

## Artículo de investigación

## Identifying the constituents of talent management in the customs organization of iran by delphi-fuzzy method (case study)

Identificación de los constituyentes de la gestión del talento en la organización de aduanas de Irán mediante el método delphi-fuzzy (estudio de caso)

Identificando os componentes da gestão de talentos na organização aduaneira do Irã pelo método delphi-fuzzy (estudo de caso)

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### Abstract

Talent management is a system for identifying, upbringing, promoting, and preserving talented persons to optimize the capability of an organization to come up with optimal business results. Nowadays, the developing talent management is one of the most important business factors, which is considered as one of the key components to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage in organizations. The purpose of this study was to identify the components of talent management in the custom organization so that its implementation will be expedited. Considering various advantages of Fuzzy Delphi, we opted this method in conducting the study (The most important advantage is its greater accuracy than classical Delphi). Twenty persons were chosen as experts through a snowball sampling method. At the first step, 139 components were proposed based on previously reported through interviews, suggested to experts that, after four phases of deactivation, 54 indicators and components that were more relevant to the experts remained. In this study, we used a modified Three-branch model of Dr Mirzai Ahranjani (2005) (Of course, we also added a perceptual/cognitive branch that our model has a circular layer of four) to present a talent management model. The results of the

### Resumen

La gestión del talento es un sistema para identificar, educar, promover y preservar a las personas con talento para optimizar la capacidad de una organización y obtener resultados empresariales óptimos. Hoy en día, el desarrollo de la gestión del talento es uno de los factores empresariales más importantes, que se considera como un componente clave para mantener una ventaja competitiva sostenible en las organizaciones. El propósito de este estudio fue identificar los componentes de la gestión del talento en la organización personalizada para que su implementación se agilice. Teniendo en cuenta las diversas ventajas de Fuzzy Delphi, optamos por este método para realizar el estudio (la ventaja más importante es su mayor precisión que la clásica Delphi). Veinte personas fueron elegidas como expertos a través de un método de muestreo de bola de nieve. En el primer paso, se propusieron 139 componentes basados en entrevistas anteriores, y se sugirió a los expertos que, después de cuatro fases de desactivación, quedaban 54 indicadores y componentes que eran más relevantes para los expertos. En este estudio, utilizamos un modelo modificado de tres ramas del Dr. Mirzai Ahranjani (2005) (Por supuesto, también agregamos una rama perceptiva / cognitiva que

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research show that the behavioral/functional components in the final analytical model have the largest share.

**Keywords:** Talent Management, Competitive Advantage, Customs, Fuzzy Delphi.

nuestro modelo tiene una capa circular de cuatro) para presentar un modelo de gestión del talento. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que los componentes de comportamiento / funcionales en el modelo analítico final tienen la mayor participación.

**Palabras claves:** Gestión del talento, ventaja competitiva, aduanas, fuzzy delphi.

## Resumo

O gerenciamento de talentos é um sistema para identificar, criar, promover e preservar pessoas talentosas para otimizar a capacidade de uma organização de obter resultados comerciais ideais. Hoje em dia, o desenvolvimento de gestão de talentos é um dos fatores de negócios mais importantes, considerado um dos principais componentes para manter uma vantagem competitiva sustentável nas organizações. O objetivo deste estudo foi identificar os componentes do gerenciamento de talentos na organização personalizada para que sua implementação seja acelerada. Considerando várias vantagens do Fuzzy Delphi, optamos por este método na condução do estudo (a vantagem mais importante é a sua maior precisão do que o Delphi clássico). Vinte pessoas foram escolhidas como especialistas por meio de um método de amostragem de bolas de neve. Na primeira etapa, 139 componentes foram propostos com base em entrevistas previamente reportadas, sugeridas a especialistas que, após quatro fases de desativação, restavam 54 indicadores e componentes mais relevantes para os especialistas. Neste estudo, usamos um modelo de três ramos modificado do Dr. Mirzai Ahranjani (2005) (claro, também adicionamos um ramo perceptivo / cognitivo que nosso modelo tem uma camada circular de quatro) para apresentar um modelo de gestão de talentos. Os resultados da pesquisa mostram que os componentes comportamentais / funcionais no modelo analítico final têm a maior participação.

**Palavras-chave:** Gestão de Talentos, Vantagem Competitiva, Alfândega, Difuso Delphi.

## Introduction

Talent management is one of the most important and even necessary issues of human resources management in the world and still is considered as one of the critical issues in most of the organizations. Nowadays, managers from different parts of the world are dealing with changing nature of work and they need staffs that are able to adapt themselves to this unstable situation. In order to preserve these expert staff, organizations will need to have an accurate planning to identify and encourage them. Today's business is facing with fast growing global competition, changing in markets and unpredictable events and consequently, it's probably hard for hiring, upbringings and preserving expert employees, which might not be a strange event (Hajikarimi & Hoseini, 2010).

According to experimental specialists and academic scholars, talent management will be one of the key challenges with which organizations will face and can act as a source of

sustainable competitive advantage in very dynamic and turbulent markets of 21th century (Meyers & Van Woerkom, 2014). In other words, obviously organizations are in a situation in which hiring and maintaining the best employees and talented employees will be the biggest sustainable competitive advantage for an organization in knowledge age. This competitive advantage will not be easily imitable and will be considered as secured investment in the current unsettled world (Javaherizadeh & etal, 2014).

Having talented and capable persons not only is a competitive advantage of an organization but also can compensate the lack or deficiency of other resources. This is a fact that all experts compromise about it internationally (Same source, same page).

One of the instants that would cause more sensitivity in precise identifying of components and characteristics of talent management is the

fact that talent management can be changing in a spectrum from an absolute talent wiper to so effective one. It is possible that two processes seem to be similar but practically, they lead to very different outcomes. Therefore, organizations should notice that having written some processes necessarily does not mean that those processes will be effective. This can be concluded by evaluating rate of active participation of employees and especially talented persons, also by evaluating the rate and reasons of job leaving by talented employees. These are the important issues of human resources both in internal and global level (Brown et al, 2016).

Employees of each organization are its intellectual capital and human assets that have an important role on leading the organization to improve the achievement of the objectives. Thus, preparing an appropriate situation to empower the talents and employing them in achieving organization objectives that can amplify the organizational commitment of employees will be one of the management necessities of organizations.

### **Theoretical Foundations of Research**

In present competitive environment that continuous changes and innovations are its basic characteristics, successful organizations in the world search the tools of sustainable development not in the nature, mountains or forests but in the mind and endless ideas of human. Therefore, in modern economic theories, the role of human capitals in generating knowledge and making incomes has been considered more than ever. In the age of knowledge and wisdom, the base of competition is totally changing and organizations put emphasis more on knowledge and wise employees. Accordingly, it has been emphasized on the necessity of designing a comprehensive process for talent management in human resources management circuit. Furthermore, valuable talents are so rare and their importance grows day over day; and retiring and exiting capable and expert employees from work environment, the need of new skills to obtain the desired future

and changes in life style in different persons, increases its importance (Mohammadi et al, 2017). Sometimes it is supposed that talent management is only defined for key persons in organization. But any person in organization has his/her own talent. Some persons are more talented than others; therefore, the process of talent management should not be narrowed to a few ones. Researchers from McKinsey group introduced the term of "talent management" for the first time; they found that talents management is best action that provides the firms with high performance. For the first time, they also presented the term of "War for talent" to highpoint the importance of key staff for companies and organizations. Philips and Ropper (2009) believe that today's the hiring and preserving of talented employees is very difficult and organizations emphasis on hiring appropriate persons for appropriate positions in appropriate time. This is due to the transition from the industrial age to the era of intellectual capital (Fathi et al, 2017).

In spite of the most of definitions provided in literature, the concept of talent in an organization is a multifaceted concept and indeed somehow it is a socially constructed formation. From the point of internal culture, the talent meaning is a feature of a person with high mental abilities that owing to these abilities, he/she may not act desirably in other areas, and even due to these high mental capabilities, which has brought him/her a good academic records, he/she may not display good work performance at the first step, and he/she cannot interact well with other members of a team at the second step. For defining the concept of talent in an organization first it should be considered that in what area and from the eyes of whom this compartment is intended to be taken into account, and then a serious clarification should be done in this regard, so that some of the talents in the organization, especially in the technical section, which can cause some problems in interactions, is not being interpreted as deliberate negative features (Gholipour & Eftekhari, 2016).

Table 1. Summary of talent management definitions

Description	References
-Talent management is the system for attracting, identifying, developing, interacting, maintaining and employing high-potential individuals, which are part of the organization's particular values.	Davies (2010).
-Manage talent as vital activity in the business strategy to attract, develop, and hold forces, and various components of this vital system, such as workforce planning, recruitment, recruitment, job development, performance management and succession management, Defines it	Stakler, 2011
-In talent management research, leadership behaviors are widely and in a special, important way. Behavior from the point of view of human resources is the same as things that make it difficult to change within people. Accordingly, talent management is an understanding of the behaviors people bring to business, and where you can really use it to grow your business and move it forward.	Tansely, 2011
-Talent management implements integrated strategies or systems designed to increase organizational productivity through the development of improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining and employing individuals with the skills and abilities needed to meet current and future business needs. And defines the work	Kehinde, 2012
-The concept of talent management as a set of processes integrated with human resources that needs to be aligned with an organizational strategy, in order to ensure that human capital is able to meet organizational needs.	Tucker & Collins, (2012)

However, identifying what is needed, finding persons with potential and readiness or performance required in this area, upbringing individuals, and preserving them for organizations, leads to many challenges. This is why the talent management has always been among the top five priorities of organizations at least over the past ten years (Gholipour & Eftekhar 2016).

Hence, today it is believed that human resource is the most important competitive advantage and organizational capital, and so it has been emphasized on the valued role of talents in the organization and desirable management of them is considered to be very important (Salehi Kordabadi & Rahbarinia, 2015).

On the other hand, the issue of the talent management in Iran, similar to other new

managerial concepts due to the inappropriate presentation of the issue by academic communities and unsuitable and incomplete execution which is without regard to infrastructure provision, blemish effectiveness of this issue in our organizations. Simultaneously, the brains drain is a current issue of our country for years. Although there is no official domestic statistics on this phenomenon, according to the World Bank reports, net immigration rate from Iran during the last five years up to 2012 were 300,000 persons. According to the Bloomberg report, the rate of student immigration to the United States has increased by 25% over the year 2012-2013 and reached to 8700 persons. It is clear that apart from the undesirable consequences this issue can cause at national level and for our educational system, it directly

affects organizations as well (Gholipour & Eftekhar, 2016).

It should be noted that most of the presented models have depicted a favorable state of a talent management system; in other words, models, regardless to the real conditions governing organizations, are the only images of talent management utopia. Reviewing Literature has shown that the most studies take no notice of the actual conditions governing organizations. What is being discussed about the actual situation of organizations in the researches is often in the form of phrases such as if talent management is not addressed, if the appropriate ways to hiring, upbringing and preserving talents are not used, the organization loses its talents and will not succeed (Trost, 2014; Htum, 2010). Another noteworthy point is that when we can expect an organization to run talent management that effective human resource systems (such as hiring, performance assessment, rewarding, etc.) have already been formed (Armstrong & Talyor, 2014).

Obviously, Customs organization as a leading organization that gained a top organization place in 2017 is no exception. Therefore, in today's competitive environment, organizations to achieve their strategic goals need to direct their employees in line with their mission to construct long-term and effective cooperation to maintain and grow themselves. Hence, in this research, we intend to identify the dimensions and components of talent management.

### Research Methodology

From the point of typology current research is essentially an exploratory research because it addresses an issue that has not been addressed before. In this kind of research, instead of testing the hypothesis, the goal is to collect patterns and ideas to come with a deep understanding of the issue. For this purpose, qualitative and quantitative methods are opted to achieve a suitable method to get research objectives. Methods of data collection are interviews with scholars and experts, and questionnaires.

Tariq and Schuler (2010), in the context of the young talent management world, called for quantitative methodologies, such as participatory observation, interviewing and analyzing the contents of archival documents, to build the basic theories in this field. On the other hand, Elaris and colleagues (2014) have asked the researchers to consider relationships in

individual, organizational, institutional, national, and international environment in talent management talks. The individual's environment encompasses the individual's mental experience. For example, it can include understanding of managers and employees of talent management in their organization. The second aspect is the intermediate role of organizations in which talent management policies and activities occur. As a third aspect, the country's institutional environment that may empower or prevent talent management: issues such as norms, values, laws and regulations that both consciously and unknowingly affect talent management policies and activities. Ultimately, there are national/international environments and even parts that can demonstrate the ability to transfer talent management processes between different business sectors and national borders (Al Ariss et al, 2014).

The Fuzzy Delphi method was developed by Kaufman and Gupta in the 1980s. The usage of this method is to decide and agree on issues where objectives and parameters are not explicitly identified. This leads to very valuable results. An important feature of this method is to provide a flexible framework that avoids many of the barriers to inaccuracy and openness. Many of the decision problems are related to incomplete and inaccurate information. Also, decisions made by experts on the basis of their individual competence are highly subjective. Therefore, it is better to show the data instead of the definite numbers with the fuzzy numbers (Jafari & Montazer, 2008).

There are no strong and explicit rules on how to choose and the number of specialists, and their number depends on factors such as: homogeneity or heterogeneity of the sample, Delphi goal or extent of the problem, decision quality, the ability of the research team in conducting research, internal and external credibility, available data and resources collection time, the scope of the problem, and the acceptance of the response. The number of participants is usually less than 50 persons and most of them are 15 to 20 persons (Ahmadi et al, 2008).

The statistical society surveyed in this research includes academic experts outside the Customs Organization, and experts including senior executives (with a graduate degree and sufficient experience of over ten years that have deep awareness and breadth of responses). This

society includes 20 persons that were surveyed that how much of each activities of the survey model to be used. Since identification of all specialists and experts was not possible for the researcher, the Snowball sampling was used.

In spite of the discussed significance, the concept of talent still has not a clear position in organizations, even at global level. Various researchers have used different concepts as the concept of talent in the organization (Gholipour & Eftekhari, 2006). Hence, with the aim of understanding of what concepts can be considered as components and proxies of talent management, we conducted a literature review, library research and participation in seminars and conferences. Then, at the next step our practical study was interview through which we refers to experts and asked for their ideas. It should be noted that the type of interview was semi-structured. During interviews voices were recorded. The interviews lasted about two months and were mostly carried out at experts' workplace. After the interview and coding, 139 indicators were obtained (described in detail in Attachment 1).

In this research, a one-stage triangular fuzzy method was used in the nine-grade Likert scale in expressing the importance of indicators in four stages.

It should be noted that the first round of data collection was performed through a typed questionnaire and in a face-to-face approach, and the second and third rounds were done through Google's form.

After interviewing the experts, the dimensions, components and indexes were identified and provided in appendix I.

In this study we used a single-phase triangular fuzzy method in nine-grade Likert scale to express the importance of indexes in three steps.

### Data Analysis

**- First Step:** Collecting of experts opinions for identified variables and the results obtained from the expert opinion average are presented in the first questionnaire. The formula used for calculation in this step is as below:

$$A_i = (l_i, m_i, u_i)$$

In continue the defuzzification method has been used to integrate the experts' views. We also used the simple relation of  $\frac{l+m+u}{3}$  to defuzzification and for determining the average of views.

The obtained results from the average of expert opinions are presented in the first step. In the second questionnaire, the obtained averages were provided to experts for each index and then the questionnaires were distributed again and completed.

**- Second Step:** The difference of each expert's view with the average of views was calculated and provided to that expert:

$$A_{AVE} - A_i = \left( \frac{\sum l}{n} - l_i, \frac{\sum m}{n} - m_i, \frac{\sum u}{n} - u_i \right)$$

The expert's views are recollected and a new fuzzy average is calculated:

$$A_i = (l_i, m_i, u_i)$$

$$B_{AVE} = \left( \frac{\sum l}{n}, \frac{\sum m}{n}, \frac{\sum u}{n} \right)$$

The results presented in the below table:

Table 2: Average of experts' views calculated in second step

\*Full information of the table has been presented in appendix (Continuation of the full table in attachment Table 2)

**- Third Step:** Examining the difference between average of the questionnaires.

Difference between the view of each expert and average of views is calculated and the Delphi cycle is repeated. This process stops when the two consecutive averages  $A_{ave}, B_{ave}, C_{ave}, \dots$  clearly approach together.

Table 2. Difference of experts' views average in first and second steps (first and second questionnaires)

Question Number	Defuzzificated Average1	Defuzzificated Average2	Question Number	Defuzzificated Average1	Defuzzificated Average2
1	0 / 792	0.825	71	0 / 746	0.746
2	0 / 471	0 / 504	72	0 / 4	0.4
3	0 / 738	0.788	73	0 / 808	0.808
4	0 / 708	0.758	74	0 / 729	0.729
5	0 / 746	0.779	75	0 / 75	0.75
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
69	0 / 754	0 / 763	139	0.808	0.825
70	0 / 408	0 / 442			

As we can see, in this step the difference in averages for indexes 24, 23, 22, 20, 16, 15, 2, 51, 50, 49, 48, 47, 46, 45, 43, 42, 41, 32, 31, 128, 127, 120, 119, 112, 82, 70, 60, 54, 53, 52 in above table is less than 0.2 (threshold). The average for quoted questions is low and this means that these questions does not matter for experts and have not more importance for them

so should be eliminated from the analysis process. For questions 64, 61, 59, 58, 57, 56, 117, 111, 108, 102, 100, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 72, 129 with respect to the threshold which is higher than 0.2, the process of performing the fuzzy Delphi analysis was not stopped, and for the remaining questions a fuzzy Delphi (third phase fuzzy Delphi) has to be performed.

Table 3. Difference of experts' views average in first and second steps (second and third questionnaires)

Averages Difference	Defuzzificated Averag Questionnaire No. 3	Defuzzificated Average Questionnaire No. 2	Criterion
0 / 0292	0 / 854	0 / 825	1
0 / 0292	0 / 788	0 / 758	3
0 / 017	0 / 746	0 / 729	4
0 / 025	0 / 804	0 / 779	5
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
0 / 008	0 / 825	0 / 817	138
0 / 017	0 / 842	0 / 825	139

Since questions 72, 64, 61, 59, 58, 57, 56, 55, 117, 111, 108, 102, 100, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95 are at the lower limit according to the average amount, they are removed from the analysis process. The threshold for questions 40 and 44

is more than 0.2, the process of performing fuzzy Delphi analysis is not stopped, and Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (Fuzzy Delphi stage 4) should be implemented again.

Table 4. The mean difference of experts' opinion in stages 3 and 4 (third and fourth questionnaire)

Averages Difference	Defuzzificated Averag Questionnaire No. 4	Defuzzificated Average Questionnaire No.3	Criterion
0 / 0292	0 / 875	/ 854	1
0 / 0292	0 / 796	0 / 788	3
0 / 017	0 / 767	0 / 746	4
0 / 025	0 / 813	0 / 804	5
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
0 / 008	00 / 833	0 / 825	138
0 / 017	0 / 85	0 / 842	139

It is observed that the mean difference at this stage is less than 0.2 (threshold) for all questions in the table and the fuzzy Delphi is completed in the fourth stage and there is no need to continue this method. It should be noted that questions 73, 71, 67, 65, 36, 29, 27, 26, 21, 14, 13, 11, 109, 105, 101, 94, 89, 88, 83, 81, 79, 78, 77, 132, 126, 124, 122, 121, 116, 115, 114, 113, 136, 135, 134, 133 should be removed from the analysis process depending on the level of the average, which is low, that is not significant according to the experts.

### Conceptual Model of Talent Management

In this study, the adjusted three-dimensional model Dr Mirzai Ahranjani (2005) to provide the talent management model.

The phenomenon of organization and management can be analyzed according to the three categories of behavioral (content), structural and context factors. The purpose of the behavioral (content) factors is all the factors related to the human resources that make up the content of the organization such as motivation, work morale, and job satisfaction; Structural factors include a set of regular relationships governing the internal components of the organization that make the body like organizational structure, and rules and regulations. Ultimately, the underlying factors include the environment and external conditions that cause behavioral and structural factors (Bahramzadeh et al, 2015).

The reason for naming this model is its three dimensions. The relationship between structural and behavioral and context factors is such that no phenomenon or organizational event cannot be outside the interaction of these three dimensions (Safarzadeh & Jafari, 2011).

In fact, the type of relationships between these three dimensions is casual as three branches grown from a body (Rahimi & Salmasnya, 2016).

- **Cognitive/perceptual dimension:** Which includes explanatory, perceptual, knowledge, theoretical philosophy, and discursive components. It should be noted that we added this dimension according to the study done by Dr. Baqerzadeh and Dr. Matani.

- **Structural dimension:** The structural dimension includes all elements and factors as well as physical and non-human conditions of the organization that connect with a special order and form the physical and material form and framework of the organization (Hosseinian & Farhani, 2016).

- **Functional dimension:** This dimension includes human factors and relationships in the organization, which consists behavioral norms, informal communication, and special interconnected patterns and the core content of the organization. These content factors are, in fact, make the organization dynamic and live and any factors and variables directly related to work force are included in this dimension (Mobini Dehkordi & Keshtkar Haranki, 2014).



- **Environmental dimension:** Environmental factors and conditions are extra-organizational that cover the organization environment, interact with the organization, and are outside the control of the organization. Each system or organization in its particular place is always in constant action and interaction with

environmental systems. Therefore, all the causes and factors that allow to timely and appropriate establish, adjust, and respond of the organization to other systems are called the context or the environment (ibid).

Thus, the model presented by this research is in the form of four layers as follows:

Table 7. Categorization of (Final) dimensión

Cognitive dimension	environmental dimension	functional dimension	Structural dimension
Customs reputation	Appropriate culture	Measuring the strengths and weaknesses of the employees	Rational decision making
Attention to law orientation	Attention to the observance of Islamic values	Good time for human resources	Determining the evaluation criteria
Attention to rectitude	Protecting the organization from political pressure	Looking for information	Using the standard performance evaluation tool
Loyalty to the organization	To protect the pressure of the interest groups	Interaction management	Succession Planning
Good knowledge of applying policy	Supporting enthusiastic people	Failure to allow poor performance	Paying attention to professional experiences
Honest assessment of employee performance	Honest feedback for employee development	Definition of competency	Designing motivational systems
The real desire of individuals to develop education		Matching job with employee	Identifying key positions
Strategic perspective towards human resources		Alignment of individual and organizational goals	
The sense of people's progress and success		Good interaction with the employees of nearby organizations	

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Opportunity for talent

Holding meetings with  
employees to plan a career  
path

Good communication  
between the manager and  
the employee

Modifying irrelevant  
behaviors

Prioritization of vacant  
positions based on ability

Continued use of high-  
performance employees

Socialization process

Finding different techniques  
to hire top graduates

Professional interviews in  
recruitment

Financial analysis of the  
human capital index

The use of talent reserves

Job rotation for training

Coaching for training

Mentorly for training

The use of retired as a  
consultant

The use of retired as a  
teacher

The use of retired as a  
participant in the  
commissions

Checking local research  
records for employment

Talent tests

Personality tests

Emotional intelligence tests

IQ test

Identifying hidden talents

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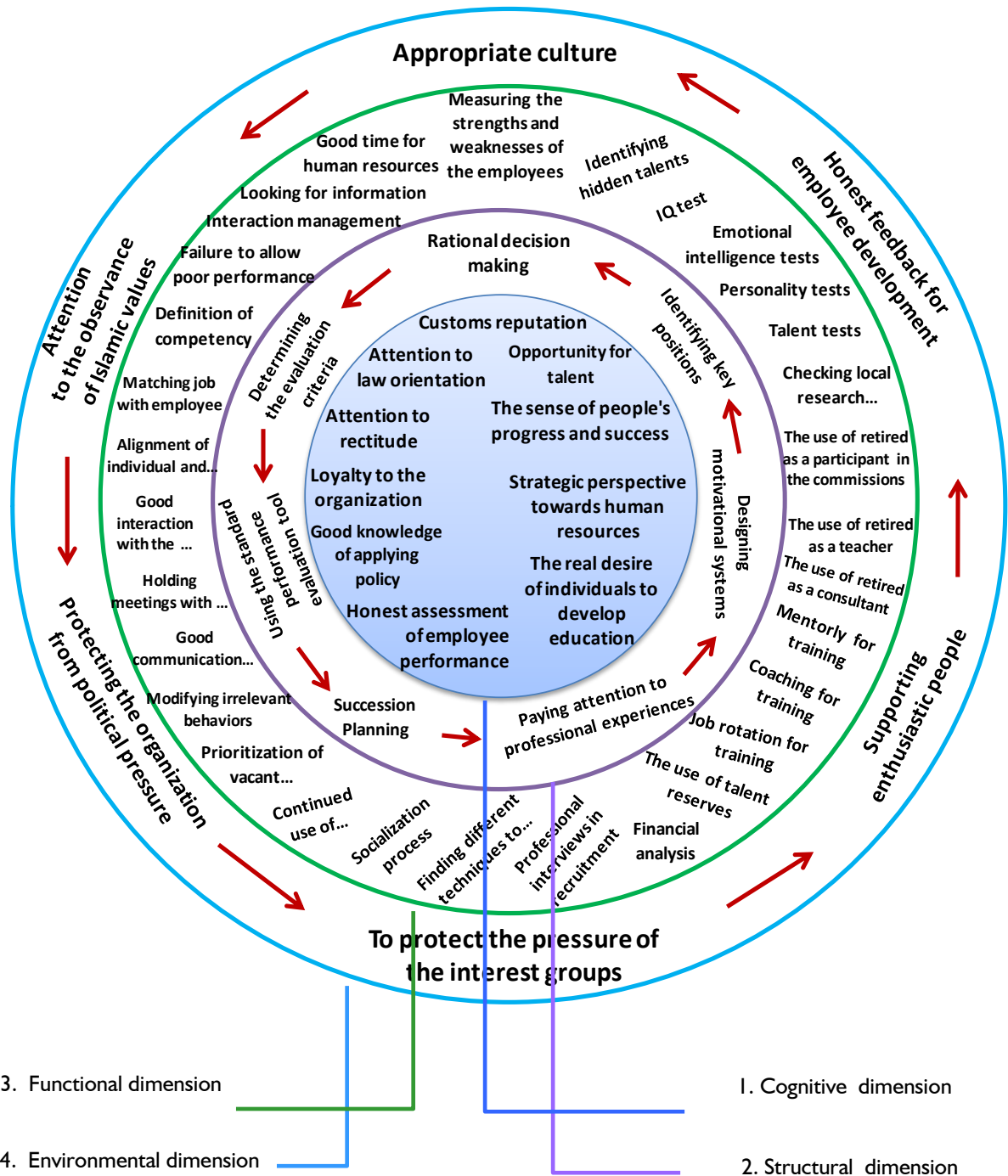


Figure 1. Conceptual analytical model of the research

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The results indicate that the behavioral/functional components have the largest share in the analytical model. Therefore, the experts considered the most importance for these components in number (quantity). Thus, the attention of managers to these factors should

be increased and the least number of components of the situational/environmental components that are less important for experts.

Conducting some types of research with a change approach seems to be necessary. In other words, the studies in this area should be excluded from the theoretical context in order

to prove their effectiveness and they should be included the scientific-action research in order to play a real role in maintaining and upgrading the talent of the organization and thus bringing the offices closer to success.

The current status of the Customs Organization, which is a leading international communication organization and bound to comply with a number of international standards, shows that there is a long way to go because the issue requires a change in the organization's management body in addition to being rooted in the national culture. Human resource managers, who often have neither a proper management education nor the necessary expertise to be able to evaluate the administrative circulars.

It is recommended to comply different levels to identify the components such as 1. Level of managers 2. level of experts 3. level of service providers for future types of research.

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