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Talent Frameworks in Software Industry: A Case Study

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Abstract

The IT and ITeS industry has made significant contribution in the GDP of India. The number of software firms has been on the rise. The competitiveness of the firms however has been revolving around its various programs and strategies designed to not only retain the talents, but also contribute towards the organizational goals. The net impact has been a rise in the employee cost, offering a host of benefits to its associates in terms of training and incentives. Various firms have adopted the different talent retention, its quality improvement by following various methods and strategies of HR. The paper has analysed the measures adopted by the software firms by using SPSS and other statistical tools. The study has found that the measures adopted by the firms have become much more mechanical and routine in nature. There is a need to rethink and re-structure the existing talent retention measures if the firms have to really be competitive and successful.

Keywords: Induction Programs, Talents, Performance Appraisal, ITeS and IT, Competitive

1 Introduction

Schultz (1993), defined the term “human capital” as a key element in improving a firm assets and employees in order to increase productive as well as sustain competitive advantage. Human capital is an important tool to enhance productivity in an organization. The former includes all the processes linked to training, education and other professional initiatives in order to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets of an employee which will lead to the employee’s satisfaction and performance, and eventually on a firm performance.

The dynamism exhibited by the changing policies of the corporate world has made it mandatory for the business organizations to augment their competitive abilities to have an edge over its competitors in terms of effective and proactive business plans in line with creativity and innovativeness. This is essentially important for their long term sustainability. Undoubtedly, a proper skilled team of human resource input can play a significant role in enhancing firms' competitiveness s in software/IT firms of India.

The Indian software industry since the initiation of economic reforms in 1991got a boost as a result of which it emerged as one of the important international competitors in the software industry. The contribution of the IT sector towards the GDP of the nation infact also was remarkable. (More than 55%). This explosion or what can be termed as boom in IT sector however brought many challenges and opportunities in this knowledge industry. The Challenge was basically in terms of managing the qualitative human resource across the firms at different levels. The human talents had to be nurtured and trained. Their skills were to be made in compatible with the organisational goals and tasks. However, the attrition also affected the IT industry. The attrition rate rose from 10% in 2020 to 20% in 2021. For the latest quarter ended September 2021, Wipro reported an attrition of 20.5%, up from 15.5% in the previous quarter. This was the highest, followed by Infosys at 20.1% and TCS at 11.9%. In fact, Wipro has now seen consistent increase in attrition rate in the last four quarters. To counter this move of employees going to other organizations, many of the firms adopted talent retention strategies thereby increasing its employee cost (Table 1) to offer a host of benefits to its employees. The cost has been increasing over the years. The employee cost of the TCS rose from Rs. 7882.43 crores to Rs. 69046 crores from 2009-10 to 2020-21. On an average over the last seven years it increased by Rs. 49035.2 Crores. What constituted a good working environment differs amongst the human talents. People spend a major part of a day in offices. So the HR is continuously on the lookout for better ways for creating a pleasurable environment to work with. Aiding in the maintenance of a balance in the personal life and work life of its employees is of a major worry to the HR. A dissatisfied workforce was a major threat to the very existence of an organization. Employees expected the company to give excellent opportunities for their personal growth through different incentives and schemes. A good balanced HR system provided the backbone for ensuring career growth to the employees. This however had to be backed by an excellent training system to meet the immediate requirements and futuristic needs based on good forecast of the key skills needed for meeting the future. This was further necessitated by the increasing penetration of the Indian software industry in the international market combined with a rise in the rate of attrition- a by-product of the increasing dynamism of the competitiveness of the Software industry.

Table 1 – Employee Cost of Select Software Firms (In Crores)

Year	2009-10	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Mean
3i Infotech (Cr.)	290.67	120.82	86.16	77.95	88.63	128.69	88.41	125.904
BlueStar	185.43	324	309.78	358.77	372.69	414.95	325.23	327.264
TCS	7882.43	42420	48116	51499	59377	64906	69046	49035.2
Infosys	10356	28207	30944	32472	38296	42434	45179	32555.4
HCL Tech.	2137.82	4866.92	6844	7365	8079	9916	11749	7279.68
Wipro	9062.8	21267.1	21854.4	21756.2	23808.5	26171.8	26467.3	21484
Tech Mahindra	1598.7	7410.1	7744.4	8106.5	8444	9282.7	9162.6	7392.71
L & T Infotech	NA	3383.84	3597.5	4134.8	5128.7	5982.8	6803.8	4838.57
Mphasis	1352.09	1390.18	1356.5	1391.55	1441.14	1662.11	1774.54	1481.16
Mindtree	743.74	2576.6	3243.8	3394.9	4421.1	5064.7	5113.2	3508.29

Source:www.moneycontrol.com

II. Theoretical Background

Management of human talents, its retention and acquisition becomes a significant variable in achieving a competitive edge in the dynamic business environment and greatly helps in the achievement of the organizational goals. Thus, the human capital component is one of the major factors, which influence the competiveness of the software industry. The human talent helps in analyzing the competitive talent landscape for compensation strategy that can serve the company goals. This impacts retention and improves the skill sets for the organization as a whole, all while ensuring the organization is addressing big-picture competitive issues proactively. Numerous studies indicate the importance of aligning human resource strategies to achieving business goals and enhancing business performance [Darwish, T.K., Singh, S., & Mohamed, A.F. (2013) and Huselid, M. S., Jackson, S. E., & Schuler, R. S. (1997).] Such studies indicate that true competitive advantage can be achieved through people and the people practices of organizations. Companies that leverage their human capital to achieve their business objectives, especially growth have more positive results.. (Bubenik, 2019). No doubt, the importance of employee cost has been stressed upon by many studies, but whether it has really helped in creating a satisfied workforce or not? Has it contributed to a reduction in attrition rate? Has it made the human talent more efficient or not. An analysis has been carried in terms of different attributes influencing the HR in the randomly selected IT and ITeS firms across India located at Hyderabad, Bangalore, Pune and Goa.

III. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are

i. To analyze the impact of talent development programs on the competitiveness of software firms.

ii. To find the different attributes of such practices on software firms.

IV. Methodology of The Study

The study is a micro level study and is confined to the mixture of software firms across India. The present study consists of mainly primary data gathered in terms of a structured questionnaire, which was administered online as well as offline to 1500 respondents. The areas covered were Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, and Goa respectively. Out of 1500 respondents, 600 respondents filled the questionnaires, but only375 questionnaires were found valid in terms of their entries and attributes. The effective success rate of the administered questionnaires was however only 25%. Hence the calculations were restricted to 375 respondents only.

V. Analysis and Discussion

The competitive conditions in the business world make it difficult to acquire and retain the top talents. Once the organization identifies, it can offer the right pay to manage the pay increases to retain top talents. The compensation strategy is the extremely important piece of the overall human capital strategy to keep the company competitive and successful. Infact today, the majority of firms pay at the market rate, which is the rate offered by most of the competitors for labor. Those paying above market are referred to as "market leaders." These typically are companies with the ability to pay and the desire to attract and retain top-notch employees. Those paying below market ("market laggards") generally do so because they are unable to pay higher salaries. Such companies often attempt to attract employees by linking pay to productivity or profits so that the employees can earn more if the company does well. From an economic point of view, transaction-costs indicate that firm gains a competitive advantage when they own firm-specific resources that cannot be copied by rivals. Thus, as the uniqueness of human capital increases, firm have incentives to invest resources into its management and the aim to reduce risks and capitalize on productive potentials. Hence, individuals need to enhance their competency skills in order to be competitive in their organizations. The software industry of India has been hailed as a successful industry over the last two decades or more on account of its efficient low cost human capital. The current analysis of the human capital of the various firms across India finds the different attributes of human capital actually in practice and its implications on the competitive abilities of the firms. Some of the attributes and their relationships with its correlations with others is discussed as follows.

5.1. Gender and salary

The differences in labour market for men and women are highly prevalent across the service industries. This may be not only due to existing discriminations, but also due to differences in attitudes of both the genders which greatly influences their competitiveness. The existing empirical literature finds a significant gender gap in competitiveness. There are several factors which account for such gender gap, but are still debatable as some emphasize on biological factors, some on social environment and so on. Over the years it has been observed that women's have exhibited higher levels of competitiveness among themselves and not among mixed gender groups. Further in most of the Companies in Silicon Valley of US, most of the men outnumbered the women. For example, At Google, women make up 25.5 percent of technical employees; at Facebook, it's just 34.2 percent. As per the Survey conducted online by Fusion from US in 2015, 92 percent of software developers were men and only 5.8 % were women's. In FY 2017–2018, the IT and ITES sector employed 34 per cent women (Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology). A 2020 study by the AnitaB.org Institute found that women make up 28.8% of the tech workforce, a steady increase from the past few years -- 25.9% in 2018 and 26.2% in 2019. It is reported that the proportion of women into the various IT based industries in India is in the order of 19% in the software industry; 40% in the telecom industry; 80% in the airlines; 45% in the ITES; and 50% in the BPOs (Dr. M. Suriya).

The HR analysis of software industry involved respondents (employees) from the mixture of all IT companies (small, medium and large) across India. This can be seen from Table 2. The study involved 58.7% of males and 41.3 of females. The mean salary between both the genders also varied. Further there is statistically significant difference between the two in terms of their mean salary (Table 3) with the sig. value of 0.02. It was presumed that female employees are found to earn less than their male counterparts. But there cannot be full proof evidence of the difference in salary in terms of the gender. Thus **Ho -** There is no significant difference between the mean salary in terms of gender in Software/IT employees. Table 2 shows $p < .05$ (it is $p = .002$). Thus the hypothesis that there exists no significant relation between the gender of the employees and their mean salary is rejected.

Table 2 Gender & Salary

Gender	No. of Respondents	%age	Mean	S.D
Male	220	58.67	56875	25017.3
Female	155	41.33	48209	24080.1
Total	375	100		

Table 3 -Independent Sample Tests of Gender and Mean Salary

Mean Salary	Learners Test for equality of Variance		t-test for equality of means		
	F	Sig	t-	df	sig -2 tailed
	0.038	0.845	3.199	339	0.002

5.2 Marital Status and Salary

It is usually perceived that married people do not give their 100% towards achieving the organizational goals as they get divided in their tasks both at organization and home. Most of the empirical studies also suggested that married employees mostly suffer from stress levels and these can greatly undermine their competitiveness which is very much important for the success of the organization. Thus

Ho – There is no significant difference between the mean salary and the marital status of the Software/IT employees

The respondents' profiles in terms of their marital status and salary is given in Table 4. Most of the respondents were married (63.9%) and the remaining 36% of were single or not married. This indicates a high proportion of employees of software organizations who are married. This can have its own repercussions on the competitiveness of the organizations, if not managed properly. However, the Table 4 indicates that irrespective of family obligations the married employees are earning more than the singles. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4 Marital Status & Mean Salary

Gender	No. of Respondents	%age	Mean	S.D
Married	134	35.73	39508.2	24120.1
Unmarried	241	64.27	61089.5	21973.2
Total	375	100		

Table 5 shows $p < .05$ (it is $p = .000$). Thus the hypothesis that there exists no significant relation between the marital status of the employees and their mean salary is rejected.

Table 5 -Independent Sample Tests of Gender and Mean Salary					
Mean Salary Equal Variance Assumed	Learners Test for equality of Variance		t-test for equality of means		
	F	Sig	t-	df	sig -2 tailed
	0.168	0.682	-8.384	338	0.000

5.3 Age and Salary

The age of the employees can act as an important determinant for influencing the competitiveness of the firms. It is presumed that the young employees are mostly energetic, innovative and always prefer challenges in any given organizations. In today's modern globalized world, the labour market has been facing three basic challenge; namely, 1. The workforce and the population as a whole are aging, 2. Labour shortages are growing in many sectors, especially in software in case of India and finally, many employees prefer to work beyond their retirement age. Though India has been talked of much because of her demographic advantage in terms of her growing young prospective employees, a doubt also has been raised in terms of the quality of this human resource which needs to be managed effectively not only at the firm level, but also at the national level if the competitive advantage needs to be sustained in the near future. The analysis of human capital in IT sector and their mean salary is shown in Table 6. The respondents involved in the study belonged mostly to the age group of 20 to 43 years i.e. almost more than 94%. The aged population of 44 years and above was hardly around 5.3%. Thus this clearly shows India's demographic competitive advantage in the software industry. But it needs to be sustained if it has to be really competitive in the years to come. Further the Anova analysis ratifies that there exists a significant relation between the mean salary and the age of the respondents. It is highly significant with sig. value of 0,000.

Table 6 – Mean salary & Age				
Age	No.of Respondents	%age	Mean Salary (Rs.)	S.D
20 - 25	72	19.3	31500	22473.07
26 - 31	130	34.6	46038.2	21347.2
32 - 37	88	23.5	57562.5	14577.2
38 - 43	65	17.3	73940.68	15447.4
44 and Above	20	5.3	90789.5	17099.6
	375	100		

5.6 Education and salary

Education and salary (income) usually goes hand in hand. The software industry cannot succeed without having an educated and talented workforce. It greatly contributes to the efficiency level of the organization. In fact, the most important factor of the globalization process is expressed as knowledge. Knowledge becomes a propulsive force in the process of creating technology and providing sustainable development and affects the competitiveness of countries directly. But its diverse in nature. Further, to get an educated workforce, it is very much important to either retain the existing or attract the new entrants in terms of fresher's by offering a perfect salary and incentives. Table 7 has analysed the mean salary in terms of the specializations in education of the employees. It was found that there a little higher degree of variation in terms of the mean salary with the employees having MCA degrees compared to other educational specializations such as BE/B.Tech, M.Sc. etc. Further, the Anova analysis showed variations even at the time and after joining in their mean salaries. But more specifically it was after joining as sig -000. This clearly reflects that the skills and training acquired post joining does helps in enhancing qualitative skills in the employees as their monetary rewards has shown an upward trend.

Table 7 Educational Specializations & Mean Salary

Specialization	No.of Respondents	%age	Mean Salary (At Joining) (Rs.)	Mean Salary (After Joining)
BE/B.Tech	54	14.4	46887.7	47179.5
ME/M.Tech	59	15.8	59675.9	59681.8
MCA	120	32	54839.4	53154.2
M.Sc.	55	14.7	54800	58150
MBA	32	8.5	59827.6	59000
BA/B.Sc./BBA.	55	14.7	44000	37105
PGDCA				
Total	375			

5.7 Work Experience

Table -8 --Anova Analysis of Industry Experience and Mean Salary

Mean Salary	*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*.Sig*
Between Groups	72428583190	3	2.4143E+10	58.3	0.000
Within Group	1.39508E+11	337	413969240		
Total	2.11936E+11	340			

Experienced employee helps in the sustaining of the competitive abilities of the firm both internally as well as externally. A perspective employer will always look favorably on the effort taken by experienced employees. It is presumed that. the organisation always stands a competitive edge with a team of experienced talents. The analysis of the respondents however showed that the employees working in ITeS and software firms work for maximum eleven years; after which they diversify their industry of employment. Further higher the experience, higher is the award in terms of financial incentives and Salary. Further, work experience greatly acts as a determining factor for the salary of the software employees. Its significance value is 0.000 as seen in Table 8.

5.8 Attributes for joining the organization

In today's modern dynamic world of competitiveness and the prevailing attrition in the software industry, employees very often switch over their organisations due to one or the other reason. The analysis however found three important reasons for the employee's tendencies to switch over in different organization of their choice. The decisions are taken by taking into account various factors such as Job Security, Better Salary, Working Environment, reputation of the organization and etc. A Anova analysis of Job Security, Better Salary and Working Environment is shown in Table 9, which shows clearly most of the employees consider Job security as an important reason for joining or switching of from one organisation to another. Further, most of the respondents, who were having 11 years of work experience or less gave more importance to better working conditions as a reason for joining the organization. Thus some of the employees having greater degree of work experience gave importance to better working conditions as a reason to join the new organisation.

Table 9 Anova Analysis of Reasons

Reasons	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*.Sig*
Better Salary	5	3.854	3.12	0.01
Job Security	5	15.657	14.931	0.000
Environment	5	3.811	3.358	0.006

5.9 Factors in Selection of Employees in Software Organizations

A founder can't grow a winning enterprise single handedly. Some may try, but it is nearly impossible to do so. Every famous entrepreneur has built a flourishing company with great employees by his or her side. In other words, every employer is aware of the fact that her company's productivity and profitability depend on the quality of workers it employs. The employer takes a number of factors such as education and merit, confidence, personality traits, set of skills in selecting the right employee/candidate and so on. The analysis found three important traits such as Qualification & Merit, work experience and personality attributes as important factors taken into consideration by the employers. it was found that educational qualifications and work experience played a major role in determining the selection of the employees in different software companies across India. The role of personality traits however was minimal.

Table 10 Anova Analysis of Factors

Factors	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*.Sig*
Qualification & Merit	3	3.02	12.734	0.000
Work Experience	3	4.183	16.186	0.000

5.10 Training and development programs and its impact on Human capital

Training and development programs contribute directly to the enhancement of efficiency and competitiveness of employees in organizations. To boost their human capital, the companies organize various training and development programs to help their talents to acquire knowledge and the required skills to achieve the goals of the organization and make them more competitive for the sustainability in the near future.

Infact the severe competition amidst attrition in the Information Technology industry within and outside India has compelled the firms to develop their human capital through continuous training and development programs. The

major purpose of such programs is to minimize the performance deficiencies of the employees at the desired level. Further evaluating the impact of training and development programmes is a continuous process. It needs to be monitored on a regular basis. The present study helps to know the impact of training and development programmes conducted.

5.10.1 Induction Programs and Management of Human talent

When a new employee joins a company, he has to adapt to the new role. This is a common scenario when one is exposed to a new working environment and culture despite the credentials and competencies a new employee brings into the company. A comprehensive and well-prepared induction program helps new staff quickly understand the responsibilities of their new role and the employer's expectation of them. Investing in such a program ensures that the learning curve is shorter, as not only are skills and knowledge of the company quickly obtained and understood, but interaction, communication and collaboration with others is likely to take place much quicker than if no program was outlined. Induction helps an employee to adapt to the organization easily in short period. This also helps to minimize the labor turnover.

The analysis carried out with the software firms across India tried to find the role of induction programs in which the respondents have revealed in terms of their responses. The study had set the objectives of induction program in terms of factors such as productivity, competitiveness, organizational goals, upgradation and no links at all. But whether such programs do matter or not. An Anova analysis was performed of Induction programs and its impact on productivity, competitiveness, organizational goals, upgradation and no links at all. It was found that Induction Programs greatly helped in making the employees highly competitive and productive. Such a competitive and productive employees are always an asset for the growth of an organisation.

Table 11 Anova Analysis of Induction Programs

Factors	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*.Sig*
Competitiveness	4	4.899	6.6	o.ooo
Productivity	4	10.69	11.69	o.ooo
Org. Goals	4	1.208	1.545	0.191
Upgradations	4	2.499	2.168	0.76

5.10.2 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal provides important and useful information for the assessment of employee's skill, knowledge, ability and overall job performance. It helps to a great extent in managing one's human capital for the betterment of the organization. Though theoretically, it plays an important role, but in reality the analysis showed a different picture. It can be observed from Table 12, that 44.53% of the respondents were of the view that the performance Appraisals are very much important and it has greatly enabled them to contribute to the competitiveness of the firm. However, 38.4 were of the opinion that it was not at all important. Furthermore 17.07% of the respondents were of the view that they don't have any link at all to the competitiveness.

Table 12 Performance Appraisal

Options	No. of Respondent	%age
Very Much Importa	167	44.53
Not at All	144	38.40
No Link at all	64	17.07
Total	375	100

5.10.3 Flexibility in Working Hours

Flexibility is about an employee and an employer making changes to when, where and how a person will work to meet individual and organisational goals. Flexibility enables both individual and business needs to be met through making changes to the time (when), location (where) and manner (how) in which an employee works. Flexibility should be mutually beneficial to both the employer and employee and result in superior outcomes. It greatly benefits in terms of reduced levels of stress, increased employee morale, reduction in absenteeism, increase in productivity, reduction in costs and etc. It can be seen from the table 13 that flexibility in working hours greatly results in enhancing the competitive abilities of the employees with an Sig. Value of .000.

Table 13 Anova Analysis of Flexibility in working Hours & Competitiveness

	Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*.Sig*
Between Groups	5.187	1	5.187	21.96	0.000
Within Groups	80.062	339	0.236		
Total	5.187	340			

The Software industry is basically a knowledge based service industry. It's totally different from the manufacturing industry. The attributes of the employees of both these industries also varies. But what are the qualities which distinguishes an employee of software industry from other industry. The analysis of the employees showed that most of the employees after joining the IT organizations found themselves as more confident than earlier. Further the payment package (76%) attributed greatly to the competitiveness of the firms.

Thus Various factors such as Salary, age, flexibility, Internal transfer of tasks, performance appraisal, package, potential for growth plays an important role in determining the competitiveness of the firms.

VI. Conclusion

The talent management in software and IT industry has become very crucial in determining the competitive edge of all the ITeS and IT firms. The various talent management, its retention programs and measures have a positive influence in determining the competitiveness of the employees. But the trend of the IT sector employees working in IT industry for a period of 11 years needs to be taken a serious note. The saturation point of the IT employees was found to be at 11 years. The traditional talent retention measures have to be re-structured in the fast growing IT industry. The firms have to be very proactive in their policies and strategies in managing its talents and resources in a most optimal manner. This can greatly enhance the employee productivity and contribute to the organizational goals which will not only help the firms but also the nation at large.

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