

Talent Management Practices in the Egyptian Hotels: Talent Retention Perspective

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Abstract

Today's markets are global and highly competitive. Therefore, it has become essential for corporate survival to be able to adapt and respond to change around them. In essence, talented people are a source of strength for any organization and behind its success. Organizations must attract, develop, and retain talented employees, especially those who are extraordinarily talented. Thus, this research assesses talent management (TM) practices and employees' retention in hotels. It also examines the effect of TM practices on employees' retention. For attaining these objectives, data were collected using questionnaires from a sample of 390 talented employees in all hotel departments. However, valid questionnaire forms received from employees were 347, with a response rate of 88.97 percent. To analyze these forms, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were used. The study proved that there is a positive effect of TM practices on the retention of employees.

Keywords: Talent management practices; employee retention; hotels.

Introduction

In the light of the continuous developments and the competitiveness, excellence and success are considered strategic goals for any business premises and similarly hospitality establishments (Barney and Wright, 1997; Lockwood, 2006; Lawler, 2008; Mathew). Today, with the increase of competition, the investment in human resources has become an important part of the strategies to be competitive (William *et al.*, 2017). Bhatnagar (2007) stated that talent has become the key to managing human capital, and TM appears to be one of the key functions that human resources management (HRM) plays strategically in organizations. Armstrong (2006) emphasized that TM is a package of interrelated processes, thus integrating HRM practices of attracting and retaining staff at the right place and time. The role of TM is to develop it into a strategic priority and part of daily work. Although the term TM may be relatively recent at least within human resources, it is an important topic in the business scope. This is what Siers (2007) refers to like that: talent is the skills and abilities of staff or it is often thought that it is vested in managerial talent only because it is extended and has a broad scope that includes all employees of the organization. Also, it includes the skills and abilities of staff and not only those who are inside but also contracted from outside parties.

Based on the above, Cappelli (2003) stated that the organizations' continuous practice of excellence requires them to continually improve their capabilities to suit their clients' needs and expectations. This improvement requires highly skilled, trained, and talented human resources as well as specific practices to help them accomplish their work. This indicates

the importance of TM practices in achieving high levels of strategic innovation in the short and long term. Abbasi *et al.* (2013) showed that talented employees are an asset for any hotel and behind its success. TM is a new trend for many small and large hotels and is one of the best practices adopted by those who wish to stay in the lead and maintain their competitiveness. Bersin (2006) defines TM as a set of organizational processes designed to attract, develop, motivate and retain talented employees. Attracting and retaining qualified talent is a major issue in the hospitality industry today. This rapid development has led to increasing demand for high-quality hotel employees. Lepak and Snell (2007) claimed that the TM concept is closely connected to human capital development, as the latter is integrated with intangible goods, skills, experience and is considered the greatest investment of all organizations. Moreover, they argued that organizations should build TM practices and invest in talent development, which should enable them to lead in the market. Research shows that hotels have always found it hard to attract, develop and retain suitably motivated, talented, and qualified employees (Baum, 2008). According to Kusluvan *et al.* (2010), talented employees are considered the key determinants of service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, competitive advantage, and organizational performance and TM plays an important strategic role in the success of a hospitality organization. However, talent management is very challenging, especially in the context of the hospitality industry given the problems faced by hospitality managers from an HRM perspective as related to the attraction, career development, and retention of staff. These issues have long been identified as the hospitality industry's biggest challenges (Powell and Wood, 1999). According to Collings and Mellahi (2009), a focus on TM practices evidences the importance hotels attach to intellectual capital investment in TM practices. It also helps retain high-class specialists and develops careers that can provide a continuous pool of fresh talent for managerial positions.

The importance of this research lies in understanding current talent management practices in Egyptian hotels and improving the recruitment, selection, retention process, and staff development in five-star hotels. Also, the importance of this research is to understand the TM practices in Egyptian hotels and their impact on the satisfaction and retention of talented employees as well as increasing their performance. Besides, there are scarce studies in the field of hospitality that focus on the practices of TM, especially in the hotel sector. Hence, the research aims to investigate how the TM is applied within the hotel sector. To attain this aim, the following objectives were triggered:

- 1) Explore the different current practices of TM in hotels.
- 2) Measure the impact of TM practices on the retention of talented employees.

Research Hypotheses:

H1: There is a relationship between TM practices and employee retention.

H2: There is an impact of TM practices on employee retention.

Literature Review

TM is a recent, practitioner-generated term covering a range of long-term practices that aim at getting the right person in the right job at the right time. These include workforce planning, succession planning, employee development, and career management (Morton, 2005). Building relationships with people, identifying talent and Capabilities, planning learning and development activities, and getting most of the talent that the organization is having (Armstrong, 2010). Armstrong (2006) stated that talented individuals are allowed to develop in their current positions and can transfer to a new position through training and development. Developing employees to help them grow with the organization and training them for the expertise needed to contribute to business success also builds loyalty and improves employee engagement (Iles, 2008). A study on employee engagement and business success showed that employees who were extremely satisfied at work were four times more likely than the employees who are dissatisfied (Lockwood *et al.*, 2006).

According to Strelau (2007) talent is a combination of abilities realized in man's specific activity thanks to the interaction of internal and external factors that make it possible to creatively perform a certain task at the highest level. However, Jamka (2011) stated that talent is the "sum of a given person's abilities—his innate gifts, capabilities and knowledge, experience, intelligence, opinions, attitudes, and will to act. It includes their ability to learn and act".

Armstrong (2007) defines TM as a set of linked organizational activities enabling a hotel to attract, retain, motivate and develop talented people whom it needs and whom it will need in the future to stay successful. According to Armstrong (2007), TM should not only focus on the high-flyers, but it should concern all the efficient workers. To use TM strategies effectively, it is important to have a clear view of the whole TM process. McCauley and Wakefield (2006) listed the TM process as follows: workforce planning; talent gap analysis; recruiting, staffing; education and management; retention; talent review; succession planning and evaluation. Thus, when TM is brought into practice, it covers the HR activities. Moreover, when managing talented workers, the ultimate aim is to get these principles and practices of 'TM' such as recruitment & selection (R&S), and retention.

TM is important for at least two primary reasons: The first is that effective TM ensures that organizations can successfully acquire and retain essential talent. The second has to do with the extent to which these employees are engaged. TM is integral to engaging employees in the hotel. The ability to effectively address both of these issues has become a primary determinant of organizational success and in some cases, even survival (Morton, 2005).

Employee turnover has negative effects on the performance of companies (Hancock *et al.*, 2013). In research by Tracey and Hinkin (2008), the primary financial implication of the employee turnover issue in the hospitality industry has been divided into two aspects. First, employee turnover may negatively affect the consistency and quality of customer service, which could directly cause damages to the revenue and profitability of the organization (Tracey & Hinkin, 2008). When the old employees depart the current position, it has to take time for new employees to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to be proficient

in their essential duties and responsibilities. The customers usually meet dissatisfaction of the service when new staff cannot provide the same level of services as old staff. Second, a high employee turnover rate increases the operating costs of organizations in the hospitality industry. The many direct and indirect costs resultant from replacing staff could be divided into hard costs, soft costs, and opportunity costs (Tracey & Hinkin, 2008).

Methodology

This research used the quantitative approach to facilitate a deductive approach to exploring the TM practices in Egyptian hotels, and the effect of these practices on the employees' retention. The purpose of this research is to offer the logical basis for the methodological choices made during this research and to explain how the data were collected and analyzed. A descriptive and analytical approach was followed in this research, which described the phenomenon, and then analysis, and interpretation, based on the data collected. In general, Cairo has been chosen as a prime case research area, because it is a nearby city, and it is also the most dominant economic, social and political city in Egypt.

Population and sample

According to the Egyptian Hotel Association Guide (2020), there are 39 five-star hotels in Cairo, all the hotels accepted to distribute the questionnaire forms to their talented employees. A total of 390 questionnaire forms were distributed to the hotels. Only 50 questionnaire forms were distributed by hand to the talented employees. As for the rest of the forms (340), and because of confidentiality of company information, the hotels assumed responsibility for distributing them, as they handed them over to the managers and assistant managers in the different hotel departments, who in turn distributed them to the talented, each in his department. A sum of 347 valid forms was returned, representing a response rate of 88.97 percent. The talented employees were selected only because they were directly affected by the issues of retention, and therefore they will give useful information for the research. The technique of convenient sampling was adopted that depends on collecting data from easily accessible individuals. The group selected was divided into different classes, which included: Talented, whether employees at low or high levels (Eusebius, 2016). In addition, these talented people are grouped according to the hotel's front or back-office functions. The talented people were identified by giving a list of talent specifications to the department managers in each hotel and asking them to distribute the questionnaire to the workers who meet these specifications.

Measurement and instrument

Due to its effectiveness in gathering empirical data from large samples, the questionnaire is the frequently used method of data collection. It is used to measure knowledge, attitudes, emotion, awareness, intention, or behavior. These considerations make using a questionnaire the most effective data collection tool for this research. All the sections of the questionnaire were derived from the literature. To obtain a high response rate, it was necessary to make questions clear, answerable, and neutral. The expression and language used in this questionnaire were kept as simple as possible to communicate with the hotel

employees. The variables in this research were examined to identify the effect of the independent variable, i.e., TM practices on one dependent variable, i.e., employee retention in the Egyptian hotel. The questionnaire form being used in the research is composed of three parts to facilitate the data analysis process. These three sections were shown in Table (1) as follows: characteristics of the hotel, TM practices, and employee retention. The study variables were measured using the Likert scale. The respondents were asked to respond to a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) in all parts of the questionnaire.

Table (1): Summary of the questionnaire sections

Sections	Scales	Adapted from
Section 1	Characteristics of the hotel	Nasr, 2018
Section 2	Talent management practices	Khairy, 2015
Section 3	Employee retention	William, 2019

Data Collection

This research focused on investigating how the concept of TM practices is being applied within five-star hotels. After collecting the contact information of the investigated hotels, telephone calls were made to the managers of the human resource departments to get their permission to visit their hotels and distribute the questionnaire forms to the talented employees. All the questionnaire forms were distributed in March 2021. These forms were retrieved after one month from distribution. Telephone contacts have been made with the human resources managers in each hotel and following up with them weekly, who in turn followed up filling out the forms with the talented people in each department with department managers in the hotel after that these forms were retrieved in April 2021 from all participating hotels.

Data Analysis

Different statistical tests were used to address the research questions for the research. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) v.23 was used to analyze the data collected. Descriptive statistics were employed to identify the talent management practices as well as employee retention in the investigated hotels. In addition, the Spearman correlation coefficient was used to find the relationships among variables. Moreover, the hierarchal multiple regression was used to examine the impact of talent management practices on employee retention.

Validity and reliability of the study instrument

The Cronbach alpha reliability was computed, and the tests showed that the reliability coefficients for all items were above 0.60. For this research, *Cronbach alpha* for all survey constructs is presented in Table (2).

Table (2): Cronbach alpha for research scales

	Scales	Number of items	Cronbach alpha coefficient
1	Talent Management Practices	38	0.985
2	Employees retention	8	0.992

Concerning validity, the questionnaire was initially pre-tested for its validity with three professors at the hotel studies department at the faculty of tourism and hotels in the University of Sadat City to get feedback regarding the clarity of the instructions and accuracy of the questions in the instrument. Comments and suggestions obtained from them were used for rewording the instructions and layouts of the questionnaire.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The questionnaires used for this research included three items concerning the respondents' demographic characteristics. The respondents were asked about their gender, age, and educational level. This information was useful in understanding the background of the respondents. Results are presented in Table (3).

Table (3): Respondents' demographics

Demographics	Classes	Freq.	%
Gender	Male	297	85.5
	Female	50	14.4
	Total	347	100
Age	Less than 30 years	36	10.4
	From 30 to less than 40 years	84	24.2
	From 40 to less than 50 years	173	49.9
	50 years and more	54	15.5
	Total	347	100
Educational Level	High school	7	2
	Bachelor	312	89.9
	Master	17	5
	PhD	11	3.1
	Total	347	100

The results in Table (3), indicated that out of the 347 respondents, 297 (85.5%) were male and 50 (14.4%) were female. Only 36 (10.4%) of the respondents were less than 30 years old, 84 (24.2%) were from 30 years and less than 40 years old group, 54 (15.5%) of the respondents have 50 years old and more, and the rest of the sample(49.9.7%) were from 40 years and less than 50 years old. The results also indicated that only 11 (3.1%) of the respondents possess a Ph.D., 17 (5%) of the respondents possess a master's degree, and 312 (89.9%) of the respondents have a bachelor's degree.

A descriptive analysis of job retention

This level included some questions to assess talent retention. These questions as shown in Table (4) are This hotel has the right talent for its present as well as future strategies, The hotel avoids to over the working load and working stress more than the employee's ability, The hotel spend more time and money on retention programs than on recruitment, The work at hotel matches the employee's abilities and skills, Recognize or rewards the employees for the value that added, The employment conditions at hotel satisfy work-life balance, Managers are trained to select, identify, guide, train, reward and retain their employees, there are flexible working hours at the hotel and Provide meaningful pay differentiation to high performers through the base and variable pay.

Table (4): Talent retention

Talent retention	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	4.399
This hotel has the right talent for its present as well as future strategies.	8	2.3	12	3.5	18	5.2	118	33.9	191	55.1	4.3602
The hotel avoids the working load and working stress more than the employee's ability.	14	4.0	24	6.8	28	8.0	102	29.3	179	51.9	4.2161
The hotel spends more time and money on retention programs than on recruitment.	9	2.6	15	4.2	24	6.9	102	29.3	197	57.1	4.4179
The work at the hotel matches the employees' abilities and skills.	5	1.5	9	2.5	16	4.6	114	32.9	203	58.5	4.4438
Recognize or rewards the employees for the value that is added.	3	1.0	7	2.1	14	4.0	105	30.4	218	62.5	4.5187
The employment conditions at the hotel satisfy the work-life balance.	10	3.0	15	4.3	21	6.0	105	30.2	196	56.5	4.3314
Managers are trained to select, identify, guide, train, reward and retain the employees.	5	1.4	11	3.2	16	4.5	107	30.8	208	60.1	4.4467
There are flexible working hours at the hotel.	9	2.6	10	3.0	11	3.2	111	32.0	206	59.2	4.4265
Provide meaningful pay differentiation to high performers through the base and variable pay.	7	2.0	12	3.5	14	4.0	105	30.4	209	60.1	4.4323

* SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Results of hypotheses test

Relationship between TM practices and employee retention

As shown in Table (5), there is a highly significant correlation at (0.01) level between TM practices and employee retention. The Spearman’s correlation is positive and strong, the ratio bigger than 0.9. The results also indicate that the TM practices variable has a strong relationship with the employee retention variable. As a result, the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between TM practices and employee retention variables was rejected. The existence of a relationship between TM practices and employee retention variables was supported.

Table (5): Relationship between TM practices and employee retention

Spearman	Variables		TM Practices	Employee retention	
	TM practices	Correlation		1.000	.940**
		Sig.			.000
		N		347	347
	Employee retention	Correlation		.940**	1.000
		Sig.		.000	
N			347	347	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Effect of TM practices on employee retention

It can be noticed from the results in Table (6) that the multiple correlation coefficient is 0.973 which indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between the research variables, i.e. TM practices and employee retention. Furthermore, it is noticed that the value of adjusted R² is very close to the value of R². If the adjusted R² is excluded from R² (0.947-0.946) = 0.001. This little shrinking of (0.001) means that if the model has been fitted when the whole population participates in the research, the higher variance in the outcome will be 0.001.

Table (6): The Effect of TM practices on the employee retention

Variables	ANOVA		Coefficients (a)	Model summary		
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>Adjusted R²</i>
		6116.77	.000 ^a		.973	.946
TM Practices			78.210			
Employee retention			12.020			

Also, the table above shows the probability of F-value and that it is significant at 0.05, which indicates that TM practices have a significant effect on employee retention, the effectiveness at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). Therefore, the null main hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative is accepted with the statistically significant effect at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) by TM practices on employee retention. Referring to the second sub-hypothesis H1; the sig value is (0.000), and it is significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). This indicates that the variable of TM practices

has a significant effect on employee retention at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). Therefore, the second sub-hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative is accepted with a statistically significant effect at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The influence of TM practices on retention of talented employees:

The researcher conducted multiple regression analyses to establish the influence of TM practices on the retention of talented employees among the hotels in Egypt. The findings are indicated in subsequent sections:

Table (7): Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate
1	.976a	.952	.952	.19678

Table (7) indicates the model summary. From the findings, R was 0.976, R square was 0.952, and adjusted R squared was 0.952. An R square of 0.952 implies that 95.2% of changes in retention of talented employees among the hotels in Egypt are explained by the independent variables of the research. There are however other factors that influence the retention of talented employees among the hotels in Egypt that are not included in the model which account for 4.8%. An R of 0.976 on the other hand signifies a strong positive correlation between the variables of the research.

Table (8): ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	264.005	3	88.002	2272.623	.000a
Residual	13.282	343	.039		
Total	277.287	346			

From the ANOVA Table (8), the value of F calculated is 2272.62 while F critical is 4.465. Since the value of F calculated is greater than F critical, the overall regression model was significant and therefore a reliable indicator of the research findings. In terms of p values, the research indicated .000 which is less than 0.05 and therefore statistically significant.

Table (9): Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-0.232	0.063		3.683	0.000
Employee Retention	0.129	0.342	0.124	0.377	0.706

The resultant regression equation becomes as following: **Y (regression coefficient) = - 0.232 (TM practices) + 0.129 (employee retention).**

Discussion

Interest in researching the TM concept, in terms of its definition, importance, and literature review, has increased, especially for academics and researchers. TM focuses on positioning the right person in the right place, encouraging employees to develop their qualifications and talent which, in return, serves to enrich and sustain the success of the organization (Chambers *et al.*, 1998). Prior research undertaken to research TM has mainly concentrated on the conceptualization of talent and TM, as well as TM practices. As a result, the purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of TM practices (i.e., attraction, retention, engagement, development, and work-life balance) on employee retention. The talented people were identified by giving a list of talented specifications to the department managers in each hotel and asking them to distribute the questionnaire to the workers who meet these attributes.

The findings of our research showed that there was a significant relationship between TM practices (independent variable) and employee retention (dependent), which agrees with most of the previous studies which stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between the variables. As regards the effect of TM practices on talent retention, the result of the present research revealed that there is a significant effect of TM practices on talent retention. These results supported the findings of Fishman (1998), who hypothesized that talent wants a big job, where they have responsibility for several functional duties, and where they can make decisions on their own. Besides, these results support the findings of Sheehan-Smith (2006), who argued that employee retention depends primarily on job satisfaction by implementing HRM practices and policies that aim at satisfying the employees' needs. Additionally, these results support the findings of Abbasi & Hollman (2000), who hypothesized that the aim of any hotel is not only to recruit personnel but also to maintain, develop, and retain such manpower. Hotels are recommended to put a technique for effective manpower retention. The retention plan should address each of the areas in which lack of commitment and dissatisfaction include pay, job performance, training, career development, commitment, conflict with managers, lacking group unity, recruitment, and selection promotion.

The results of this research have some managerial implications, which can help managers achieve their organizational goals effectively. It is clear from the results that management pays attention to attracting and retaining talent in the industry, hence the need to implement TM practices to improve the retention of talented people and enable them to obtain a competitive advantage in the market where they work. TM should be considered as more than just a theoretical concept, managers must convert their minds range from discussing TM practices informally to formally implementing them in all matters of A and B level employees, to get A level talents on the line of leaders, while B level from the employees must improve their skills at work.

Based on the above results and discussion the final hypotheses research model is presented in the following Figure (1):

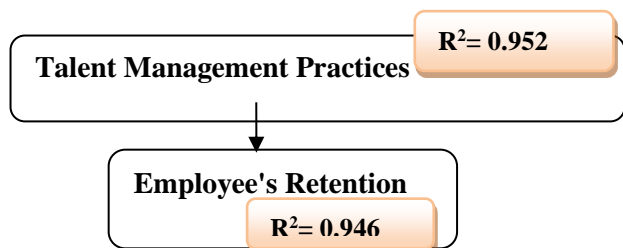


Figure 1: The Final Hypotheses Research Model

It is clear from the hypotheses of the research that there is a relationship and a direct effect between TM practices and the retention of talented employees in the five-star hotels in Egypt. It was shown on the regression model that, R was 0.976, R^2 was 0.952, and adjusted R^2 was 0.952. An R square of 0.952 implies that 95.2% of changes in retention of talented employees among the hotels in Egypt are explained by the independent variable of the research. There are however other factors that influence the retention of talented employees among the hotels in Egypt that are not included in the model which account for 4.8%. An R of 0.976 on the other hand signifies a strong positive correlation between the variables of the research. The results of testing research hypotheses are shown in Table 10.

Table (10): Results of Testing Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Testing Results
Hypothesis 1	
There is no relationship between TM practices and employee retention.	Rejected
Hypothesis 2	
There is an effect between TM practices and employee retention.	Supported

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to explore the impact of TM practices on the retention of talented employees. To identify the relationship between TM practices and employee retention, the research collected the required data through distributing well-administered questionnaire forms to a sample of 347 respondents representing 39 five-star hotels in great Cairo. The research also revealed that there is an effect of TM practices on talented employees' retention at the rate of 78.21. Hence, it is clear that good TM practices have a strong and direct impact on the retention of talented workers where it makes A-level employees on the line of leaders, while B-level from the employees will improve their skills at work.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations can be suggested as follows:

- 1- Hotels should care and support TM, and develop an action plan that includes all the practices that take place with the talented employees from recruitment, training, development, participation, and retention, and ensure that this plan is implemented with all its practices and at all levels in the hotel.
- 2- Talented employees should feel properly valued to stay in the hotel longer, and the hotel should prioritize social recognition and financial rewards with meaningful pay.
- 3- The hotel must provide all the means of support to attract talented people and keep them.
- 4- The hotel should prepare well job descriptions for each job and make regular updates on all jobs within the hotel, and train employees on these updates.

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ممارسات إدارة المواهب في الفنادق المصرية : منظور الاحتفاظ بالموهوبين

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الملخص العربي

إن الأسواق العالمية لها قدرة تنافسية عالية. لذلك ، لكي تستمر الشركات ، أصبح من الضروري أن تكون قادرة على التكيف والاستجابة للتغيير من حولها. يعتبر الموهوبون مصدر قوة لأي منظمة وسبب نجاحها، لذا يجب على المنظمات جذب الموظفين الموهوبين وتطويرهم والاحتفاظ بهم ، وخاصة أولئك الذين يمتلكون قدرات غير عادية. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التعرف على آثار ممارسات إدارة المواهب على الاحتفاظ بالموظفين في الفنادق المصرية. من أجل تحقيق هدف الدراسة ، تم تصميم استبيان واحد. تم توزيع 390 استبيان على الفنادق، قام الباحث بتوزيع 50 استبيان باليد على الموهوبين بشكل شخصي، أما باقي الاستبيانات (340 نموذج استبيان) وبسبب خصوصية الإدارة ، تولت إدارة الفنادق مسؤولية توزيعها على مديري ومساعد مديري أقسام الفنادق توزيع هذه الاستبيانات على الموهوبين في كل قسم. تم تحديد عينة نهائية من 347 استبيان على أنها صالحة للتحليل الإحصائي بمعدل استجابة 88.97٪. وللتحليل الإحصائي واختبار الفرضيات تم استخدام برنامج SPSS إصدار 23 . أثبتت الدراسة أن هناك علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين ممارسات إدارة المواهب والاحتفاظ بالموظفين في الفنادق ، وهناك تأثير إيجابي لممارسات إدارة المواهب على الاحتفاظ بالموظفين.

الكلمات الدالة: ممارسات إدارة المواهب، الاحتفاظ بالموظفين، الفنادق.