

THE INFLUENCE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN PUBLIC AGENCIES

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Abstract: *The study examines the influence of talent management practices, specifically talent acquisition and talent retention on organizational performance within public agencies in Malaysia. It draws upon the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory as its underlying theoretical framework. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed to 385 employees, who were selected using a convenience sampling technique. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis. The findings indicate that talent management has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance, whereby both talent acquisition and talent retention demonstrate strong and statistically significant relationships with performance outcomes. This study represents the first empirical investigation of talent management practices and organizational performance within Malaysian public agencies. Consequently, the results offer valuable insights for public sector officers, as they underscore the importance of implementing effective talent management practices to enhance organizational performance and organizational effectiveness.*

conclusions.

Keywords: *Talent Management, Organizational Performance, Public Agency, Malaysia*

Introduction

Recent reforms across public administration globally emphasize performance-based public management as a key mechanism for driving accountability, efficiency, and service quality in government institutions (Department of Economic, 2023). At the same time, the imperative to optimize workforce talent has become increasingly apparent: public agencies are now expected to compete for high-potential employees, adapt to demographic shifts, and manage skills in a dynamic environment (Fauzian et al., 2024). Empirical studies in emerging markets reinforce that talent management practices are positively associated with employee performance within public sector organizations, particularly where traditional bureaucratic structures are challenged (Wahyuni & Suwena, 2025; Mohamad et al., 2023). From a talent management perspective, prioritizing the strategic alignment of human capital with institutional goals, leveraging data-driven HR systems, and fostering stronger employee engagement has become increasingly essential for enhancing public-sector performance in the digital age. Indeed, talent management enhances organizational capacity by developing employees' adaptability to evolving requirements while facilitating the recruitment of appropriately skilled candidates to meet future business demands (Yomralıoğlu, 2026).

Talent management plays a crucial role in enabling organizations to attain and sustain competitive advantage. Nevertheless, although its importance is widely acknowledged, existing research has predominantly focused on private-sector contexts, with comparatively few studies conducted within Asian settings (Pham, 2023). In the Malaysian context, public sector agencies continue to lag behind their private sector counterparts in implementing strategic talent-management practices. While the Malaysian government has introduced programs aimed at high-potential employee development and talent retention, these efforts remain hampered by inflexible civil-service structures, centralized human resource processes, and constrained reward systems (Ananthan et al., 2019). Despite investment in talent initiatives, the public service still struggles with talent mismatch and retention shortfalls, undermining innovation and organizational responsiveness. By contrast, studies of Malaysian private organizations demonstrate stronger links between career-development interventions (such as succession-planning, job rotation and mentoring) and the cultivation of high-performance talent (Mahmood et al., 2014). Moreover, research in the state government setting highlights that the absence of integrated talent frameworks (acquisition, development and retention strategies) limits public agencies' ability to shape and sustain a strategic organizational (Abdullah et al., 2020). Malaysian public agencies exhibit a comparatively lower level of strategic maturity in talent management, as they are often constrained by traditional administrative structures and rigid human resource practices. While private sector organizations have adopted effective talent management systems that integrate employee performance, career development, and flexible organizational planning, public agencies still fall behind because their talent strategies are not yet fully matched with organizational goals and changing organizational needs.

Problem Statement

Organizational performance in Malaysian public agencies remains a critical concern, as these institutions are expected to deliver efficient, effective, and high-quality public services. However, achieving consistent performance is challenging due to structural constraints such as rigid bureaucratic systems, limited financial incentives, and regulatory restrictions. Moreover, public agencies worldwide, including those in Malaysia, continue to face persistent human resource challenges such as aging organizationals, limited career progression, rigid human resource (HR) systems, and low employee motivation. The demographic shift towards older employees in the public sector has led to concerns over knowledge transfer, reduced

adaptability, and organizational renewal (García-Pereiro et al., 2025). In Malaysia, an aging labor force is increasingly viewed as a potential constraint on productivity and public service innovation (Azhar & Omar, 2025). Moreover, the hierarchical and rule-bound nature of public administration often restricts opportunities for career advancement, thereby undermining motivation and retention among skilled employees (Zolak Poljašević et al., 2025).

Talent management plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational performance, particularly in the public sector where service quality depends heavily on human capital. Nevertheless, Malaysian public agencies face difficulties in attracting, developing, and retaining skilled employees, partly due to competition from the private sector and institutional limitations. Although the importance of effective talent management has been widely acknowledged within Malaysia's public sector, its practical implementation remains inconsistent and fragmented. Studies reveal that despite the introduction of various initiatives to attract, develop, and retain skilled employees, talent management practices have yet to be institutionalized across agencies (Ananthan et al., 2019).

The rigidity of HR frameworks; marked by centralized control, standardized pay scales, and procedural constraints; further limits flexibility in recruitment, performance management, and talent development. These structural limitations, coupled with limited autonomy and recognition, tend to erode employee engagement and morale, diminishing the capacity of public organizations to cultivate and sustain a motivated, high-performing organizational (New Metrics, 2024).

Additionally, Oko-Joseph (2015) contends that transforming government agencies from traditional bureaucratic models to more dynamic, talent-focused systems is essential for developing nations to enhance their competitiveness, operational efficiency, and citizen-oriented service delivery in the 21st century. Abdullah et al. (2020) observe that while talent frameworks are conceptually recognized in state government agencies, their execution is often hindered by bureaucratic rigidity, limited managerial autonomy, and weak alignment with strategic objectives. Comparative evidence further indicates that inconsistencies in policy interpretation, performance appraisal systems, and incentive structures contribute to uneven adoption across different levels of government (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013). Consequently, the gap between policy recognition and effective implementation continues to impede the development of a strategically managed and high-performing public organizational in Malaysia. Therefore, a clear gap exists in understanding the effectiveness of talent management practices in improving organizational performance in this specific context.

This study addresses the limited empirical evidence on talent management in Malaysian public agencies by focusing specifically on two critical dimensions: talent acquisition and talent retention. First, it examines the influence of talent acquisition on organizational performance, providing insights into how effective recruitment strategies contribute to improved public sector outcomes. Second, it investigates the relationship between talent retention and organizational performance, highlighting the importance of retaining skilled employees in sustaining performance.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the influence of talent acquisition on organizational performance in public agencies.
2. To examine the relationship between talent retention and organizational performance in public agencies.

Literature Review

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) argues that valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources create sustainable competitive advantage. Talented employees are viewed as strategic assets; therefore, effective talent management becomes a mechanism for developing and leveraging unique human capital to enhance organizational performance. RBV posits that sustainable competitive advantage is derived from resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and effectively embedded within the organization (Kero & Bogale, 2023). Within this framework, human capital, particularly employees endowed with strong innovative capabilities, is increasingly recognized as a critical strategic asset (AlQershi et al., 2021).

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance has been a key concern in management research, highlighting its importance in gaining competitive advantage and sustaining long-term success. Fundamentally, it refers to an organization's capacity to accomplish its goals effectively and efficiently (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). Additionally, organizational performance is defined as the actual results or outputs achieved by an organization compared with its intended goals (Richard et al., 2009). In this study, organizational performance serves as the outcome variable, indicating the extent to which the company achieves its objectives in areas such as efficiency, profitability, and customer satisfaction.

Organizational performance reflects an organization's capacity to achieve its strategic goals, deliver value to stakeholders, and sustain competitive advantage. Shafiee & Goodarzi (2026) suggest that a strong organizational reputation as an employer significantly enhances both the attraction and retention of talented employees. By prioritizing these aspects, organizations are better positioned to reinforce their competitive standing in the labor market. Within the public sector, performance is commonly assessed through indicators such as customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. Effective talent management practices play a critical role in cultivating a high-performance culture that supports these outcomes, enabling organizations to remain agile and responsive to dynamic market conditions. Furthermore, organizations that invest in talent management and foster a supportive work environment tend to experience higher levels of employee retention, which in turn contribute to enhanced overall performance.

Talent Acquisition and Talent Retention

Employees are widely recognized as a key driver of organizational performance and competitive advantage (Héder et al., 2018). Prior studies indicate that talent management practices enhance employee motivation, engagement, and productivity (Radhi & Al-Abbasi, 2024), while talent acquisition strategies improve candidate quality, performance, and organizational commitment (Bansal, 2025). Evidence from private sector contexts, particularly IT firms, further confirms the positive impact of effective recruitment and selection on organizational performance (Sahithi & Mathe, 2025).

Meanwhile, talent retention refers to organizational strategies aimed at retaining skilled employees by reducing turnover through supportive work environments, competitive rewards, career development, and attention to employee needs (Kagwiria, Namusonge, & Karanja, 2021). It also involves enhancing engagement, aligning employees with organizational goals, and recognizing their contributions. Effective retention improves organizational stability, reduces recruitment and training costs, and enables better use of employee expertise (Taiko,

2024). It has become increasingly important in the post-pandemic labor market as organizations seek to maintain a committed and capable workforce (Alissai et al., 2025).

However, existing literature is largely concentrated in the private sector and non-Malaysian settings, limiting its applicability to public agencies that operate under distinct institutional and bureaucratic constraints. In addition, talent management is often examined as a broad construct, with limited differentiation between its specific dimensions. This study addresses these gaps by focusing specifically on talent acquisition and talent retention within Malaysian public agencies, offering more context-sensitive and nuanced insights into their influence on organizational performance.

Conceptual Framework

This study is conceptually grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory to explain and interpret the relationships among its variables. According to the RBV, talent management enables organizations to develop and leverage valuable, rare, and hard-to-imitate human capital. By systematically attracting and retaining skilled employees, organizations enhance innovation, commitment, and productivity, which in turn drives superior organizational performance and sustainable competitive advantage. The independent variables of the study are talent acquisition and talent retention, while organizational performance serves as the dependent variable in the context of public agencies in Malaysia. Organizational performance is influenced by talent management. The research framework is illustrated in Figure 1.0 below:

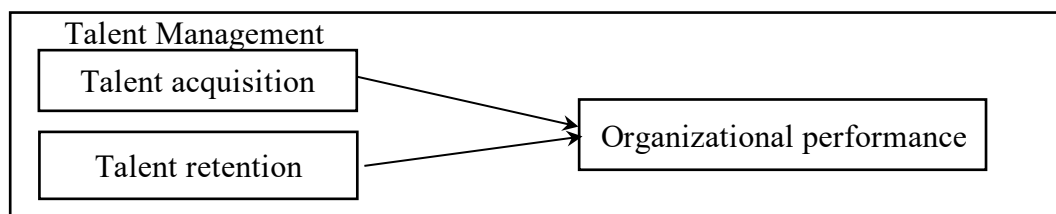


Figure 1: The relationship between talent management and organizational performance

Methodology

This study adopted a deductive research approach grounded in established theories and existing conceptual frameworks. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, and the analysis was conducted exclusively using quantitative methods. The target population comprised employees of the Kelantan state government in Malaysia, estimated at approximately 4,120 individuals. A total of 385 respondents participated in the study, exceeding the minimum sample size of 274 recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). In line with Lehdonvirta et al. (2021), who highlighted the growing reliance on cost-efficient and accessible non-probability sampling methods in contemporary online research, this study utilized convenience sampling. The questionnaire link was disseminated via WhatsApp to facilitate broad and timely participation. Although convenience sampling is subject to limitations related to representativeness and potential sampling bias, it is positioned methodologically between single-subject designs and fully randomized controlled approaches (Emerson, 2021). The relatively large sample size employed in this study permits limited generalization beyond single-subject analyses; however, the non-probability nature of the sampling technique imposes inherent constraints on the broader generalizability of the findings.

The questionnaire was administered in the Malay language to enhance clarity and ensure respondent comprehension. All items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging

from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). Prior research indicates that seven-point Likert scales yield slightly higher mean scores relative to the maximum attainable score compared with ten-point scales, without compromising measurement reliability (Dawes, 2008). Data collection was conducted through a personally administered survey, and the measurement instrument was adapted from Kaleem (2019).

The study achieved a response rate of 67%, which is considered satisfactory for empirical research. As noted by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), response rates of 50% are deemed acceptable for analysis and publication, 60% are regarded as good, and rates of 70% or above are considered very good.

Demographic data

As shown in Table 1, male respondents constituted 59% of the sample, while female respondents accounted for 41%. Prior studies have reported mixed findings regarding gender differences in responses to talent management practices. For instance, Khoreva, Vai man, and Van Zalk (2017) found that female high-potential employees exhibit stronger responses to effective talent management practices, particularly through higher commitment to leadership competence development, compared to their male counterparts. In contrast, Tatli et al. (2013) argued that female employees are less inclined than male employees to compete for higher-status positions, as women tend to avoid competitive environments while men are more likely to embrace them.

Table 1: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	227	59.0
Female	158	41.0
Total	385	100.0

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents (61%) were aged between 20 and 40 years, followed by those aged 41–50 years (33.2%), while a smaller proportion fell within the 51–60 age group (5.8%). In the context of this study, the sustainability of future competencies is closely linked to the retention of younger employees in the labor market over an extended period. Accordingly, it is important for human resource practitioners to possess a comprehensive understanding of talent management practices, particularly in relation to how the competencies of older employees are positioned and leveraged in technology-driven work environments.

With respect to educational attainment, 86.5% of the respondents possessed a diploma or higher qualification (refer to Table 3). This substantial proportion of employees with tertiary-level education reflects a relatively high level of human capital within the sample, which is a critical foundation for effective talent management. The prevalence of academically qualified workers suggests that the state government workforce possesses the formal competencies typically required for managerial, professional, and supervisory roles. From a talent management perspective, this profile underscores the importance of strategic practices related to talent identification, development, and career progression, as employees with higher educational attainment are more likely to benefit from structured learning and development initiatives, succession planning, and leadership pipelines within the public sector.

Table 2: Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
20-30 years old	96	24.9
31-40 years old	139	36.1
41-50 years old	128	33.2
51-60 years old	23	5.8
Total	385	100.0

Table 3: Education of the respondents

Education	Frequency	Percent
PhD	8	2.1
Master's degree	18	4.7
Bachelor's degree	181	47.0
Diploma	126	32.7
SPM	46	11.9
PMR	6	1.6
Total	385	100.0

Results and Discussion

The correlation coefficient was employed to assess the strength of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Correlation values approaching +1.00 or -1.00 indicate stronger associations, whereas values closer to 0.00 reflect weaker relationships (Pallant, 2013). The correlation results for all study variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlations among the Variables

	Organizational Performance	Talent Acquisition	Talent Retention	Talent Management
Organizational Performance	1	.560**	.716**	.574**
Talent Acquisition	.560**	1	.575**	.679**
Talent Retention	.716**	.575**	1	.703**
Talent Management	.574**	.679**	.703**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

In examining the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the association between talent retention and organizational performance was the strongest ($r = 0.716$, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, the weakest relationship was identified between talent acquisition and organizational performance ($r = 0.560$, $p < 0.01$).

Subsequently, multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relationships between the components of talent management and organizational performance. As reported in Table 5, talent acquisition ($\beta = 0.330$, $t = 5.770$) and talent retention ($\beta = 0.712$, $t = 11.700$) exerted a positive and statistically significant influence on employee performance. In contrast, talent management demonstrated a significant but negative effect on organizational performance ($\beta = -0.163$, $t = -2.900$). All corresponding t-values were statistically significant, with p-values below the 0.05 threshold.

These findings indicate that talent acquisition and talent retention are significant predictors of organizational performance. However, talent development did not exhibit a statistically significant effect ($\beta = -0.089$, $t = -1.103$), as its p-value ($p = 0.271$) exceeded the conventional significance level of 0.05.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Results for Organizational Performance

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		11.285	.000
	Talent Acquisition	.330	5.770	.000
	Talent Retention	.712	11.700	.000
	Talent Management	-.163	-2.900	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Sariwulan et al. (2021) indicated that performance is positively influenced by talent management, while Dalal and Akdere (2021) found a significant and positive overall relationship between talent management and job-related outcomes.

Implications and Limitations

Although prior research has explored various aspects of talent management in organizations, their findings cannot be readily generalized to Malaysian public agencies. This study makes a significant contribution by addressing this gap, specifically examining the relationships between talent management practices and the performance of Malaysian public agencies. Limited research has empirically investigated talent management practices within Malaysian public agencies contexts, particularly in terms of theoretical implications. The evidence generated from this study regarding the impact of talent management on the performance of Malaysian public agencies provides a potential benchmark for other country government agencies seeking to evaluate performance across the various dimensions of talent management. Consequently, Malaysian government can assess the extent to which they optimize their human capital to achieve superior organizational productivity and performance.

From a practical perspective, personnel in the public agencies should recognize that the effectiveness of talent management is shaped not only by the overarching organizational philosophy but also by the individual philosophies of those tasked with implementing talent-management practices, particularly senior officers in state government departments and agencies. It is imperative that senior officers clearly articulate and disseminate their organization's talent philosophy to junior officers, ensuring alignment and consistency in implementation. Shared understanding of this philosophy between senior and junior officers is crucial, as it generates clear signals for subordinates, whose perceptions are critical determinants of talent-management outcomes.

Nevertheless, this study is subject to certain limitations. The proposed theoretical model of talent management and organizational performance incorporates only three factors, which may constrain its explanatory power. Future research could incorporate additional variables to enhance the model's comprehensiveness and predictive capability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence on the critical role of talent management in enhancing the performance of Malaysian public agencies. The findings highlight that components such as talent acquisition and talent retention exert significant positive effects on employee performance. This underscores the necessity for state government HRM personnel to implement comprehensive, well-aligned talent management strategies that not only attract and retain high-potential employees but also actively foster their development in a structured and supportive environment.

The study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it addresses a notable gap in the literature by extending talent management research into the public sector, offering a model that links specific talent management practices to employee performance outcomes. Practically, it provides actionable insights for government agencies, emphasizing that senior leadership must communicate a clear and unified talent philosophy and ensure alignment across all levels to optimize the effectiveness of talent management initiatives.

While the study's scope is limited by its focus on two primary factors, the findings offer a valuable foundation for future research. Expanding the model to include additional variables and testing it across other country organizations could further enhance understanding of how talent management drives organizational performance. Ultimately, the evidence reinforces that strategic, well-executed talent management is a cornerstone for sustaining high-performing public-sector organizations.

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