



## The Effect of Talent Management on Organizational Performance with the Mediating Role of Knowledge Absorptive Capacity and Innovation Ability among Nurses in the Hospitals Affiliated to Qom University of Medical Sciences

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of talent management on organizational performance with the mediating role of knowledge absorptive capacity and innovation capability.

**Methods:** This applied correlational study was conducted in 2019 with the participation of 106 people selected by a simple random method from nurses of hospitals affiliated to Qom University of Medical Sciences. The face and content validity of the research tools were confirmed by the use of standard questionnaires and the opinion of experts.

**Results:** The findings represented that the correlation between talent management variables and knowledge absorptive capacity ( $t=2.13$ ,  $r=0.83$ ), talent management and innovation capability ( $t=5.03$ ,  $r=0.54$ ), knowledge absorptive capacity with organizational performance ( $t=3.48$ ,  $r=0.80$ ), innovation capability with the organization performance ( $t=3.53$ ,  $r=0.72$ ), capability to absorb knowledge and innovation capability ( $t=6.97$ ,  $r=0.78$ ) and talent management with organizational performance ( $t=3.19$ ,  $r=0.86$ ) was confirmed.

**Conclusion:** The results indicate that the organizational improvement depends on the development and advancement of employees, so it is better to focus on talent management to increase the innovation capability in employees by optimally influencing the capacity to absorb knowledge as a set of organizational processes for acquiring, simulating, transferring and extracting knowledge and take steps to improve productivity and increase organizational performance

**Keywords:** Talent Management, Organizations, Knowledge, Innovation Ability, Nurses, Work Performance

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### Introduction

Human resource management is one of the most important procedures in any organization. None of the existing organizations can achieve their goals without suitable and qualified specialists (Čižiūnienė et al, 2016) (1). Therefore, today, one of the most important concerns of human resource development managers is to retain and develop organizational talents. Talent management has had an astonishing effect on the reputation of organizations (Cart Wright, 2008) (2). Talent is a resource that is valuable, rare and difficult

to emulate. Talent management is a strategic activity that is in line with the company's business strategy that aims to attract, develop and retain talented employees at every level of the organizations (Hatun and Preve, 2015) (3). Whenever organizations need to optimize their workforce, the strategic importance of talent management becomes more apparent to them (Lyria et al, 2017) (4). Talent management is the key to the success of business in the postmodern era. As a result, it makes some kind of investment in certain individuals, as the main source of innovation and social development (Mohammed et al, 2017) (5).

Recent studies showed that many large organizations face a severe shortage of talented individuals. Sparrow and Hilltrapp (1994) examined the growing problems related to talent scarcity in most European countries and concluded that in the 21st century, there is a growing need for people with a wide range of skills and abilities required to meet unforeseen needs of companies (Hiltrop, 1999) (6).

Organizations compete with others for hiring talents. Therefore, businesses must be able to identify talented people, provide them with the necessary training and retain valuable employees for the long term, and consider strategies for this issue. Given that achieving optimal organizational performance is the ultimate goal of organizations and the term “employee involvement and effort” has recently become a popular term in human resource management, it can be said that talent management by affecting the talented employees’ work effort, improves their efficiency and performance. Researchers have examined the relationship between talent management and organizational performance and recognized why talent management is extremely valuable. Organizations that employ talent management activities perform significantly better than other companies in their industry (McCauley, 2006) (7). Latokha and Veselova (2019) confirmed a positive and significant relationship between talent management and company’s performance through mediation of absorptive capacity (Tzokas et al, 2015) (8). Luna Orukas and Morali (2015) also showed that talent management strategies affect organizational performance, and this effect acts as a mediating variable through job satisfaction (Jiménez-Barrionuevo et al, 2011) (9).

In addition to talent management, many variables and stimuli have been introduced by researchers as factors affecting organizational performance (Nasr Esfahani et al, 2016) (10). In recent research, Tzokas et al. (2015) referred to the absorptive capacity of the organization to improve the final performance of the organization, which in their opinion is likely to have a decisive effect on the performance of the organization (Wikhamn, 2019) (11). The capacity of knowledge absorptive capacity is one of the most basic learning abilities that organizations can use to identify knowledge and information outside the organization and adapt themselves to the identified knowledge and finally internalize it (Saeed Ardakani et al, 2010) (12). Knowledge Absorptive capacity is an organizational feature that on the one hand determines the pattern of searching knowledge from existing knowledge bases by the company, and on the

other hand shows the exploratory behavior versus exploitation behavior of organizations seeking the development of innovation and high performance (Taleghani et al, 2013) (13). In addition to the absorptive capacity, employees’ innovation ability is an effective factor in improving organizational performance. Innovation is a common term among different groups with different meanings. This concept is often associated with such aspects as creativity, innovation, value creation, and economic growth. According to Oslo manual, innovation includes: the implementation of a new or completely improved product (service or goods), or a process, a new marketing method, or new organizational methods in business operations, organization or foreign relations (Gharaipour and Al Ibrahim, 2014) (14). In today’s workplace, employees who are able to make the right decisions, come up with creative solutions to problems, and are responsive to and innovative in their work, are needed. For almost a century, in theories of economic evolution and innovation have been recognized as the driving force of economic growth and development. In other words, nowadays, factors such as environmental changes, technological advances and the increase of competitors have led to an endless conflict and competition between organizations. At the same time, organizations with a tendency to embrace innovation will be more successful in responding to environmental changes as well as expanding new capabilities that help them achieve higher performance (Gelens et al, 2014) (15).

Mahmoodi and Nikpour Dehkordi (2016) confirmed the positive and direct effect of technological capabilities and customer relationship on performance and the capacity of knowledge absorption, as well as the direct and positive relationship between capacity of Knowledge absorptive capacity and performance (16). The results of researchers indicated a positive and significant effect of technological capabilities on performance, and in general on the appearance of organizational creativities (Bethke-Langenegger et al, 2010) (17). Faraj et al. (2015) also confirmed the positive and significant effect of innovation and organizational learning on performance as well as the positive and significant effect of learning on organizational innovation (Haneda and Ito, 2018) (18).

Among the various parts of the health system, hospital services are the most effective factors in increasing the costs in many countries. In recent years, the rapid development of medical sciences and new technologies in the field of health care on one hand and the increase in people’s level of

information and the improvement of economic and social situation on the other hand, have increased people's expectations from the services provided in hospitals more than before (Latukha and Veselova, 2019) (19) Health system decision makers need to know what patients expect from health care providers so that they can make plans based on the patients' needs and demands (Luna-Arocas and Morley, 2015) (20). Given that health care organizations, including hospitals, are facing many challenges today and meeting patients' needs and expectations is becoming more and more difficult, it can be said that providing better health care services and improving hospital processes is not possible without the participation of all human resources, especially nurses (Fernhaber and Patel, 2012) (21). Organizations such as hospitals must reduce the various risks of human resources by hiring talented people, who are capable of solving the problems of the organization, and in this way fulfill their mission and improve its performance. Among the components of the human resource structure in hospitals, nurses perform a key role compared to others. The management of hospital nurses' talent can help them grow their innovation and creativity and improve their absorptive capacity, which ultimately improves the overall performance of the organization (Fraj et al, 2015) (22).

Therefore, the current study aims to investigate the effect of talent management on organizational performance with the mediating role of Knowledge absorptive capacity and innovation ability between nurses in hospitals affiliated to Qom University of Medical Sciences, based on the conceptual model presented in Figure 1. This conceptual model is based on previous studies in this field.

#### Research Hypothesis:

1. There is a significant relationship between talent management and organizational performance.
2. There is a significant relationship between talent management and knowledge absorptive capacity.
3. There is a significant relationship between talent management and innovation capability.

4. There is a significant relationship between knowledge absorptive capacity and organizational performance.

5. There is a significant relationship between innovation capability and organizational performance.

6. There is a significant relationship between knowledge absorptive capacity and innovation capability.

#### Research Methodology

The statistical population of the study was the nurses of hospitals affiliated to Qom University of Medical Sciences, who were 1012 persons. The sample size was equal to:

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)NZ_{\alpha/2}^2}{e^2(N-1) + p(p-1)Z_{\alpha/2}^2} = \frac{0.5 \times 0.5 \times (1.96)^2 \times 1012}{(1012 - 1) \times (0.05)^2 + 0.5 \times 0.5 \times (1.96)^2} \approx 106$$

For this purpose, 150 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the nurses of 5 hospitals (Shohada, Kamkar-Arabnia, Kheyrieh Health Center, Hazrate Masumeh and Shahid Beheshti) of Qom University of Medical Sciences and finally 120 usable questionnaires were collected.

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire. The following questionnaires were used to collect data:

- The Phillips and Roper Talent Management Questionnaire (2009) that has 28 items and measures the four dimensions of talent absorption, discovery, development and retention. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire in this study was 0.959. (Phillips and Roper, 2009) (23)

- Hersey and Goldsmith (1980) Organizational Performance Questionnaire has 42 items and measures seven dimensions of capability, clarity, assistance, incentive, evaluation, credibility, and environment. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire in this study was 0.933. (Hersey and Goldsmith, 1980) (24)

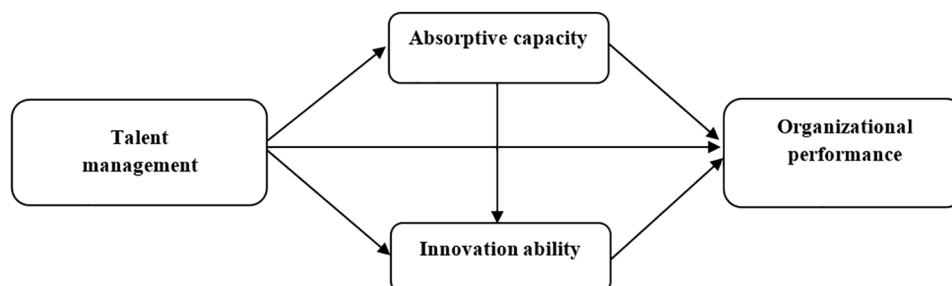


Figure 1: Conceptual model of research

- The Innovation Capability Questionnaire by Jorfi and Branch (2013) has 10 items and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire in this study was 0.847. (Jorfi and Branch, 2013) (25)

- The Knowledge Absorptive capacity Questionnaire from Tzokas et al (2015) has 12 items that measure the dimensions of acquisition, integration, extraction and transfer (8) The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire in this study was 0.789.

In this study, According to the questionnaire, the capacity to absorb knowledge of the organization from the perspective of nurses is examined. The face and content validity of the questionnaires were examined by 4 academic experts and structural validity of this research was studied by structural equation modeling. Also, for scoring, this questionnaire had a range of 5 Likert options. To analyze the data, normality tests, t-test for independent groups, and structural equation modeling test were used. SPSS19 and LISREL 8.8 were used in all stages of data analysis.

In order to investigate the variables of talent management, organizational performance, absorptive capacity, and innovation ability from the statistical population, the mean of a statistical population had been used. In the following, the results obtained

from the test are examined. The null hypothesis and hypothesis no. 1 of this test were as follows:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: \mu = 3 \\ H_1: \mu \neq 3 \end{cases}$$

According to the results obtained in Table 1, it can be seen that the level of significance for all variables was less than the error level (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis for these variables is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Moreover, considering that the upper and lower values were positive for all variables, it could be said that the mean of the respondents' responses to the variables was more than 3 (the average point of Likert scale) and therefore the variables in the society were in a favorable situation.

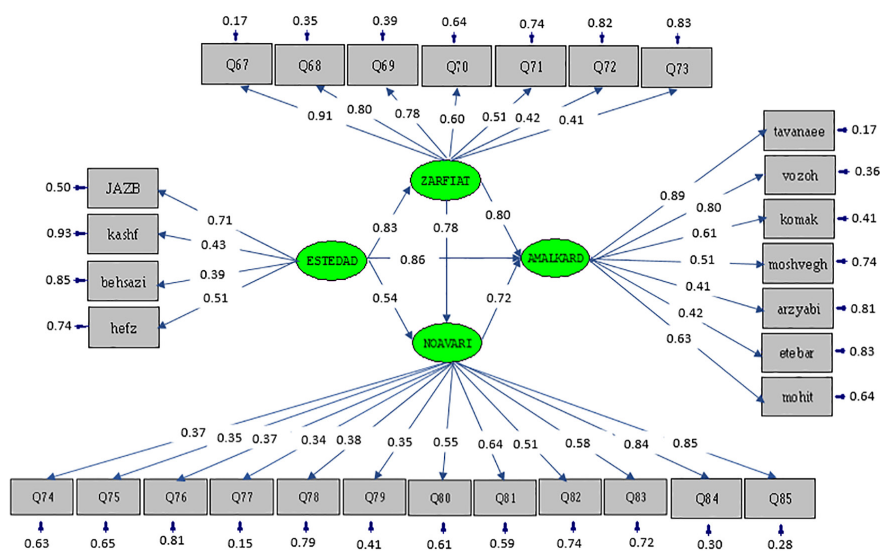
In this research, an attempt was made to observe all the considerations of research ethics and the confidentiality of the personnel's information and the hospitals under study.

*Research Findings*

In this part, first, the structural equation modeling in standard mode and level of significance for research hypotheses were presented (Figures 2, 3) and then the fitness of the model was examined.

**Table 1:** Results of the mean of a population for research variables

Index	The mean is equal to 3						
	Mean	t	Degree of freedom	sig	Mean difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
Talent management	3.0576	0.404	119	0.008	0.05762	0.2292	0.3444
Organizational performance	3.3997	4.938	119	0.000	0.39970	0.2368	0.5626
Innovation ability	3.7720	8.225	119	0.000	0.77204	0.5831	0.9610
Absorptive capacity	3.3387	3.911	119	0.000	0.33865	0.1643	0.5130



**Figure 2:** Structural equation modeling in standard mode

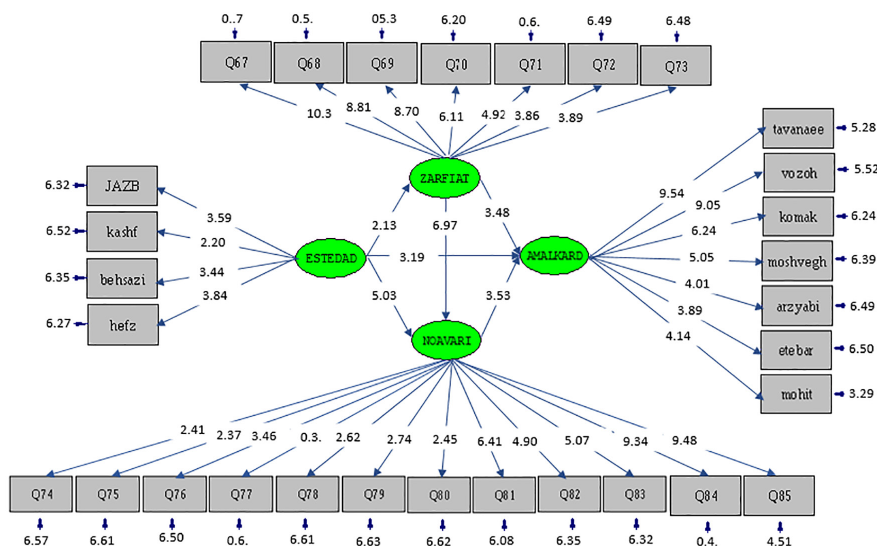


Figure 3: Structural equation modeling in mode of significance level

Table 2: fitness indices of the model

Index	Standard	The value obtained in the model
$\chi^2$	Less than 3	2.83
$df$		
RMSEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 0.05: good fitness</li> <li>• Between 0.05 and 0.08: acceptable fitness</li> <li>• Between 0.08 and 0.1: medium fitness</li> <li>• Greater than 0.1: poor fitness</li> </ul>	0.045
RMR	Less than 0.05	0.023
GFI	Greater than 0.9	0.98
AGFI	Greater than 0.9	0.94
CFI	Greater than 0.9	0.99
IFI	Greater than 0.9	0.98
NFI	Greater than 0.9	0.99
NNFI	Greater than 0.9	0.99

RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; RMR: Root Mean Square Residual; GFI: Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI: Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; IFI: Incremental Fit Index; NFI: Normed Fit Index; NNFI: Non- Normed Fit Index

To check the suitability of the above models, first, the fitness of the structural equation modeling had to be examined. According to Table 2, the fitness indices of the model were in an acceptable range. Therefore, it could be said that the model under study had a good fitness.

To test the significance of the hypotheses, a partial index of T-value had been used. In this regard, if the value of T was greater than 1.96, at the level of 95%, it could be said that the effect between the variables was significant. Factor load was also used to determine the effect of independent variables on dependent variables. The results of the research hypotheses are presented in Table 3.

To test the significance of indirect effects caused by a mediator variable (i.e. there are two paths), the formula first proposed by Sobel was used:

$$Z - value = \frac{a \times b}{\sqrt{(b^2 \times s_a^2) + (a^2 \times s_b^2) + (s_a^2 \times s_b^2)}}$$

In this formula, a: the value of the path coefficient between the independent and the mediator variables; b: the value of the path coefficient between the mediator and the dependent variables; Sa: standard error related to the path between independent and mediator; Sb: Standard error related to mediator and dependent paths. The amounts of standard error of the related routes are given in Table 4. To examine the mediating role of variables, the results of the Sobel test are presented in Table 4:

### Discussion

The present study investigated the effect of talent management on organizational performance through

**Table 3:** Summary of research hypotheses

Hypothesis number	Path		Error number	Path coefficient	sig	Test results
	From variable	To variable				
1	Talent management	Organizational performance	—	0.86	3.19	Confirmation of hypothesis
2	Talent management	Absorptive capacity	0.121	0.83	2.13	Confirmation of hypothesis
3	Talent management	Innovation ability	0.068	0.54	5.03	Confirmation of hypothesis
4	Absorptive capacity	Organizational performance	0.082	0.80	3.48	Confirmation of hypothesis
5	Innovation ability	Organizational performance	0.071	0.72	3.53	Confirmation of hypothesis
6	Absorptive capacity	Innovation ability	—	0.78	6.97	Confirmation of hypothesis

**Table 4:** Summary of test results of hypotheses with mediating role

Independent variable	Mediator variable	Dependent variable	VIF	Z value	Test result
Talent management	Absorptive capacity	Organizational performance	0.43	5.61	Confirmed
Talent management	Innovation ability	Organizational performance	0.31	6.25	Confirmed

the absorptive capacity and nurses' innovation ability in hospitals affiliated to Qom University of Medical Sciences. The results of this study can help hospitals and other service organizations to increase the organization's productivity with proper human resource management and talent management, which ultimately lead to the satisfaction of hospital clients.

Improving the performance of organizations depends on the capability of their human resources. It is a function of job knowledge and the skill of applying this knowledge in performing tasks and job activities, and talent management is the capability to manage the experience that employees will have one after another in the workplace, which leads to their empowerment. The most important asset of organizations is the knowledge of their employees. Talent management can improve the performance of organizations by integrating the knowledge capital of organizations in various sectors and influencing issues such as knowledge absorptive capacity and innovation capability (28). Therefore, the present study investigated the effect of talent management on organizational performance with the mediating role of knowledge absorptive capacity and innovation capability among nurses in hospitals affiliated to Qom University of Medical Sciences.

The first hypothesis was confirmed at an error level of 5% considering that there is a significant relationship between talent management and organizational performance, based on the results of Table 3. Talent management is a functional method that leads to the formation of a system that influences organizational processes and supports the goals of the organization. Talent management, focusing on organizational mechanisms, directs knowledge behavior and interactions among employees and increases organizational performance. Therefore, according to the findings of this study, talent

management is a stimulus that moves through various formal mechanisms, such as organizational structures and reward systems, and relationship mechanisms such as leadership committees to improve the performance of the entire organization. The findings of this study in this hypothesis are consistent with the results of Haneda and Ito (2018) (18), Latukha and Veselova (2019), Luna-Arocas and Morley (2015) (20) and Kostopoulos et al (2010) (26).

In the second hypothesis, it was suggested that there is a significant relationship between talent management and knowledge absorptive capacity, which was confirmed at the 5% error level based on the results of table (3). The results of this study show that the implementation of the talent management process is critical to improve the capacity to absorb knowledge in an organization because talent management is an important and effective factor in the capacity to attract and will cause significant exchanges of employees with each other and with the environment that will absorb knowledge. According to the research findings, talented nurses are more loyal and play an important roles in satisfying clients and providing them with effective services. The findings of this study in this hypothesis are consistent with the results of research by Latukha and Veselova (2019) (19), Fernhaber and Patel (2012) (21).

The third hypothesis was that there is a significant relationship between talent management and innovation capability, which was confirmed at the 5% error level based on the results of table 3. The results of this study show that by implementing talent management, the organization is assured that its human resources are the most productive. With the proper management of talents and abilities through attracting capable and creative forces, developing the capabilities and abilities of human resources and maintaining and retaining the experienced and

specialized forces in hospitals, the level of innovation and creativity will also increase. The findings of this study in this hypothesis are consistent with the results of research by (11, 18, 22).

The fourth hypothesis, with the premise that there is a significant relationship between knowledge absorptive capacity and organizational performance, was confirmed at the 5% error level based on the results in Tables 3 and 4. The results of this study show that the capacity to absorb knowledge in hospitals helps to analyze and interpret information in a way that can be used to support goals. absorbing new knowledge and combining it with existing knowledge means increasing innovation capacities. Because hospital activities are often associated with a high degree of risk and complexity, innovative capacities enable the organization's activities to better meet technical and operational challenges; as a result, they improve the performance of the organization. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the studies of (11, 29, 30).

The hypothesis 5 was that there is a significant relationship between innovation capability and organizational performance, and based on the results of tables (3 and 4), it was confirmed at an error level of 5%. The results of this study show that if hospitals are committed to managing nurses' talents and guiding them to learn, they will be able to innovate in services and processes, and the capability to innovate will improve their performance. without a strategy to develop innovation capabilities among nurses, performance improvement and other organizational success in hospitals will not be possible. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the studies of (13, 14, 19).

The fifth hypothesis was that there is a significant relationship between knowledge absorptive capacity and innovation capability. Based on the results of tables no. (3 and 4), it was confirmed at an error level of 5%. The results of this study show that absorptive capacity can not only lead to service innovation but to strategic innovation and performance improvement. Thus, hospitals use their internal research and development capabilities to identify and monitor foreign technologies and their effective use, and to improve the quantity and quality of their knowledge to improve the level of absorptive capacity and the capability to innovate and improve the effective provision of services. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the studies of (11, 18, 19).

In line with the obtained results, the following practical proposal is made: The organization can adopt measures such as forming a favorable mentality

in all members of the community, especially in prodigies and talented people, using the system of recruitment and promotion within the organization, applying appropriate working hours, considering enough salaries and benefits, providing employment contracts with high security and creating welfare and recreational facilities on its agenda to attract elite and talented people effectively. Talent management requires serious determination and comprehensive support from employees and managers of the organization. Accordingly, it is suggested that, in an organization, talent management culture should be in process in employees and managers' words and actions and all members of the organization should accept and believe that talent management will have a profound effect on organizational performance. To achieve this, serious attention should be paid to the underlying factors for its realization and at the extra-organizational level, the government and parliament should consider this important issue, as one of the indicators of the country's development and progress, in national bills and laws more seriously than before. By analyzing the labor market conditions and establishing relations with universities and the academic environment, talented job-seeking people should be identified. In the selection process, recruitment procedures and tests should be adjusted according to competency criteria so that the screening of applicants is done in a principled manner, and finally, in the arrangement of human resources in the workplace, it should be tried to recruit an appropriate combination and ratio of elite employees, talented employees, and ordinary employees at different levels of the organization.

Considering the content of talent management and its connection with the behavioral and personality characteristics of individuals, it can have more complex dimensions and characteristics that this study has not addressed. Therefore, we need an approach that examines the capacity to attract and innovate, not only at the level of the organization, but also at the level of people in that organization, because when the capacity of individual absorption and innovation in the organization is considered, theories of organizational behavior and human resource management are introduced.

Incapability to control environmental factors may affect the generalization of statistical and quantitative studies, including the results of this study. For example, in some cases, several people may sit together in one place and complete the questionnaire. They may be influenced by their friend and not fill out the questionnaire according to the reality. Also,

a questionnaire was used to collect analytical data in this study. Since the questionnaire measures individuals' perceptions of reality, and individuals' perceptions are usually different, the possibility should not be overlooked that this perception does not fully correspond to reality; therefore, the inherent limitations of the questionnaire are also among the limitations of this research that affect the generalization capability of the results.

### Conclusion

Regarding the recruitment, development and retention of talents, with respect to the compensation of services based on competency and in line with talent and performance, evaluation of talented people' 360-degree performance is accompanied by feedback. The organization can focus on issues such as staff promotion based on performance and competence, the attention to personal experiences and career path, the use of successor-training programs, and issues related to individuals' job development and exert a positive effect on quality and innovation in providing services using this method. It is suggested to the managers of organizations that by supporting employees' creativity, initiatives, and organizational innovations in shaping new services and processes, they can strengthen their performance and create innovations in their organization by using these organizational initiatives. This improves organizational performance. Given the fact that the ability to absorb knowledge in employees is not genetically fixed and can be learned and trained, managers are advised to provide appropriate training courses in order to increase employees' ability to absorb knowledge and improve the power of developing innovation in the organization by increasing it. Organizations need to pay attention to and use important sources of knowledge beyond their borders to develop innovation and flexibility. Therefore, in addition to allocating research and development budgets, the managers of organizations should take necessary measures to form a positive collective attitude about knowledge resources beyond the borders of the organization.

**Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

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