring an institution meets its potential goals (Ahmad & Keerio, 2020). In the educational level, researches showed the significant role of the principals in student achievement efforts and school improvement and success (Louis et al., 2010; Grissom & Loeb, 2011). Hence, succession planning must be implement to provide more opportunities for the improvement and development of school work. Zepeda et al. (2012) showed the importance of succession planning for school principals as it develop performance and effectiveness within the school.

Different studies were done in the field of succession planning and talent management. The results of many studies regarding the reasons of the succession management failure indicated a gap between the existing and desirable succession management, which could be related to issues such

as: inappropriate organizational culture, lack of systematic approaches (Gray & Brad, 2009). Moshfeghi et al. (2020) in their research on talent management found that the highest mean was related to the talent recruitment component in the first rank. Development and training component, talent retention, talent promotion, and talent assessment and discovery were from second to fifth ranks, respectively. Researchers found the order of path coefficient value from the highest to the lowest as following: (1) talent assessment and discovery component; (2) the talent recruitment component, (3) talent retention component, (4) the talent promotion, and (5) the development and training component.

Sephavand (2019) found that the existence of an efficient talent management system in schools requires the development of a vision and attitude based on talent development. Therefore, the educational organization should create talent treasury during employment, through which it can easily identify talented people based on the type of competencies and specialization required. He suggested that existing an efficient talent identification system, recruitment of expert employees, engaging talented people in planning and decision making and key activities, school talent development policy, development of talents, succession planning, career path planning for talents, developing organization vision on talent development, and matching the talent of employees with their expertise were among the most important components of talent management in schools.

Darafsh et al. (2017) found that there was significant correlation between talent management with organizational health. Out of the talent management components, performance management of human resource, and reward and recognition of human resource could be predicted organizational health. Musakuro (2018) developed

a framework tool for talent management in educational sector. The framework included: internal influences on talent management framework (talent management policy and governance, role players, tools), strategic drivers, integrated talent management processes (attracting talent, acquiring talent, growing talent, managing talent, and talent retention), and review (regular progress check-up on integrated talent management processes). Accordingly, He suggested that he study contributed in solving talent management challenges faced in the South African education sector. The findings of Ahmadi et al. (2019) study on open, axial and selective coding regarding teacher talent management process showed that: the causal conditions included system changes and managerial changes. Core categories included individual professional management in the organization and mental management of the individual in the organization. Strategies included executive actions. The underpinning factors included the structural context, environmental contextualization, and space-based human resources. Interventional factors included necessary structural changes in schools, the necessary functional changes. Finally, the consequence included cognitive psychological achievements, and the academic achievements of education. The researchers concluded that the teacher talent management process at the secondary school reflected the relationship between its different dimensions.

According to the above issues and the importance of assessing current status of succession planning and talent management, in this research, secondary school principals' views on talent management and succession planning in the Iranian educational system was analyzed. The research objectives were: (1) identifying the level of talent management in the Iranian educational

system, (2) identifying the level of succession planning in the Iranian educational system, (3) ranking dimensions of talent management from secondary school principals' views, (4) ranking dimensions of succession planning from secondary school principals' views, (5) examining probable differences in secondary school principals' views on talent management and succession planning according to gender and work experience.

Material and Methods

The statistical population of this study comprised secondary school principals, in which a sample of 127 principals (by using Cochran's formula) was selected, using proportional random sampling method.

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire, divided into three parts: demographic characteristics, assessing succession planning, and assessing talent management. To assess succession planning, by reviewing previous literature and Rothwell scale on succession planning, respondents' views on succession planning was evaluate on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1: very low to 5: very high). The scale had 28 items and assessed seven dimensions of succession planning including: make the commitment, clarify the work/people performance, appraise performance, clarify the work/people needed in the future, access potential, plan for development, and evaluate the program. Also, according to Phillips model, respondents' views on talent management was evaluate by 23 items on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1: very low to 5: very high), in five dimensions including: attracting talents, selecting talents, engaging talents, developing talents, and retaining talents.

Face validity of the instrument was confirmed by a panel of experts consisting of 8 faculty members in the fields of management. Coefficient Cronbach's alpha, calculated for testing the

questionnaire reliability, estimated the degree of interrelatedness and variance among a set of items. The findings (Table 1) showed that reliability of the instrument for different parts of questionnaire met this criterion.

Table 1. Results of Cronbach's alpha

Scale		Cronbach's alpha
Succession planning	Make the commitment	.89
	Clarify the work/people performance	.84
	Appraise performance	.91
	Clarify the work/people needed in the future	.78
	Access potential	.75
	Plan for development	.79
	Evaluate the program	.76
Talent management	Attracting talents	.79
	Selecting talents	.82
	Engaging talents	.75
	Developing talents	.81
	Retaining talents	.84

After gathering the questionnaires, data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using SPSS/Windows. Frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard deviation were descriptive statistics. T-test and ANOVA (F-test) were used for inferential analysis. Using a T-test of mean differences, respondents' views on studied variables were compared by gender. Using ANOVA (F-test) respondents' views on studied variables were compared by work experiences.

Results

According to the findings, 56.7% of respondents were female and 43.3% were male. Respondents were on average 47 years old. 29.13% of respondents had less than 5 years of work experience, 45.67% had between 5-10 years of work experience, and 25.20% had more than 10 years of work experience,

As previously mentioned, succession planning was assessed in seven dimensions. The mean score of respondents' views on clarify the work/people performance, appraise performance, and plan for development were more than the middle of scale spectrum. In contrast, the mean score of respondents' views on make the commitment, clarify the work/people needed in the future, access potential, and evaluate the program were less than the middle of scale spectrum (Table 2).

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of succession planning dimensions

Scale		Mean	SD
Succession planning	Make the commitment	15.84	3.24
	Clarify the work/people performance	9.51	1.67
	Appraise performance	12.92	2.97
	Clarify the work/people needed in the future	8.52	1.21
	Access potential	10.88	2.36
	Plan for development	12.64	2.98
	Evaluate the program	9.12	1.54

Talent management was assessed in five dimensions. The findings showed that the mean score of respondents' views on attracting talents and selecting talents were more than the middle of scale spectrum. In contrast, the mean score of respondents' views on engaging talents, developing talents, and retaining talents were less than the middle of scale spectrum (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of talent management dimensions

Scale		Mean	SD
Talent management	Attracting talents	9.33	1.46
	Selecting talents	12.08	2.13
	Engaging talents	13.35	2.78
	Developing talents	15.24	3.01
	Retaining talents	13.15	2.63

For ranking respondents' views on succession planning and talent management the scores were recorded on to 5-point scale. According to the findings, respondents ranked appraise performance in the first place and after that, was clarify the work/people performance. In addition, the score of evaluate the program was less than the other dimensions according to respondents' views (Fig 1).
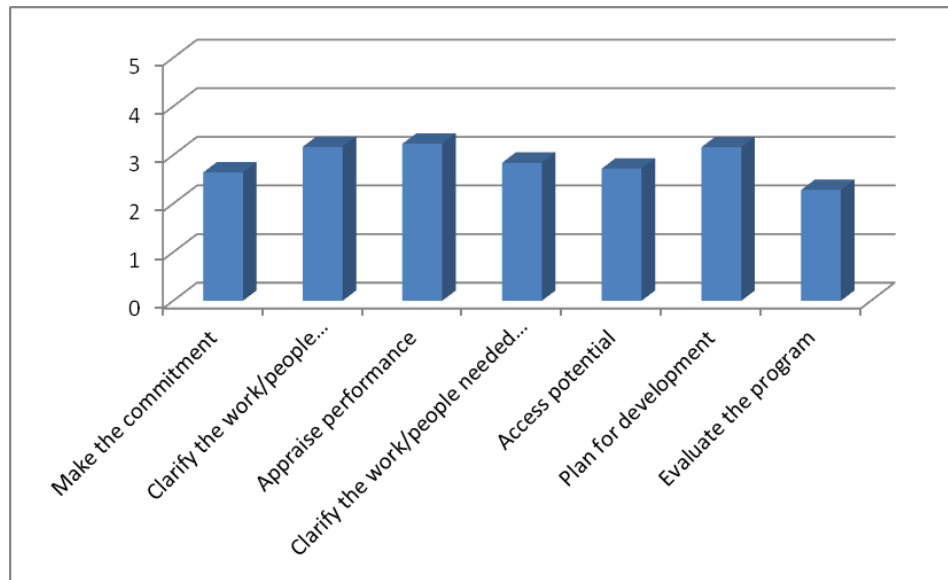
Fig 1. Ranking succession planning dimensions

Among talent management dimensions, the current status of attracting talents was better of the other dimensions and so, it ranked first. Selecting talents, engaging talents, and retaining talents ranked from 2 to 4, respectively. In addition, the score of developing talents was less than the other dimensions according to respondents' views (Fig 2).
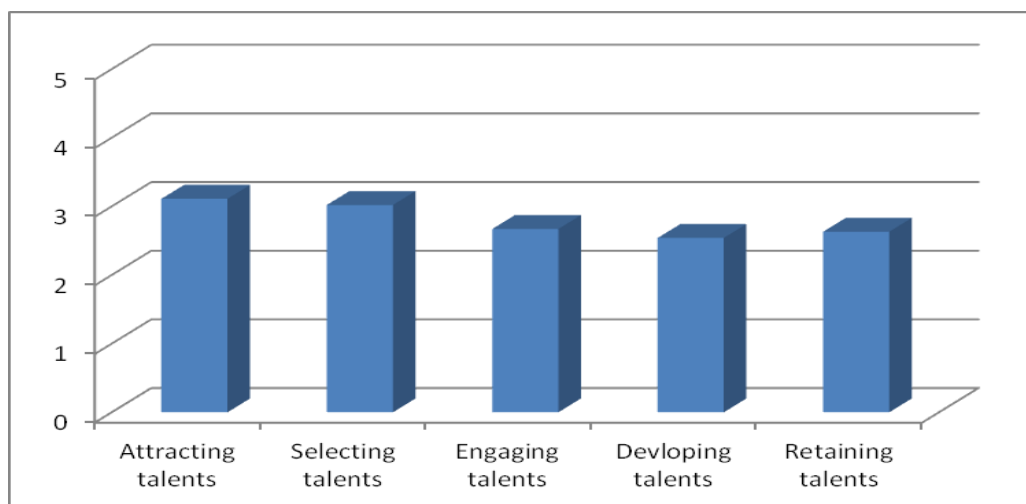

Fig 2. Ranking talent management dimensions

Results of t-test for the comparison of the mean of the two groups' views (male and female) on the current status of succession planning (Table 4) showed that females' view on clarify the work/people performance (m_f= 9.69, m_m= 9.27) and on appraise performance (M_f= 13.02, M_m= 12.78) was significantly higher than that of males. On the other hand, males' view on access potential was significantly higher than that of females (M_f= 10.75, M_m= 11.05). The results indicated that there were no significant differences between males' and females' views on the other variables.

Table 4. Results of t-test

Variable		Gender	Mean	SD	t-value
Succession planning	Make the commitment	Male	15.91	3.14	.889^{ns}
		Female	15.78	3.30	
	Clarify the work/people performance	Male	9.27	1.71	-1.486*
		Female	9.69	1.62	
	Appraise performance	Male	12.78	2.79	-1.681*
		Female	13.02	3.11	
	Clarify the work/people needed in the future	Male	8.45	1.24	-.719^{ns}
		Female	8.57	1.18	
	Access potential	Male	11.05	2.34	1.755*
		Female	10.75	2.37	
	Plan for development	Male	12.61	3.02	-.578^{ns}
		Female	12.66	2.92	
	Evaluate the program	Male	9.04	1.48	-.614^{ns}
		Female	9.18	1.59	

^{ns}: Non significant
*: p<.05

The comparison of the mean of the two groups' views on the current status of talent management indicated that there was significant difference between males' views and females' views on Selecting talents (M_f= 11.90, M_m= 12.31), in which males scored the variable more than females. There were no significant differences between males' and females' views on the other dimensions (including attracting talents, engaging talents, developing talents, and retaining talents) (Table 5).

Table 5. Results of t-test

Variable		Gender	Mean	SD	t-value
Talent management	Attracting talents	Male	9.39	1.43	.517^{ns}
		Female	9.28	1.49	
	Selecting talents	Male	12.31	2.18	1.914*
		Female	11.90	2.09	
	Engaging talents	Male	13.37	2.92	.321^{ns}
		Female	13.33	2.66	
	Developing talents	Male	15.21	3.14	-.372^{ns}
		Female	15.26	2.91	
	Retaining talents	Male	13.18	2.55	.345^{ns}
		Female	13.13	2.68	

^{ns}: Non significant
*: p<.05

Mean square and analysis of variance (F-test) of respondents' views toward succession planning by work experience are demonstrated in Table 6. The findings revealed that there were significant differences in respondents' views on clarify the work/people performance and on appraise performance.

Table 6. Results of F-test

Variable			Mean Square	F
Succession planning	Make the commitment	Between Groups	32.38	1.482ns
		Within Groups	21.84	
	Clarify the work/people performance	Between Groups	27.27	4.038*
		Within Groups	6.75	
	Appraise performance	Between Groups	44.10	4.257*
		Within Groups	10.36	
	Clarify the work/people needed in the future	Between Groups	4.76	.516ns
		Within Groups	9.70	
	Access potential	Between Groups	6.693	.724ns
		Within Groups	9.793	
	Plan for development	Between Groups	23.34	1.901ns
		Within Groups	12.28	
	Evaluate the program	Between Groups	28.05	2.59ns
		Within Groups	11.53	

ns: Non significant

*: $p < .05$

In order to determine which means differ, Post-hoc test (Duncan) was conducted. The findings indicated that on clarify the work/people performance; there were significant differences between respondents' views with more than 10-year work experience and the two other groups. About appraise performance; there were significant differences between respondents' views with less than 5-year work experience and the two other groups (Table 7).

Table 7. Results of Duncan test

Variable	Work experience (Year)	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Clarify the work/people performance	<5	9.49	
	5-10	9.42	
	>10		9.72
Appraise performance	<5	12.86	
	5-10		12.93
	>10		12.97

Results of analysis of variance (F-test) for probabilistic differences in respondents' views toward talent management by work experience showed that there were significant differences in respondents' views on attracting talents and developing talents (Table 8).

Table 8. Results of F-test

Variable			Mean Square	F
Talent management	Attracting talents	Between Groups	32.69	3.46*
		Within Groups	11.71	
	Selecting talents	Between Groups	8.67	2.386ns
		Within Groups	3.63	
	Engaging talents	Between Groups	26.14	1.613ns
		Within Groups	16.20	
	Developing talents	Between Groups	61.41	4.35*
		Within Groups	14.08	
	Retaining talents	Between Groups	14.66	1.063ns
		Within Groups	13.79	

ns: Non significant

*: $p < .05$

Duncan test was used to determine which means differ (Table 9). Results showed that on attracting talents, there were significant differences between respondents' views with less than 5-year work experience and the two other groups. About developing talents, there were also significant differences between respondents' views with less than 5-year work experience and the two other groups.

Table 9. Results of Duncan test

Variable	work experience (Year)	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
	<5	9.24	
Attracting talents	5-10		9.37
	>10		9.38
	<5	15.12	
Developing talents	5-10		15.31
	>10		15.27

Discussion and Recommendations

In the era of competiveness and the advancement of technologies, human capital is critical for society development. Education and educational organizations are among the key factors in the development of a society by transforming human resources into human capital. Since schools are the most important formal

learning organization to all actors of the education system (including students, teachers and local communities) and are responsible for the general education of all young people; selection and appointment of competent school principal causes resources in the schools be used optimally, resulting school be improved and progressed. In this regard, a key factor of success is the talent management and succession planning of principals, to be ensure that the right human resource is serving in the right and proper position. According to Collins (2001): "first get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats – then figure out where to drive it" (Collins, 2001: p. 41).

In this study, we examined the current status of talent management and succession planning in schools. According to respondents' view, the score of four of seven dimensions of succession planning and three of five dimensions of talent management were less than the middle of scale spectrum; showed that theses dimensions were not in a proper status. The findings are accordance with Zeynoddini Bidmeshki et al. (2014). Since previous researches showed the relationship between talent management with organizational innovation (Marofi et al., 2016) and the relationship between succession planning with organizational commitment (LalehAbadi, 2016) and organization performance (Helmich, 1974), it is vital to pay attention to improve the aforementioned dimensions. Among talent management dimensions, the highest mean was related to the attracting talents, standing in the first rank. Among succession planning dimensions, the highest mean was related to the appraise performance, standing in the first rank.

The other objective of our study was to examining probable differences in secondary school principals' views on talent management and succession planning according to gender and work experience. The findings of comparative analyses showed differences and similarities on respondents' views by the studied variables. Findings on the current status of succession planning and talent management dimensions showed that clarify the work/people performance and appraise performance got better scores from the views of females than males. Access potential and selecting talents got better scores from the views of males than their counterparts. Results showed that work experience had also been effective in assessing the current status of succession planning and talent management dimensions. So that respondents with more than 10 years of experience assess the dimensions of clarify the work/people performance and appraise performance more favorably. According to the results, for fostering a succession planning, the current performance of individuals should be considered and according to the current requirements of work, experience and specialization, an appropriate succession planning be taken. If, regardless of the two important mentioned variables, succession planning is raised; it can cause the failure of succession goals and organizational goals. It will make human resource be bored and burn out. Accordingly, it is necessary to pay attention to the above dimensions, because if an individual does not have the necessary talents to take responsibility for succession, it is like an unfavorable land where cultivation takes place. Therefore, paying attention to the background and talent of the individual, as well as the requirements of future work, causes the correct matching of talents and needs.

The talents engagement, their development and retaining were not very desirable based on the research results; could cause talents to suffer from burnout, organizational silence, reduction of organizational commitment, and leave the

organization after a while. As Gilmore (2007) suggested, individual development planning is necessary and important to provide direction for high potentials to achieve improvement to the better level. Based on this, it is recommended that the individuals be aware of the importance of succession planning and talent management in schools. Educational organizations should consider all dimensions of talent management and not just focus on the talent attraction dimension. Support of the development of all human resources and individuals greater engagement should be done. It is recommended that a database of human resources and their capabilities be prepared and used along with a report of their current performance to prepare a succession planning. It should be noted that each individual who serves in the organization is a talent. Therefore, necessary and appropriate action must be taken to develop and retain them. It is recommended that in-service training be held for them, and by providing appropriate conditions for organizational growth, their presence in the organization be maintained. This developing and retaining will be useful when it is accompanied by the use of their expertise.

Ethical considerations

During the implementation of this research and the preparation of the article, all national laws and principles of professional ethics related to the subject of research, including the rights of statistical community, organizations and institutions, as well as authors and writers have been observed. Adherence to the principles of research ethics in the present study was observed and consent forms were consciously completed by all statistical community.

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Conflict of interest

According to the authors of the present article, there was no conflict of interest.

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