

**CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS OF TALENT MANAGEMENT
ADOPTION IN A MULTINATIONAL COMPANY IN
THAILAND: A CASE STUDY**



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entitled
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THAILAND: A CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

According to the sustainability in the organization, it does not only focus on how much profits the company can generate, but also on how to maintain its human resource capital as one vital dimension to drive the company goal achievement and mission. Therefore, the talent management is one strategy to help the company to maintain the high potentials and to avoid brain drains outside the company.

This research paper aims to explore on which area of challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in a multinational company as a case study are on the largest and most well - known hypermarket format retail business company in Thailand through direct experiences of talents in the selected multinational company. The result could be divided into the challenges and barriers on structure, management, and behaviors. Firstly, the structural challenges and barriers included unclear management trainee program, unequal treated on management trainee program for the fast-track graduate, lack of alignment on management trainee program with parent company, and too quick rotation. Secondly, the managerial challenges and barriers included lack of understanding about the importance of management trainee program, inadequate support from mentors, and inadequate follow-up by HR. Lastly, the behavioral challenges and barriers included Thai culture especially on seniority and high expectation from talents. In conclusion, the recommendations or action plan with seven steps could help the company to mitigate those challenges and barriers of talent management adoption and also leverage the quality of talent management adoption to be more effectively.

KEY WORDS: Talent Management/ Multinational Company/ Challenges and Barriers

49 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research paper aims to explore on the challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in a multinational company as a case study on the largest and most well - known hypermarket format retail business company in Thailand. The company has its own talent management department to monitor and nurture the high potentials particularly. This giant retail business company is categorized as the multinational organization section with its headquarter located in the United Kingdom.

Referring to several assumptions on talent management adopted by the multinational company in Thailand, a case study in this paper can be used as one sample to explore for the answers. For example, what challenges and barriers in talent management adoption from talents' perspective are, how the company approaches talent management as one of the multinational company in Thailand, and whether the company is successful in alignment such talent management adoption in Thailand comparing to its British parent company.

Even though the talent management has arisen for more than a decade, it still does not seems as much successful in Thailand due to high investment of human capitals including the recruitment and development processes as much as the hierarchy and seniority Thai culture could be a drawback. Therefore, it is interesting to study on this issue and to explore on which areas make the most challenges and barriers for the company.

According to the sustainability in the organization, it does not only focus on how much profits the company can generate, but also on how to maintain its human resource capital. Human resource capital is one vital dimension to drive the company goal achievement and mission because they are the persons who work in the real situation. However, the company should concern, especially on the high talented employees who will help to drive for the company achievement.

On the other hand, as mentioned above, the company probably needs to invest the huge amount of money on the human capital investment not only for the HR processes, such as sourcing and recruitment to seek for the right person who match with the company and be able to achieve the company goal, but also for the learning and development processes of high talented employees including their succession plan.

There are various strategies to develop the knowledge and skills of people in the company, but one interesting strategy, which is well-known and widely implemented in company worldwide, is the talent management. Talent management is used to nurture the high potentials or talented in the company particularly. Thus, to avoid brain drain outside of the organization, the talent management is one alternative that the organization may consider to implement across its organization. This is also to initiate and motivate the talented employees who have the dominant potential to drive higher performance and help an organization to achieve future requirements.

Furthermore, this talent management strategy implementation in the organization would probably be doubted whether it is truly efficient in maintaining talented people through the talent management adoption. One difficulty apart from sourcing and selecting high potential employees to the organization is how to keep those talents to stay working with the company as long as possible. The reason is because they are counted as the significant employees who will help to drive the organization to meet its requirements in the future.

Besides, these high potential employees are often approached by the headhunters to work with other companies such as the competitors. With low retention rate of high potential employees, it is possible to lose the market share and profits. For example, one of the famous billionaires such as Bill Gates also considers in the talent-focused and also said that “Take our twenty best people away from us and I can tell you that Microsoft would be an unimportant company” (Berger, 2004). Thus, the company should convey the company visions again and again to increase the engagement among high talented group and make them feel that the company belongs to them as well.

There are many interesting areas about the talent management to explore, but the most interesting point in this paper will be particularly challenges and barriers for a multinational company in Thailand. The perspectives of talents can be one of

good evidences to explore what challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in such company are.

Therefore, the scope of this paper will emphasize on challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in a multinational company in Thailand through direct experiences of talents in the selected multinational company. To illustrate clearer picture in this paper, many real experiences that the talents confronted from the talent management program will be illustrated in the chapter of findings.

The scope of research questions is to discover the real challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in a multinational company in Thailand from talent's side and aspects whether the company adopt the talent management in practical.

The research question scope will be covered as below:

- How the company approach the talent management.
- Challenges and barriers of talent management adoption
- Understanding on talent management by talents and other employees



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to rapid global business movements, the core competencies and development systems should be considered to initiate superior benefits for organization. To sustain the competitive advantage of company in long-term perspective, the involvement of talents and competencies should probably be approached by converting from solving problem-oriented approach to goal-oriented approach (Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, Amori, 2017).

For example, regarding replacement for the retirement or vacant positions, the organization sometimes decides to place the outsourcing to do the replacement instead of practicing the internal promotion or selecting the internal people who may found fit for such replacement, as those internal employees may not totally be qualified for that job or position. Then, higher cost, time-wasting, and risk for the organizational culture may occur from above decision-making by the organization because the company just want to solve the problem without long-term vision (Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, Amori, 2017).

According to Cascio and Boudreau (2016), Meyers and van Woerkon (2014), and Vaiman et al (2012) (as cited in Khoreva, Vaiman, Zalk, 2017), it was agreed by scholars and practitioners that the talent management (TM) is one of the priorities for organizations around the world as it is able to stand for sustainability in highly competitive advantage and market environment uncertainty in the twenty-first century.

However, the serious difficulties on how to prevent the lower of high potential employee's commitment and satisfaction are proceeding by organization (Beamond et al., 2016 as cited in Khoreva, Vaiman, Zalk, 2017).

2.1 A Definition of Talent Management

A definition of “talent” in the literature reviews can be described in various senses depending upon the authors. Talent is probably used to call a group of excellent competencies, key employees in an organization, high abilities, or those individuals who are high potentials and have high performances or are truly value to an organization (Tansley, 2011).

According to Chambers et al. (2001), the effective leaders and managers could help their organization to achieve its goals by these talents because they know how to recruit the great talents and how to develop them. Furthermore, talent can also be called as Superkeepers or the employees who exceedingly achieve company expectations, achieving their higher succession, and also influence other people to success in their achievements (Berger, 2004).

The results of study in the 1990s by LBA Consulting Group discovered that there are six human resources perspectives led to an excellent organization such as culture focusing on performance, low turnover especially for potential employee group, high levels of employee’s satisfaction, a key qualified group replacements, effective investment in employee compensation and development, and the use of success factors in employee recruitment and performance evaluation processes (Berger, 2004).

Besides, the talent management (TM) is one of the strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) related to the processes and activities that involves with the HRM systems such as identifying on key positions to contribute to the organization properly in competitive advantage sustainability, talent pooling of premium capability and performance development, and ensuring that HR structure facilitates to those key positions with the long-term commitment in organizations (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). High potential candidates or premium employees, who are future senior management and expatriate roles, are expected to drive the growth of company and the competitive performance (King, 2015).

2.2 Talent Management Practices

Schweyer (2004) (as cited in Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, Amori, 2017) mentioned that talent management is covered all human resource activity processes starting from sourcing, recruiting, deployment, absorption, retention, and development of talent employees (Figure 2.1).

A cycle of talent management is consisted of recruitment, retention, and development. For planning objectives of talent management, the decisions related to the HR goals and the HR practices are made by the major decision makers in an organization such as top management, supervisory board, and HR management.

Since talent management is one of the strategic HRM, it aims not only to drive employee's performances and lead to leadership accomplishment, but also aims to ensure that TM roles are clear and be able to measure for the outcomes. The clarity of roles must be visible to achieve the expected outcomes (Collings, 2014, Nishii and Wright, 2007 as cited in King, 2015).



Figure 2.1 Human resources activity processes of talent management

Source: Own illustration, based on Schweyer (2004)

2.3 Five Perspectives on Talent Management Approach

Apart from traditional talent management approach which is a series of several steps e.g. talent identification, talent recruitment, talent deployment, and talent development, the perspectives to approach the talent management mentioned by Powell and Lubitsh (2007) divided into five perspectives: process, culture, competitiveness, development, and HR planning. Those perspectives can lead to individual talent's dissatisfaction and contradiction.

2.3.1 The process perspective

All required processes to optimize employees within the organization should be included in the talent management. This is to empower individual potentials to be

successful in their career because the talented employees will grow and progress if they achieve the performance and competency requirements in the process of talent management.

2.3.2 The cultural perspective

Mindset is more important for the talent management than the activities. This perspective focused on the individual talent's belief that they will be successful if they are talented enough. Moreover, their achievement means the company achievement as well. Therefore, the individual talents may create their own opportunities with other workplace if there is any absence of processes especially in their promotion which could lead them to leave the company in the end.

2.3.3 The competitive perspective

In the talent management approach, the organization should specify potential employees and give them what they want to avoid hunting or recruiting by competitors in the industry. This also covers the effective retention strategy in the organization. For example, this perspective should be considered especially for the organization where it is plenty with specialists or technical professionals such as banking and financial area.

2.3.4 The developmental perspective

This perspective focuses on the hastening career path of high potential employees by developing those talents. For example, targeting talents at the entry level when the organization conducted the recruitment, providing them the training and development, and then promoting from inside to maximize the career path for those high potentials can help to keep the talents to work with the organization.

2.3.5 The HR planning perspective

This perspective is related to human resource planning. It means the talent management should be involved in the HR processes such as selecting and recruiting the right person to the right jobs at the right time and performing the right thing for the organization.

2.4 Four Steps Approach to Talent Management

Referring to the research from Institute for Employment Studies or IES (Campbell and Hirsh, 2013), the four steps model to develop the talent management approach is shown as followings:

- Definition
- Focus
- Process
- Action

The Four-Step Approach to Talent Management



Figure 2.2 Four-step approach to talent management

2.4.1 Definition: What is talent management?

The definition of talent management is the first key step in developing talent management that the company should consider. The clear definition of talent management on what it is and what achievement the company wants to reach are crucial especially when the company communicated to the employees across the organization to show them how important the talent management is.

Nevertheless, the definition of talent groups could probably be divided into the inclusive definition and the exclusive definition. For the inclusive definition, it means that every employee in the company has talent and then these employees are developed by the personal development of the company. This implementation shows the real employee

engagement through learning and development activities that the company provided to them with clear evaluation and personal development reviews.

On the other hand, the exclusive definition of certain group of employees who are selected as high potentials for the jobs at the very top of the company or senior management roles. Moreover, these high potentials sometimes called the high flyers because they are considered by the company that they want those high flyers to go far with the company. Such high potentials or high flyers will be offered the clear career development which it probably opens to learn in different career experiences and to fill the key roles.

However, the company must identify the talent management definition which is the most suitable for its organization to define the business drivers, to reduce the business risk, to sustain and design the appropriate processes and structures according to capability, and to make clear when the company conduct the measurement in the end.

2.4.2 Focus: Where is talent management needed?

The second key step that the company should consider is to focus on where the talent management need. For instance, which critical roles should be focused by the company or what meaning of talents the company should emphasize on. Then the company can provide the proper leadership development following such focuses.

For example, in the fast-track graduate program, the leadership development should be focused since the recruitment stage. This could be treated like the intensive period of early career development because of the selective recruitment.

In addition, the understanding of the business risk can also help the company to approach the talent management effectively as the company would be able to balance its business investment such as time, budget, and resources. The company can prevent the business risk; for instance, the company can fulfill the critical tasks by focusing on correct people.

For example, one of the business risks for the fast-track graduate program is inadequate support from management level. The support from management level would help to encourage individual talents to step out of their comfort zone. To mitigate the risk, the company should ensure that the talent management program is designed

with sufficient high quality managers to support those talents in the fast-track graduate program.

2.4.3 Process: How is talent management done in practice?

Step three is related to the processes or how the talent management is done in practice. According to the obvious definition of talent management in the organization and also what kind of talent group and roles that the company should focus on, the company should then consider the processes in developing its high flyers with transparency. This is to encourage those high flyers or high potential employees to be ready and to understand what roles and responsibilities it will lead them to achieve the company goals.

2.4.4 Action: What are the practical outcomes?

The last key step to approach the talent management is about action. This action includes the talent development, deployment, and retention for the best people in an organization. Therefore, the measurement should be considered in the areas of promotion and progression, employee engagement, and retention rates. For the promotion and progression, the company should review on the succession plan.

For example, how many successors who come from the fast-track graduate program can complete in their plan of successors. For the talent employee's engagement, the company should concern whether the talents feel valued, satisfied with their development plan, and have a willingness to stay with the company.

This close monitor can help the company to effectively retain the best people in organization. Finally, the low retention rate will belong to the company once the high potentials have high engagement. It is not only to leverage high potential development, but also to maintain them and avoid moving outside the company of the smart brains.

2.5 Challenges and Barriers of Talent Management

According to Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, and Amori (2017), the challenges and barriers when talent management was applied in organization can be categorized into two elements: hard organizational elements and soft organizational elements.

2.5.1 The hard organizational elements

The hard organization elements are consisted of all tangible and information sources development across organization. These also include the structural challenges and barriers and the environmental challenges and barriers. For instance, the environmental challenges caused by external forces outside an organizational performance lead to enhancement of the performances following those forces although it is out of control by management level.

2.5.2 The soft organizational elements

On the other hand, the soft organizational elements also include the behavioral challenges and barriers and the managerial challenges and barriers. These challenges and barriers on behaviors and management lead to the relationship in organization and also show the attitude when the organization implemented the talent management.

For example, the behavioral challenges and barriers are included such as the cultural barriers, the change resistance by managers, or the selected talents' expectation. Whereas the sample of the challenges and barriers related to management are such as lack of support by top management, lack of cooperation between managers during the talent management implementation, lack of understanding about importance of talent management, or lack of cooperation of human resource.

As above mentioned, Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, and Amori (2017) summarized that the top key barriers and challenges of talent management can be divided into four categories such as the factors from structures, environment, behaviors, and management in enterprises. Sample of barriers and challenges factors (figure 2.3) are shown in each category (Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, Amori, 2017).

Table 1 The most important barriers and challenges of talent management	
Structural challenges and barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of integrated HR systems Lack of a competency model in organizational strategies Lack of strategic alignment between HR strategies and business strategies Lack of professional and specialized managers in HR field Lack of an integrated talent management approach Intangibility in outputs of human resource processes Lack of suitable motivational approaches Lack of HR departments' competencies to address TM challenge and focus on administrative process rather than HR development process Poorly implemented performance management systems Impossibility of cost-benefit analysis, especially the cost of selecting wrong people
Environmental challenges and barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance of politics and external pressures on hiring managerial positions Lack of stability in management Governmental support and the absence of serious competition Economic sanctions Population and labor market saturation Supply and demand gap Slow movement toward privatization and globalization Limit access to international markets
Behavioral challenges and barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental and cognitive prejudices Cultural barriers Resistance to change among managers Expectations among elected people Sexual discrimination Nepotism
Managerial challenges and barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of commitment, support and belief of the top managers Lack of strategic perspective to human resources Lack of positive outlook on HR among managers Lack of involvement and cooperation among managers in implementing TM processes Lack of understanding about the importance and significance of TM Lack of commitment to development of employee's capabilities and careers Difference between talent management process and manager's staffing and promotion decisions

Figure 2.3 The most important barriers and challenges of talent management

Besides, the figure 2.4 shows that the disconnection of the core elements of human resource management such as processes of selection, performance evaluation, career planning, succession plan, training and development, replacement planning, or compensation and benefits can lead to fail adopting talent management (Berger, 2004).



Figure 2.4 The disconnection of HRM core elements can lead to fail TM adoption

Source: Own illustration, based on Berger (2004)

Referring to the multinational organization, Newhall mentioned that the talent management can be narrowed to the global talent management (GTM) approach to increase talent management demand systems together with tools and processes are used globally. The barriers when the organization intended to approach the global talent management (GTM) can be related to culture acceptance and local resistance (Newhall, 2012). The global talent management is the list of Human Resource Management activities

relevant to international business context to manage those talent differentiated roles (King, 2015).

2.6 Sample Case of Talent Management Adoption in Thailand

Referring to Pimapunsri's research (Pimapunsri, 2013), the talent management implementation was studied on 13 companies located in Rayong province by conducting the interview with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Her findings show that the definition and the individual talents are the most area which companies are focusing on when they adopted the talent management. (Four companies focused on the definitions of talent management and nine companies focused on the people's talents.)

2.6.1 Talent management definition

Pimapunsri (2013) found that companies may focus on their definition of talent management as competency development of the company key position or the talent management program such as activities which used in the talent management program or the HR processes which used in the talent management program. For example, they focused on activities of recruitment, retention, and development the potential performance employees. The scope of talent management could sometimes be defined differently depending on whether the company focuses on some position or focuses on the entire organization. Besides, some companies might use the title of talent management program differently.

During the interview, Pimpapunsri found that HR activities such as selection, recruitment, performance evaluation, retention, development, and succession plan are most described about what talent management currently implements in the company from the interviewees. Furthermore, the two key criteria of competency and performance are considered to identify their talented employees from the rest of employees. The criterion of competency was used in the selection process to select the right person to right position. To reach this criterion of competency, the companies may consider both core competencies which is crucial to a business competitive advantage achievement and functional competency which is related to a specified job.

On the contrary, another criterion of performance to separate the talented employees from the rest of employees was considered by using evaluation process. Those companies in Pimpapunsri's research concern about the employees' performance and use the same evaluation process for entire companies for both regular employees and talented employees. As well as the development plan, it may implement the same across the company including these talented employees because they believe that the talented people are excellent in self-development and they are willing to support the talented development as requested.

2.6.2 Individual talents

As the difficulty of high potential employees' retention, some companies in Pimpapunsri's research focused on how to develop the talents of employees instead of focusing on person by using many activities to develop both core competencies and functional competencies for their employees. Therefore, the companies agree to invest to this employee development process because it leads to employees' engagement after development program or willing to stay longer with the companies.

Besides, Pimpapunsri mentioned in the end of her research findings that the talent management may lead to misperception of employees who were considered joining this talent management program because they expected to be promoted to higher position or management position in the future. Thus, it is possible to lose these high potential employees because of the talent management program as well.

2.7 Summary of Talent Management Scope

According to above literature review, a focused scope to explore on what challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in a multinational company in Thailand as a case study will be shown in figure 4.

The figure 2.5 explains the four steps approach to talent management by the company such as definition, focus, process, and action (Campbell and Hirsh, 2013). Then, the company can discover the challenges and barriers while they apply the talent management.

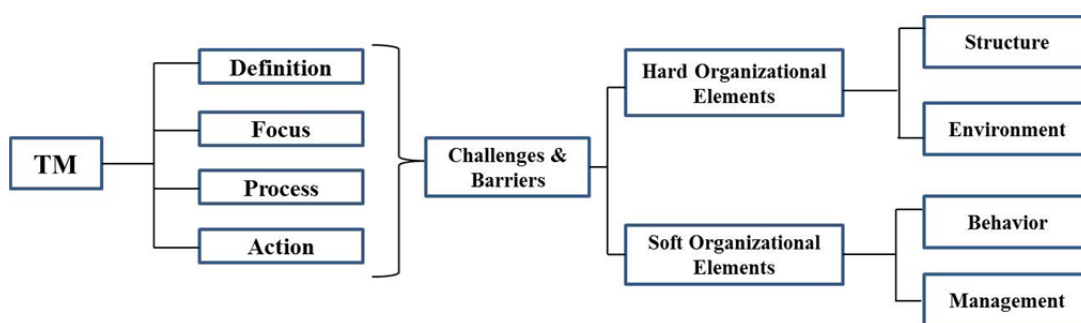


Figure 2.5 Summary of talent management scope

Source: Own illustration, based on Campbell and Hirsh (2013) and Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi and Amori (2017)



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to the topic on talent management adoption in a multinational company in Thailand, this paper is willing to explore through the talents' perspectives whether the talent management in the selected multinational company is practical in Thailand. The area of this exploration, which it comes from direct experience of the talents, is the focus on what area of challenges and barriers in the talent management adoption are such as culture, structure, behaviors, or management.

Besides, as mentioned earlier that the talent management is some kind of high investment especially for the human capital which most companies in Thailand probably pay less attention to. Thus, it is interesting to search for a multinational company where it is outstanding potential in talent management adoption in Thailand to use as a case study in this paper.

3.1 Case Study Selection

In order to explore the talent management adoption in Thailand, one local subsidiary of a multinational company in Thailand was selected. This company, which is one of the largest hypermarket format of retail businesses in Thailand, was chosen as a case study to explore the challenges and barriers of the talent management adoption when its company followed its international headquarter in such talent management. This paper will represent this company as "Company A"

This chosen company is one of leading British supermarket chain and presently opens more than 1,800 branches or 73 provinces across Thailand. There are main five business formats such as Extra, Hypermarket, Department Store, Talad, and Express.

The reason why this paper decided to pick this leading retail business company as a case study is the distinguished talent management program and investment of talent management in Thailand. It is obviously when the company was established its own

talent management department to monitor and focus on its human capital closely. The interesting point in this case is how the company implemented the talent management in Thailand, whether the talent management is adopted as same as its headquarter overseas, and what challenges and barriers the company probably face during this talent management adoption in Thailand.

As mentioned earlier in previous chapter that talent management definition in each company is probably different. The name of talent management program at this company is called “Management Trainee Program”. In fact, there are many management trainee program types in the company. However, this paper will focus on the fast-track graduate for Store Manager Program or the option program which it is one of management trainee program type in this company.

The fast-track graduate for Store Manager Program or option program is introduced to the candidates via many channels such as the company website, the job seeker website, the open-house event, and the headhunter company. The qualifications are mentioned clearly that the candidates must graduate from the only list of specified universities by the company or the candidates must not exceed 0-1 year work experience.

The recruitment process includes the application form submission, the written examination of knowledge and skill for managerial level, the interview when the candidates successfully pass the examination and the acceptance contract as normal when the candidates get the job.

Then, all new comers will be sent to learn and train more about what the job areas in the operation works are at the various stores. This training aims to let the new comers with high potential understand about the real roles and responsibilities in each function that they have to be responsible for in the future as the Store Manager. Meanwhile, the rotation in every two months will be applied for these talented employees.

Due to the various level of Store Manager such as Express, Talad, Hypermarket, Department Store, and Extra level respectively in the talent’s roadmap, it is fortunate that the journey of management trainee program can also be shown to get more pictures on this management program from the past until the present in this paper. Therefore, each journey in management trainee program route was shared upon each direct experience of selected talents.

3.2 Primary Data Collection

Referring to the purpose of this paper which it is to explore the talent management adoption for a multinational company in Thailand through individual direct experiences of chosen talented employees, the data collection method in this paper is the qualitative collected data through the interview. Both the current talents who are working with company A and the former talents who have left company A are included in the interview. The reason why this interview includes the former talents is that they may show the reason why they decided to leave the company before the management trainee program completion.

The interview happened to share the direct experiences as one of high potentials in management trainee program in company A by the existing talents and former talents. However, the talents in company A are called the “MT”. For instance, the interview leads the interviewees or the MTs to share their direct experiences on what definition of management trainee is in their understanding, what their journey in this management trainee program is, what challenges and barriers they may encountered while working as the talent in such management trainee program.

A set of questions, which was composed of both opened-ended questions and closed-ended questions, is applied on every interviewee or MT during the interview. The sample main questions are covered as below:

- What is the definition of management trainee program in those MTs’ understanding?
- How long have those MTs joined this management trainee program at company A?
- What is their journey in the management trainee at company A?
- What are the challenges and barriers while those MTs are working at company A?
- Does the management trainee program help those MTs to get promotion earlier than other regular employees?
- Does the management trainee program help those MTs work with company A longer?

- Does it have adequate supported by the top management for the management trainee program?
- What are the differences between the management trainee program in Thailand and the management trainee program in the U.K.?

Ten selected anonymous MTs were interviewed one-by-one to collect the data for this paper. Those ten interviewees were contained of both current MTs and former MTs in company A to show the comparison in talent's perspectives for both sides. In addition, three former talents were chosen in this interview to explore the real reasons why they cannot complete this management trainee program until the end even if this program regards as the fast-track in their career path and career development.

As a part of selected interviewees' background and information, the average years when these talents joined such management trainee program is between 7 months to 3 years which is varied depending on different applying job method. For example, most of talents in this paper were new graduates who applied this management trainee position directly because they found this job position from the job seeker website and the open-house event. On the other hand, there is one talent who came from the headhunter while she was working in abroad.

Because of different background, some interviewees are able to prove that they are success in their career because of the management trainee program. For instance, they started joining the management trainee program when they were fresh graduates from their universities, then trained to work in various functions at the stores with every two month rotation, and finally got promotion to work as the Store Manager within two years. Whereas other regular employees outside this management trainee program may need to spend time about ten years or put much harder effort to get a promotion as the Store Manager.

On the other hand, another group of interviewees, who shared their direct experiences as talents at company A, have left the company. They also shared the reasons why they decided to submit their resignation after joining this management trainee program.

3.3 Secondary Data Collection

Apart from the interview conduction, the data collection includes searching some information about management trainee program from the company website as well. For example, to provide more about sample of management trainee program types in company A, browsing details about other management trainee program types from the company website can help getting clearer picture in this paper.

3.4 Summary of the Interviewees' Information

To get even clearer picture in next chapter of data analysis, the brief of the chosen interviewees' information are summarized as shown in table 3.1. All ten interviewees have different backgrounds before joining this management trainee program and also have different experiences in joining such management trainee program.

Table 3.1 The selected interviewees' information

Interviewees	Total period joining		Current Status in company A
	Management Trainee Program	New Graduate	
MT 1	3 years	Yes	Current employee
MT 2	3 years	Yes	Current employee
MT 3	2.5 years	Yes	Current employee
MT 4	1 year and 3 months	1 year professional experience	Current employee
MT 5	1 year and 5 months	Yes	Current employee
MT 6	7 months	Yes	Current employee
MT 7	1 year	Yes	Current employee
MT 8	2 years	Yes	Former employee
MT 9	1 year	Yes	Former employee
MT 10	1 year	Yes	Former employee

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

According to the data collection as mentioned in previous chapter including data analysis after interview completion, it has been found that the management trainee program in company A is probably not completely successful and also may encounter the challenges and barriers especially upon unclear and unstable program structure.

Regarding direct experiences from the talents or the MTs, the talent management approach shows that the company should increase its awareness on the management trainee program. The standardized and equalized all management trainee programs should be applied by the company to mitigate the challenges and barriers.

4.1 Talent Management Approach in Company A

Referring to the four-step approach to talent management (Campbell and Hirsh, 2013), the management trainee program approach in company A can be analyzed in each step as below:

4.1.1 Definition: What is the meaning of talent management in company a in Thailand?

With the assumption on the rapid growth of its retail business and fast store expansion not only around Bangkok and metropolitan but also in other provinces across Thailand, company A decided that it should pay more attention and invest more in its human capitals. The management trainee program was established following its parent company in the United Kingdom to develop their human resources emphasizing on high potential employees to be readiness in any coming changes.

The definition of talent management in company A may identify clearly with the belief that this management trainee program can return its company with long run benefits by those talents or MTs as same as the headquarter done in the United

Kingdom. Hence, company A decided to launch the management trainee program in many types to achieve its company goal such as the management trainee program for senior managers, the management trainee program for 8 business functions, or the management trainee for Store Manager focusing on new graduates. However, the fast-track graduate for Store Manager program, which it is one of talent management to hasten high capability's development in an organization, is focused in this paper.

Even if this fast-track graduate for Store Manager Program is well designed on its processes and structure by the company, the perception of the talents or the MTs seem not to perceive only the optimism as expected. Both optimism and pessimism are shown by the MTs during the interview.

Most selected MTs accept that they may not totally understand about the definition of management trainee program. In their comprehension since their job application, this program is just the fast-track program to allow them to reach the executive position of Store Manager faster than the regular professional path. Their understanding about management trainee program definition is still the same since they start working with the company as MTs until now.

According to the literature review, company A approaches on talent management by exclusive definition or certain group selection that the company think they are able to fly very far with the company. Exclusive definition by the company offers those MTs with the clear career development including offering the opportunities to learn in different career experiences to fill any key roles in the future as well. By this exclusive definition, company A offers the rotation during each phase of MTs' roadmap to create new opportunity to serve the company talent management definition.

In addition, during the interview, it also expected that these MTs will be able to provide the information about the management trainee program in the U.K. as this program was influenced by the parent company in the U.K. Unfortunately, they show very limited knowledge on this as they only know that there is the management trainee program in the U.K. as same as Thailand without providing more details. This is because it is not much focused during their training or it is not much emphasized about the exchange of knowledge across global company.

This does not only applied on the MTs who may not feel excited about the management trainee program apart from their personal fast-track career path, but also

on other regular employees especially for the employees who based outside the head office in Bangkok may not realize how management trainee program is important to the company. As new graduate people or young people who were sent to various stores to learn the jobs in details, such MTs can feel that nobody understand certainly why they come here, who they are, or how much authority they can have at stores.

The first introduction from HR to other employees is just only they are new comers who will work as the position of Management Trainee (MT) from now on. This is probably because HR believes that everyone in company already understand well about the management trainee program launched.

4.1.2 Focus: Which jobs and people groups should be focused by talent management?

As focusing on the fast-track graduate for Store Manager Program in this paper, the company expects that such talents or MTs must have strong knowledge and leadership skill even if these MTs have no professional experiences before as new graduates or having less professional experience about 0-1 year. Thus, the company seems to monitor on how to develop those MTs who are new graduates to fit for the position of Store Manager by sending them on field training at various stores.

The Store Manager's job description is quite broad as they must be responsible for every function at store. The real job on field is the best method which the company thinks it is the most workable. Thus, all new comers will be sent by the company to the chosen stores to learn about the roles and responsibility.

The existing Store Managers in those particular stores will be the mentors who teach and transfer the knowledge in every function at the store or at the department to the MTs. In additionally, the company has provided other trainings from time to time to develop those MTs as well. For this reason, the support from management level or the Store Manager is critical to create good perception for the MTs. The company should concern about adequate support by management, which it is one of business risk, to encourage individuals to out of their comfort zone as knowing a little thing about business.

Besides, the understanding about business risk did not mention at all during the interview. Thus, it is not sure whether the MTs understand well about what the

business risks are. The understanding about business risk will help them to realize what needs they should ask for the company to achieve the performances and goals.

4.1.3 Process: How will talent management be done in practice in company A?

The HR processes in company A for the management trainee program is set clear such as MT's qualifications, MT's roadmap, grading evaluation structure, and so on. For example, the interviewees show that the journey of their MT career is combined as followings

- Clear qualifications; for instance, the candidates must graduate with Bachelor degree or Master degree from only specified universities as per attached. (Top ten universities in Thailand and abroad depends on the company discretion.)
- All new MTs will be sent by the company to the chosen stores to practice and learn the jobs closely with the Store Managers.
- The rotation will be happened every two months to offer the MTs in different jobs and roles learning.
- The performance evaluation by HR and Store Managers will be conducted every phase upon roadmap such as every 4 months. (The evaluation result can be divided into blue, green, yellow, and red respectively.)
- If the MTs pass the performance evaluation in each phase, they will be promoted to work in higher level of the Store Manager following the roadmap.

The interviewees shared that the HR processes look clear especially in the work manual which all MT will received from HR before learning the jobs at the store. "I accept that I do not often use the work manual although it is mentioned the roadmap and everything that the MT should know basically," one MT said.

As mention earlier that the store is like the MTs' school, the real mentor for them is the Store Manager including his/her team at such store. The progress of MT's development depends on the mentor and the team at such stores whether they are willing to transfer knowledge or teach the jobs to those MTs. It is impossible to choose which store to go by the MTs so that the mentor is one of key part whether the MTs can have high development.

Nonetheless, as selected stores by the company and learning processes in that store may not standardize. For example, most interviewees shared similar experiences that they have to know by themselves which knowledge they should learn in next rotation. The Store Manager is probably busy and sometimes does not follow up or talk to them closely to check which knowledge part that the MTs may need more.

4.1.4 Action: What are the practical outcomes in company A?

Again, as the fast-track graduate program, the conversation about the management trainee program was explained to individual candidates by HR not only in the recruitment stage, but also on the day of signing employment contract. This conversation was included the roadmap for their MT's career as well. This roadmap will allow the MTs to understand which path they should go ahead during the journey in the management trainee program.

In term of talent development, the MTs' potential will be developed within the real working and practicing at the stores to get ready for the succession plan on the vacant position of the Store Manager. The goal of the MT is to reach the position of the Store Manager therefore the development plan is very important.

The rotation in every two months is also included in their development plan. Moreover, the rotation expects that the MTs should understand the overview of each function in the store so that they are able to know all process when they have to run their own store as the Store Manager in the future. Other trainings to encourage the MTs' leadership skill or required knowledge are also provided to the MTs from time to time properly. Most of trainings will be conducted by HR and taught by the managers or directors who are the expert in such field.

The measurement of talent's performance in company A focuses on the promotion and progression of individual MT. It depends on their individual performance whether they can pass the performance evaluation in each phase. For example, they will get promoted to the higher level, if they can pass their performance evaluation which it is composed of written examination, showing the presentation to managers, and discussion to HR and managers.

In addition, the measurement depends on the level of performance evaluation because there are four colours represented their performance level such as blue, green,

yellow, and red. The positive colours are blue and green. If the MTs obtain these colours after their performance evaluation, they can ensure that they will get promotion to the higher level because blue means excellent performance and green means good performance. On the other hand, the negative colour can make their promotion delayed. The negative colours are yellow and red because yellow means not outstanding performance and red means poor performance.

According to the perspectives of talent in company A, almost every interviewees share their direct experience that the roadmap is not stable as expected. For example, they are not promoted to the expected level of MT following their roadmap although they pass all evaluation process. In other words, they are promoted after passing performance evaluation, but it is not following the roadmap as some change of company policy. Then, they are moved to work and learn other job function instead. For instance, they moved to work in new project launched as the pioneer without adequate strong knowledge and skill.

However, as direct experience from the interviewees, HR currently enhances the better management trainee program comparing to the past. This can make more positive perception among new talents about the management trainee program comparing to the previous batch of MTs even if the high turnover rate keeps showing for the MTs in this fast-track graduate program in company A.

4.2 Challenges and Barriers from Talent's Aspect

Referring to the interview, the talent management approach in company A can show that most challenges and berries in talent management adoption are related to both hard organizational element and soft organizational element such as structural challenges and barriers, behavioral challenges and berries, and managerial challenges and barriers (Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, Amori, 2017). The challenges and barriers that this paper found are summarized in figure 4.1 as below:

Challenges and Barriers on Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear management trainee program structure • Lack of alignment on program with parent company • Too quick rotation during program
Challenges and Barriers on Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding about the importance of management trainee program • Inadequate support from mentors • Inadequate following-up by HR
Challenges and Barriers on Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thai culture especially on seniority • High expectation from talents

Figure 4.1 Challenges & Barriers of talent management (Company A)

4.2.1 Challenges and Barriers on Structure

4.2.1.1 Unclear management trainee program structure

The unclear management trainee program structure was mentioned during the interview many times by almost every interviewee. For example, even if clear roadmap plan is provided to the MTs on the days of orientation, the unclear structure in term of career path or succession plan which it does not exactly follow such roadmap happens to these MTs. Some interviewees encounter with this situation although they work with the company more than 2 years. Their career level in management trainee program is not reached the expected level referred to the roadmap.

For instance, one interviewee said that “It has been 3 years for me to train and learn in each job function, but the company has not assigned any new promotion to upper level yet. This delay always happens and makes me feel curious about my career path.” This is one challenge lead them discourage because they are on special program in the company and also expect to fast-track career path than other regular employees.

The faster promotion is key point of this management trainee program. If it does not follow like that, the attitude of MTs may discourage and may lead to look for other opportunity with competitor’s company.

Another term of unclear structure in this paper is about on field training. As mentioned earlier that MTs are required to practice and learn at the real stores. There is no standardizing processes or lessons at such stores for these MTs. For instance, it depends on the Store Manager who will assign them to learn or practice in any field as his/her discretion only. Some interviewees may start training from the cashier function and then moving to fresh food function. Meanwhile, some interviewees may start training from the dried food function and then moving to shelving function. Thus, ten interviewees have different experiences when they shared their journey as MTs in company A because of non-standard training processes.

Change of roadmap without prior notice is also one challenge faced by MTs. “According to the change in company policy many times, I sometimes feel insecure about my career path because I have no idea what is going on next for my MT path and HR always inform me one week in advance before launching new project,” one interviewee said. This interviewee shared her experience that she sometimes feels insecure about her career path because of the change in the organization policy.

Despite it is good opportunity to learn new experience across organization, new projects according to new company policy is one challenge and lead to insecure feeling because she cannot get clearer picture what her career path is once these new projects are completed. It seems that she is not sure which knowledge and skill she should focus more to get the best promotion in the future.

4.2.1.2 Unequal treated on management trainee program for the fast-track graduate

“I can tell you that the MTs who work only at the stores, not at the head office in Bangkok, is like the mistress’s children.” or “If you work in Bangkok especially in the head office, everyone will know you as MT well so that they can treat you properly.” These are sample of challenges and barriers that the interviewees also mentioned the same about unequal treated on management trainee program for the fast-track graduate program. Comparing to one interviewee who works in the head office, she said, “I am very happy to work here because I can work closely with the management level especially with the director level.”

After completion in operation field at the stores, HR will assign the MTs to work in various location depends on vacant position of Store Manager or

projects. The locations of such moving are included the head office in Bangkok or the stores in other provinces.

Four out of ten interviewees are currently working at the head office and they look very satisfied with their jobs despite of unclear career path or succession plan. On the other hand, six out of ten interviewees feel unequal treated because they have the experience to work at the stores only and also think that the MTs who work at the head office are better treated by HR and the company than the MTs who works at the stores or upcountry area.

Therefore, unequal treated on management trainee program for the fast-track graduate count as one challenge and barrier on structure as well. It can lead to higher turnover rate if the MTs in an organization have the attitude like this.

4.2.1.3 Lack of alignment on management trainee program with parent company

Even though the parent company in the United Kingdom also implements the management trainee program as same as Thailand does, ten interviewees cannot share much about information such as what different implementation between the parent company in the United Kingdom and the company in Thailand are.

It is not a key point to know everything about the management trainee program implementation in the United Kingdom, but only three interviewees can provide the small part of answers. For instance, they know that Thailand is adapting the management trainee program by using the same policy and criteria as the United Kingdom. It is obviously shown that they just have the limited information with no details.

The alignment of management trainee program should be cooperated among regions or countries to create the capability of management trainee program to be more superior or reach the successful outcome as same as its parent company. For example, one interviewee said, “I heard that the management trainee program at headquarter is quite successful and the MTs sometimes get promotion to very high position beyond their roadmap.”

4.2.1.4 Too quick rotation

The rotation at each function in stores happens every two months. Then, MTs will move to train in other formats e.g. Talad or Hypermarket. Most interviewees

said that they can learn about each job function in the store roughly and it may not be enough to get explicit details. For example, one interviewee shared that “I think two month rotation is not enough for me to learn in deep details in each function and I expect to learn in each function longer than two months.”

Furthermore, the quick rotation makes them facing with tough time especially for the frequency of adaptability themselves to their new team. They have to change the style to work with new team again and again while they are almost familiar with those subordinates in such team. “You know, as new graduate people, it is not easy to adapt yourself with the team and I have to change my team again and again when we start getting along well with such team and start working as the good teamwork.” This is one example to show that too quick rotation is one challenge and barrier on structure when the company adopts the talent management.

Those MTs must change frequently their leadership style depends on new team, so it may effect insecure feeling for young members in the fast-track graduates program especially how they should handle those people in each team caused by too quick rotation.

4.2.2 Challenges and barriers on management

4.2.2.1 Lack of understanding about the importance of management trainee program

The meaning of lack of understanding of talent management definition in this paper is related to the understanding of other employees internally. For example, what the talent management is in company and also who the talents are especially when they went to practice and learn the roles and responsibilities at the stores. Six out of ten interviewees shared their direct experiences about this challenge that they feel “nobody” and sometimes feel curious what their actual roles and responsibilities or authority are at such store. Like one interviewee said, “I feel like I am nobody because no one knows who we are, so we have to introduce myself again about my MT position.”

One of selected talent said that there was no clear communication about their introduction. For instance, the introduction related to who they are when they start working as the management trainee at the first day. The introduction by HR will be roughly as expectation that everyone already understood about the management trainee

program. Otherwise, it can mention that other employees just only know them as the position of management trainee, but they might not know exactly what their authority or roles and responsibility are.

This is one of challenges particular in the stores or branches where they were submitted to learn and train the details of operation function. As new comers who join the company as management trainees and who are one of future executives and successors in the company, they are probably not know well how much authority they can have in hand. For example, the team may not accept them yet because they do not understand who they exactly are and why they come to the store. It spends time for a while until these MTs can make more trust with their team.

In generally, the Store Manager, who acts as the talent's mentor, is totally responsible for any final decision in a store. Then, the challenge happened because of duplicate authority that the team may face during working. Moreover, every store has already had its own Assistant Store Manager who is in charge when a Store Manager will not be there. The confusion among subordinates is increased about the authority on who they should trust and follow once they were assigned to do the jobs.

“Nobody” is mentioned implicitly by some interviewees. They feel that they are not important enough for the company or lead to failure of their self-confidence. For instance, the subordinates do not follow their decision-making because of confusion about the authority in the store. This situation may also come from the unclear communication to the subordinates by the Store Manager when he/she assigned MTs to make the final decision on behalf of him/her. Like one interviewee said, “I was confused what time I should make a decision on behalf of the Store Manager when he was not there. Moreover, I don't know what I should do because there is already the Assistant Store Manager as well.”

4.2.2.2 Inadequate support from mentors

According to direct experience from the interviewees, one of challenges and barriers on talent management adoption is related to the support from mentors. The mentors for the management trainee program are the store managers. The MTs will be assigned the jobs including trainings by those store managers.

Challenge occurs when the mentors or managers have tight schedule and may not pay attention closely with the MTs. Most interviewees feel far

away from their mentors and they have to learn the job details with the store subordinate teams instead.

Moreover, they mentioned that it depends on individual luck to learn the jobs with the smart and kind mentors. If they are lucky enough, they will meet the potential mentors who are totally willing to teach them everything they know. “It depends on your luck to have a good mentor because he will teach you everything. However, I am the one of unlucky person,” one interview shared.

The interviewees also shared that there is no standard processes by mentor when they were at such store. It depends on mentor’s decision at that time to assign which work functions in the store MTs should go to train. In fact, few interviewees shared that the head office has provided the clear roadmap to the store, but the Store Manager has the right to arrange the training to the MTs upon his/her consideration.

4.2.2.3 Inadequate follow-up by HR

One of challenges and barriers in term of management is about inadequate follow-up by HR. This HR follow-up means the conversation related to the progression of the MTs. This challenge occurs especially for the MTs who work in the remote area. Those MTs may need the following up by HR to ask whether they are fine or what additional supports they may need from HR during this fast-track graduate program.

Some interviewees shared that they are abandoned by HR particular in following up and encouraging them to go far as the roadmap. For example, sample conversation by one interviewee showed, “I have worked with the company more than 2 years, but I still feel alone because HR did not ask me anything about my progression except in the performance evaluation session. Furthermore, I have no idea who I can talk to in case that I probably need more information or help.” The MTs sometimes need the listener like HR to follow up their progress or to recommend about the techniques what they should do or prepare in each phase of management trainee program.

4.2.3 Challenges and barriers on behaviors

4.2.3.1 Thai Culture especially on seniority

Even if it is not big challenge that the MTs encountered, Thai culture could be added as one of challenges and barriers on behaviors. As new graduates or talents who have less experience, those young MTs sometimes confront with issue

of seniority. It is not only with their subordinates, but also vendors they may get to work with.

For example, it is little tough time at first time when they met their team at the store because they are probably younger than some people who work there and they have to supervise them. Without trust and minor confusion about MT's authority, it must spend time for a while to adapt themselves to know each other.

The MTs may decide to be modest when they assigned the jobs for subordinates because they are older than them. Most interviewees accept frankly that Thai culture is involved a little bit when they work as the management trainee in this multinational company because they cannot ignore Thai culture which young people should respect the older people. Thus, the leadership style that these MTs use when they assigned the jobs is quite soft and select to ask those older subordinates about what their opinions are instead. Additionally, they are trying to avoid using tough style which it could lead to more aggressive environmental workplace. For example, one interviewee said, "It make me sometimes confused whether I am their boss or they are my boss because someone in my team can be my mother or my father and I sometimes have to ask them to make a decision as my less knowledge and experience on such thing as well."

Otherwise, it can assume that Thai culture is one of talent management barriers which block talent management approach seriously used in Thailand. For instance, some Thai employees may not prefer to see other people have superior talents than them in organization or departments.

One MT shared her experience that she faced with some negative feedback from some regular colleges because she joined this special treated program. Some colleges may not understand why this program is more special than regular employee status including providing the faster career path. They probably think that why they cannot get such fast-track as same as the MT although they also graduated with the bachelor degree and have more professional experiences. However, it is because they are recruited from the regular employee program and did not graduate from universities in required list so that the career path is different.

4.2.3.2 High expectation from talents

Last challenge and barrier on behaviors is high expectation from talents. It can understand that the talents may have high expectation from the company

when they join in this fast-track graduate program. They probably expect the beautiful road on the management trainee program once they decided to join this program. Nevertheless, some MTs may feel that their decision is wrong when they confront with the real situation differ from their expectation and may decide to leave from this program before completion.

For instance, three out of ten interviewees, who are former employees at company A, point out that the reason they resigned from the company is because this program is much different from their first expectation. One of high expectation is about the exact progression and promotion following the roadmap. “It looks fancy at first time when you joined this management trainee for Store Manager Program. Then, your feeling will change because most actual works are quite different from your thought,” one former employee said.

Second, they graduated from one of top ten universities in Thailand with outstanding GPAX so that it is unreasonable to work some jobs as workmen. They do not mean to look down the workmen career, but they want to show the example of what kind of works they did during training at the stores. Some interviewees gave us the easy example; for instance, they need to work as the real cashier, the real fresh vegetable arrangement, or the real taking care of shelving more than learning on how to manage its store. One interviewee said, “I expect to learn more on the management, not too much operation like this because I am confident that I have very good education background and also have more capability than doing some kind of these workman’s works.”

Otherwise, they may encounter with poor performance store once they got promotion to train in higher level. The facing problems are much different from the training at the excellent performance stores they ever had. Therefore, high pressure and tough road come into their real world. Finally, the MTs decided to quit this talent management trainee program in the middle way as too high expectation on this program.

4.3 Conclusion on Challenges and Barriers

Upon the findings in previous chapter, it obviously shows that those challenges and barriers in talent management adoption in company A are also related to the HRM processes. The disconnection of HRM processes leads to unsmooth implementation in the company.

Based on figure 4.2 for the disconnection of human resource management (HRM) core elements lead to fail talent management adoption (Berger, 2004), most challenges and barriers directly come from career planning, succession plan, and training and development area. Therefore, the company should raise its monitor on those areas to make the connection between each process.



Figure 4.2 The disconnection of HRM core elements can lead to fail TM adoption in company A

Source: Own illustration, based on Berger (2004)

The perspectives of talents related to the talent management adoption in company A show that they need clear career planning, succession plan, and training and development. If any one of HRM core element is missing or disconnected, the talent management cannot be totally successful and it will lead to high turnover rate in the end.

In conclusion, to maintain the high potential employees in the organization, company A should concern more not only what the qualifications of candidate are, but also what the clear standard structure of the management trainee program is to superior those talents' engagement. Ultimately, the outcome will be definitely worth for talent management adoption for the company.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recommendation

According to above findings which the challenges and barriers on talent management adoption come from both hard organizational element and soft organizational element (Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, Amori, 2017), the recommendation to enhance and eliminate those challenges for the management trainee program at company A will be proposed as followings:

5.1.1 Step 1: Make clearer communication for management trainee program definition across an organization

One challenge that the talents raised during the interview is about the lack of understanding about management trainee definition especially for other employees outside this program. Thus, not only the clearer communication from HR, but also from the Store Manager is vital to interpret the roles and responsibility of MT across an organization. The issue about the duplicate authority or “nobody” feeling can eliminate certainly.

The Store Manager is one key person who should cascade down the management trainee definition to his/her team around the store. For instance, the Store Manager can share to each function in a store in the monthly meeting or small meeting arrangement in each store to emphasize about the roles and responsibility of MTs. This communication can encourage the leadership skill of the MT once this new graduated MTs step to the store since first time.

In fact, HR and the Store Manager should work closely to make the real result following the roadmap the company shows to the MTs. Besides, HR and the Store managers should provide these MTs with recommendations. For instance, what MTs should do next if they cannot pass the evaluation in each phase or how long they should stay in such phase in case that it is not time to get promote. This back up plan and recommendation can make the MTs feel secure in their career path.

5.1.2 Step 2: Standardized structure and processes on management trainee program

Referring to main challenge and barrier related to the unclear management trainee program, the first priority that the company should concern is how to standardize the program structure to avoid negative perception of the MTs. The standard program structure can help not only the company to adopt the talent management effectively, but also for the talents to fully develop themselves and having the willingness to work with the company in long-term.

The standard management program structure is comprised of career path roadmap, training and development plan, and succession plan. When management trainee program is set everything as standard, it will be measured easier as well. Both company and talents can bridge over the challenges and obstacles together.

For example, in term of training and development plan at the stores, HR should set the standard processes to mention clearly in what the first function that the MT should train is, what the second function is, and so on. HR and the store managers must work closely to monitor the program and do not too much flexible in switching learning function processes to prevent any confusion by talents.

Moreover, the standardized structure and processes should be implemented to all type of management trainee program to equal talented employees' perception. The equal treated will happen even if the MTs may work in the remote stores or in the store where is located in other provinces.

The roadmap should be reviewed every batch to ensure that everything can run following the roadmap exactly as the MTs' expectation. Then, the retention rate of MTs can maintain or superior because the MTs are satisfy and will give the company with the high engagement.

5.1.3 Step 3: Standardize training and development processes

Referring to MTs' perspectives, challenges and barriers are also involved about the training and development process which it is may not completely work especially real training at store without any academic session. Otherwise, there is not standard pattern what these MTs should start learning or training in the store. It depends on the Store Manager's discretion as proper only.

With this reason, the setting of standard learning and development process is probably one solution to make it clear for those MTs. For example, the first stage of learning and development process that the company should provide to them since the first time is about the overview technical academic session through the real case study. The MTs can understand in big picture through such real case study happens in the stores. This is to allow the MTs collect information to understand what their actual roles and responsibility is and also prepare themselves in any coming facing problem when they truly run their store.

Then, the mock-up store probably provides to them in the second stage of training and development process. This mock-up store will allow the MTs to apply their academic knowledge with any case study at this mock-up store. Moreover, leadership skill and management skill of the MTs can be developed and encouraged before going to the real store.

The training on field at the stores should keep doing because it is the important stage to allow the MTs who are new graduate grasp the picture of the store. If the academic session and the mock-up store are provided to the MTs, it can leverage their learning skills than current situation because they will know what functions or knowledge they need to learn or practice more. The challenge of inadequate support by the mentors can be removed because of strong knowledge foundation of MTs before training at the stores as well.

5.1.4 Step 4: Create reflective session after each rotation among talents

As one challenge and barrier on structure about too quick rotation, the company may mitigate this challenge and barrier by conducting the reflective session after each phase of rotation. This is the way that the company can communicate directly to the talents and also be able to increase the understanding among talents about what the objective of two month rotation is.

The reflective session should be included the previous batches of the MT to allow them share their direct experiences about the rotation between each other. For example, this reflective session should conduct shortly about 20-30 minutes by the guest speakers such as some MTs from previous batches. Thus, they can share not only about the feeling and experiences related to their rotation, but also about the lesson learned

and method they may use in solving problem during such rotation. It is like the case study to let the talents who just completed each rotation get the bigger pictures than they learned only two months.

Moreover, this session can allow the talents to share what they have learned or what the additional learning or trainings to improve their knowledge and skills in the future as well. Both talents and the company can have the win-win situation because the talents totally understand why the company provided them only two months in each rotation and may feel that it is enough to this two months rotation.

5.1.5 Step 5: Stay interview with these high potentials

The company should not let the talents who are high potential feel alone or have nobody feeling because it will effect to the lower retention rate in the future. Therefore, the company should make more understanding about their MTs by staying interview with those talented employees especially for talents who work in other provinces or remote areas.

Even if the company may conduct the follow-up session for the MTs as normal, it is probably not enough to fulfill their feeling that the company is really care for them. They believe that they are talent pool and get special taking care by the company at first time. The lack of talking closely with the MTs is one mistake that the company can lose these high potentials to work with the company longer.

The small additional or special session conducted by HR should be done to discuss what knowledge and skill that those MTs may need to enhance. This staying interview is included what any compensation or welfare that the MTs may require is or what recommendations for preparation into next phase of the MTs career path are.

Finally, the engagement of the MTs will maintain or increase because they feel that they are not abandoned although they work in the remote area outside of Bangkok and metropolitan. Furthermore, HR can use the information from this stay interview to improve the management trainee program structure as well.

5.1.6 Step 6: Initiate online exchange training among regions or parent company

According to management trainee program implemented as same as the parent company in the U.K., the online training to exchange knowledge among the MTs around global company may be worth to invest. This online training will not spend huge money as developing the existing resources such as IT system and will also allow the connection between talent pools in global company.

Some criteria and policies in the talent management adoption may be adjusted to match with Thai culture as proper. However, it will be more advantage if the online exchange training can be initiated to make the clearer picture about the management trainee program for Thai MTs. They can then understand directly more about the talent management definition and also how much the talent management is important via this online training channel.

It benefits Thai MTs to feel more challenges and to be proud with this cooperation of the online training across global company as well. Furthermore, the challenges and barriers about lack of management trainee program alignment will be removed.

This online exchange training will also allow Thai MTs to apply some knowledge that other exchange MTs may apply in their countries. Besides, the company invests for this high technology at once and then the company can use this IT system in long-term to leverage their MTs' training and development processes around Thailand. Otherwise, the online exchange training can help to reduce the gaps between the talents who work at stores in Bangkok and metropolitan and the talents who work at stores in other provinces. The communication among the MTs will be aligned with same direction as well.

5.1.7 Step 7: Gathering session for the fast-track graduate program by Webinar

The gathering session for the fast-track graduate program is the last step to allow Thai MTs, who are joining this program, be able to share their direct experiences to both new batches and existing bathes. For example, the company may use the IT system again such as the webinar that it can help the live online from anywhere by the MTs

although they work in other provinces. Then, all of talents can join this meeting and get to know each other more at once.

The problems or real case studies in the stores can be exchanged in this activity; for instance, how previous the MTs handled the situation as the guideline to younger batches. The challenges about mentors can be lower because all MTs seem to be the mentors for each other and no need to wait only for coaching from the Store Managers who are quite busy.

Moreover, this session can show the new batches about how previous MT's batches are successful in their career path. It is like one method in motivation by showing the real role model to the talents.

5.2 Conclusion

Although the talent management like the management trainee program in company A seems to be successful and still implementing until now, the company is able to leverage the quality of talent management adoption by following above seven steps. This action plan can help the company to eliminate the challenges and barriers in term of hard organizational and soft organization such as structure, behaviors, and management (Tafti, Mahmoudsalehi, Amori, 2017).

The seven-step action plan (Figure 5.1) useful not only in communication across the company to let everyone in the company understand the talent management definition, but also in strengthen program structure and training and development process that they lead to the certainty of career path regarding the roadmap and the company direction alignment. Once the talents have the satisfaction during joining this management trainee program, the high expectation will be served and then the engagement of these high potential employees will superior. Then, they are willing to work with company as long as they can.

The gap among talents who work in the different location of stores can get rid of by the IT system investment such as the online training and the webinar. This long-term investment is worth to implement in sustainable high potentials and to keep the brain and knowledge in the company. In addition, the company direction around worldwide can be aligned by this IT system development.



Figure 5.1 Seven-step action plan to mitigate challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in company A

Moreover, above seven-step action plan can also fulfill in the HRM core elements (Berger, 2004) especially in career planning, succession plan, and training and development because the employees' understanding about definition of the talent management is aligned across the company. It leads to the strong standard structure of the management trainee program such as the fast-track graduate program. Finally, company A can maintain the talented pool to work with the company in long-terms and also can sustain their organization with the human capital especially for high flyers in the company.

5.3 Limitations of Study

The limitations of study in this paper are concluded such as minority of outstanding talent management adoption in Thailand, limited target of interviewees, time constraint of information access, lack of supporting information from the company side, and limited industry of study.

5.3.1 Minority of outstanding talent management adoption in Thailand

The minority of outstanding talent management adoption in Thailand is one of limitations of study in this paper. Thus, the choices when this paper selected the company to collect data are few. Moreover, some multinational companies where they are expert in the talent management adoption probably cannot provide fully cooperation for the interview as their tight schedule.

For example, it is time to conduct the annual company evaluation so that such company gives the interview permission only HR Manager. The talents' interview is not permit because of their tight schedule and the company concerns that it will effect to those talents' performances if this interview is conducted.

5.3.2 Limited target of interviewees

Regarding the focus on challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in this paper, the interviewees will be limited to the talented people only. The methodology of information access through the target group like talents is one of limitations of study because it is specific qualifications of interviewees that they must be the talents and cannot interview generally whoever work in company A.

Moreover, it is also not easy to make a one-on-one appointment with those talents who work in management level and have tight schedule. For example, there are three talents who denied giving the interview because they are not convenient.

5.3.3 Time constraint of information access

As previously discussed, time constraint of information access is also one of limitations of study because the interviewees such as the talents will not available if the interview is conducted too long. Therefore, time management is very important to ensure that the interview will not effect to their works.

The scope of the interview should be mentioned clearly before the interview to allow the interviewees understand in prior and to manage time in the interview effectively as well. For example, one interviewee was interrupted by an urgent meeting during the interview so that she has to come back to the interview again when she finished such urgent meeting.

5.3.4 Lack of supporting information from the company side

In the part of data analysis, the absence of supporting information such as the perspectives from the company side is included in the limitations of study. This paper is more rational if it can include the supporting information like the company point of views to explore the real challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in such multinational company in Thailand. In addition, although the direct experiences and perspectives were shared by the talents, it is able to explore more in term of the company side whether they think the same with those talents.

5.3.5 Limited industry of study

According to company A used to explore as the case study, this paper explores only one industry in retail business. It is probably not enough to prove that the challenges and barriers of the talent management adoption in a multinational company in Thailand found in this paper will be the same in other industries. Thus, the limited industry of study is included in limitations of study as well.

For example, the multinational companies in other industry may encounter with different challenges and barriers so that the action plan should implement differently upon such challenges and barriers as proper.

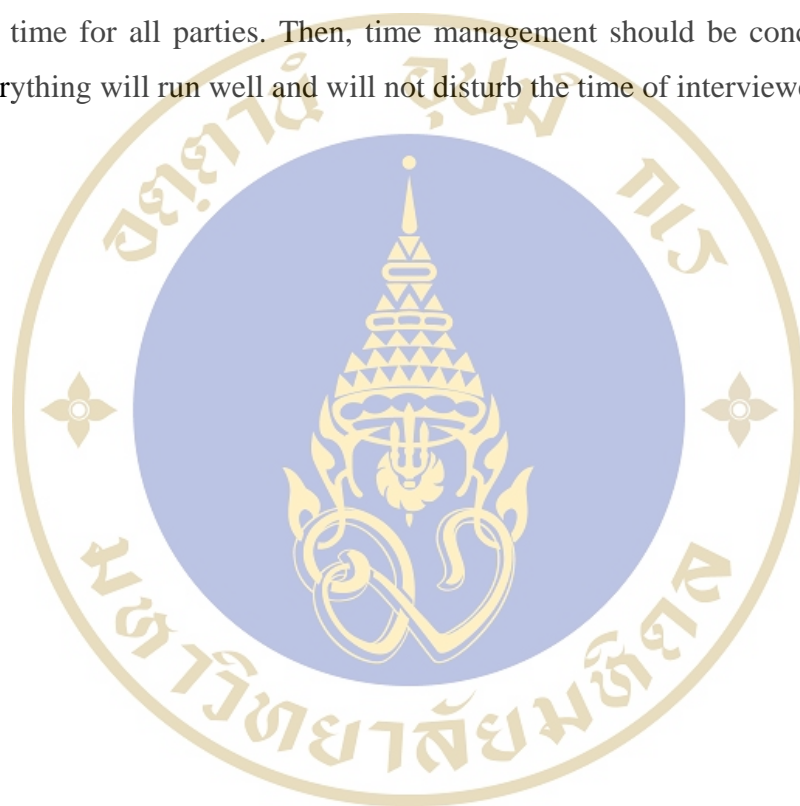
5.4 Recommendation for Future Research

Upon earlier limitations of study, the recommendation for future research is to explore more for both perspectives' sides between the talents and the company to make the comparison and to measure what the real challenges and barriers of talent management adoption in Thailand are. Without the company or the HR point of view, the information may not be strong enough to prove that the challenges and barriers, which this paper found from the talents' perspectives, are universal or truly occur in every multinational company in Thailand. Furthermore, the information from the HR inside can show the real processes and management that the company is implementing their talent management across the company.

Exploring more in other industries can also help the future research to be more trustworthy. The future research probably conducts the interview with the multinational

companies in other industry such as automobile industry or healthcare industry and then compares to which challenges and barriers of the talent management adoption in Thailand that they are encounter the most.

Last recommendation for the future research is about well-preparation and time management. It is necessary to well-prepare before starting the interview because it is not only the company and the HR, but also the talents may have tight schedule. The well-preparation in term of scope of the interview, questions of the interview, or other documents such as the permission letter should be prepared in advance to prevent wasting time for all parties. Then, time management should be concerned to ensure that everything will run well and will not disturb the time of interviewees.



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Appendix A: Interview Questions in English

No.	Questions
1	Are you current MT or former MT?
2	Have you ever heard about the talent management before? If so, please share what is the definition of talent management in your understanding?
3	Do you think the talent management program can influence you to work with company longer or its program can influence you to deny the offers from the headhunters when they tried to approach you to recruit a new job? Please share the reasons why or why not?
4	Do you know about the talent management program implementation in the parent company? If so, please share whether it is implemented as same as Thailand.
5	What are the different points or processes of talent management adoption if the parent company implements its talent management differently from the company in Thailand?
6	Do you think the talent management program can help you to get promotion earlier than other regular employees? If not, please share the reasons.
7	As the talent, how does the company evaluate your performance? Is it same standard or same method as other regular employees? If not, please share the method the company evaluate you as the talent.
8	As the talent, have you ever faced with any negative feedback from your colleges who may dislike seeing others superior than themselves referring to Thai culture? If so, please share your experiences if possible?
9	What are the challenges or barriers that you encounter as the talents e.g. Thai culture or lack of understanding about importance of Talent management?
10	Do you think the talents in your company get adequate support by top management? Please share the sample why you think it is adequate and also share the reason if you think it is insufficient support by top management.
11	If you have a chance to share your opinion to the company as anonymous, what are the recommendations you will suggest to enhance the talent management program in your company?