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COMPETITIVE CREATIVITY BETWEEN TALENT MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE QUALITY: EVIDENCE FROM JORDAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Talent management encompasses a wide range of human resources management practices aimed at attracting and developing talented employees. This study examines the impact of talent management on service quality in Jordanian information technology companies, focusing on the perspective of talented employees and the role of competitive creativity. Data was collected from 341 employees at thirty different Jordanian companies using stratified random sampling techniques. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS and AMOS SPSS analysis techniques to test the conceptual framework.

The study findings demonstrate a significant positive impact of talent management on improving service quality, mediated through the indirect influence of competitive creativity. Furthermore, the direct effects of talent management practices such as talent attraction and talent succession planning were found to have a significant positive effect on service quality. On the other hand, the study reveals that other talent management practices, such as talent development, have a negative direct effect on service quality. Given that this study is the first to investigate the mediating role of competitive creativity between talent management and service quality in Jordan, the limitations of the study were carefully considered.

Keywords: Talent development, talent attraction, talent succession planning, competitive creativity, service quality.

INTRODUCTION

Jordan has emerged as one of the rapidly growing countries in the Information Technology (IT) market in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (Jordan Investment Commission [JIC], 2018). The development of the Jordanian IT sector has not only enhanced Jordan's reputation in the MENA region, but also contributed to its economic growth by empowering the higher education sector, particularly in the field of IT. IT not only contributes to the economy, but also creates business opportunities, especially for the younger generation (JIC, 2018). The Jordanian government has created an enabling investment environment for the IT sector through legislation that promotes its effective role in achieving economic growth (Information and Communication Technology Association [ICTA], 2021). This is evident in the establishment of startups by talented individuals in the IT field. The IT sector in Jordan contributes approximately 12% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (JIC, 2018).

Talent Management (TM) is a set of integrated human resource management techniques aimed at empowering and motivating the best employees to be more successful and productive in achieving the company's objectives (Rizvi & Garg, 2017). TM strategies, such as succession planning, talent development, and attraction, are employed to meet the companies' goals and adhere to established work schedules (Collings & Isichei, 2018). TM practices must also provide a secure and fulfilling work environment for talented employees, inspiring

them to showcase their abilities, which directly impacts both their performance and the company's overall performance in achieving its objectives (Ogunbiyi et al., 2014). TM practices are crucial in attracting top talent to meet current and future needs and in retaining competent employees to help the company reach its goals.

However, TM in Jordan has faced challenges due to a lack of local talent (Al Ariss, 2014). TM is considered highly important for Jordan's economic development (Alzbaidi, 2020; Scullion & Collings, 2011). Furthermore, it has been found that 59% of employees from various job profiles who left their companies in 2017 had been employed for less than one year, indicating that the implementation of TM in Jordan is still evolving (German Agency for International Cooperation in Jordan and Amman Chamber of Industry, 2018). In today's rapidly changing business environment, companies must actively search for talent to overcome economic challenges. Consequently, talent shortage is becoming more prevalent in Jordan (Sheehan et al., 2018). For instance, Jordan had the highest unemployment rate of 22.8% in 2022 (Department of Statistics in Jordan, 2022).

Furthermore, while Islam emphasizes virtues such as moderation, fulfilling promises, accountability, and discipline, nepotism remains pervasive in Jordan, and its inadequate governance systems present challenges for TM (Eabrasu & Al Ariss, 2012). As a result, many talented employees are compelled to seek work abroad in order to have equal access to job opportunities that value quality and qualifications (Alzbaidi, 2020). The issue of brain drain ranked Jordan 90th out of 131 nations in 2015, indicating a poor capacity to retain talented employees (Alzbaidi, 2020). The Global Competitiveness Talent Index (GCTI) has highlighted Jordan's struggle with talent empowerment and the significant wage disparity among talented employees (Lanvin & Evans, 2018).

TM remains under-researched in Jordan. Previous studies have primarily focused on examining the impact of TM practices on service quality in various research contexts outside of Jordan (Budhwar et al., 2019; Košir et al., 2021; Jimoh et al., 2020; Chiloane & Barkhuizen, 2017; Nafie, 2015; Irtaimeh et al., 2016; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Muhaybis & Abdul Hussein, 2020; Al-Shammari & Ghalib, 2015). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is only one study that has explored the impact of TM practices on service quality in Jordan, specifically in the health sector (Irtaimeh et al., 2016). This

limited focus reflects a lack of attention to businesses of various types, particularly IT companies. Based on a comprehensive analysis of available research, the majority of studies examining the impact of TM practices on service quality have been conducted in the education, health, and banking sectors (Košir et al., 2021; Jimoh et al., 2020; Chiloane & Barkhuizen, 2017; Nafie, 2015; Irtaimeh et al., 2016; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Muhaybis & Abdul Hussein, 2020; Al-Shammari & Ghalib, 2015).

This underscores the importance of TM as a tool to promote effective, sustainable advantage in a competitive market environment (Kabwe & Okorie, 2019). The IT sector in Jordan has placed greater emphasis on talented employees compared to physical capital, given the information age and competitive economy (Al-Lozi et al., 2018). This study aims to evaluate the impact of TM practices (independent variables) on improving service quality (dependent variable) provided by IT companies in Jordan by examining the mediating role of competitive creativity (mediating variable) from the perspective of talented employees working in these companies. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for decision-makers in IT companies to enhance their services in the highly competitive IT sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

TM has emerged as one of the most critical human resource functions and challenges faced by organizations, governments, and countries in the twenty-first century (Sparrow et al., 2017). TM practices encompass a range of activities within companies, including identifying, attracting, and developing high-potential individuals who contribute to the achievement of organizational goals (Jyoti & Rani, 2014). The three core TM practices that go beyond traditional human assets are talent attraction, talent development, and succession planning (Ambrosius, 2016; Vaiman et al., 2018; Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Attracting the best talent is a crucial and effective role of TM in improving companies' performance.

TM has garnered significant attention since its inception in the late 1990s, as evidenced by the McKinsey study on the "war for talent" and the fierce competition for scarce talent (Chambers et

al., 1998; Cappelli & Keller, 2017; Collings et al., 2018). The study emphasizes the increasing competition to attract and retain talent in order to achieve organizational goals. It also predicts that TM will face significant challenges in effectively managing talent to enhance company performance in the next two decades. The overall focus of TM is on the individual level, aiming to develop talented employees to contribute to organizational success (Sparrow et al., 2017).

Reports on TM have been published by the World Economic Forum and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development since the 1980s (Khilji & Schuler, 2017). These reports highlight how leading governments, such as the US, Germany, and the United Kingdom, have sought global talent by implementing attractive TM techniques and investing in education and human resource development to enhance the capabilities of companies within their countries (Khilji & Schuler, 2017; Lanvin & Evans, 2017). The Jordanian government and companies should take note of these reports to strive for excellence in TM. Further empirical research on TM is urgently needed to advance the current frameworks in the literature (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

The Resource-Based Theory (RBT), established by Barney in 1991, considers talent as a valuable, unique, inimitable, and non-substitutable resource that companies seek to acquire to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). The term "valuable" refers to talent's ability to exploit market opportunities within a company. "Rare" refers to talent that is scarce and difficult to find among competitors, providing a unique advantage in achieving company goals. "Inimitable" describes exceptional and unrepeatable skills possessed by talent. Non-substitutable talent cannot be replaced by other resources. Barney expanded on this idea by stating that each company has a distinct set of tangible and intangible resources, capabilities, and competencies that enable the development of a long-lasting competitive advantage and the achievement of high-quality services or other objectives.

Interest in the concept of quality began during the Apollo program between 1969 and 1972 in the USA, which emphasized accuracy and quality in various processes (Doyle, 2017). This led to the spread of the concept of quality across companies worldwide and became a significant stage in administrative processes of all kinds. Philip Crosby was the first to establish a college of quality based on previous

studies (Singh, 2018). Service quality refers to the compliance of a product with required specifications and can be classified as poor, good, or excellent based on measurable factors such as height, width, and weight (Roy & Ghose, 2016). It involves meeting customer requirements, avoiding errors, and implementing performance standards. Quality is achieved by delivering defect-free and unique performance (Kiran & Diljit, 2017). The quality of services is defined by the practices and activities that result in a specific good (Maiyaki et al., 2011; Bansal & Taylor, 2015).

Creativity is the process of transforming ideas into tangible outcomes by replacing existing applications in a company to attract and satisfy customers (Hagenau & Tiwari, 2017). Competitive creativity improves service quality by leveraging creative abilities and available resources to reach a larger customer base. Customers are retained through the provision of exclusive, high-quality services that meet their expectations and market requirements (Stankevice & Matijosaitiene, 2015). Creativity involves perceiving the world differently, discovering hidden patterns, making connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and generating solutions (Linda, 2014). It entails individuals possessing valuable original ideas that can be applied within a company, adding value for the creator in conjunction with teamwork to achieve goals (Jones & Wright, 2018).

This study investigates the impact of talented employees on improving the services provided by IT companies in Jordan. The focus on talented employees is driven by the reliance of many IT jobs on talent. The study extends the concept of RBT by incorporating TM constructs, namely talent development, talent attraction, and talent succession planning. It also examines service quality from the perspective of talented employees, as well as the measurement of competitive creativity, providing insight into the crucial relationship between talent and creativity. Therefore, the study develops the hypotheses discussed hereafter.

Talent Development and Service Quality

Talent development plays a crucial role in improving the performance of talented employees and positively impacts company performance (El Dahshan et al., 2018). The literature on TM recognizes the significance of development activities and training programs for talented employees (Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018; Collings & Mellahi,

2009). Continuous development of talented employees is essential for companies to achieve service quality (Borisova et al., 2017). Training and development are crucial for both businesses and individuals (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Studies have shown that talented employees perform better when they perceive that their employer has their best interests in mind and provides training, professional development plans, and learning opportunities (Hirsh, 2009). Investments in training and development can benefit businesses and enhance the abilities of talented employees (Bapna et al., 2013).

Talent development goes beyond training programs and aligns with the long-term goals of companies in developing employees with high potential. This aligns with the principles of the resource-based theory, which considers talented employees as unique elements to enhance their capabilities and achieve service quality (Irtaimeh et al., 2016). According to the resource-based theory, companies achieve consistently high-quality services by investing significantly in the development of their talent, creating invaluable, unique, and non-substitutable human resources. Ongoing talent and competency development are crucial for companies to maintain service quality (Kundu & Vora, 2004). Identifying potential talent who possess the necessary skills for future requirements is vital for companies (Silzer & Church, 2010).

Several studies (Irtaimeh et al., 2016; Karuri, 2015; Rawashdeh, 2018; Shulga & Busser, 2019; Obeidat, Yassin & Masa'deh, 2018) examining talent development practices in companies have found a positive impact on company performance. Among the studies that have measured the impact of talent development on service quality (Košir et al., 2021; Jimoh et al., 2020; Nafie, 2015; Irtaimeh et al., 2016; Barkhuizen et al., 2014), the findings also support a positive relationship. Based on the influence of talent development on service quality highlighted in the literature, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H^1: Talent development has a direct positive effect on service quality.

Talent Attraction and Service Quality

Attracting talented employees involves utilizing various employer brand value techniques during the recruitment and selection process to appeal to talented individuals (Armstrong, 2006). It is crucial for

companies to employ effective recruitment strategies that reflect the company's values and culture in order to attract talent in a competitive market. Careful selection of talented employees leads to increased productivity, which is reflected in the quality of services provided by companies (Boštjančič & Slana, 2018).

To attract talented employees with high potential, effective recruitment strategies must consider their unique characteristics, which cannot be easily imitated. This aligns with the principles of the resource-based theory. The importance of attracting talented employees has a positive impact on achieving high-quality services, such as selecting individuals with unique personal characteristics necessary for the job and utilizing talent matrices to shape the desired employee profile (including factors such as experience, qualifications, the reputation of employers in the market, and competitive compensation) (Marachi & Wario, 2013; Tansley et al., 2013).

Furthermore, empirical studies have shown the positive impact of talent attraction practices in companies (Jimoh et al., 2020; Elia et al., 2017; Rawashdeh, 2018; Lesenyeho et al., 2018). Among the studies that have examined the impact of talent attraction on service quality (Košir et al., 2021; Jimoh et al., 2020; Nafie, 2015; Irtaimeh et al., 2016; Barkhuizen et al., 2014), the findings support a positive relationship. Based on the aforementioned influence of talent attraction on service quality, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H^2: Talent attraction has a direct positive effect on service quality.

Talent Succession Planning and Service Quality

Succession planning involves developing talented and high-potential employees to become future leaders (Alzbaidi, 2020). The implementation of a succession planning strategy leads to increased satisfaction among leaders, which helps maintain the performance of talented employees and improve services in companies (Golden, 2007). The importance of succession planning lies in retaining talented employees and ensuring leadership continuity through the development of exceptional individuals who can fulfill critical strategic responsibilities in the future (Rothwell, 2010). Companies should invest in creating effective succession plans to achieve high-quality services (Ahsan, 2018).

The term "succession plan" refers to a company's ability to identify talented individuals who have the potential to assume important roles in the near or distant future (Bryant & Allen, 2012). Based on the resource-based theory, the unique capabilities of talented employees make it essential for companies to continue developing their skills and providing career paths that enable them to assume any position within the company and have an impact on service quality. Ali and Mehreen (2019) found that succession planning is an effective practice for improving employee performance. Studies by Irtaimeh et al. (2016) and Košir et al. (2021) also found a positive effect of succession planning on raising the standard of service quality provided by companies. Based on the aforementioned influence of talent succession planning on service quality, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H[3]: Talent succession planning has a direct positive effect on service quality.

The Mediating Effect of Competitive Creativity in the Relationship between Talent Management and Service Quality

It should be noted that competitive creativity standards are of great importance in Jordan's IT sector (Suifan & Marwa, 2017). This study recommends that companies effectively implement standards such as building layers of advantage, changing the term of engagement, searching for "Loose Bricks," and competing through collaboration, which heavily relies on providing solutions to address company weaknesses (Saleh, 2015). Competitive creativity standards are crucial for achieving the highest levels of competition in the market. This is achieved by relying on creative ideas within companies that support this trend, leading to success, increased revenue, profitability, and competitiveness (Shqipe et al., 2013).

The implementation of creative ideas in the IT sector has a significant impact on attracting customers and achieving company satisfaction. For example, the assembly process of vehicles with an electronic driver assistance service demonstrates the achievement of competitive creativity in the IT sector (Arnold et al., 2010). Competitive creativity is a necessity in IT companies, and talent management contributes to raising the level of competitive creativity in these companies through the effective application of creative strategies, ultimately improving service quality.

Therefore, the application of the resource-based theory (RBT) is crucial in considering talented employees with high qualifications and capabilities as an effective strategic resource for companies to enhance sustainability and creativity. Creative talents possess valuable, rare, unique, and irreplaceable skills, and when a company loses its talented employees, it loses its competitive advantage. This study introduces the concept of competitive creativity for the first time, examining its relationship between TM and service quality in IT companies in Jordan from the perspective of talented employees. Given the aforementioned influence of TM and service quality through competitive creativity, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H4: Competitive creativity has a mediated effect on the relationship between talent development and service quality.

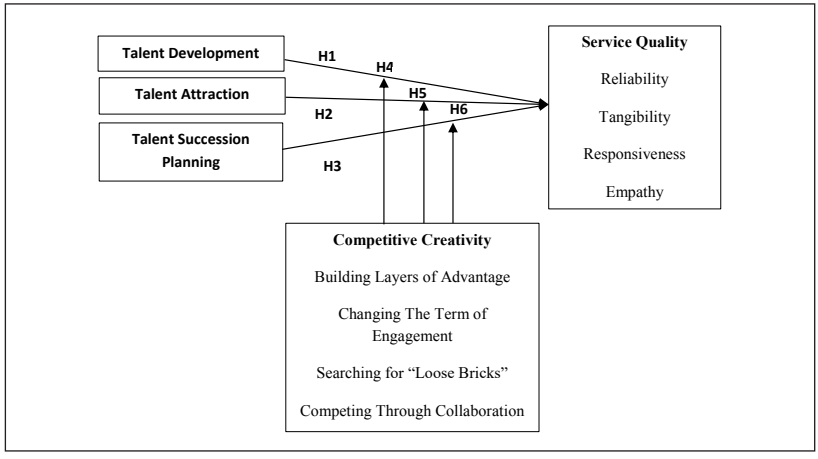
H5: Competitive creativity has a mediated effect on the relationship between talent attraction and service quality.

H6: Competitive creativity has a mediated effect on the relationship between talent succession planning and service quality.

In the end, all hypotheses are interconnected, and these form the basis of the model that this study suggests. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the proposed model.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Hypotheses



Sample and Data Collection Procedure

The study utilized a quantitative methodology and targeted employees working in software development in IT companies in Jordan. The respondents included data analysts, database designers, software developers, and testers. A total of 341 questionnaires were distributed, and 230 valid responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 67.4%, which is considered acceptable for statistical analysis in business research (Cycyota & Harrison, 2006; Mellahi & Harris, 2016).

An English-language questionnaire was developed based on the conceptual framework and was evaluated and verified by professionals. The semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents through field visits and online platforms such as email and LinkedIn. Stratified random sampling was employed to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: demographic information and questions related to the study variables. The demographic information section included gender, age, educational background, job title, and years of experience.

Out of the 230 participants, 77 (66.4%) were male, and 39 (33.6%) were female. The higher response rate among males can be attributed to the nature of the study, which focused on the impact of talent management on service quality through competitive creativity in the IT sector, where males are typically more represented. The age categories ranged from less than 25 years to 45 years, with the majority of respondents (166, 72.2%) falling within the age bracket of less than 25 years to 35 years old.

In terms of educational background, 212 (92.2%) respondents held bachelor's degrees, 14 (6.1%) had postgraduate degrees, and only 4 (1.7%) had diplomas. Regarding job titles, 174 (75.7%) were programmers, 43 (18.7%) were testers, 8 (3.5%) were data analysts, and 5 (2.2%) were database designers. In the category of years of experience, 152 (66.1%) had less than 5 years of experience, 76 (33%) had between 5 to 15 years of experience, and only two employees (0.9%) had over 15 years of experience.

Table 1

The Respondents Data (N=230)

		N	Percent
Gender	Male	167	72.6
	Female	63	27.4
Age	Less than 25 years old	51	22.2
	25 to less than 35 years old	166	72.2
	35 to less than 45 years old	13	5.7
Job Title	Data Analyst	8	3.5
	Database Designer	5	2.2
	Programmer	174	75.7
	Tester	43	18.7
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	152	66.1
	5 to less than 15 years	76	33.0
	15 to less than 25 years	2	0.9
Educational Background	Diploma	4	1.7
	Bachelor	212	92.2
	Postgraduate	14	6.1
	Total	230	100.0

RESULTS

Regression and path analysis were conducted in this study using SPSS and AMOS SPSS (version 26) as statistical analytic tools to validate the proposed model and hypotheses. Kurtosis and skewness tests were performed, and the values fell within acceptable bounds (Hair et al., 2010; Byrne, 2016) with a skewness-kurtosis value of 1.96. The distribution of the data was found to be normal according to the Shapiro-Wilks and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. There was no evidence of multicollinearity as the variance inflation factor was below 5, indicating the absence of coefficient collinearity and a normal distribution of the data.

The sample's reliability was assessed through the use of a reliability test, which examined the test's consistency. The internal consistency of all variables was tested using Cronbach's alpha, and all variables had alpha values greater than 0.70, the agreed minimum level for Cronbach's alpha (Hair et al., 2010). No items were eliminated based on reliability, and Table 2 provides an overview of the results.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Test

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Talent Development	6	0.839
Talent Attraction	6	0.775
Talent Succession Planning	6	0.757
Service Quality	13	0.907
Competitive Creativity	9	0.872

The five variables used in this study underwent continuous reliability testing. The statistical results showed that the Cronbach's alpha values for all variables were at least 0.757, indicating good reliability for the construct as a whole. The items used in the study were obtained from prior literature, and their discrimination and convergent validity were established.

Previous studies on TM is impact on service quality with competitive creativity antecedents were conducted in various countries and considered different samples and research environments. Therefore, the validity of these measurements needs to be reassessed to ensure that they align with the intended outcomes and goals of the study.

Table 3

Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability Result

IV	<---	LV	SL	SSL	SSSL	NI	CV-AVE	CR
TA6	<---	TalA	0.596	0.355216	2.231782	6	0.371963666	0.77
TA5	<---	TalA	0.633	0.400689				
TA4	<---	TalA	0.502	0.252004				
TA3	<---	TalA	0.725	0.525625				
TA2	<---	TalA	0.558	0.311364				
TA1	<---	TalA	0.622	0.386884				
TSP6	<---	TalS	0.74	0.5476	2.083688	6	0.347281333	0.75
TSP5	<---	TalS	0.591	0.349281				
TSP4	<---	TalS	0.597	0.356409				
TSP3	<---	TalS	0.669	0.447561				
TSP2	<---	TalS	0.434	0.188356				
TSP1	<---	TalS	0.441	0.194481				

(continued)

IV	<---	LV	SL	SSL	SSSL	NI	CV-AVE	CR
TD6	<---	TalD	0.698	0.487204	2.851851	6	0.4753085	0.84
TD5	<---	TalD	0.787	0.619369				
TD4	<---	TalD	0.684	0.467856				
TD3	<---	TalD	0.77	0.5929				
TD2	<---	TalD	0.591	0.349281				
TD1	<---	TalD	0.579	0.335241				
CC9	<---	CCC	0.67	0.4489	3.930382	9	0.436709111	0.87
CC8	<---	CCC	0.549	0.301401				
CC7	<---	CCC	0.627	0.393129				
CC6	<---	CCC	0.75	0.5625				
CC5	<---	CCC	0.691	0.477481				
CC4	<---	CCC	0.675	0.455625				
CC3	<---	CCC	0.611	0.373321				
CC2	<---	CCC	0.68	0.4624				
CC1	<---	CCC	0.675	0.455652				
SQ13	<---	SEQ	0.635	0.403225	5.821259	13	0.447789153	0.86
SQ12	<---	SEQ	0.614	0.376996				
SQ11	<---	SEQ	0.492	0.242064				
SQ10	<---	SEQ	0.759	0.576081				
SQ9	<---	SEQ	0.607	0.368449				
SQ8	<---	SEQ	0.751	0.564001				
SQ7	<---	SEQ	0.659	0.434281				
SQ6	<---	SEQ	0.679	0.461041				
SQ5	<---	SEQ	0.818	0.669125				
SQ4	<---	SEQ	0.769	0.591361				
SQ3	<---	SEQ	0.559	0.312481				
SQ2	<---	SEQ	0.655	0.429025				
SQ1	<---	SEQ	0.627	0.393129				

Note: TalA: Talent Attraction Items= 6, TalS: Talent Succession Planning Items= 6, TalD: Talent Development Items= 6, CCC: Competitive Creativity Items= 9, SEQ: Service Quality Items= 13, IV: Indicator Variable, LV: Latent Variable, SS: Standardized loadings, SSS: Sequre of Standardized loadings, SSSL: Sum of the Sequred of Standardized loadings, NL: Number of Indicator, CV-AVE: Convergent Validity- Average Variance Extracted, CR: Composite Reliability

Table 3 presents the reliability of the five constructs based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and composite reliability. The combined reliability of the five measures ranged from 0.75 to 0.87, exceeding the threshold of 0.60 considered acceptable (Fornel & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values ranged between 37% and 47%, which is below the recommended level of 0.5. However, since the composite reliability is above 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still considered

adequate (Fornel & Larcker, 1981; Lam, 2012). Although more than 43% of the variance is attributed to error, the researcher can infer that the convergent validity of the construct is sufficient based solely on composite reliability. The internal reliability of the measurement items is adequate, as the composite reliability of the four constructs is significantly higher than the recommended level (Fornel & Larcker, 1981; Lam, 2012).

Table 4

Discriminant Validity Result Using Monotrait Correlation Ratio

TalA	TalS	TalD	CCC	SEQ
0.366733333	0.332066667	0.467466667	0.433444444	0.442439394

Note: TalA: Talent Attraction Items= 6, TalS: Talent Succession Planning Items= 6, TalD: Talent Development Items= 6, CCC: Competitive Creativity Items= 9, SEQ: Service Quality Items= 13,

Table 5

Discriminant Validity Result Using Heterotrait Correlation Ratio

LV	TalA	TalS	TalD	CCC	SEQ
TalA		0.287583333	0.31	0.310888889	0.252358974
TalS				0.318685185	0.216012821
TalD		0		0.278407407	0.197589744
CCC					0.29182906
SEQ					

Note: LV: Latent Variable, TalA: Talent Attraction Items= 6, TalS: Talent Succession Planning Items= 6, TalD: Talent Development Items= 6, CCC: Competitive Creativity Items= 9, SEQ: Service Quality Items= 13

Table 6

Discriminant Validity Result Using Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

LV	TalA	TalS	TalD	CCC	CCC
TalA		0.694565	0.888329	0.779764	0.626494
TalS				0.707978	0.474982
TalD		0		0.73384	0.515495
CCC					0.6663998

Note: LV: Latent Variable, TalA: Talent Attraction Items= 6, TalS: Talent Succession Planning Items= 6, TalD: Talent Development Items= 6, CCC: Competitive Creativity Items= 9, SEQ: Service Quality Items= 13

In Tables 4, 5, and 6, the results of the discriminant validity analysis using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HMR) are presented. HMR is a method for assessing discriminant validity and is considered a primary construction method for model evaluation (Henseler et al., 2015). HMR has been found to have higher sensitivity and specificity rates (97%-99%) compared to the Fornell-Lacker criterion (20.82%) and cross-loadings criterion (0.00%) based on a simulation study (Henseler et al., 2015). A value of HMR close to or greater than 1 indicates a lack of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). However, different thresholds have been suggested, with Kline (2015) proposing a limit of 0.85 and Gold et al. (2001) suggesting a value of 0.90 for HMR. In this study, a threshold of 0.90, the lowest among the mentioned limits, was applied. All constructs have HMR values of less than 0.89, *indicating that* discriminant validity has been adequately established.

The model fit of the covariance matrix is assessed to determine the extent to which the model replicates the observed covariance between variables. The goodness of fit metrics in AMOS evaluate how closely the predicted values match the observed values, with an emphasis on prediction. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Results Fit Indexes

C	CS-CMIN/DF	PNFI	PCFI	SRMR	RMSEA	PCLOSE	Result
IV	2.110	0.636	0.749	0.062	0.070	0.000	Acceptable

Note: C: Construct, IV: Indicator Value, CS-CMIN/DF: Chi-Square, PNFI: Parsimonious Normed Fit Index, PCFI: Parsimonious Comparative Fit Index, SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, RMSEOA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Multiple regression analysis is conducted to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in the proposed study model. The analysis, as shown in Table 8, tests three hypotheses (H1, H2, H3). The predictive model explains 6.4% of the variance in service quality through talent development. Additionally, the model accounts for -2.5% of the variance in service quality through talent retention. The total variance (41.7%) in service quality is explained by talent attraction, and the total variance (17.3%) is explained by talent

succession planning. Path analysis is performed to assess the indirect effects between the independent and dependent variables through the mediating variable in the proposed study model.

Table 8

Regression Results- Whole Model for H1, H2, H3

Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P Lable	Result
SQ <--- TD	0.054	0.067	0.799	0.424	Not supported- not significantly
SQ <--- TA	0.367	0.077	4.737	***	Supported- significantly
SQ <--- TSP	0.159	0.067	2.371	0.018	Supported- significantly

Note: TD: Talent Development, Items: 6, TA: Talent Attraction, Items: 6, Talent Succession Planning, Items: 6, SQ: Service Quality Items: 13, S.R: Standard Error; C.R: Critical Ratio, P-Value significant at 0.05 level

The structural model analysis using AMOS-SEM includes H4, which focuses on competitive creativity. The results show that talent development has a significant effect (P=0.000) on competitive creativity (Beta=0.482, P<0.05), in line with the indirect effect, which has a significant effect (P=0.000) on service quality (Beta=0.520, P<0.05). However, the direct effect of talent development on service quality is not significant (P=0.065) (Beta=0.095, P<0.05). The indirect effect of talent development via the mediating variable competitive creativity on service quality is found to be significant (Talent Development -> Competitive Creativity -> Service Quality, P<0.05).

The structural model analysis using AMOS-SEM also includes H5, which focuses on competitive creativity. The results show that talent attraction has a significant effect (P=0.000) on competitive creativity (Beta=0.595, P<0.05), in line with the indirect effect, which has a significant effect (P=0.000) on service quality (Beta=0.428, P<0.05). The direct effect of talent attraction on service quality is also significant (P=0.000) (Beta=0.222, P<0.05). The indirect effect of talent attraction via the mediating variable competitive creativity on service quality is found to be significant (Talent Attraction -> Competitive Creativity -> Service Quality, P<0.05).

Similarly, the structural model analysis using AMOS-SEM includes H6, which focuses on competitive creativity. The results show that talent succession planning has a significant effect (P=0.000) on competitive creativity (Beta=0.635, P<0.05), in line with the indirect

effect, which has a significant effect (P=0.000) on service quality (Beta=0.533, P<0.05). However, the direct effect of talent succession planning on service quality is not significant (P=0.284) (Beta=0.067, P<0.05). The indirect effect of talent succession planning via the mediating variable competitive creativity on service quality is found to be significant (Talent Succession Planning -> Competitive Creativity -> Service Quality, P<0.05).

DISCUSSION

Testing the first hypothesis revealed that talent development does not have a significant positive effect on service quality. This finding suggests that there is little correlation between talent development and service quality. These results are consistent with Barkhuizen et al.'s (2014) study in South Africa, which found a non-significant negative relationship between talent development and service quality. However, these findings differ from prior empirical studies that have shown a significant positive relationship between talent development and service quality (Irtaimeh et al., 2016; Al-Shammari & Ghalib, 2015).

Therefore, hypothesis (H1), which proposed a direct positive effect between talent development and service quality, is not supported. It is worth noting that IT companies in Jordan employ moderate-degree talent development practices, such as assisting talented employees in creating development plans aligned with their job descriptions, emphasizing continuous learning to preserve and develop talents, implementing training programs, and seeking feedback on the behavior of talented employees. Despite these practices, they had a limited impact on improving service quality. This finding contradicts the resource-based theory, which encourages IT companies to invest in talent development as a means to enhance service quality. It suggests that companies may need to reassess and strengthen their approaches to talent development.

Testing the third hypothesis demonstrated that talent attraction has a significant positive effect on service quality. This finding aligns with prior empirical studies that have shown a significant positive relationship between talent attraction and service quality (Nafie, 2015; Irtaimeh et al., 2016). However, it is not consistent with the findings of Košir et al. (2021), who found no significant consequences

of talent attraction for service quality in Egypt. The results indicate that IT companies in Jordan have successfully implemented talent attraction policies that contribute to their ability to provide good service quality. Therefore, hypothesis (H2), which proposed a direct positive relationship between talent attraction and service quality, is supported.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that IT companies should adopt best practices for attracting talented employees by offering attractive job offers that meet their needs. Hiring talented individuals who possess valuable skills can play a significant role in achieving high-quality service in IT companies. Moreover, creating a welcoming and safe work environment is crucial for attracting talent in this field. Additionally, strategically placing talented employees in suitable positions, sourcing talented individuals externally to fulfill company objectives, providing significant incentives, and offering flexible work schedules are effective strategies for attracting talent. The resource-based theory, which emphasizes the advantage of attracting exceptional and irreplaceable employees, supports this finding and highlights its contribution to achieving high service quality.

Testing the third hypothesis revealed that talent succession planning has a positive effect on service quality, which contradicts the findings of Košir et al. (2021). This result aligns with the study by Irtaimeh et al. (2016), which found a positive effect of talent succession planning on service quality in Jordan. It appears that IT companies in Jordan effectively implement talent succession planning practices, leading to the recruitment of talented employees capable of providing high-quality services. Based on this finding, hypothesis (H3), which proposed a direct positive relationship between talent succession planning and service quality, is supported.

Testing the fourth hypothesis demonstrated that competitive creativity mediates the relationship between talent development and service quality. These results are presented for the first time in this research, as competitive creativity was used for the first time as a mediating variable between talent development and service quality. The path analysis supported these findings. Thus, talent development was found to have a negative effect on service quality. However, talent development had a positive effect on competitive creativity as a mediating variable. Furthermore, competitive creativity was found to

have a positive effect on service quality. Overall, the results indicate that competitive creativity enhances the impact of talent development on service quality.

Testing the fifth hypothesis revealed that competitive creativity mediates the relationship between talent attraction and service quality. Similar to the previous hypothesis, this research presented these results for the first time by introducing competitive creativity as a mediating variable between talent attraction and service quality. The path analysis provided support for these findings. Therefore, talent attraction was found to have a positive effect on service quality. Additionally, talent attraction had a positive effect on competitive creativity as a mediating variable. Moreover, competitive creativity was found to have a positive effect on service quality. Consequently, the results indicate that competitive creativity strengthens the impact of talent attraction on service quality.

Testing the sixth hypothesis showed that competitive creativity mediates the relationship between talent succession planning and service quality. In the study, these results were presented for the first time due to the use of competitive creativity for the first time between talent attraction and service quality. Also, these results were supported by the path test. Thus, talent succession planning was found to have a negative effect on service quality. Furthermore, talent succession planning was found to have a positive effect on competitive creativity as a mediating variable. Additionally, competitive creativity has been found to have a positive effect on service quality. Finally, the results show that competitive creativity increases the effect of talent succession planning on service quality.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of talent management (TM) practices on service quality through competitive creativity in IT companies in Jordan, specifically from the perspective of talented employees. There is a lack of research on the relationship between TM and service quality in Jordan and the surrounding region. Moreover, this is the first study to examine the mediating role of competitive creativity between TM practices and service quality in IT companies in Jordan, focusing on talented employees.

The study's conceptual framework was empirically tested to examine the influence of TM practices on service quality through competitive creativity in IT companies. The findings indicate that all TM practices contribute to improving service quality through the enhancement of competitive creativity. The study extends and validates the effectiveness of talent attraction and succession planning in influencing service quality. The framework provided a suitable approach to identify, forecast, and understand the impact of talent attraction and succession planning on service quality in IT companies.

By considering talent attraction and succession planning, IT companies can better understand how talented employees can contribute to improving service quality and enhancing their competitiveness in a dynamic business environment. The study contributes to the existing knowledge by highlighting the significance of TM practices and their influence on service quality in IT companies.

RBT has played a crucial role in shaping TM practices. According to this theory, talents are considered valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources that need to be developed, retained, and attracted in order to create a sustainable advantage for IT companies. The RBT emphasizes the significance of recognizing the unique talents of individuals and ensuring their well-being and significant contributions through effective talent management practices. By doing so, companies can motivate and inspire talented employees to fulfill their responsibilities and contribute to the overall success of the organization.

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the field of TM in Jordanian IT companies, specifically in relation to service quality and competitive creativity from the perspective of talented employees working in software development. The findings highlight the significant indirect effect of TM practices on service quality through the mediation of competitive creativity. By filling these gaps in the literature, this study advances the understanding of TM is impact on service quality through competitive creativity.

The study emphasizes the importance of IT companies recognizing and valuing their talented employees by providing the necessary support to unleash their potential. This recognition and support have a direct impact on service quality and the improvement of competitive creativity. The findings of this study can be utilized to formulate

effective TM practices, service quality standards, and competitive creativity standards. IT companies that respond to these practices in a meaningful way are more likely to foster loyalty among their talented employees and retain them within the organization.

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