

Derleme

Examining Talent Management In The Context Of Organizational Theory

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Abstract

The concept of talent management has been examined from the perspective of theories such as resource dependency theory, McKinsey research, and human capital approach, which are frequently cited in the literature. In this study, the values that the concept of talent management expresses for organizations in terms of different theories were examined and it was aimed to contribute to the literature. In the literature, the relationship of talent management with different variables has been examined in studies or theses related to talent management, and in some studies, the theories on which talent management is based are mentioned. However, these theories have not systematically been found in studies that only constitute the main headings of the study. It will be useful to researchers who want to use the concept of talent management in order to see the theories on which the concept of talent management is based in a single study.

Keywords: Talent Management, Organizational Theory, Resource Dependence Theory, Human Capital Approach

Jel Classification Codes: M10, M12, M19

Yetenek Yönetiminin Örgüt Teorisi Bağlamında İncelenmesi

Öz

Literatürde sıklıkla atıf yapılan kaynak bağımlılığı kuramı, McKinsey araştırmaları, insan sermayesi yaklaşımı gibi kuramların perspektifinden yetenek yönetimi kavramı incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmada da yetenek yönetimi kavramının farklı kuramlar açısından örgütler için ifade ettiği değerler incelenmiş, literatüre katkı sağlamak amaçlanmıştır. Alan yazında yetenek yönetimi ile ilgili çalışmalarda veya tezlerde yetenek yönetiminin farklı değişkenlerle ilişkileri incelenmiş ve bazı çalışmalarda yetenek yönetiminin dayandığı kuramlara değinilmiştir. Ancak sistematik olarak, bu kuramları çalışmanın ana başlıklarını oluşturan çalışmalara rastlanılmamıştır. Dolayısıyla yetenek yönetimin kavramını kullanmak isteyen araştırmacılara da, yetenek yönetimi kavramının dayandığı kuramları tek bir çalışmada görmeleri açısından da yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yetenek Yönetimi, Örgüt Kuramı, Kaynak Bağımlılığı Teorisi, İnsan Sermayesi Yaklaşımı

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1. Introduction

Recent studies have shown that organizations' awareness of their employees' potentials and raising these potentials will increase their own productivity (Scullion, Collings, & Caligiuri, 2010; Becker & Gerhart, 1996). Organizations can increase the quality of their employees to the extent that they contribute to their development and get more efficiency from them (Gelens, Hofmans, Dries, & Pepermans, 2014). In this way, organizations can survive and have a competitive advantage. Today, most organizations are struggling with complex, competitive problems that they have not encountered before (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Organizations face the problem of how to effectively manage their human resources (Ulrich, 1997). Therefore, organizations are working to increase the commitment of their employees to the organization and to improve their skills (Enz & Philips, 2001). In the globalizing world, as competition increases in every field, it becomes difficult for organizations to select, motivate and retain talented employees (Meyskens, Von Glinow, Werther, & Clarke, 2009).

In recent years, the demand for talented individuals has been increasing day by day. The selection of talented individuals is of vital importance for organizations, especially in societies where unemployment is high (Lockwood, 2006). Providing competitive advantage through human resources and talent management is a challenge that organizations have to deal with (Collings & Melahi, 2009). It is a fact that it is very difficult for organizations to find talented individuals as well as keeping them in the organization. Organizations that want to reach talented individuals and employ them as their employees know that investing in an individual and making him talented is more costly than transferring a ready talent to another organization. They know that talented employees are very valuable and it is easy for them to change positions and organizations whenever they want (Sonnenberg, Van Zijderveld, & Brinks, 2014).

Talent management emerged in the USA in the 1990s and then started in 1997 with the researches of the McKinsey consulting firm. Accordingly, they stated that organizations compete with other organizations in order to retain their talented employees and that the most important capital they have is talent. Another finding of the research is that the financial performance of businesses that implement talent management effectively is better than other businesses. In a study by Michaels and his friends, they stated that talent wars, which were originally based on McKinsey research, changed the management strategies of organizations. Accordingly, there are three reasons that push organizations to wars for talent: the transition to the

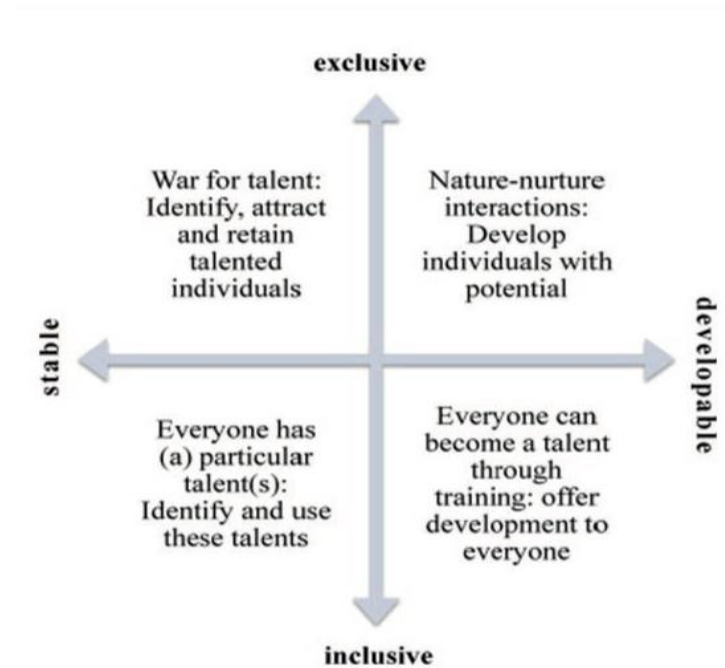
information age, the need for talented employees, and the tendency to change organizations among employees (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001).

2. Literature Review

It is said that the idea of talent management first emerged in McKinsey's work called "talent war" (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). While following years it was a part of human resources strategies, it is now emerging as a remarkable research area in the field of human resources management (Cappelli, 2008).

Talented employees want to work in organizations where they can best reveal their talents, experience, knowledge and productivity, but in this way, they can increase their motivation (Zahorsky, 2010). If they cannot find an environment where they can maintain their motivation, they consider moving to another organization or quitting the job (Katcher & Snyder, 2009). Therefore, employees at all levels within the organization should be allowed to use their potential (Redford, 2005). It is known that the lack of talent in the organization is one of the most important obstacles to the success of the organization's strategies (Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, 2010). Therefore, studies on talent management have been increasing recently (Chuai, Preece, & Iles, 2008; Thunnissen, 2016; Collings & Melahi, 2009; Sidane & Al Aris, 2014) and it is stated that talented employees have a very important place in the success of the organization in many of these studies (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001).

When defining talent management, it is necessary to underline strategic talent management. Strategic talent management is defined as processes and activities that define important positions and develop talent pools (Collings & Melahi, 2009). Integrated talent management is a strategy that integrates four different levels of talent (Avedon & Scholes, 2010). Business strategy, human resources strategy, talent management processes and organizational culture are these levels. According to Meyers and van Voerkom (2014), it is possible to examine the philosophy of talent management in four groups. If it is necessary to show this in a figure, it can be shown as follows (Figure 1).



Source: Meyers and Woerkom, 2014

Figure 1: Talent Management Philosophies

Accordingly, it can be divided into categories as exclusive-stable, exclusive-developable, inclusive-stable and inclusive-developable. According to the exclusive-stable philosophy, it advocates identifying, finding and recruiting talented individuals. Exclusive-developable, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of developing individuals in line with their potential. Inclusive-stable, on the other hand, states that everyone has a certain talent or abilities, and the important thing is to identify and use them. Inclusive-developable, on the other hand, says that everyone can be talented thanks to education, and it is necessary to give individuals an opportunity for this. These arguments for talent management also constitute the nature of human resource management and talent management (Meyers & Woerkom, 2014).

Many important components of the organization are explained by organizational theories. One of these is talent management, which has recently gained weight in research. Studies show that one of the most important problems that organizations have to deal with is the difficulty of recruiting talented people to the organization and the difficulty of keeping these people in the organization for a long time. In addition,

studies show that the most important factor affecting the success of successful organizations is their talented employees.

When we look at human resources management studies, we see that talent is considered as a valuable capital. When looking at the concept of talent, four different asset areas should be considered (Sparrow, 2009; Farndale et al., 2010; cited in Dries, 2013). These are human capital, social capital, political capital and cultural capital. While features such as knowledge, personality traits and ability to perform the job are shown as human capital, potential resources that can be transferred through membership or social networks can be considered as social capital. Although being in close contact with someone to carry out the tasks easily is seen as political capital, entering the socialization process to stay in the memory of the organization is called the cultural process. The human capital approach adopts the resource dependency approach and the contribution of the employee to the organization is seen as the main issue to be emphasized (Dries, 2013).

When we examine the organizational theories that contribute to the development of talent management, it is seen that one of the theories that most affects its development is the theory of resource dependence. According to the values on which this approach is based, the competencies and resources of the organizations are one of the most important facts in maintaining their existence. The success of organizations is also related to the extent to which they use these resources. It is stated that especially talented employees are of vital importance for the continuity of the organization. The practices that increase the skills of the employees of the organizations can also help them to establish superiority over other organizations. The place of resource theory approach in organization theory is undeniably important. Barney (1991) stated that in the resource approach, which is popular in the management literature, the resources of the organizations are the knowledge, skills and learning that increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the organizations.

Another approach on which the foundations of talent management are based is the human capital approach (Becker, 1964). It refers to the sum of values such as knowledge, skill and experience that add value to production. It is frequently mentioned in research that human capital is an important variable that enables the organization to compete and survive. While the factors of production were listed in the 1950s, while land, physical capital, and management were at the forefront, in later studies, it was found that human capital was one of the most important factors of production. According to the human capital approach, it is stated that employees who develop themselves in terms of knowledge and skills will be more productive and can receive higher wages in return (Pfeffer & Cohen, 1984). Organizations that support

their employees in terms of knowledge and skills also increase their productivity and maintain their existence.

Another approach based on talent management in the literature is the human resources approach (Lepak & Snell, 1999). Basically, it would not be right to manage all human resources and organization employees with a single model, and that there should be different practices for each group of employees (Jackson, Schuler, & Rivero, 1989). It is known that there are groups with different knowledge and skills in the organization, and some of these groups have strategic knowledge, while others only have the technical skills necessary to run the business.

In this research, talent management will be tried to be explained conceptually from the perspective of organizational theories. The links between organizational theories and related theory will be examined, and how these ties are handled in the literature will be comprehensively evaluated. Resource dependency approach, human capital approach, and McKinsey researches, which are related to talent management, will be examined separately along with the characteristics of these theories that constitute a resource for talent management will be discussed in detail.

2.1. What is Talent Management

It is not easy to define talent management because of the many definitions written about the subject and the different number of assumptions that talent management puts forward. It has also been used in the literature with different names such as talent management, talent strategy and success management. Jackson & Schuler (1990) defined talent management as placing the right person in the right job at the right time. Pascal (2004) defined it as managing the flow of talent through supply, demand and human resources. According to Cheloha and Swain (2005), it is the most important part of effective success management. In fact, when we look at the definitions, it is seen that the definition of talent management is defined similarly to human resources planning, career planning, and success planning (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). While talent management is sometimes confused with human resources (Conger & Fulmer, 2003), it is sometimes confused with success management as well (Rothwell, 1994). According to another definition, talent management is helping your best employees to do positive things, invest in their development, unlock their potential and direct their strengths towards the best (Garrow & Hirsh, 2008).

2.2. Resource Dependency Theory

Organizations work with other organizations in order to survive and establish various ties with them in order to benefit from their resources (Pfeffer & Nowak, 1976). Hence organizations with strong ties can reduce resource dependency (Baker, 1990). According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), organizations with open systems need continuous resources such as employees, money, social acceptance, customers, and technological requirements in order to continue their existence. Organizations also build their relationships with other organizations on power dependency relationships (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962). This power dependency can also take the form of a functionalist version of the resource dependency theory (Thompson, 1967). According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), the dependence of organizations on other organizations is determined by three important factors. How important the resource is to the survival of the organization depends on whether a group within or outside the organization has more rights to access and use resources, and whether there are alternatives to existing resources. Another important conclusion of Pfeffer and Salancik is that the dependence is mutual. Accordingly, two organizations may be dependent on each other. When the dependency of an organization begins to increase, the balance of power between them begins to deteriorate.

According to the resource dependency theory, organizations need physical and non-physical resources to sustain their business strategies (Barney, 1991; Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001). If these resources of the organization are irreplaceable and unique, they also constitute the source of the organization's competitive advantage (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). One of the assumptions of the resource-based approach, which is also called the theory of competitive advantage in strategic management, is that the competitive advantage that organizations want is possible only with managerial capabilities (Makhija, 2003). The first contribution to the resource-based approach was made by Penrose (1959), and later these studies were developed and the foundations of the resource-based approach were laid by Wernerfelt (1984). It was further developed by Dierickx and Cool (1989) and Barney (1996). In particular, Barney (1991)'s stating the features required for sustainable competitive advantage and stating that not all organizations have this advantage and that organizations must have inimitable resources to have this potential are among the most important assumptions of the approach. These resources can be physical or intangible assets. According to the resource-based approach, investing in such resources contributes to organizational competition (Boxall & Purcell, 2003).

According to Oliver (1997), resource dependency theory has some arguments. It assumes that an economic motivation over the choice of management motivated by efficiency. The aim of management is to increase value, optimize options and make the most efficient decisions with a systematic application. Trying to evaluate potential

opportunities with the opportunities available is a more realistic approach than spending new resources for each new opportunity (Kibui, 2015).

The difference between the assets and capabilities of the organizations affects their competitive advantage and productivity (Peteraf, 1993). Most of the studies on resource-based approach are related to what resources organizations have and how these resources provide competitive advantage to the organization (Hunt & Morgan, 1995). The ability of organizations to have a competitive advantage is closely related to having different and more effective resources than their competitors. It is an undeniable fact that organizations with such resources can be more successful. One of the most important resources that the organization can provide competitive advantage is having talented individuals (Lepak & Snell, 2009). Talent management is not only finding the right personnel, but also placing these personnel in positions of high strategic importance for the organization (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005).

According to the resource-based approach, the human capital of organizations is the most important resource that can provide superior performance to the organization (Saa-Perez & Garcia Falcon, 2002). Organizations that can meet their raw material needs on equal terms like other organizations may not have the same conditions in terms of recruiting talented individuals to the organization. Because it is not an easy situation for a talented individual to be discovered within the organization or transferred from outside the organization. Therefore, the resources of organizations that want to have a competitive advantage and want its continuity should be unique and not be substituted or imitated (Cadogan Hooley, Douglas, Matear, & Greenley, 2002). Today, it would not be wrong to state that one of this resource is talented individuals. The development of technology has led to the disappearance of borders, and organizations in different parts of the world have become rivals of each other. Organizations can also transfer the most suitable and talented managers from organizations in different countries. Therefore, organizations that hold talented individuals have both very advantageous position and competitive advantage, but at the same time they are faced with the threat of losing their talented employees to different organizations.

Some approaches, on the other hand, oppose considering the human factor in the organization as a resource. It has been criticized that the organization's resources such as machinery, materials and raw materials are evaluated at the same level of talented employees. They stated that employees should be approached psychologically rather than just being seen as a resource (Inkson, 2008). In addition to that perceptions, behaviors and personalities differ among employees.

The traditional talent management approach consists of four stages. Although these four stages are acquiring talent, placing talent, developing talent and keeping it, the traditional management approach generally focuses on acquiring and retaining talent (Akar, 2015). Philips and Edward (2008) summarized talent management as workforce planning, workforce acquisition, workforce placement, workforce management and workforce retention in their classification. While talent needs analysis and planning is a part of workforce planning, the process of finding, selecting and recruiting talent is considered as a part of labor force acquisition.

2.3. Mckinsey Researches

One of the most important arguments of McKinsey studies is that talent is an innate gift, real talent cannot be developed, and scarce resources such as talent are not equally distributed in the society, that is, a small number of people have talent and the majority of the society does not have talent (Meyers, Woerkom, & Dries, 2013). If talent is not equally distributed in the society, some companies can reach the talent they need while others cannot. Hence, human resources can be the source of competitive advantage for companies (Snell, Youndt, & Wright, 1996). This part shows parallelism with the resource dependency approach.

The most important result of McKinsey research, which lasted for more than four years and entered the literature as talent wars and was later published as *The War for Talent*, is that the most important element that distinguishes organizations from others is having good talent. Axelrod, Helen and Timothy (2001) summarized the results of the study. We can summarize them as follows:

- According to the managers participating in the research, they stated that the most sensitive issue they had difficulty in managing was to include talented employees in the organization and to retain them.
- Organizations have had difficulty in finding talented employees in a certain age range due to certain social changes..
- Organizations have said that they do not have talented managers to follow the opportunities that may arise in the future.
- Organizations are now measured by spiritual abilities such as intellectual capital and creative ideas.
- The most important issue in organizations with better performance is to have talented employees.

McKinsey studies have guided the studies on talent management and after McKinsey studies, talent management studies have been studied more heavily (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Caligiuri, 2011). McKinsey research has also pioneered changing

the perspective of talent management and employees. Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001) summarized the differences in understanding before and after McKinsey studies. According to this:

- Despite the understanding that previously argued that individuals need an organization or a job, it brought the point of view that organizations need.
- While material resources such as machinery and capital are seen as a competitive advantage for organizations, talented individuals are seen as a competitive advantage after McKinsey researches.
- Although the opinion that having talented individuals did not make a big difference was dominant, after the researches, the idea that having talented individuals would make extraordinary differences became dominant.
- Albeit there is a shortage of jobs before the researches, it is stated that there is a shortage of talented individuals after the researches.
- While the commitment of the employees to their jobs was high in the past, these commitments are shorter and the competition between the organizations is high.
- While employees used to be content with what the organizations gave them, now employees make more demands.

As can be seen, after the McKinsey studies, we see that a more individual-oriented approach that emphasizes the abilities of the individual has started to become widespread. It has been stated that rather than individuals' need for the organization, the fact that organizations need talented individuals is the main issue that needs to be emphasized. It is stated that besides the difficulty of selecting talented individuals, it is also difficult for organizations to retain talented individuals due to increasing competition.

2.4. Human Capital Approach

The human capital approach, on which Becker (1964) forms the basis of his work, expresses positive values such as knowledge, skills and experience that employees have. Human capital is one of the most important tools for the competitiveness and survival of the organization (Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2012). From the period when factors such as land, labor and capital were listed as production factors in the 1950s, it became difficult to explain growth with these concepts in the 1970s, and the importance of human capital was revealed (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961; Mincer, 1974).

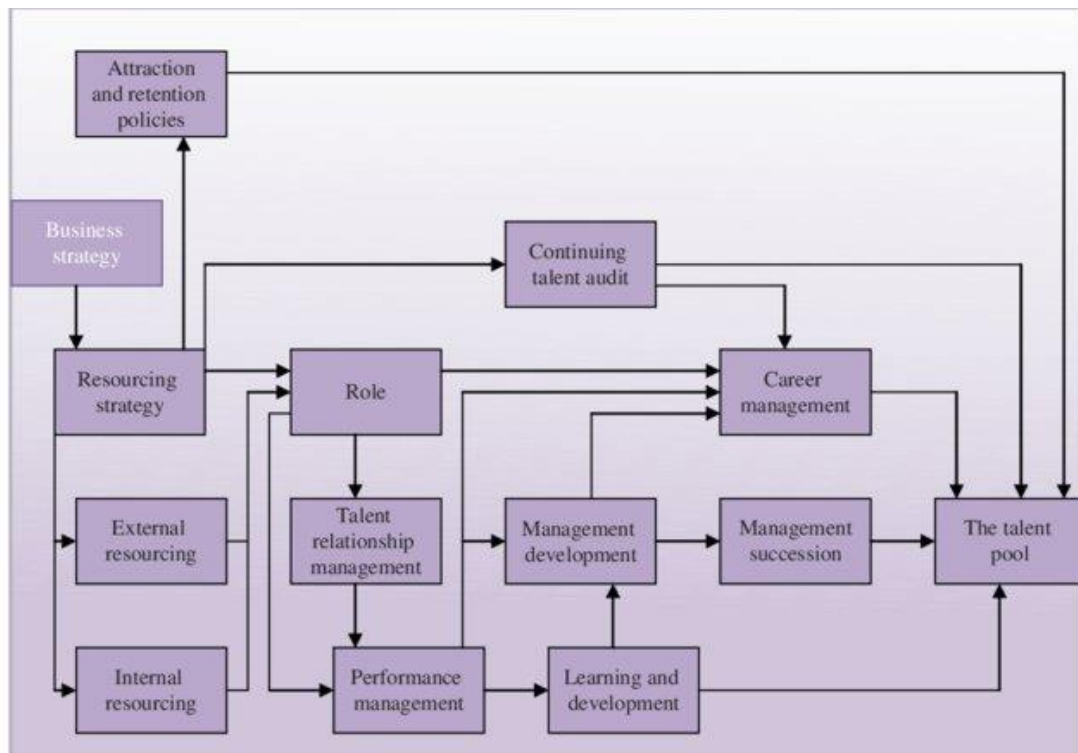
Although the concept of talent, which has been in many sources since ancient times, has been used in different meanings such as abilities and mental gift, by the 19th

century it was perceived as a talented individual (Tensley, 2011). According to Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001), one of the most popular studies in the field of talent management and one of the most referenced for the definition of the concept of talent, one of the leading researchers in talent, talent is an individual's ability, innate abilities, experiences, intelligence, charactera and learning ability. According to the OECD, the concept of human capital is defined as the knowledge, skills and competencies that individuals possess that facilitate the creation of personal and social well-being (OECD, 2007). Human capital is the qualities that individuals have, increase their productivity. According to the human capital approach, human capital is key to the survival and sustainability of organizations (Aguinis & O'Boyle, 2012). While the factors of production were explained until the 1950s, values such as land, labor and physical capital (Mincer, 1963). After the 1960s, scientists revealed that the success of organizations could not be explained only by land, labor and physical capital. They suggest that human capital was also an important factor. (Mincer, 1974). One of the most important factor that organizations can have for their survival is human capital, and the most important element in human capital is the presence of talented individuals.

According to the human capital approach, it is very important for the organizations to keep such talented individuals in the organization and the individuals who can be most beneficial to them are those who receive training in accordance with the functions of the organization. Increasing global and regional competition makes it necessary to include talented individuals in the organization with the least cost. Organizations sometimes discover these individuals within themselves, but most of the time, organizations that cannot make this discovery within themselves are faced with the desire to include these talented individuals in their organizations. As a result, organizations compete to transfer the same individuals, while organizations with talented individuals step forward. Therefore, the trainings and investments that organizations give to their employees are an important tool to retain talented individuals (Armstrong, 2006).

According to Armstrong (2011) talent management consists of interrelated processes. These processes are shown in Figure 2. Accordingly, the starting point of talent management is to define the business strategy and the importance of the concept of talent for the organization. Next comes the strategy for acquiring resources such as human capital. The next step is the strategy of finding and retaining talented employees. Employee selection and recruitment is carried out at this stage. Talent control, on the other hand, refers to revealing the potentials of individuals. Role designing is the process of ensuring that desirable values such as motivation and commitment are part of talent management. Managing relationships means establishing effective and productive relationships with employees who have specific

roles. Performance management, on the other hand, is to do the best for talented individuals in the organization. Performance management is also a factor that increases motivation and commitment. Learning and development is an important talent management process for employees who want to improve their skills and knowledge.



Source: Armstrong, 2011

Figure 2: Talent Management Elements

3. Methodology

The main objective of this research is to collect and analyze the literature about talent management. In this study, a systematic review analysis has been used. Systematic analysis is used to summarize the final important point in a certain area which in this study is talent management. Systematic analysis also uses descriptive information to summarize the endpoint (Clapton, Rutter & Shariff, 2009). Moreover, systematic

analysis uses similar and related publications for a particular topic (Liberati et al., 2009).

First of all, I searched talent management on the database with peer-reviewed researches. Second, I added constraints to these studies related to either resource dependence theory, Mckinsey researches or human capital approach. The aim of this selection to find out researches with one of the theories that are considered the root of talent management. Those articles and theses about talent management that include either resource dependence theory, Mckinsey researches or human capital approach have been selected for analysis.

Within the scope of the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

- 1) What is the concept of talent management? How did it come about?
- 2) What are the theories that form the basis of the concept of talent management?
- 3) What assumptions did talent management deal with in these theories?

4. Conclusion

The fact that talent management is a relatively new subject in the literature, and the research of its connections with many organizational issues shows that we will frequently encounter talent management studies in the coming years. While most of the quantitative studies examine the moderator or mediator role between talent management and organizational issues, it is clear that there is a need for comprehensive theoretical studies on which organizational theories the theoretical foundations of talent management are based on, which theories support them, and what the arguments of each of these theories are on talent management. Although these studies are in the literature, many studies refer to one or some of the theories of organization, and most of them are included as part of the introduction. Therefore, this study, in which organizational theories shape talent management and what assumptions are made, is expected to contribute to this deficiency in the literature.

The definitions in the literature related to the concept of talent have been discussed and the definitions made in different fields have been tried to be included. It has been tried to express the historical process where the concept of talent and talent management came from. In addition, the main purpose of the study, which is the theory of talent management, and which arguments these theories are supported by, have been tried to be stated. The different points of these theories and at what point they differ from each other has also formed the focus of the research.

Qualitative researches on talent management can contribute more to the field. In this way, it can be tried to understand the different approaches of employees and managers towards talent management. On the other hand, at what points the organizational theories on which the foundations of talent management are based differ from each other can be seen as a subject worth investigating. In other words, while resource dependency theory deals with talent management at the point of effective use of resources, human capital approach is in search of how employees can be used more efficiently or how their talents can be benefited more. However, each theory may have similar aspects as well as different features or approaches. Therefore, a detailed examination of the different aspects of organizational theories that constitute the source of talent management can contribute to the field.

In this study, the theories cited as the source of talent management have been examined separately, but their differences or similarities from each other have not been discussed in detail. It is considered that it may be a start in preparing a guide to facilitate the future researchers to examine the organizational theories that constitute the source of talent management and to see which organizational theories the talent management develops with support from or which theory is more effective in the development of talent management as a start.

While there are other theories which contribute to talent management such as social exchange theory, the social cognitive career theory, motivation-hygiene theory, equity theory etc., the most important and the most cited theories that contribute the development of talent management are resource based view, McKinsey studies, and human capital approach. In order to understand the talent management, there needs to be understood these theories first. Resource based view argues that when a company has distinctive competence over its competitors, it has competitive advantages. Especially when the business environment is unstable, competitive advantage would be crucial.

Becker (1964) stated that human capital is the most important element of survival, the most important part of human capital consists of employees who have received special education and such employees are more important for the organization. He stated that the high labor turnover rate of such employees can create problems for the companies. For these reasons, organizations need to make more efforts to retain these employees (Pfeffer & Cohen, 1984). Therefore, it is clear that one of the most important resources of organizations is human capital. The basic assumption of the human capital approach regarding the basic arguments of the theories, which is one of the research questions of this study, is that human capital is vitally important for the continuation of the organization.

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