



Talent Management Framework in China Youth Travel Agency

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ABSTRACT

In the context of China's rapidly changing market and evolving workforce demographics, talent management has become a key factor in organizational success, particularly within service-oriented industries like the China Youth Travel Agency (CYTA). This study aims to explore the role of a structured talent management framework in driving employee motivation at CYTA, focusing on four dimensions: Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Deployment, and Talent Retention. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data was collected from 287 CYTA employees through a structured survey and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) path analysis. The findings reveal that each dimension of talent management significantly enhances employee motivation, with Talent Development showing the strongest impact. This research contributes to the literature by demonstrating the importance of an integrated talent management approach in fostering a motivated and committed workforce, essential for sustaining CYTA's competitive edge and adapting to the dynamic demands of the travel industry.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, talent management has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational success, especially in the context of China's rapidly evolving market environments (Mujtaba & Mubarik, 2022). The China Youth Travel Agency (CYTA), a prominent player in the Chinese travel industry, has recognized the importance of developing robust talent management frameworks to foster employee motivation and retain its competitive edge (Tao et al., 2014). Traditionally, talent management in China has been heavily influenced by cultural norms such as hierarchical organizational structures and a strong emphasis on loyalty and job security (Sun et al., 2021). However, as the demographic composition of the workforce changes and more millennials and Gen Z employees enter the job market, there is a growing need for more dynamic and engaging talent management strategies (Harsch & Festing, 2020).

The travel industry, characterized by its service-intensive nature, requires highly motivated employees who are capable of delivering exceptional customer service and adapting to the fast-paced changes in global travel trends (Ngemntu, 2022). CYTA, with its extensive network and diverse service offerings, relies heavily on the motivation and expertise of its employees to drive customer satisfaction and business growth (Mao, 2017). Employee motivation is not only crucial in enhancing productivity but also in fostering innovation and responsiveness to market changes (Jose et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding the role of a tailored talent management framework in enhancing employee motivation is paramount for CYTA to sustain its growth and market leadership.

Despite the critical role of motivated employees in the travel industry, CYTA faces significant challenges in maintaining high levels of employee motivation. One of the primary issues is the alignment of the organization's talent management practices with the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of its employees (Liu, 2017). There is often a disconnect between the career aspirations of employees and the opportunities available within the agency. Furthermore, the rapid technological advancements and changes in consumer behavior have necessitated a shift in skills, which CYTA's existing talent management frameworks may not adequately support (Liu, 2017). This misalignment can lead to decreased employee satisfaction, increased turnover rates, and a workforce that is not fully equipped to meet the evolving demands of the travel market.

Another significant issue is the lack of a structured framework to effectively recognize and reward employee contributions. While financial incentives are common, they may not be sufficient to sustain long-term motivation among employees (Liu, 2017). Non-monetary rewards, such as career development opportunities, recognition programs, and work-life balance initiatives, are often underutilized. Additionally, CYTA's management practices have not fully adapted to the feedback-driven culture valued by younger employees, which can lead to feelings of undervaluation and a lack of engagement.

The study aims to investigate the role of talent management framework in driving employee motivation within the China Youth Travel Agency (CYTA) and to identify the specific talent management practices that align with the needs and aspirations of CYTA's workforce. This involves examining the four key dimensions, including Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Deployment, and Talent Retention, and their influence on employee motivation in CYTA's workforce. The study seeks to provide recommendations for CYTA to develop a more dynamic and engaging talent management framework that supports sustained employee motivation and organizational success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Talent Management Framework

Talent management is a comprehensive approach aimed at optimizing an organization's ability to attract, develop, deploy, and retain top talent (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). This strategic process ensures that the organization has the right people in place to achieve its business objectives. As outlined by Dawn & Biswas (2013), the talent management framework can be segmented into four critical dimensions: Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Deployment, and Talent Retention. These dimensions are not only sequential but also interdependent, each playing a vital role in the lifecycle of talent within the organization.

Talent Acquisition is the initial phase of attracting and selecting the right candidates to meet current and future organizational needs. This process involves sourcing candidates, assessing their skills and fit for the organization, and successfully recruiting them. The aim here is to create a talent pool that provides the organization with a competitive edge. Effective talent acquisition strategies are aligned with the strategic goals of the organization and are critical for filling the talent pipeline (Pandey & Sarangi, 2023).

Talent Development refers to the systematic effort by an organization to ensure that employees are provided with the opportunities to learn new skills and enhance their existing capabilities. This dimension focuses on continuous improvement and growth, which helps in preparing employees for higher responsibilities and new roles within the organization. Development initiatives can include formal training, mentorship programs, on-the-job training, and leadership development programs. These activities not only enhance the capabilities of employees but also increase their engagement and motivation (Subotnik et al., 2021).

Talent Deployment is about ensuring that employees are effectively utilized across the organization according to their skills, competencies, and the needs of the organization. It involves aligning the workforce with the strategic objectives of the organization, often requiring managers to think critically about how best to deploy talent to maximize organizational performance. Effective deployment can lead to increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and improved organizational performance as employees are better aligned with roles that fit their skill sets (Yildiz & Esmer, 2023).

Talent Retention involves strategies and practices aimed at retaining the best talent to maintain competitive advantage and reduce turnover costs. Retention strategies are closely tied to recognizing and rewarding employee contributions, ensuring job satisfaction and engagement, and creating a positive work environment. Factors such as career development opportunities, competitive compensation packages, and a supportive work culture play critical roles in retaining top talent (Zainee & Puteh, 2020).

Employee Motivation

Employee motivation can be defined as the level of energy, commitment, and creativity that a company's workers bring to their jobs. It is seen as a crucial factor in the organizational performance as motivated employees are often more engaged, productive, and willing to invest effort in their work compared to unmotivated ones. The significance of employee motivation is not only seen in its impact on output but also in its ability to foster enhanced job satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Kalogiannidis, 2021).

A substantial amount of research has explored the factors that drive employee motivation. These factors can be broadly categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence, whereas extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). Studies have shown that intrinsic motivators, such as personal growth, recognition, and a sense of achievement, generally have a more lasting impact on employee motivation compared to extrinsic motivators like pay raises or promotions (Ahmad, 2021).

The role of job design and work environment in motivating employees has also been extensively documented. Job characteristics theory suggests that tasks that are perceived by employees as meaningful, involving a degree of choice and providing feedback, are more likely to lead to higher job satisfaction and motivation (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Similarly, the physical and psychological conditions of the workplace play a critical role in influencing employee motivation. Factors such as a safe working environment, supportive colleagues, and a positive corporate culture are essential for sustaining employee motivation and reducing workplace stress (Kodarlikar, 2020).

Leadership styles also significantly affect employee motivation. Transformational leadership, which involves inspiring employees through effective communication, intellectual stimulation, and consideration for individual employee needs, has been found to be particularly effective in enhancing motivation. This style of leadership helps in fostering an environment where employees feel valued and understood, which in turn boosts their motivation (Rabiul & Yean, 2021).

Furthermore, organizational policies and practices are crucial in sustaining employee motivation over time. Practices such as performance-based rewards, career development opportunities, and flexible work arrangements have been shown to contribute positively to employee motivation. Organizations that adopt a holistic approach to employee welfare, emphasizing not only financial

rewards but also personal and professional growth opportunities, tend to experience higher levels of staff motivation (Al-bawaia et al., 2022).

In conclusion, employee motivation is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by a variety of factors. While intrinsic factors are crucial, the structure of work tasks, the nature of the organizational environment, leadership, and organizational policies all play significant roles in motivating employees. Companies aiming to enhance employee motivation need to consider these various dimensions to create a supportive and engaging work environment. Continued research and practice in these areas are essential to develop innovative and effective ways to motivate employees in various organizational contexts.

Relationship between Talent Management and Employee Motivation

Talent management has emerged as a critical strategic initiative in organizations seeking to enhance employee motivation and achieve competitive advantage. Scholars have increasingly examined the direct impact of talent management practices on employee motivation, focusing on how these practices can foster a motivated and committed workforce.

Sopiah et al. (2020) found the positive influence of talent management on employee motivation, observing that employees who perceive their organization as committed to identifying and developing their talents tend to exhibit higher motivation levels. The study highlighted that employees feel more valued and enthusiastic about their work when organizations demonstrate an interest in their professional growth and potential. The study emphasized that talent management serves as a motivational tool by signaling to employees that they are integral to the organization's long-term success, which, in turn, enhances their motivation to contribute.

Similarly, Nawangsari & Sutawidjaya (2019) identified that talent management directly influences employee motivation by fostering a sense of job security and career advancement. In their study, they found that employees who experienced clear talent management initiatives, such as opportunities for skill enhancement and career progression, reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation. According to the study, these initiatives make employees feel more engaged and inspired to perform well, as they see a clear path for their professional growth within the organization. Thus, the researchers concluded that talent management has a motivational impact by providing employees with a sense of purpose and direction in their careers.

Masri et al. (2021) demonstrated that talent management has a significant impact on employee motivation by increasing their job satisfaction. The study found that talent management practices such as mentoring, regular feedback, and personalized development plans positively influence employee motivation by enhancing their job satisfaction. According to the study, when employees receive support in the form of talent management practices, they feel that their skills and contributions are recognized, which boosts their motivation to perform effectively. The study concluded that talent management not only

encourages motivation through skill development but also strengthens employees' emotional connection to their work.

Kaleem (2019) also supported the positive relationship between talent management and employee motivation, showing that talent management directly influences motivation by building employees' self-efficacy. The study revealed that when employees participate in talent management programs, they gain confidence in their abilities, which translates into increased motivation to tackle challenging tasks. The study indicated that employees are more likely to set and achieve ambitious goals when they feel capable and competent, largely due to the training and development opportunities provided by talent management. The study concluded that talent management has a direct influence on employee motivation by fostering a belief in one's own capabilities.

In summary, numerous studies have shown that talent management has a direct and positive influence on employee motivation. Whether through promoting job satisfaction, building self-efficacy, talent management consistently drives employee motivation. These literatures indicate that talent management practices signal to employees that they are valued and integral to the organization's success, which, in turn, motivates them to excel. By prioritizing talent management, organizations not only develop a skilled workforce but also cultivate a motivated and committed team dedicated to achieving organizational goals.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the role of the talent management framework in driving employee motivation within the China Youth Travel Agency (CYTA), a structured research methodology was employed. The methodology is designed to ensure rigorous data collection and analysis, using a quantitative approach.

This study adopts a quantitative research design, utilizing a survey-based questionnaire to collect data from CYTA employees. Quantitative research is particularly suitable for this study, as it allows for the statistical analysis of numerical data, providing objective insights into the relationship between talent management practices and employee motivation. The primary focus of this design is to quantify the influence of talent management dimensions, including Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Deployment, and Talent Retention, on employee motivation levels. By using a structured questionnaire, the research aims to capture specific aspects of employee perceptions regarding CYTA's talent management framework and its impact on their motivation. Furthermore, this method enables the identification of patterns and correlations within a larger population, making it appropriate for drawing generalizable conclusions relevant to the entire organization.

The sample size for this study is comprised of 300 CYTA employees, selected through a random sampling method. Random sampling ensures that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen, thus enhancing the representativeness of the sample and minimizing selection bias. The sample includes employees from different departments and levels within

the organization, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how talent management practices impact motivation across diverse roles and functions within CYTA. The choice of a 300-employee sample size is based on the organization's total workforce and the research objectives. This sample size is adequate to achieve reliable results while balancing time and resource constraints. Ultimately, the final data set included responses from 287 employees, reflecting a 95.6% response rate, which is considered high and indicates a good level of engagement and reliability in the data collected.

The research utilizes a structured questionnaire divided into two primary sections, designed to measure both talent management practices and employee motivation. The first section assesses talent management practices and is based on the Talent Management Questionnaire developed by Dawn & Biswas (2013). This section includes questions that cover the four dimensions of talent management: Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Deployment, and Talent Retention. Each dimension is evaluated through multiple items, allowing the study to capture a nuanced understanding of the talent management practices at CYTA. The second section of the questionnaire focuses on employee motivation, using items adapted from the Employee Motivation Questionnaire by Nguyen et al. (2020).

All items on the questionnaire are rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The Likert scale provides a consistent method for respondents to express their levels of agreement, facilitating easier quantification of attitudes and perceptions.

The questionnaire was distributed online to 300 employees at CYTA. Online distribution was chosen for its convenience and efficiency, allowing employees from different locations to participate in the survey within a flexible timeframe. The questionnaire link was shared via the organization's internal communication channels, accompanied by an invitation explaining the purpose of the study and assuring respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. Out of the 300 distributed questionnaires, 287 were returned with complete responses, yielding a high response rate of 95.6%. The data collection process spanned two weeks, allowing sufficient time for employees to participate at their convenience, thus minimizing the risk of non-response bias.

To analyze the data and validate the relationships between talent management practices and employee motivation, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) path analysis was employed. SEM is a powerful statistical technique that allows researchers to examine complex relationships among observed and latent variables. This method is particularly suited for this study, as it enables the simultaneous examination of multiple relationships between the different dimensions of talent management and various aspects of employee motivation.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The study utilizes Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) path analysis, conducted through AMOS 28.0 software, to examine the impact of various dimensions of talent management on employee motivation in China Youth Travel Agency. Drawing from previous literature, talent management

framework consists of the following components, which includes Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Deployment, and Talent Retention. Data collected from the study is analyzed using SEM path analysis, and the results are illustrated in Figure 1 and detailed in Table 1.

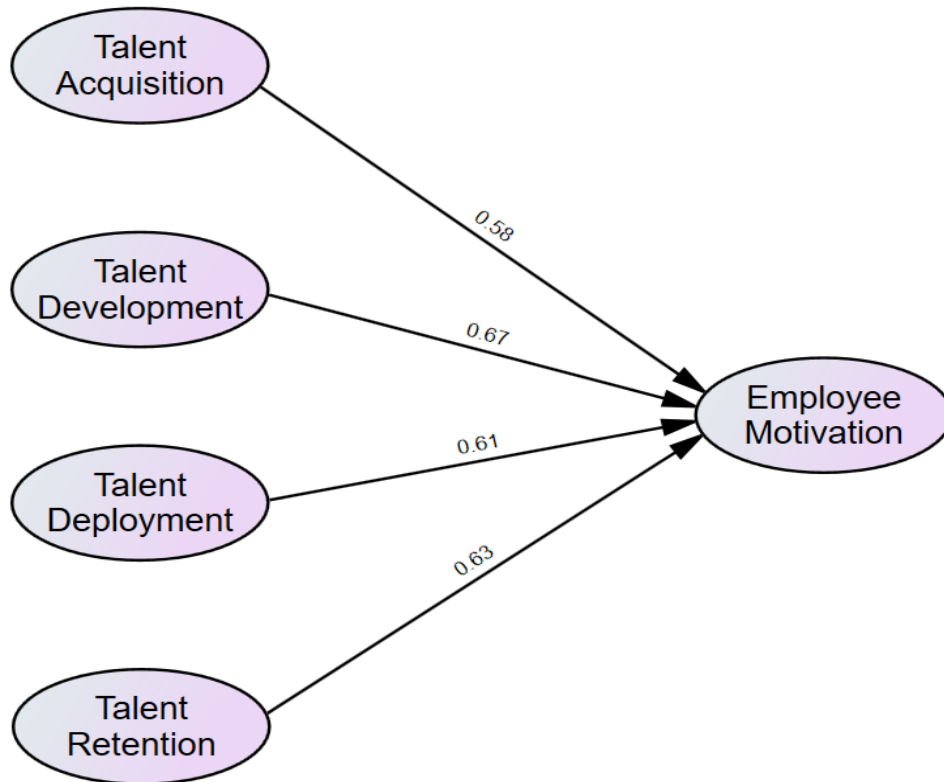


Figure 1. Structural Equation Model Test Results

In order to present the path more directly and easily, the study utilized some symbols to represent the latent variables of the study: talent acquisition=TA; talent development=TD; talent deployment=TAD; talent retention=TR; employee motivation (EM).

Table 1 SEM Path Analysis Results

Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Std Path coefficient	P-value	Results
TA--->EM	0.685	0.059	11.610	0.578	***	Validated
TD--->EM	0.773	0.064	12.078	0.669	***	Validated
TAD--->EM	0.714	0.061	11.705	0.609	***	Validated
TR--->EM	0.729	0.063	11.571	0.627	***	Validated

The study conducted at China Youth Travel Agency (CYTA) aimed to explore the relationship between different dimensions of talent management and employee motivation. Utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) path

analysis, the data elucidated how Talent Acquisition (TA), Talent Development (TD), Talent Deployment (TAD), and Talent Retention (TR) each contribute significantly to fostering employee motivation. The results, as represented in Table 1, provide a comprehensive view of how these dimensions interplay to enhance motivation within the agency.

The path from Talent Acquisition to Employee Motivation (TA ---> EM) yielded a standardized path coefficient of 0.578 with a highly significant p-value ($p < 0.001$). The coefficient indicates a robust positive impact of effective talent acquisition strategies on employee motivation. A higher coefficient suggests that the initial stages of attracting and selecting the right candidates play a crucial role in setting the stage for enhanced motivation. This could be attributed to the fact that a well-matched employee is likely to feel more engaged and committed from the outset. The high critical ratio (C.R. = 11.610) further underscores the strength of this relationship, indicating that when talent acquisition is aligned with organizational goals and employee expectations, it significantly boosts motivation levels. This result supports the notion that effective talent acquisition not only fills positions but also contributes to a motivational environment by ensuring that new hires are well-suited to their roles and the organizational culture.

The analysis shows that Talent Development has an even stronger impact on Employee Motivation (TD ---> EM), with a standardized path coefficient of 0.669 and a p-value below 0.001. The critical ratio of 12.078 highlights the strong influence of development activities on employee engagement and motivation. This dimension involves the ongoing education and skills enhancement of employees, which evidently plays a pivotal role in maintaining high motivation levels. As employees grow in their roles and are provided opportunities for professional advancement, their satisfaction and motivation to perform well increase. This finding emphasizes the importance of continuous investment in employee development as a means to foster not only capability but also motivation and loyalty.

Talent Deployment also shows a significant positive relationship with Employee Motivation (TAD ---> EM), with a standardized path coefficient of 0.609. The critical ratio of 11.705 and a very low p-value signify a strong positive effect. Effective deployment involves strategically positioning employees in roles that maximize their skills and career aspirations, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction and motivation. This suggests that proper alignment of employee roles and responsibilities with their competencies is crucial in motivating them to perform better and stay engaged with the organization.

The path from Talent Retention to Employee Motivation (TR ---> EM) yielded a standardized path coefficient of 0.627, with a critical ratio of 11.571 and a p-value less than 0.001. This indicates that retention strategies, which include recognizing and rewarding employees' contributions, as well as creating a supportive work environment, are highly effective in sustaining employee motivation. Retention practices ensure that employees feel valued

and integral to the organization, which is critical for long-term motivation and organizational commitment.

In summary, the SEM analysis results clearly illustrate that all four dimensions of the talent management framework at CYTA, namely, Acquisition, Development, Deployment, and Retention, have significant and positive impacts on employee motivation. Each component plays a distinct but interrelated role in enhancing motivation, which collectively contributes to a robust motivational ecosystem within the agency. The strong statistical significance and high coefficients associated with each path suggest that these talent management practices are not just peripheral elements but are central to fostering a motivated and committed workforce.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the study conducted at China Youth Travel Agency (CYTA) offer compelling insights into how a well-structured talent management framework can drive employee motivation significantly.

Consistent with the findings of scholarly works such as that by Kaleem (2019), the data from CYTA underscores that talent acquisition plays a critical role in establishing a foundation for employee motivation. The process of attracting and selecting the right candidates ensures that individuals are not only qualified but also culturally and motivationally aligned with the organizational goals. This initial match is crucial, as it sets the tone for the individual's engagement and satisfaction, factors that are closely tied to motivational levels. The research results, showing a significant positive relationship between talent acquisition and employee motivation, underscore the need for meticulous recruitment processes that go beyond skill matching to consider motivational fit and cultural alignment, which in turn enhance employee engagement and retention.

In line with Hayati (2020), the research findings regarding talent development highlight its essential role in fostering employee motivation. Ongoing training and development opportunities are not merely perks but are critical for keeping employees engaged and motivated. This facet of talent management ensures that employees feel valued by the organization through investments in their personal and professional growth, leading to increased motivation and job satisfaction. The strong correlation observed in the study between talent development and employee motivation reaffirms the notion that proactive development strategies contribute significantly to building a resilient and adaptable workforce.

This research corroborates the findings of authors like Mwanzi et al. (2017), who emphasize the strategic importance of talent deployment in enhancing employee satisfaction and motivation. Effective deployment strategies that align employees' skills with organizational needs not only optimize workforce productivity but also significantly boost motivation. Employees feel more engaged and valued when they see that their skills and competencies are being utilized effectively, which in turn positively affects their motivation levels. CYTA's research findings, which illustrate a robust relationship between talent

deployment and motivation, serve as a compelling argument for organizations to adopt more dynamic and strategic deployment practices.

Consistent with the research by Ramlall et al. (2004), the research findings underscore the critical role of talent retention strategies in sustaining employee motivation. Retention practices that focus on recognition, rewards, and a supportive work environment are vital for maintaining high motivation levels. By ensuring that employees feel secure and valued within the organization, these practices not only enhance loyalty but also motivate employees to contribute their best efforts. The strong link between talent retention and employee motivation highlighted in this study supports the notion that effective retention strategies are indispensable for cultivating a motivated and committed workforce.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study conducted at the China Youth Travel Agency (CYTA) unequivocally illustrates that a well-structured talent management framework plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee motivation, which in turn drives organizational success and competitiveness in the dynamic travel industry. The research findings emphasize the significant and positive impact of the four key dimensions of talent management, including Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Deployment, and Talent Retention, on employee motivation. Each dimension contributes distinctly and synergistically to create a motivated workforce, thereby highlighting the necessity of an integrated approach to talent management. Talent Acquisition ensures that the initial engagement of employees is well-matched to the organizational culture and roles, setting a foundation for sustained motivation.

Talent Development further reinforces this by continuously investing in employees' skills and professional growth, which enhances their job satisfaction and eagerness to excel. Meanwhile, Talent Deployment aligns individual skills and career aspirations with organizational goals, optimizing both employee satisfaction and organizational efficiency. Lastly, Talent Retention strategies that focus on recognizing and rewarding employee contributions effectively sustain motivation and commitment to the organization. The strong statistical correlations demonstrated in the SEM path analysis underscore the robustness of these relationships, offering clear evidence that proactive and coherent talent management practices are essential for fostering a highly motivated workforce.

Implementing a dynamic talent management framework that addresses those critical dimensions, CYTA can ensure that its employees are not only well-prepared to meet the challenges of the global travel market but are also highly motivated to drive innovation and customer satisfaction. This research thus serves as a compelling call to action for organizations, particularly in service-intensive industries, to reassess and rejuvenate their talent management strategies as a fundamental business imperative for enhancing employee motivation and achieving long-term organizational success.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future research could investigate the long-term impact of talent management frameworks in driving organizational innovation and employee well-being, especially in service-driven sectors such as travel and hospitality. Examining how advances in digital technologies, such as AI-powered talent analytics and immersive virtual training solutions, enhance or modify the efficacy of talent management practices will provide important insights into their relevance in a rapidly evolving business environment. Comparative studies across industries and geographies can explore how cultural, economic and industry-specific factors influence the design and outcomes of these frameworks. Furthermore, analyzing employee perceptions of fairness in talent deployment and satisfaction with retention strategies could deepen our understanding of the psychological basis of employee motivation. Such research would contribute to advancing the theoretical basis of talent management while equipping organizations with actionable strategies for developing adaptive, motivated, and high achievers.

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