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EXPLORING THE CONCEPTUALISATION, PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES OF TALENT MANAGEMENT: *A CASE OF THE MINING QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY*.

By

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RESEARCH REPORT

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TALENT MANAGEMENT IN THE SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY: A CASE OF THE MINING QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

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A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education by a combination of coursework and research in

Johannesburg,
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ABSTRACT

This research explores the role of talent management with a specific focus on its implementation, processes, and practices. The primary objective of this research is to explore the current conceptualisation of talent management within the Mining Qualifications Authority and to delve into the practices associated with the identification and development of internal talent. This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine key issues in workplace talent management employing a case study method. Utilising qualitative techniques, including in-depth interviews, the study captures the experiences and practices related to talent management. The research utilised strategic tools, specifically the Talent Management Pipeline Framework and Caruso's nine-grid box, to understand effective talent development and succession planning. The findings illuminate critical challenges within the realm of talent management, including issues of misalignment with organisational goals and deficiencies in evaluation systems. Notably, the study highlights the increasing reliance on informal development methods, emphasizing the role of organisational context in comprehending the intricacies of talent dynamics. Despite positive progress, a critical gap exists in the Mining Qualifications Authority's talent management practices. Cascio and Aguinis' three-fold approach is advocated for aligning employee identification with broader organisational goals. This study highlights the limitations of relying solely on education in talent management, emphasizing that a proficient employee exceeds mere educational qualifications. The research proposes a paradigm shift in talent management strategies, advocating for a broader scope that includes learning, knowledge, talent, skill development, and dynamic skill sets beyond traditional educational boundaries. Embracing this holistic approach positions organisations for success in cultivating a workforce adaptable to the evolving demands of contemporary workplaces.

Keywords: Talent management, Sector Education and Training Authority, Mining Qualification Authority

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



CHRISTOPHER TEBOGO RAMCWANA

18 March 2024

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1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context of the study

Talent management has developed as a significant strategic priority for companies around the world, prompted by their desire to attract, develop, and retain competent workers who can help the company achieve its goals. In South Africa, the skills development landscape is supported by Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which have been created to tackle talent gaps in various industries (Letshaba, 2024). Among these, the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) plays a crucial role in guaranteeing that the mining sector, a substantial contributor to the South African economy, is provided with competent personnel.

Talent management in the field of human resources advanced rapidly in the early first century (Cappelli & Keller, 2017). Sparrow (2019) argues that talent management has undergone a substantial evolution and transformation because of six main enabling elements. This includes resourcing and development, competency-based movements, portfolio thinking for human assets, and forward-thinking HR planning strategies with long-term prosperity in mind. Workforce development programs like training or apprenticeships empower employees holistically. Moreover, Sparrow (2019) explains that the emphasis is on nurturing a learning-based environment for all staff regardless of seniority. This shift towards comprehensive talent management stems from global corporate practices and sectors advocating for people-centric approaches to enhance engagement, retention, productivity, and synergy worldwide. Similarly, Gallardor-Gallardor et al. (2015) argue that various underlying factors influence talent management and the trajectory of skill demand in diverse organisations worldwide.

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), one of South Africa's 21 SETAs, plays a distinctive and essential role in the country's skills development landscape (Mining Qualification Authority, 2023). According to Gamakulu (2016), the MQA was established to address the mining sector's specific training and educational needs. Its mandate includes facilitating qualification development, accreditation of training providers, and promoting the development of skills that are in line with the mining industry's evolving requirements (Gamakulu, 2016). Given the mining sector's history

and continued importance to South Africa's economy, the MQA's function is especially important in guaranteeing its long-term viability and competitiveness on a national and international scale.

Litvinenko (2020) mentioned that the mining sector is known for its capital and labor demanding nature, necessitating a workforce that is not only proficient in technology but also adaptive to constantly evolving technological, environmental, and regulatory environments. As the business evolves, fuelled by reasons such as digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and safety standards, the demand for a professional and competent staff grows. The MQA is responsible for tackling these difficulties through its talent management procedures, ensuring that the mining sector is supplied with workers who possess the required skills and knowledge.

However, the MQA's position in talent management is not without limitations. The mining industry, like many others, encounters challenges such as talent retention, skill mismatches, and the ongoing development of new competencies (Coculova & Svetozarovova, 2024). These issues are worsened by the industry's cyclical character, with boom and bust phases influencing job levels, training possibilities, and the sector's general appeal as a career destination. Furthermore, the MQA must manage the difficulties of South Africa's socioeconomic terrain, which includes historical injustices, educational system flaws, and regional differences in development that represent substantial impediments to effective skill development (Moraka, 2023).

The world of work is changing, and numerous factors shape talent management's significance. Elegbe (2010) highlights that globalisation, diverse economies, and political reforms in emerging nations are altering the nature of labour. Additionally, Djankov and Saliola (2019) argue that technological advancements are profoundly reshaping the skill sets required in workplaces. Organisations, aiming for competitive superiority, are compelled to not only meet stakeholder expectations but also ensure efficient performance in producing products and services. Consequently, the increasing expectations and pressures led to a growing need for optimising resource utilisation across time, materials, and equipment. These pressures and expectations are creating new directions and skill requirements for organisations. Stone and Deadrick (2015) argue that placing inevitable tension on individuals and workforces to

adapt to changing demands. Against this backdrop, this study will look into talent management in the Mining Qualification Authority.

1.2. Problem Statement

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), operating within the framework of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) as a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA), plays a vital role in developing and implementing Sector Skills Plans (SSPs) for the mining sector (Authority, 2019; Gamakulu, 2016). To fulfill its mandate, MQA must retain a highly skilled and informed workforce, as outlined in the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (Cosser et al., 2012; Mabena & Nengovhela, 2006). However, the dynamic nature of talent management within this knowledge-intensive environment presents significant challenges.

A critical issue is the lack of empirical studies that support the theoretical frameworks of talent management, leading to ambiguity and inconsistency in its conceptualization within the MQA (Letshaba, 2024). This makes it difficult to understand and effectively implement talent management strategies in organisational contexts. Moreover, challenges such as inadequate resources, lack of strategic approaches, unfavorable working conditions, and misalignment between talent management practices and organisational goals further complicate the MQA's efforts to manage talent effectively (Kock & Burke, 2017).

Additionally, the absence of robust systems to assess employee competencies and potential, coupled with the rising prevalence of informal and unstructured development methods, exacerbates these challenges (Schulte et al., 2020). Managers' lack of skills or motivation to invest in employee development further contributes to higher turnover rates and hinders the retention of skilled human capital, posing a significant threat to the organisation's success (Alrazehi & Amirah, 2020). Thus, this study investigated “the role of talent management”, emphasizing its implementation, processes, and practices within the Mining Qualifications Authority.

1.3 Rationale of the study.

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), as a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) under the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), is instrumental in shaping the skills landscape of South Africa's mining sector (Mining Qualification Authority, 2023). The effectiveness of the MQA in fulfilling its mandate hinges on its ability to manage and retain a skilled workforce (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014, 2021). However, the dynamic and complex nature of talent management within this environment presents several challenges that necessitate further exploration. Talent management is increasingly recognised as a critical component for organisational success, particularly in sectors that require specialized skills and knowledge (Al Aina & Atan, 2020; Hongal & Kinange, 2020). Despite its significance, there is a notable gap in empirical research concerning talent management practices within Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) like the MQA (Mining Qualification Authority, 2023). This gap results in a lack of clear, actionable strategies that can be implemented to effectively manage talent in these organisations. The absence of robust talent management frameworks and the challenges associated with resource constraints, strategic misalignment, and the use of informal development methods further complicate the MQA's ability to retain high-performing employees (Mining Qualification Authority, 2023).

The motivation for conducting this study stems from the urgent need to address these challenges. By focusing on the MQA as a case study, this research aims to contribute to understanding the existing talent management practices within SETAs and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, this research will contribute to the broader body of knowledge on talent management in the public sector, offering practical recommendations that can contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of talent management strategies in organisations operating in knowledge-intensive industries. Ultimately, this study is motivated by the desire to bridge the gap between theory and practice in talent management, ensuring that the MQA and similar organisations can better align their human resource practices with their strategic objectives. This alignment is crucial for the long-term sustainability and success of the MQA in fulfilling its role within the South African skills development landscape.

1.4 Significance of the study

The research on talent management within the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) is of critical significance for several reasons, particularly given the MQA's role as a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) in the mining sector (Authority, 2019; Mining Qualification Authority, 2023). Firstly, the study addresses a significant gap in the literature regarding the empirical foundations of talent management. While theoretical frameworks exist, their practical application in sector-specific contexts like the MQA remains underexplored. By investigating how talent management strategies are implemented within the MQA, the research provides valuable insights that can refine and enhance existing theoretical models, contributing to a more robust understanding of talent management in knowledge-intensive sectors.

Secondly, the findings from this study have the potential to directly impact the MQA's operational effectiveness. Talent management is crucial for the MQA's ability to fulfill its mandate under the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) (Authority, 2019). By identifying and addressing challenges such as resource constraints, strategic misalignments, and inadequate development systems, the research can help the MQA optimize its workforce management. This, in turn, can lead to better retention of skilled employees, improved performance, and more effective delivery of Sector Skills Plans (SSPs) across the mining sector.

Moreover, the research offers broader implications for other Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and similar organisations facing comparable challenges (Mining Qualification Authority, 2023). The insights gained from this case study can serve as a model for best practices in talent management, guiding these organisations in aligning their human resource strategies with their overarching objectives. This alignment is particularly crucial in sectors where specialised skills are in high demand and where the retention of talent is vital for maintaining industry standards and competitiveness.

Lastly, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on talent management by highlighting the importance of strategic alignment between talent management

practices and organisational goals. It underscores the need for robust systems to evaluate employee competencies and potential, and for managerial commitment to employee development. The research's findings can inform policy recommendations and practical interventions that enhance the effectiveness of talent management practices, ultimately benefiting both the MQA and the broader mining industry in South Africa.

1.5 Aim and research questions

This study aims to examine the conceptualization of talent management within the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), particularly concentrating on the identification and development of its internal talent.

1.6 Objectives of the study

i. To explore and analyse the conceptualization of talent management within the MQA.
ii. To investigate the processes and strategies used by the MQA to identify, develop, and prepare its talent pool for current and future organisational needs.
iii. To assess employees' experiences and perceptions regarding the effectiveness and impact of talent management practices within the MQA

1.7 Main research question

How is talent management conceptualised, particularly in terms of identifying and developing internal talent within the MQA?

1.8 Sub-questions of the study

i. How is talent management conceptualized within the MQA?
ii. How is a talent pool identified, developed in the MQA, and how are employees prepared for the current and future needs?
iii. What are the employees' experiences and opinions regarding talent management practices within the organisation?

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the critical role that talent management plays in the sustainability and competitiveness of South Africa's mining sector, particularly within the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA). The chapter has highlighted that the MQA is uniquely positioned to influence the mining industry through its skills development initiatives. However, the dynamic nature of the talent landscape marked by evolving technological, environmental, and regulatory challenges demands a more nuanced and strategic approach to talent management. While the MQA has made significant strides in developing talent through initiatives aligned with national goals, challenges such as talent retention, resource limitations, and skill mismatches persist. These obstacles, compounded by South Africa's socio-economic factors, require an enhanced understanding of talent management practices to ensure alignment with organisational objectives. Therefore, this study aims to examine the theoretical frameworks underpinning talent management such as human capital theory, and assess how these frameworks are applied within the MQA. By exploring the alignment between theory and practice, the study seeks to identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities that can be leveraged to improve talent management strategies, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of both the organisation and the broader mining sector.

1.10 Outline of the chapters

The rest of the dissertation is organised as follows:
Chapter 1 is the introduction to Talent Management in Sector Education and Training Authority investigating a case of Mining Qualification Authority. This chapter provided a general overview of what the rest of the report investigated. Chapter 2 is a review of the existing literature to contextualise the study. Chapter 3 described and justified the methodological approach that was applied in this study. Chapter 4 described the key findings that emerged from the data, and Chapter 5 located and discussed the findings within the context of the existing literature and draws similarities and contrasts it further presented the main conclusions and recommendations supported by the findings and highlighted the implications for practice, and further suggested potential areas for future research.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed the literature that is relevant in understanding Talent Management within the sectoral education and training authority. This section discusses talent management, its evolution, and its objectives, including its critics. It systematically breaks down complex ideas into clear, distinct components to enhance understanding. It emphasises the importance of identifying, developing, and retaining talent both internally and externally to enhance organisational performance. By focusing on key factors such as expanding developmental opportunities for employees, talent management aims to achieve a competitive advantage through the specific skills and knowledge of individual employees. The chapter reviews six key areas namely: Conceptual clarification of Talent Management based on existing literature, a critical analysis of the Talent Management concept, the relationship between Human Capital Theory and Talent Management, an overview of Human Capital Theory and its critiques, the role of succession planning within Talent Management and Frameworks for Talent Management and their processes.

2.2 Talent Management Conceptual Clarification and Concept Analysis

The core concept of talent management revolves around strategically placing individuals with exceptional skills in the right roles at the right time to meet both current and future organisational needs (Erasmus et al., 2019). Despite extensive research, there is still a lack of clarity around the exact meaning and implications of talent management, highlighting the need for further exploration (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). Collins et al. (2017) argue that there is confusion and lack of clarity among scholars regarding the definitions of "talent" and talent management. Kock and Burke (2017) define "talent" as individuals in crucial or mission-critical roles, including those with leadership potential. Schreuder and Coetzee (2013) characterise "talent" as individuals making an immediate or long-term difference in organisational performance through the display of exceptional potential. Wobodo et al. (2020) emphasise remarkable ability in specific work, suggesting that talent comprises an

individual's trainable or developable intrinsic qualities that confer a competitive edge. Erasmus et al. (2019) provide a comprehensive definition of talent, encompassing shared knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, values, habits, and behaviours, relevant to the study's focus.

The existing literature strongly indicates that the term "Talent" encompasses an individual's intrinsic attributes, comprising knowledge, skills, and capabilities, which are evaluated within the organisational setting, thereby demonstrating clear implications on outcomes (Maker, 2021). Simultaneously, the concept of "talent management" emerges as a strategic and methodical procedure, entailing the identification of individuals possessing the necessary knowledge, skills, and capabilities essential for diverse roles within the organisational context (Sandeepanie et al., 2024). The critical analysis of the literature supports the view that talent management is not merely a reactive process, but a forward-looking and unique approach geared towards achieving sustained organisational success through the optimal utilization of individual talents (Lenton, 2021).

In contrast, "talent management" emerges from human resource management, business, and related sectors, involving a systematic process wherein a company concentrates on employees with exceptional abilities and skills. This process, outlined by Schreuder and Coetzee (2013), encompasses various stages from sourcing to workforce renewal. Erasmus et al. (2019) frame talent management as a human resources strategy seeking to attract, develop, deploy, and retain talented and high-potential employees. Gallardor-Gallardo et al. (2015) define talent management as a systematic identification of key positions contributing differentially to sustainable competitive advantage. They highlight the development of a talent pool and differentiated human resources architecture for filling positions with competent incumbents and ensuring organisational commitment. It is crucial to highlight the insight provided by Gallardor-Gallardo et al. (2020) that, beyond the diverse definitions available, the significance of the organisational context is paramount in determining the talent necessary for achieving optimal company performance. This resonates with Gallardor-Gallardo et al. (2017) argument, highlighting the need for defining talent management within a specific organisational framework to facilitate effective implementation.

To delve into the essence of employee development, one must appreciate its significance as a requirement in the talent management spectrum. Yusuf (2019) knowledge for future work. It adopts an integrated approach that harmonizes with diverse activities to stimulate behavioural changes. Yusuf (2019) emphasis on a holistic and integrated approach aligns with the principles of effective talent management and succession planning. In the context of talent management, organisations must not only identify high-potential individuals but also provide them with developmental opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills. This aligns with Yusuf's notion of development as a process that stimulates behavioural changes.

The evolution of the "war for talent" concept, pioneered by The McKinsey Group, has significantly shaped the discourse around talent management (Erasmus et al., 2019). This notion, born out of the scarcity of skilled individuals in the job market and corporate hierarchy, has led to intensified competition among organisations to secure these valuable resources (Cappelli & Keller, 2017). The ensuing "war on talent" has introduced key concepts like treating talented individuals as consumers, establishing differentiation systems, and managing a pool of talented individuals (Sparrow, 2019).

Historically, the development of talent management has been influenced by six enabling concepts, according to Sparrow (2019): resourcing and development, competency movement, portfolio thinking about human assets, growth of the human resource planning movement, knowledge workplaces, and intellectual shift. This emphasises the comprehensive nature of talent management, drawing from various strategies in human resource management, international business, and related sectors (Gallardor-Gallardo, Nijs, & Gallo, 2015; McDonnell et al., 2017). However, concerns have been raised about the conceptual clarity of talent management, with arguments that it lacks a solid theoretical foundation and is often rooted in a phenomenological approach (Cappelli & Keller, 2017; Gallardor-Gallardo et al., 2017; Sparrow, 2019).

The focus of talent management lies in the systematic acquisition, identification, development, engagement, retention, and placement of talents for sustainable competitive performance (Cappelli & Keller, 2017; Gallardor-Gallardo et al., 2017;

Sparrow, 2019). It aims to ensure that the right professionals are strategically placed at the right time to contribute to organisational objectives (Erasmus et al., 2019). Notably, talent management has expanded globally, yet there are acknowledged gaps in its efficacy and value provision (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011).

As the study transitions to address talent shortages, it becomes evident that organisations face significant challenges in aligning market demands with workforce skills (Closing the Skills Gap: What Workers Want, 2020). This misalignment impacts productivity and competitiveness, necessitating a re-evaluation of talent management strategies, including recruitment, training, and retention (Closing the Skills Gap: What Workers Want, 2020). The emphasis on continuous training and development programs stresses the imperative for organisations to bridge the gap between current employee skills and evolving industry requirements.

Considering talent shortages, the study highlights the crucial role of fostering a culture of continuous learning within organisations (Closing the Skills Gap: What Workers Want, 2020). Such a culture becomes essential for adaptability to new technologies and positions organisations to navigate uncertainties, sustaining competitiveness in a rapidly changing global landscape.

This critical examination demonstrates the formidable challenge that contemporary organisations encounter in the tripartite process of attracting, developing, and retaining talent, as elucidated by (Gallardor-Gallardo et al., 2020). The heightened complexities arise notably from factors such as brain drain, increased labour turnover, a scarcity of expertise in the labour market, and the spectre of unemployment, collectively amplifying the intricacies of recruiting and selecting new personnel (Zinyemba, 2014).

While the acknowledgment exists that more effective mechanisms are available for addressing recruitment and selection challenges, the narrative introduces an ethical dimension within the human resources domain. It highlights the potential ramifications of discretion, ethical considerations, and regulatory expectations within the recruitment process, emphasizing the risk of appointing individuals unsuitable for the organisational context (Mdletye & Hlongwane, 2019a; Murage et al., 2018). These

ethical dilemmas not only pose immediate challenges but contribute substantially to the overarching issues faced by organisations in securing and retaining the right talent.

The critical perspective not only highlights the complex nature of talent challenges but also establishes a clear link to the necessity for robust talent development strategies. The imperative for ethical discernment within the human resources sphere adds a layer of complexity and points out the pivotal role of talent management in addressing these formidable obstacles and fostering sustainable talent pipelines within the organisation.

The foregoing insights set the stage for a deeper exploration of a critical component of talent management such as succession planning. The next section of the study will delve into the connection between human capital theory and talent management, aiming to ensure the availability of talent when needed and shedding light on its implications within the broader framework of talent management. The linkage between talent pool development, talent shortages, and the imperative for continuous learning provides an understanding of the challenges and strategies in managing and developing talent.

2.4 Human Capital Planning and Talent Management

The comparison between Human Capital Theory and Talent Management highlights the significance of adopting a forward-thinking approach to human capital. This report argues that Human Capital Theory confines its focus primarily to education and assumes a linear correlation between education and productivity (Brown, Lauder, and Cheung, 2020). Talent Management offers a more dynamic and inclusive perspective. Schreuder and Coetzee (2013) emphasise the immediate or long-term impact individuals can make on organisational performance through exceptional potential, highlighting a broader view of talent that goes beyond academic achievements. Wobodo et al. (2020) contribute to this perspective by underlining remarkable abilities as trainable or developable intrinsic qualities that confer a competitive edge. As described by Schreuder and Coetzee (2013), talent management broadens the perspective by incorporating various intrinsic qualities beyond formal education.

The strength of Talent Management lies in its diverse mechanisms for talent development, extending beyond the traditional bounds of education. By embracing continuous learning, skill diversification, and individualized approaches, Talent Management aligns more closely with the evolving dynamics of the contemporary workforce (Brown, Lauder, and Cheung, 2020). In navigating the complexities of talent optimization, Talent Management emerges as an adaptive framework, emphasizing the importance of a holistic understanding of human capital going beyond the confines of educational attainment (Maker, 2021).

The Human Capital Theory (HCT) highlights its structured framework yet necessitates critical scrutiny (Brown et al., 2020). The discourse emphasises a pivotal shift toward forward-thinking approaches (Becker, 1993). This transition is deemed essential for navigating the dynamics of talent optimization in the constantly evolving professional landscape (Marginson, 2019). The imperative of embracing a holistic understanding of human capital that surpasses educational attainment, recognizing the complex nature of skills, experiences, and intrinsic qualities in shaping a resilient and adaptive workforce (Schultz, 1961).

A noteworthy consideration pertains to the discourse concerning the interrelation of Human Capital Theory (HCT) and the Knowledge Economy. This examination highlights the acknowledged economic significance ascribed to individual expertise, comprehension, and competencies, as posited by (Tan, 2014). HCT contends that strategic investment in education and training is imperative, providing individuals with the means to enhance their skills, knowledge, and expertise, consequently amplifying productivity, and elevating income status (Sullivan, 2022). This alignment with the Knowledge Economy points out a shared emphasis on the pivotal role of knowledge in propelling both financial growth and societal advancements over an extended temporal continuum, as elucidated by (Akude, 2014). These perspectives demonstrate how the development of individuals, education, and knowledge are all interconnected. They aid in improving society and enhancing the economy.

According to Erasmus et al. (2019), the exploration of talent identification and development within the context of talent management is a critical endeavour that aligns with the broader strategic objectives of organisations. More importantly, internal

talent development is becoming increasingly critical as talented individuals are becoming scarcer and there is generally a global competition to acquire them. (Kaliannan et al., 2023). Talent management, as articulated by Armstrong and Baron (2018), is a comprehensive process that goes beyond mere recruitment and retention, it encompasses a strategic and proactive approach to identifying, nurturing, and leveraging the potential of individuals possessing exceptional skills. Additionally, Shikweni et al. (2019) introduced a compelling perspective on talent growth, emphasizing the importance of leveraging development opportunities. Their approach advocates cultivating essential skills, enabling talent to fulfil their roles more, and adopting a blended strategy that focuses on meeting the future needs of the organisation. Mere attraction and retention of highly skilled individuals are deemed insufficient for ensuring sustained organisational performance (Wobodo et al., 2020).

Cascio and Aguinis (2014) proposed a comprehensive three-fold approach to human capital planning, which intersects with the process of employee identification. Table. 1 presents the three-fold approach:

Table 1 Cascio and Aguinis (2014) three-fold approach

Steps	**Description**
Step One	Identifying and understanding the skills, competencies, and potential of current employees is essential for effective talent management and workforce planning. By assessing individual strengths and weaknesses, organisations can align employees with suitable roles and responsibilities to maximize internal talent.
Step two	Predicting future human resource needs involves analysing industry trends, technological advancements, and market dynamics to anticipate skill demands. By identifying gaps between current capabilities and future requirements, organisations can implement targeted development initiatives and recruitment efforts.
Step three	Utilizing gathered information to create action plans involves turning workforce insights into strategic initiatives. By using data on current employee attributes and future needs, organisations can develop tailored plans to address talent gaps, foster skill development, and ensure workforce readiness. This proactive approach helps

	organisations adapt to changing business conditions and stay competitive in the market.

Cascio and Aguinis (2014) proposed that companies must align their quest for high-quality employees with their overall objectives. By adopting this approach, enterprises can ensure they employ effective strategies in managing skilled personnel and achieving sustainable prosperity.

Gallardor-Gallardo et al. (2015) emphasise that talent management goes beyond simply identifying talented individuals; it must also involve the systematic identification of key positions within the organisation. They argue that this dual focus not only strengthens organisational sustainability but also enhances competitive advantage (Gallardor-Gallardo, Nijs, & Gallo, 2015). By integrating the identification of critical roles into talent management practices, organisations can better align their human resources with strategic objectives, ensuring that the right talent is placed in positions that drive long-term success and provide a competitive edge.(Gallardor-Gallardo, Nijs, & Gallo, 2015).

In the main, talent development entails the planning, selection, and implementation of developmental strategies to ensure that the organisation has the current and future supply of talent to achieve the strategic objectives and that development activities are aligned with the talent management strategies (Erasmus et al., 2019, p. 291). Expanding on talent development, the authors introduce four developmental methods, as depicted in Table. 2 below.

Table 2 Talent development strategies (Erasmus et al, 2019)

Programmes	**Descriptions**
Formal developmental programs	The program aims to improve the generic competencies of middle and senior management professionals. They include conceptual and skill-based development, personal development, feedback-based development, action-learning interventions

Relationship-based developmental experiences	It is used to develop the leadership capabilities and employability of high potentials. It includes functions such as coaching and mentoring, career counselling and guidance, and psychological support
Job-based developmental experience	It entails job activities as developmental opportunities. Jobs that take employees out of their comfort zone. They include some form of cross-functional activities which provide significant developmental opportunities
Informal developmental activities	These activities occur by chance and are experiential. They are unplanned and or unintentional with no specific outcomes.

The outlined developmental programs demonstrate the crucial role of talent development in sustaining alignment with an organisation's strategic objectives. The diverse range of developmental methods discussed highlights the necessity for a multifaceted approach to nurturing talent. This strategic focus on talent development is fundamental for organisations aiming to remain competitive and adaptive in today's ever-evolving professional environment (Erasmus et al., 2019).

Talent management extends beyond mere recruitment and retention, constituting a strategic and proactive approach to identifying, nurturing, and leveraging the potential of individuals with exceptional skills (Armstrong & Baron, 2018). This comprehensive process reflects an organisational commitment to aligning human capital with strategic goals. By recognizing and developing exceptional talent, organisations can cultivate a dynamic and high-performing workforce, positioning themselves for sustained success and a competitive edge in today's ever-evolving business landscape.

Training is another critical element of nurturing and cultivating employees. Training and development constitute a systematic process aimed at instigating change in work behaviour and enhancing competencies, encompassing knowledge, skills, and abilities, while also addressing employee motivation within the organisational context (Urbancová, Vrabcová, Hudáková, & Petru, 2021). A fundamental link between training and development and talent management lies in the efficacy of training programs in aiding organisations to pinpoint and foster potential talents. These

initiatives prove instrumental in identifying individuals demonstrating elevated aptitude or possessing specific competencies requisite for future leadership roles.

Yusuf`s (2019) makes a clear distinction between "training" and "development," offering a deeper understanding of their specific roles in talent management. According to Yusuf, "training" focuses on enhancing an individual's ability to perform specific tasks in their current role, addressing immediate skill needs. In contrast, "development" is a more comprehensive process aimed at broadening an individual's knowledge and skills for future roles, utilizing an integrated approach that encourages long-term behavioural changes. This distinction emphasises that while training is task-specific and short-term, development is future-oriented and geared towards overall growth (Yusuf, 2019). This clarification highlights the importance of both elements in a holistic approach to enhancing employee capabilities, aligning them with current tasks, and preparing them for future challenges. It is noteworthy to highlight that Ismael, Othman, Gardi, Hamza, Sorguli, Aziz, Ahmed, Sabir, Ali, and Anwar (2021) identified a correlation between training and development programs, establishing a direct influence on organisational effectiveness, progress, and development of key components for organisational success.

As argued by Karim (2019), organisations must prioritise enhancing the capabilities of their human capital, with training and development programs playing a crucial role in achieving impactful employee development. The intrinsic link between the success and effectiveness of an organisation and the knowledge and skills of its personnel is emphasised (Ismael et al., 2021). This demonstrates the significance of a proactive and multifaceted approach to talent development in contributing to organisational excellence.

Empirical research substantiates that offering comprehensive training and development opportunities exemplifies an organisation's dedication to employee growth and development (Harrison, Smith & Johnson et al., 2020). Employees who perceive value through continuous learning exhibit heightened engagement with their work, resulting in elevated levels of job satisfaction. This establishes a positive cycle, motivating talented individuals to remain within the organisation rather than exploring opportunities elsewhere.

Moreover, meticulously designed talent development programs play a crucial role in succession planning within talent management processes. A recognizable talent pool both inside and outside the organisation can be trained and developed progressively through talent management (Wobodo et al., 2020). Significantly, prioritizing internal talent development holds greater importance than emphasizing external talent acquisition, as emphasised (Dhanabhakyam & Kokilambal, 2014). This is attributed to the heightened challenges in securing talent externally, given the ongoing talent war or competition for scarce human resources, as outlined by (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Elegbe, 2010).

Employee identification and development is a complex process which need to incorporate the inclusive and exclusive talent management strategies McDonnell et al. (2017). They argue that both inclusive and exclusive strategies play a pivotal role in shaping effective talent management initiatives. This approach acknowledges the value of diverse talents while enabling targeted development strategies.

Contrarily, Kaliannan, Darmalinggam, Dorasamy and Abraham (2023) highlight organisations' tendency to prioritize exclusive talent development, focusing on external hiring or selecting elite performers internally. They argue that inclusive talent development, offering career opportunities to all employees regardless of performance, can enhance management efforts and foster employee retention. Their systematic review explores talent development's representation in talent management literature, its impact on individual and organisational performance, and current research limitations.

While inclusive talent management promotes diversity, it may face challenges such as measuring success and avoiding tokenism (Moss-Racusin, 2014). Conversely, exclusive approaches risk excluding valuable perspectives essential for organisational success. A constructive and balanced talent management strategy, as proposed by (Collings et al., 2017), involves navigating the dynamic interplay between inclusivity and exclusivity to optimize talent identification, development, and deployment.

This discussion shows the importance of organisations carefully considering the advantages and challenges of both approaches. Integrating inclusive and exclusive elements offers the potential to harness diverse talents effectively while ensuring targeted talent development. Striking this balance is crucial for maximizing organisational resilience, adaptability, and longevity in today's competitive landscape. More importantly, seamlessly integrating talent identification, development, and succession planning within a comprehensive talent management framework is essential for organisational success.

2.5 Criticisms of Human Capital Theory

In this section, Human Capital Theory and its main critiques are presented. Recognizing the pivotal role of knowledge and skills, aims at understanding their contribution to employee development and growth, robust business performance, and heightened competitiveness in the ever-evolving global landscape. The study dedicates attention to Talent Management, placing a significant emphasis on employee development as a catalyst for improving organisational efficiency. The strategic application of Human Capital Theory is viewed from the perspective of investing in the human capital of the organisation, as it attempts to augment competitiveness in the knowledge economy.

Galiakberova (2019) attributes the genesis of Human Capital Theory to T. Schultz, highlighting his pioneering role in extensive economic research. Schultz (1961) points out the paramount importance of investing in education, emphasizing the direct impact of knowledge and skills on an individual's production levels. This aligns with Human Capital Theory's core tenet of strategically assembling employees to contribute value to the organisation (Wright & McMahan, 2011). The Human Capital Theory's proposition of a direct correlation between educational investment and both individual and national success has shaped policy frameworks, as evidenced by studies such as (Brown, Lauder & Sin Yi Cheung., 2020). This highlights the enduring impact of Human Capital Theory on guiding policies that seek to enhance human capital development for broader societal and economic benefits.

However, the study implicitly suggests that Human Capital Theory is not immune to criticism. While recognizing its influence, the examination of Human Capital Theory in this study serves as a starting point for the exploration of its limitations and practical implications, especially concerning talent development. By focusing predominantly on educational investment as a primary driver of productivity, Human Capital Theory may oversimplify the complex nature of talent. This oversimplification has the potential to neglect other crucial aspects that contribute to effective human capital development within organisations, prompting an understanding of human capital beyond the educational lens.

Human capital theory, as articulated by Marginson (2019), suggests a relationship exists between education, labour productivity, and earnings. Moreover, Marginson (2019) explains that the theory implies that intellectual formation serves as a distinct form of economic capital, framing higher education primarily as a preparatory phase for the workforce, with the overarching assumption that educational attainment fundamentally dictates graduate outcomes.

Schultz`s (1961) concerns regarding the adequacy of education challenge the assumption that education automatically translates into talent and increased productivity. Moreover, Marginson (2019) outlines four major limitations of Human Capital Theory, casting doubts on its analytical robustness. The first limitation, the closed analytical system, suggests that HCT may not adequately account for external factors influencing human capital development. This limitation points to the theory's potential narrowness in addressing the complexities of real-world situations.

Brown et al. (2020) assert that Human Capital Theory theorists are pivotal, highlighting the variance in the returns to education within the framework. However, they argue that a critical examination of the core tenets reveals two questionable assumptions. Firstly, they indicate that the theoretical premise of homo economicus, assuming individuals act solely in their economic self-interest, raises concerns about oversimplification. Human behaviour is intricate and influenced by complex factors beyond economic logic. Secondly, they indicate that the assumption that reflects productivity oversimplifies the intricate relationship between educational investment and workplace output. Variability in job markets, technological advancements, and

systemic factors challenge the direct correlation between wages and productivity. These assumptions prompt a re-evaluation of the foundational principles of Human Capital Theory, urging a more distinct understanding that considers the complexities inherent in human behaviour and the evolving dynamics of the contemporary workforce.

While this perspective offers a structured framework, it warrants critical scrutiny, especially concerning its simplified view of the multifaceted dynamics influencing labour markets and individual career trajectories. The theory's assumption of a direct and linear correlation between education and productivity overlooks the influence of various socioeconomic factors, personal motivations, and evolving job markets, challenging the comprehensiveness of its explanatory power. When engaging with this theory, it is crucial to critically examine its premises and consider alternative perspectives that acknowledge the complexity inherent in the relationship between education, labour, and economic outcomes.

2.6 Succession Planning and Development

According to Erasmus et al. (2019), succession planning process encapsulates the identification of potential successors and their subsequent preparation for heightened responsibilities via targeted job assignments and developmental opportunities. This approach implies a proactive stance in talent management, aligning individual growth with organisational needs. The formation of a talent pool, as suggested, is a strategic outcome of this process, reflecting a deliberate effort to cultivate a reservoir of capable individuals ready to navigate and lead in more significant roles.

Erasmus et al. (2019) point out the significance of succession planning as an effective human resources system, challenging the conventional view of it as a mere replacement exercise. They posit that succession planning should encompass a broader and more proactive approach, integrating a comprehensive employee development system. The critical analysis of this perspective reveals a shift towards a more strategic and forward-thinking organisational mindset. By linking succession planning with employee development, organisations can foster a continuous talent

pipeline, preparing individuals not only for immediate roles but also for future leadership positions.

This argument aligns with contemporary human resources practices that recognise the dynamic nature of the business landscape. It emphasises the need for organisations to invest in the growth and readiness of their workforce, ensuring adaptability to evolving challenges. Erasmus et al. (2019) study provides a constructive argument for redefining succession planning as a holistic process that goes beyond mere replacements. Embracing a comprehensive employee development system within succession planning positions organisations to proactively manage talent, contributing to long-term organisational sustainability and success.

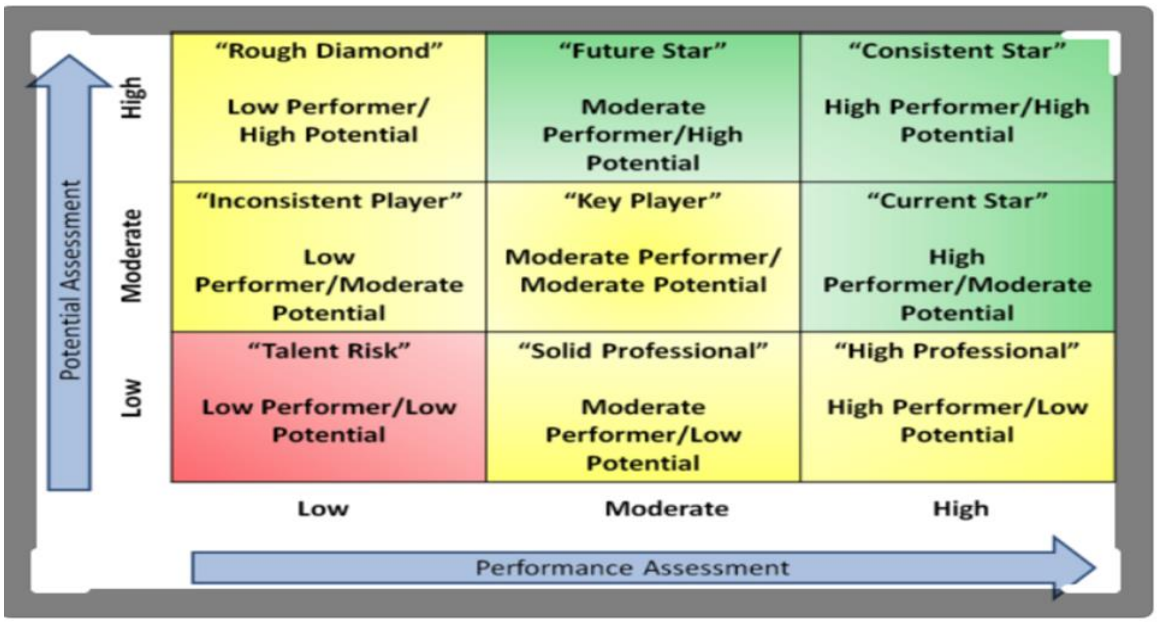
Kock and Burke`s (2017) study emphasises that cultivating succession depth begins with effective talent planning, incorporating workforce planning and talent identification. The assessment of employees' performance, potential, and readiness for vertical and horizontal advancement becomes crucial. Succession planning entails the identification of potential leaders capable of assuming critical positions in the future, especially when incumbent leaders retire or transition from their roles (Noe et al. 2017).

Wobodo et al. (2020) emphasise a blended approach in developing skills for current and future organisational roles, leveraging diverse development opportunities. In contrast, Luthans and Youssef (2004) focus on enhancing organisational capacity through distinct strategies such as human resource training, cross-functional teams, vicarious learning, positive feedback, goal setting, and process-oriented methods. While both perspectives aim at talent development and creating a talent pool, Wobodo et al. stress an integrated skill-development approach, whereas Luthans and Youssef highlight specific, strategic methods for organisational enhancement.

Caruso (2012) nine-grit box presents a comprehensive framework for classifying employees according to their performance and potential, spanning from "Low Performers with Low Potential" to "High Performers with High Potential." This categorization not only aids in understanding individual contributions but also provides

strategic insights into organisational impact. By discerning between key players, current stars, rough diamonds, and consistent stars, Caruso's model becomes a valuable tool for harmonizing talent development initiatives with succession planning efforts. This comprehension of employee dynamics lays the groundwork for strategic talent management, enabling organisations to allocate resources effectively, nurture high-potential individuals, and cultivate a pipeline of future leaders and contributors. The nine distinct groups offer a perspective, acknowledging specific employee characteristics that contribute to organisational impact.

Figure 1 Caruso's (2012) nine-grit box



The first category, which includes individuals with low performance and potential, is rightly identified as posing a high risk to organisations. This recognition emphasises the understanding that those who have limited growth potential may not significantly contribute to organisational success. The "Solid Professional" category acknowledges individuals with moderate performance but low potential and highlights the importance of consistent professionalism even in roles without expectation for high-performance results. Moreover, the "High Professional" group addresses one paradox involving highly performing persons having limited prospects for personal advancement; this acknowledgment recognises their challenges within long-term strategic planning and succession management efforts.

This framework suggests that different employees in the organisation must be classified according to their potential and performance standards. Eventually, when these two vary together, they provide a classification of whether the employee is a low or top performer. This insight is crucial for tailoring development plans to individual capabilities and aspirations.

The categorization framework presented offers a robust method for evaluating individuals' performance and potential within organisational contexts. It effectively delineates different levels of performance and growth potential, facilitating a nuanced understanding of employees' contributions and challenges. Recognizing the risks associated with low-performing individuals and the value of consistent professionalism enables organisations to align talent management strategies with long-term objectives. However, the acknowledgment of high performers with limited growth potential underscores the intricacies inherent in succession planning and strategic talent management. While this framework provides valuable insights for enhancing organisational effectiveness, it's crucial to heed Collings et al. (2017) call for a balanced talent management strategy. By navigating the interplay between inclusivity and exclusivity, organisations can optimize talent identification and development while mitigating the risk of isolation and demotivation among employees.

2.7 A Conceptual Framework for Talent Management

According to Erasmus et al. (2019), it is crucial to recognise the distinction between human resource management and talent management. They argue that while transactional HR activities are typically administrative in nature, talent management comprises a set of interconnected processes aimed at retaining potential and high-performing employees. In their perspective, an overarching talent management framework and strategy entail:

Table 3 Overarching Talent Management Farmwork

Strategy	**Description**
Attracting	In a context where there is a scarcity of skilled personnel, it is vital for the organisation to employ innovative approaches to attract and locate

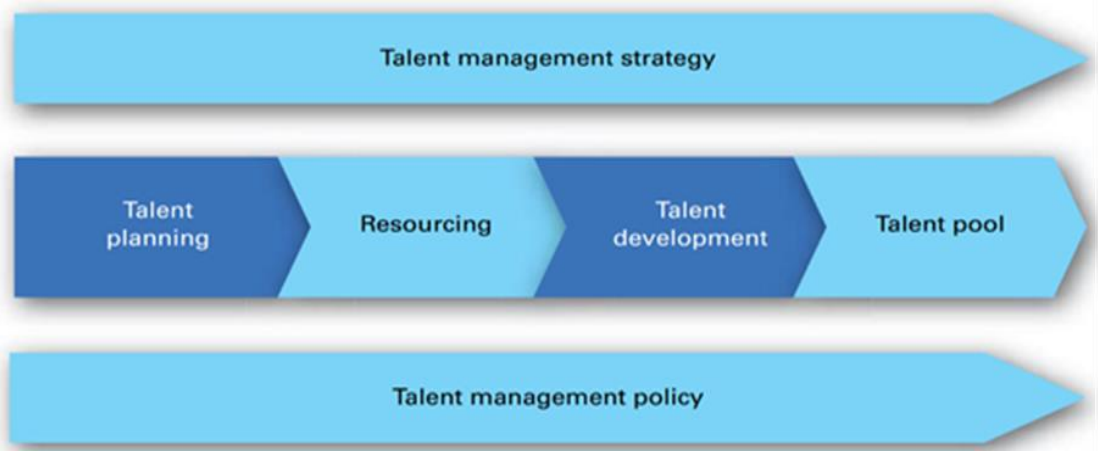
	suitable candidates. This involves integrating both internal and external recruitment methods to populate their talent pools effectively.
Developing	Establishing effective developmental practices is immensely advantageous in laying the groundwork for organisational success. This involves devising programs that cater to the requirements of high-potential, talented employees and aligning them with the anticipated future demands of key positions. Additionally, organisations should foster and endorse learning environments backed by appropriate policies and procedures.
Retaining	Organisations must prioritize efforts to retain high-potential, talented employees at all costs. The effectiveness of employee retention hinges on factors such as competitive compensation, organisational culture, job attributes, opportunities for training and development, a supportive work environment, and achieving a balance between work and personal life.
Transitioning	This dimension aims to facilitate smooth transitions for employees as they move into new roles, encompassing succession planning, internal mobility, retirement arrangements, and knowledge retention.

The strategic approach to talent management comprises four essential dimensions: attracting, developing, retaining, and transitioning employees (Erasmus et al., 2019). The attraction of skilled personnel is crucial in environments where there's a shortage of qualified workers achieved through inventive recruitment practices. Employee development via tailored programs safeguards organisational success while allowing for adaptability (Erasmus et al., 2019). Retaining talented staff members is necessary for continuity and is supported by various factors such as compensation, company culture, and work-life balance (Erasmus et al., 2019). Enhancing organisational agility with succession planning coupled with promoting internal mobility will ensure a seamless transition throughout the entire organisation. Overall optimizing these critical areas wholly optimizes talent management fostering sustained performance & growth within organisations.

When establishing a comprehensive theoretical framework in talent management that interlinks identification, development, and succession planning, it is crucial to examine Armstrong and Taylor's (2014) systematic methodology within the expansive field of talent management. Their approach can be visualized as a pipeline, as shown in

Figure 2, functioning within the constraints of talent strategy and policy. This process initiates with planning the optimal use of talents, followed by various resourcing activities and multiple developmental practices, thereby creating a broad pool of proficient individuals. For a more detailed depiction, refer to Figure 3.

Figure 2 Armstrong and Taylor's (2014) Talent management Pipeline



Central to their framework is the initial phase of talent planning, a critical component that entails the assessment of both current and future organisational requirements for individuals possessing specific skills and competencies (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). This foundational phase not only serves as a precursor to subsequent activities but also plays a pivotal role in pinpointing key positions and competencies essential for organisational success. Understanding the shades of this talent planning phase is paramount for establishing a cohesive and effective framework that aligns talent management strategies with overarching organisational objectives.

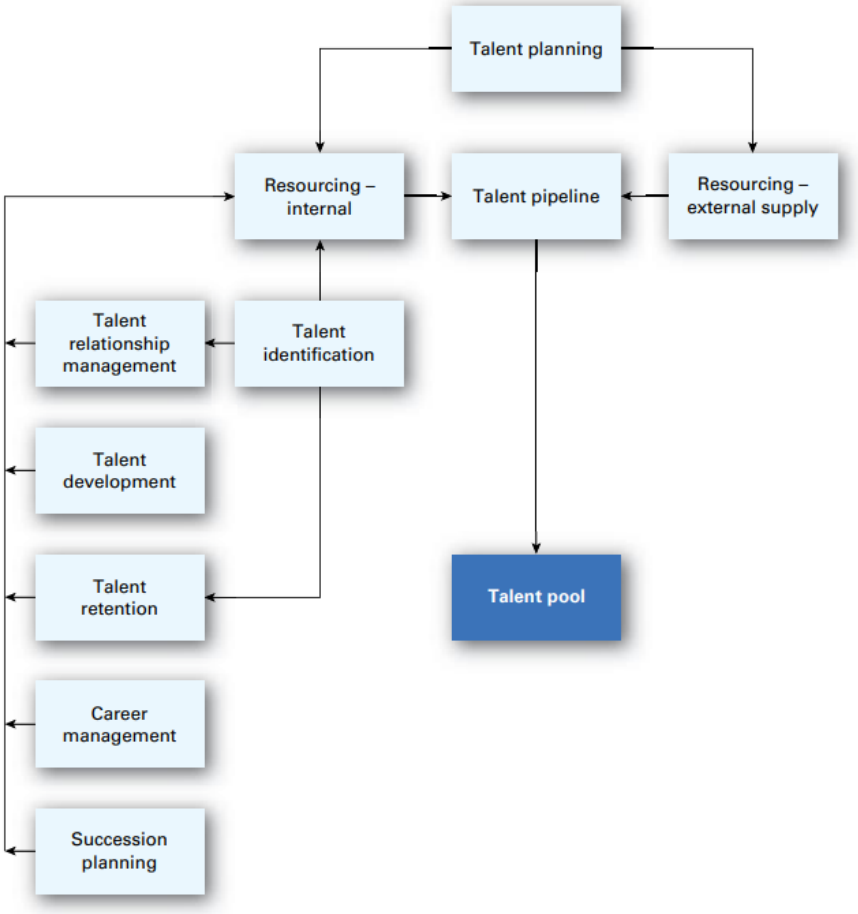
Following the foundational stage of talent planning, the subsequent phase of internal resourcing assumes pivotal significance, incorporating critical elements such as talent identification, career management, and talent development. As delineated by Armstrong and Taylor (2014), internal resourcing represents a strategic deployment of resources aimed at cultivating and enhancing internal talent pools. Central to this phase are learning and development policies that play a crucial role in equipping individuals with the requisite skills and competencies aligned with the overarching objectives of the organisation. In this compromising talent management environment,

the efficiency of internal talent nurturing is crucial. Since this may impact the success and sustainability of the organisation.

McDonell et al. (2017) challenge the viewpoint of concentrating solely on critical positions, arguing for an inclusive talent management approach that recognises the diverse contributions of all roles within the organisation, especially during economic fluctuations. Martin (2015) further emphasises the importance of fostering a culture conducive to talent agility, enabling organisations to navigate workforce changes and anticipate future human capital needs.

Armstrong's framework encompasses career management, succession planning, retention, development, and pipeline preparation, providing a comprehensive perspective on talent management (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). For this study's focus, attention is directed toward planning, talent pipeline development, and succession planning, emphasizing the strategic alignment of talent with organisational goals.

Figure 2 Armstrong and Taylor's (2014) Talent management Process



The given statement discusses Figure 2 as an improved version of the talent management pipeline framework that outlines a comprehensive process for developing talents within organisations. The primary planning stage, which utilises workforce planning techniques to align with established practices, is emphasised. This phase facilitates the creation of policies and strategies aimed at retaining talented individuals while attracting new ones through ongoing monitoring via talent audits.

The statement highlights that talent identification, development, and career management programs play a vital role in utilizing the internal talent pools of an organisation efficiently. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of talent audits as they are derived from performance management systems to assess eligibility for participation in developmental initiatives while providing guidance.

Acknowledging the strengths of the framework in its comprehensive approach and alignment with established practices, the statement also highlights potential areas for improvement. It suggests that there may be a need for additional clarity regarding the specific contributions of talent audits while stressing explicit considerations towards diversity and inclusion in talent development processes. Despite these areas requiring improvement, the overall assessment remains positive describing Figure 2 as providing solid foundations for organisations to develop their talents along with opportunities to refine them further enhancing their effectiveness.

Talent development policies and programs focus on enhancing skills and competencies, guided by employee success profiles (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Wobodo et al. (2020) highlight the benefits of proficient talent management, including increased productivity and alignment with organisational goals. However, Sparrow (2019) presents critical arguments, advocating for alternative approaches aligned with practical realities.

The inclusion of different frameworks and models discussed greatly contributes to developing a thorough comprehension of talent conceptualization within organisational contexts. The fundamental approach by Armstrong and Taylor lays down a sturdy foundation, establishing the structural basis for upcoming stages like

internal resource allocation, talent development, and succession planning. These stages synergistically boost the strategic coordination between talents with organisational objectives while providing an orderly direction for the effectual management of talents.

The inclusive perspectives of Martin (2015) bring a crucial dimension, emphasizing the adaptive nature of talent management to meet diverse demands in organisational contexts. This recognition highlights the importance of flexibility and responsiveness when navigating intricate landscapes related to talent within different work environments. Furthermore, Caruso's "Nine Grit Box" introduces a classification system that transcends simplistic performance assessments. The model provides strategic insights into making informed decisions about managing talents. By recognizing varied dynamics associated with employee potential, this approach contributes towards a better understanding of talent aligned with organisational objectives.

The integration of these models results in a conceptual framework that addresses the versatile challenges of talent management within organisational landscapes. This holistic approach acknowledges the interconnectedness between talent identification, development, and succession planning, offering organisations a comprehensive toolkit to navigate the complexity related to managing talents. Ultimately, this synthesis provides a strategic roadmap for an organisation’s optimized talent management strategies towards fostering resilience, adaptability, and sustained success even amidst dynamic competitive business environments.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter highlights significant shortcomings in the conceptualisation of talent and its management. Recognizing potential discrepancies in interpretations across the literature, there is an imperative for a more cohesive understanding of these terms within organisational contexts. The exploration of employee development highlighted its complex nature within the broader context of talent development and management. Talent management has been portrayed as a comprehensive process focused on enhancing knowledge for future work and stimulating behavioural changes.

Acknowledging the logical continuum within talent management, where individual development aligns with succession planning, emphasises a strategic approach to cultivating a reservoir of capable individuals aligned with organisational needs.

Transitioning to the link between Human Capital Theory (HCT) and Talent Management, the chapter highlights that HCT focuses primarily on education and assumes a linear correlation between education and productivity. Embracing continuous learning, skill diversification, and individualized development align more closely with the intricate and evolving dynamics of the contemporary workforce. Delving into talent identification and development, the chapter highlights their critical role in organisational strategic objectives. Cascio and Aguinis' three-fold approach aligns employee identification with broader organisational goals, optimizing talent management strategies. The integration of talent identification and development lays the groundwork for effective succession planning, ensuring a robust leadership pipeline.

Inclusive and exclusive talent management strategies advocate for a balanced approach, recognising the value of diversity while ensuring precision in talent acquisition. Comprehensive framework offers valuable tools for classifying employees and enhancing the talent management pipeline, which contributes to a nuanced understanding of talent (Van Zyl, 2017). Collectively, the various frameworks form a toolkit for organisations to optimise talent management strategies, to foster resilience, adaptability, and sustained success in dynamic business environments.

3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As per Babbie and Mouton (1998), research methodology encompasses the process of performing research alongside the tools and procedures employed. It involves selecting the most appropriate research methods for the study. This Chapter elaborates comprehensively on the research methodology adopted for this study. It includes a detailed assessment of the study's approach, the reasons behind participant selection, methods of data collection, analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Additionally, it summarizes the challenges encountered throughout the study.

3.2 Research Design

The research design process entails planning a scientific investigation and developing a strategy for discovering something (Mouton & Marais, 1996, p. 72). This study adopted a qualitative research method, Merriam (2009, p. 13) defines qualitative research as "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seeks to describe, decode, translate, and come to terms with meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomenon in the social world". The research design of this study focused primarily on the conceptualisation and surfacing of talent management practices within the MQA as a SETA. In addition, it examined the policies and strategies in place, as well as employee perceptions of talent management. This method aids the research in achieving the study's objectives. To investigate a complex and relatively new concept that is still undergoing critical review, an in-depth study is required; thus, a qualitative approach was used.

To conduct adequate research for the organisation under review, the investigation employed the case study method. A case study is "characterised by its emphasis on an individual unit" and "thickly described case studies take multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, p. 281). This method applies against this backdrop to ensure that the organisation is thoroughly

examined, analysed, and understood within its context and approach. The unit of analysis is the MQA as a SETA that is studied, selected, and investigated.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

The sampling method considered the sample to be chosen, sampling methods, sampling size, and data collection method. Because the study used a qualitative approach, only a few participants were chosen to provide comprehensive responses to the question under consideration.

In this study, a non-probability sampling method was used. This is because the question required specific individuals with knowledge of the subject for interview purposes. This type of research is used when the researcher "can't select the probability sample used in a larger-scale survey," according to (Babbie & Mouton, 1998, p. 66). Furthermore, they state that researchers can choose from four types of sampling: reliance on available subjects, purposive or judgmental sampling, snowball sampling, and quota sampling (p. 166). As a result, the researcher had to make use of purposeful sampling, which is the process of selecting a smaller group from a larger population (Van Zyl, 2014). As a result, participants were purposefully carefully selected because they hold positions within the MQA's talent management value chain.

Participants chosen hold positions of responsibility in areas ranging from governance to strategic development and operations, and some are implementers in issues relating to the broader spectrum of human resource development. Some of the participants, however, are recipients of talent management systems, programs, and initiatives. To that end, every individual involved in the human resources function is chosen as a participant, including Board members, Executives, Managers, Specialists, Operational managers, Operational Specialists, and Beneficiaries. Purposive sampling is defined as a suitable selection of the researcher’s sample based on the researcher’s own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of the researcher’s research aims (Mouton, 2001, p. 166).

To ensure representativeness, a group of 17 participants from various departments and positions within MQA was included in the study. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I was able to secure 11 participants for interviews. The participants were purposively chosen because they have a direct or indirect impact on talent management in the MQA. The table below depicts the organisation's category, the position of the chosen participant, the motivation for their selection, and the sample size.

3.4 Research Participants

The participants selected for this study hold key positions within the human resources function, encompassing roles such as Board members, Executives, Managers, Specialists, Operational Managers, and Operational Specialists. Seven participants bring a wealth of experience, with over 5 years in their specific operational areas, ranging from Manager to Board member. This group of experienced participants was further categorised into three groups: human resources specialists (4 participants), operational managers (3 participants), and the remaining four participants who are beneficiaries of talent management interventions.

The selection of these 11 participants was based on their direct involvement and comprehensive understanding of talent management interventions from an organisational standpoint, with many serving as process owners. This ensures a diverse and informed perspective on the topic, contributing to a robust exploration of talent management practices within the organisational context.

Table 4 Categories of participants

Category	**Motivation for inclusion in Sample**	**No of participants**
Human Resources Specialists	To help manage talent in the organisation, human resource specialists formulate strategies for training, skill enhancement, and improving the working environment. They assist in developing the talent management strategy by formulating methods for achieving talent management objectives.	4

Operational Managers	These managers oversee identifying talented individuals/pools. They are crucial in ensuring that employees are developed in accordance with the organisation's/departmental objectives and strategies. They are also responsible for ensuring the implementation of talent management initiatives and strategies.	3
Talent management programme Beneficiaries	Employees in acting positions (vacant senior positions) as well as those recruited through graduate internship programs. These employees were invited to participate to learn more about their talent management programs, which include structured training and skill development, mentoring, coaching, guidance, support, and monitoring & evaluation programmes. The goal is to determine if these programs produce any beneficial outcomes in terms of exposure to different tasks and functions, opportunities for growth, training, skill development, progression, and succession to senior roles after the programs are completed.	4
Total Number of Participants		**11**

As shown in the table above, eleven employees were interviewed, three of whom were human resources specialists, three operational managers, and four beneficiaries of talent management initiatives. The next section presents detailed findings and analysis, including verbatim extracts of statements from interviewees in response to the research question.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study used in-depth face-to-face interviews that allowed the researcher to ask probing and follow-up questions. Babbie and Mouton (1998, p. 291) state that "A depth interview is a process where the researcher is not all that interested in the content of the conversation but rather in the process by which the content of the conversation has come into being". The researcher embarked on an exhaustive exploration of Talent Management within the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), primarily relying on face-to-face interviews with 11 participants for data collection. However, logistical constraints prompted the incorporation of online Zoom interviews for select individuals, ensuring inclusivity in the data-gathering process. To guarantee

comprehensive documentation, all interview sessions were meticulously recorded, irrespective of the format employed.

While most interviews maintained approximately 45 minutes, exceptions arose, particularly in discussions involving specialists, where participants' enthusiasm led to extended durations as they shared additional insights. Tailored interview questions focused on participants' roles in the talent management process, delving into their perspectives and conceptualisations of talent management within the organisational context.

The research scrutinized various methodologies for talent identification and development, shedding light on the processes employed to recognise and nurture talent within organisations. Additionally, challenges in talent management were identified, underscoring the importance of aligning talent management strategies with organisational objectives. Furthermore, the inquiries delved into the critical role of succession planning and talent development in ensuring sustained business viability and competitiveness. The participants were also tested on practical insights for organisations aiming to refine their talent management practices emphasizing. The significance of coherence between talent management strategies and organisational goals for long-term success.

3.6 Data Quality Control

Data quality control ensures that the information and data collected are correct, credible, and of high quality (Miles, 1979). This process ensured that the findings were trustworthy and reliable.

3.6.1 Reliability

The concern of reliability is whether a particular technique, when applied repeatedly to the same object, produces the same result each time (Babbie and Mouton, 1998, p. 119). Reliability occurs when a test measures the same thing more than once and will result in the same outcomes (Miles, 1979). By gathering information from various sources and employing various data collection techniques, the researcher ensured

that the study's results were measurable when compared to other studies of a similar nature.

3.6.2 Validity

The concern of reliability is whether a particular technique, when applied repeatedly to the same object, produces the same result each time (Miles & Huberman, 1984). By gathering information from various sources and employing various data collection techniques, the researcher ensured that the study's results were measurable when compared to other studies of a similar nature.

3.6 Qualitative Data Analysis

Drawing on Mouton (2001, p. 490), the study adopts a comprehensive perspective on qualitative data analysis, encompassing all forms of analysis applied to data collected through qualitative techniques, irrespective of the underlying research paradigm. In alignment with this conceptualisation, the researcher employed a content analysis approach to analyse the data in this study.

The research process followed a systematic and logical sequence, guided by predefined research objectives and questions. Initially, the researcher outlined these objectives to serve as a framework for the subsequent content analysis. To define the scope of the analysis, specific content, derived from in-depth interviews, was identified, and transcribed from audio to text. Upon transcribing the data, the researcher engaged in a careful reading process, categorising information according to responses that aligned with the research questions.

To ensure a coherent and logical analysis, the researcher created themes and codes that corresponded to the established research objectives. These codes and themes were systematically applied to relevant segments, enhancing the overall readability and analytical flow of the data. The subsequent analysis aimed to identify patterns, trends, relationships, similarities, and overarching themes within the dataset.

To further structure the findings, the researcher establishes main themes with topics and subtopics addressing the research questions and objectives. The interpretation of these findings was rooted in the initial research objectives, allowing for the extraction of key insights, implications, and conclusions. These derived insights were then contextualised within the broader research framework, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of their significance. The presentation of the findings adhered to a coherent structure guided by the original research objectives, contributing to a systematic and orderly academic analysis. The below table depicts how data was categorised and analysed.

Table 5 Data analysis Table

THEMES	DATA EXTRACTS	KEY WORD IN THE EXTRACT	Category	DOCUMENT
Talent Management Conceptualisation	it is when you have the ***right competencies***, the ***right knowledge, and skills***, to be able to ***execute your job plus execute other responsibilities***, when you are given additional responsibilities over and above what you are employed to do, you excel	• Right Competencies • Right Knowledge and skills • Execute responsibilities of self and others	**Operational Specialist**	OPSMZ1, Pos. 24
	One says a ***natural talent***, ***a gift***, for, for lack of a better word, somebody who has some ***inborn talent*** and a person who has to perform a specific thing. And that thing is so ***unique*** to that person that you may not find it in other people. Okay. One of the most important things about talented if you are talented, you must not be a ***hard worker*** talent without work, there is a relationship between talent and work	• Natural talent • A gift or Inborn talent • Uniqueness • hard worker		OPSML2, Pos. 17&19
	A talented person is a person who has reached a certain level of ***competence*** that now, that person can be defined as ***fitting the responsibility level of the***	• Competence • Fitting the responsibility levels of decision-making		OPMX3, Pos. 16

	decision-making level of a particular role. I call competence or in other words, he has ***both the skill and the requisite knowledge*** to perform at that level	• Possesses knowledge and skills		
	a talented individual is, the term talented, should not be used in isolation, the term is used when you are rating an employee's performance. A talented person will be the person who was ***appealing***, and who ***performs simply above average*** for HR managers, we all always say a talented person is able to do ***their job better with the least supervision*** when compared to other people, they are able to ***solve complex situations***.	• Appealing • Above average performance • Better performance with less supervision • Solve complex situations	**Human Resources Specialist**	HRSPB2, Pos. 10
	talented individuals exhibit ***higher levels of commitment*** one, two ***high levels of interest***, and ***high levels of productivity*** in the workplace. Okay, so they, these are individuals that are that are ***super-fast, super-efficient***, and they that there's that individual, ***individual organisational fit***, that is that is ***near perfection***, so this person comes to work or even if you don't see them, you know, that they are doing their best wherever they are, in ***pursuit of an organisational objectives***. So, okay, so those talented individuals love what they do, they give their best in terms of latent talent,	• High level of commitment, interest, and productivity • Super-fast and supper-efficient, These individuals are organisational fit • Near perfection • They pursue organisational objectives		HRSPT3, Pos. 19

3.7 Ethical Considerations

I obtained informed consent from participants during the interview sessions. In this case, the participants were informed of their rights by emphasising that this is a

voluntary participatory process. I informed the participants that they were free to leave the process at any time. Furthermore, the participants were given consent forms to fill out and sign to agree to participate in the study. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, nature, and the type of information that will be gathered. They were similarly informed about how the information would be used and some of the consequences of their participation as research contributors.

Throughout the study, the researcher ensured that confidentiality was maintained. The information and data gathered and gained during the interview process were treated as confidential and presented in a way that ensured anonymity. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that other participants' information was not disclosed to other participants; as a result, the confidentiality of others' responses was fully maintained, secured, and kept safely. The researcher ensured that the participants' identities were protected and kept private. Participants were given a code, instead of using their names to protect their identities when reporting the research findings. Below is a summary code used for each participant,

Table 6 Code names of participants

Category	**Code name**
Human Resources Specialists	HRSPB2
Human Resources Specialists	HRSPY1
Human Resources Specialists	HRSPT3
Human Resources Specialists	HRSPN4
Operational Managers	OPMX3
Operational Managers	OPSML2
Operational Managers	OPSMZ1
Beneficiaries	BRTBS1
Beneficiaries	BRPM2
Beneficiaries	BRAY3
Beneficiaries	BRSI4

The complete dataset, comprising recorded interview tapes and transcripts, was securely stored in locked metal file cabinets within the researcher's office. Following

an appropriate duration, as recommended by (Ivankova, 2002, p. 62), the data shall be disposed of per established protocols.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

Due to practical constraints, this research report cannot provide a comprehensive review of other SETAs' practices as this would necessitate the inclusion of many SETAs to ensure equal representation. This process makes generalisation difficult because the opportunity to extend the study to other SETAs is not available. However, because of the similarities between and among SETAs, the findings can be applied in a variety of contexts. Another consideration is the race and gender issues. Because this study used purposive sampling, where participants were strategically sampled based on their understanding of the topic, it is difficult to balance race, gender, and age. Furthermore, the researcher was unable to locate a white male, male and female Indian, as well as a female coloured. It is important to note, however, that the researcher was unable to reach only one category of participant, and that category was a labour representative. Despite this, all other categories were interviewed, with a minor shortage of 1 or 2 participants in each. The age-related difference between races was not realised. The study was unable to reach individuals from various organisations who lived in different provinces.

Similarly, attempting to probe an emerging and evolving phenomenon that has not been thoroughly defined and appears to lack a solid theoretical foundation presented its own set of challenges. Talent management thinking and practice are still emerging and developing in the South African context, particularly within SETAs. This means that it is frequently misunderstood by certain professionals. Second, some regard it as a contentious and contested approach to value creation within organisations. Trying to navigate the unclear terrain, especially when coupled with a greater extent of controversy at times, results in the researcher frequently finding it difficult to produce accurate responses to the investigations. As a direct consequence, the first is a need to balance, at times opposing, priorities, which can be challenging. The first struggle is the need for clarification in the presentation of results and analysis, and the other one is the need to give voice to the ambiguity and contradiction expressed

by research respondents as truthfully as possible. There could be additional constraints not addressed above that the research study is unaware of.

3.9 Conclusion

The methodology of the study was laid out in this section. The highlights are the data collection and analysis processes, and the ethical considerations of the study. The subsequent chapter will present research findings and analysis in the format of case studies wherein data presentation is intertwined with analysis. Even though it is inevitably simplified, it is internally consistent and minimizes the chance of data presentation and analysis becoming disorganised.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the Sector Education and Training Authority's exploratory case study that was employed to gain insight into how talent management is conceptualised, implemented, and practiced ensuring its effectiveness in this workplace setting. The interview transcripts were read, categorised, and aligned to the research sub-questions. These questions are; how is talent management conceptualised within the MQA; how does the MQA identify a talent pool, develop, and prepare employees for the current and future needs; what are the employees' experiences and opinions regarding talent management practices within the organisation. This chapter will therefore highlight three main topics, which each describe the findings through various themes that have emerged from the data. The first topic outlines the participants' understanding of concepts of Talent management within the organisation. The second topic focuses on processes within the MQA and how they identify talent and prepare employees for organisational needs. The final topic foregrounds employees' perceptions of talent management practices within the organisation.

4.2 Conceptualisation of Talent and Talent Management

This section highlights two main concepts; talent and talent management. The findings show that although there are differences in approaches and explanations, there is alignment in how MQA understands talent management.

4.2.1 Different perspectives on defining talent.

In this section, the study delves into the conceptual understanding of what talent means to the participants. To obtain a complete understanding of how human resource specialists and the broader operational specialists perceive talent management, this study investigated their definitions of "talented individuals" and "high performers." The responses demonstrated diverse perspectives that introduced interesting views with occasional conflicts. However, most participants exhibited some level of agreement in

comprehending these concepts. Upon examination, this research revealed an insufficient grasp by some individuals within the organisation regarding its talent management structure. This observation highlights a possible lack of clarity affecting the understanding of talent because of inadequate definition documentation within its context.

4.2.1.1 Talented individuals exhibit higher levels of commitment, interest, and productivity.

The researcher collected various statements that participants used to depict a "talented individual." Essentially, they comprehended that an ideal candidate should be well-suited for the organisation with immense dedication and engagement in it. Furthermore, competence, skills, and knowledge are requisite attributes allowing them to solve intricate problems even without supervision. Such individuals possess natural talents coupled with efficient work techniques fast enough while bearing decision-making capacities depending on their hierarchy level, also, being more concerned about fulfilling company objectives first as opposed to self-interests. One of the human resource specialists stated that:

> *Talented individuals exhibit higher levels of commitment, one, two high levels of interest, and high levels of productivity in the workplace. Okay, so they, these are individuals that are that are super-fast, super-efficient, and they that there's that individual, individual organisational fit, that is that is near perfection, so this person comes to work or even if you don't see them, you know, that they are doing their best wherever they are, in pursuit of an organisational objectives. So, okay, so those talented individuals love what they do, they give their best in terms of latent talent (HRSPT3).*

The operational specialists agree with the human resources specialists that talented individuals are productive. They stated that:

> *A person who is talented is a person who has reached a certain level of competence that now, that person can be defined as fitting the responsibility level of the decision-making level of a particular role. I call competence or in*

other words, he has both the skill and the requisite knowledge to perform at that level (OPMX3).

One says a natural talent, a gift, for, for lack of a better word, somebody who has some inborn talent and a person who has to perform a specific thing. And that thing is so unique to that person that you may not find it in other people. (OPSML2).

These findings reveal that a talented individual is someone who possesses natural-born talent and is committed to achieving organisational objectives. These individuals are self-driven and motivated. They have the necessary knowledge and skills, and they can make decisions without supervision.

4.2.1.2 High performer would have been working hard and smart as well

Participants' responses appear to show a close conceptualisation of "talented individuals" and "high performers". The keywords they used to define "high performers" are that it is an employee who produces high-quality work while achieving or exceeding performance standards. An employee whose performance is evaluated against predetermined standards and who goes beyond what is expected. These employees have the necessary knowledge and skills, a high-performance scale, and therefore can complete work with little supervision. They are organisational trainers and coaches, as well as productive, talented individuals who add value to the organisation. One of the operational managers stated that:

A high-performing person I think is a person that performs at a specific standard predetermined has been set, because now if I said a person is a high-performing person, I need to measure it against a predetermined level and then determined that person then perform against that level and then I can consider that person as a high performer (OPSML2).

High performer would have been working hard and smart as well. But a talented individual, you could be talented, but you are not making an effort we cannot. But you are gifted, but we know you can do the job, but you are not making the

effort. But a high performer is also committed and making sure I think that is the difference for me (OPSMZ1).

A talented individual is, is not necessarily a high performer" (*HRSPT3).*

High performers also are on a high scale of performance, their employees also who does the duties with little or no supervision or the people who have mastered their craft, they should be able to train others they are able to coach others then they generate many ideas in the companies that are useful for the growth and production in the country (HRSPB2).

A high-performing person I think is a person that performs at a specific standard predetermined has been set, because now if I said a person is a high-performing person, I need to measure it against a predetermined level then determined that person then perform against that level and then I can consider that person as a high performer (OPSML2).

The findings suggest that high performers are individuals who can achieve targets, produce good quality work by giving more than others, and can-do high-quality work with little supervision. Participants explained that these are trainers and mentors of other employees in the organisation. This reveals a relationship between talented individuals and high performers. There is a distinction, in that high performers have the willingness to work hard to achieve their intended outcome whereas talented individuals are gifted but at times they are not making an effort. The findings indicate a convergence of perspectives among participants regarding the definition of talent. The distinction between talented individuals and high performers is minor, with participants emphasizing competence, exceeding predetermined standards, and contributing value to the organisation.

4.2.2 Talent management

4.2.2.1 Conceptualization of talent management by individuals in organisational context

Most of the participants interviewed presented their understanding of talent management from their own perspective. Similarly, some of them presented a textbook understanding and not necessarily what talent management means within their organisation. One of the human resources specialists stated that:

> *Talent Management is a broad term that is used in HR, and I have very many different actors and things in it. But it is basically for an organisation to identify talent within the organisation, but also from the outside looking at, within their organisation and cultivated to use this talent, because we want people who can produce who's effective and people need to grow in the organisation, managing that and also then to bring that talent from the outside, keep them in and keep them in (HRSPY1).*

> *Talent Management, I think it starts with having the right people in the right jobs and retaining those right people and high-quality employees, it is attracting high quality employees and retaining them I think that is basically what I understand to be a talent management (OPSMZ1).*

The study highlights the imperative for a standardised, systematic, and strategically aligned talent management approach, emphasising the need for organisational leadership commitment, structured manager training, and a clear strategy for optimal employee development and organisational success. They demonstrate that there is a notable gap in talent management understanding and implementation within MQA, marked by a fragmented approach. Specialists raised concerns about the lack of a centralised model, leading to inconsistent interpretations. Managers demonstrate a varied understanding of talent management, emphasising individualised approaches.

4.2.2.2 Talent management systems and strategies

Despite the manager's comprehensive description of talent management, some participants expressed concern about a lack of understanding of what talent management is and the use of a structured approach to talent management. More importantly, as custodians of talent management, the human resource department

lacks the necessary wisdom to empower various departments within the organisation to provide the necessary training and competence. One operational specialist stated that:

> *I think my direct answer to you would be a no, I do not even think managers at the MQA you know, are worried about talent management, let alone understanding what it is about, let alone ensuring that there is you know, a concerted effort, you know, for people in the different units or departments, where these managers are supposed to know, how to what talent management is about and how to implement it, and what does it mean for the different individuals in their departments? My view is that even the custodians of talent management within the organisation are not putting an effort to ensure that there is a broad understanding within the organisation of the talent management concept (OPMX3).*

Subsequently, another two operational specialists stated that:

> *Every manager of the organisation has their own idea what talent is, and I will tell you it should be managed. I do not see any MQA centralized model. Where I can say this is the model that is in compliance with all the managers in relation to that model. I do not see tha" (OPSML2).*

> *…there is no program for managers to be able to do that and we That's why I feel that we use different approaches. And one of the biggest things is that okay, sorry… I want to say that there is no standard approach. And for that reason, I want to say that to standardise things, we need to rely on HR processes. If we have processes, then we will be able to do things in a standard manner and consistently as managers (OPSMZ1).*

One of the beneficiaries made a similar observation by indicating that:

> *It is my cry to say, as an organisation, why don't we have such workshop to say, Chris, you are in a specialist for you to be a manager, we need an honor*

whatever, so that you prepare yourself towards that. That is a lack of organisation (BRAY3).

The statements seem to suggest that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding concerning talent management within the organisation. More specifically, each manager implements talent management in their own unique way. The Human Resource Specialists also responded, and they confirmed the concerns raised by Operational Specialists. A Human Resource Specialists stated that:

I think for now, it is on an ad hoc basis, we are planning to develop training for first line managers so that they will be able to apply these talent management processes. For now, I am willing to say it is a systematic approach because the human resources unit are willing to help hold the hands of the line managers all the time. Although one thing that the line managers are doing well for now is that performance management, after having a session with them last year before we did the, the performance moderations, so we are getting there (HRSPB2).

All operations specialists and human resources specialists indicated that the organisation's talent management system and process are unstructured, and that implementation is haphazard, with managers left to figure things out on their own. All participants agreed that there is a lack of a structured and systematic organisational approach to talent management, particularly in the human resources department. One Operational Specialist stated that:

The biggest challenge would be in respect of the organisation is that I do not see definite talent management. I do not see an explicit talent management process within the organisation a lack of leadership at first as far as talent management is concerned, within my space as well as within a big organisation. I do not see there is I do not see leadership I do not see the organisation taking leadership to make sure that this problem within HR, what in the organisation is competitive? And that is one of the problems, the others, of course, because of the lack of proper tech talent management with the organisation, I see there is a high staff turnover (OPSML2).

Participants painted a bleak picture of organisational systems and approaches to talent management. Another cause for concern is that the human resource specialists, who are supposed to be at the forefront of the initiative and provide technical expertise, appear to definitively validate the concerns raised by the Operational Specialist and the Beneficiary.

Another important element of the investigation was to establish if talent management does exist and if so, outline their strategies, including the instruments used to achieve such strategies. The responses were very bleak as most participants focused on explaining the ideal situation instead of explaining the organisational framework and practices. What was more concerning was that even the Human Resource Specialists were not confident with their own strategies. One human resources specialist confirmed that the organisation has strategies in place to deal with talent management expectations, and the comments are presented below by stating that:

> *Remember, we have the talent management tools that form a strategy the training and development. You can in other words say the training and development policies, succession policy, performance management policy are the tools to make sure that the talent management strategy is implemented (HRSPB2).*

> *So, now, the strategies that we have in place are a bigger focus on the training of our staff. And we have a succession policy …For the MQA itself, the biggest focus is on training staff based on the gaps that have been identified through this performance management process in IDP, currently, the bigger focus (HRSPY1).*

The later Human Resource Specialist responded to the same question differently after during the session. The Human Resource Specialist stated that:

> *We are not doing a lot. We are not doing a lot of talent management, in my opinion, looking from the outside to attract people. Where we do have structured and planned training for our staff, this originates basically through*

the performance management system. So, we have the system in place…gaps in areas can be identified. Okay, so while these training needs are identified at an early phase, certain competencies of the staff members need to be developed. So, we have that process that is in place and from the place that IDP (Individual Development Plans) is in individual development plan (HRSPY1).

The response coming from the Human Resource Specialists and Operational Specialists seems to be putting a lot of emphasis on training and development as well as performance management. The Human Resource Specialist stated that:

There is a performance management policy which we, which I don't, there's a performance management policy, which forms part of the talent management, the talent management whereas the performance management policy that forms part of the talent management strategy, and this performance management policy says, for instance, you can identify your high performance, support them, reward them through your performance bonuses, and then create more opportunities for them (HRSPT3).

Participants in the strategy indicated that policies are in place to ensure proper talent management and development. In their comments, the Human Resource Specialists mentioned the following policies:

Learning and development, succession propulsion, performance management and also recruitment Policy" (HRSPB2).

… the policies are there, my friend to cover all these eventualities, there is also a successful succession planning policy, there is a succession planning policy. It is linked to your performance management; it is linked to recruitment and selection. Those three policies are key in ensuring award recognition of you of your, of your highfliers, so you asked, do we have a mentoring and coaching strategy as part of your one on ones, part of those quarterly reviews as part of mentoring and coaching (*HRSPT3).*

The first one I have mentioned is the learning and development policy. That policy describes the view of the company and how we go about training our staff to be an external training or internal training external. And it also talks about bursaries for staff. As that is also a big part of our development, we will touch on again later about that study outside of study while working. So that policy drives the training aspect at the MQA…internship policy, because we have to also at the MQA, we appoint interns per unit…(HRSPY1).

The findings show a lack of talent management understanding and implementation in MQA. Operational and Human Resource Specialists express concern about inconsistent approaches among managers due to the absence of standardised processes, leading to haphazard talent management across departments. Managers have varied approaches to talent management, causing inconsistency and lack of a system. Leaders aren't committed to fostering it; the Human Resources department is aware they need training for line managers to empower departments better.

The findings reveal a significant gap in talent management understanding and implementation within MQA, characterised by a fragmented and unstructured approach. Both Operational and Human Resource specialists' express concerns about the absence of a centralised model, leading to inconsistent interpretations across departments. Managers lack a collective understanding of talent management, resulting in varied and individualised approaches. The absence of workshops for managers exacerbates the situation, and the Human Resources department recognises the ad hoc nature of the current state. The findings underscores the importance of organisational leadership commitment, structured training for managers, and a clear talent management strategy for optimal employee development and success.

This conceptual gap ripples through subsequent elements, notably hindering the systematic development of the organisational framework and strategy, thus disrupting the logical sequence crucial for effective talent management. The argument asserts that rectifying this foundational conceptual gap is crucial for cultivating a strategic and cohesive approach to talent management within the organisation.

4.2.2.3 Talent Management vs Performance Management

Participants were questioned about their understanding of talent management. The participants mainly expressed talent management as a process that seeks to manage talents. However, it appears that some responses were aligned with performance management more than talent management. To some extent, the study shows that there seems to be an assumption that talent management is performance management. The following comments which were expressed by operational specialists and human resources specialists show that:

> *Talent management, is a process, you know, if you think performance management this is a process, start to end the process, where now you have a in an organisation, either I would call it is a process or I could call it a method to ensure that the organisation brings into its fold the right kind of people, or you were you talking about talent earlier on (OPMX3).*

> *A talented individual is, the term talented, should not be used in isolation, the term is used when you are rating an employee's performance (HRSPB2).*

> *Talent management is utilised to ensure that high performers are recognised, rewarded, and given more space to express their innovation. So, you need talent management is a deliberate strategy or deliberate plan of action to facilitate further growth of your talented individuals or your high performers* (*HRSPT3).*

> *The accusation of the talent, identification of the talent, and then you see how that talent works in terms of performance management, how the performance of the talent, the performing of the performance of the individual with such talent, and then when I think was also then important, I said the motivation to constant upgrading or motivating the person or the talent to perform even better (OPSML2)*

The participants demonstrate some understanding of talent management as they see it as a process of managing talents that involves planning. Moreover, talent

management is much more than just training, it entails deliberate strategies such as succession planning to improve employee performance However, they also seem to understand it as management of performance, with an understanding that eventually, the performance must be rewarded.

4.2.2.4 The importance of talent management within the organisation.

Participants were asked if they considered talent management as an important aspect in the context of MQA. All participants agreed that talent management is critical and necessary for organisational success. They explained that they see it as an important intervention in the organisation because it allows the organisation to identify talented individuals. Similarly, it provides the opportunity to improve employee performance and organisational performance and increases organisational effectiveness. This is what one of the Operational Specialist stated:

> *Talent management of course, is very important, because it gives an opportunity for the institution to identify high flyers within the institution to identify people that have specific skills, that the institution one of the reasons for talent management, I think is important is when you have identified a talent you will be able to talk to it will it would give the organisation a basis for attracting top talent constantly, so, it's it there's a recruitment component to it as well (OPSML2).*

The statement suggests that talent management is important because it helps with the identification of high-performing individuals in the organisation. Also, it is important because it enables the organisation to recognise employees with unique skills, attract top talent through the recruitment process, and place individuals in roles that are aligned with their talents. The statement highlights that employees identify with the positive impact of talent management on organisational performance, succession planning, and employee performance. Additionally, it highlights the role of talent management in shaping job roles, refining job descriptions, and facilitating the recruitment of top talent to contribute to organisational success.

Furthermore, a human resource specialist indicated that:

It is necessary because it motivates employees, it makes sure that people's careers are taken seriously. And it also helps the organisation improve its performance. Yes. This works in two ways, if you have employees that are not motivated that they do not see where they are going, they will not give, they will not perform according to the best of their abilities. It is important to build it to your HR strategy (HRSPB2).

We are in a competitive world, we, whether we are like the MQA, we have gotten targets we need to reach for your organisation that produces something we are in a competitive world, and we need to get a competitive edge (HRSPY1).

Operational and Human Resources Specialists emphasise talent management's importance in acquiring, developing, & keeping top employees. It links to success by enhancing employee performance, organisational efficiency & competitiveness, crucial for competitive businesses' strategic goals. In sum, these findings show how participants view talent management, that it is a process that involves a considerable number of varied interventions, and it goes beyond recruitment. They emphasise identification, development, coaching, and motivation including succession planning. All these are in line with what the literature suggests, and the discussion section will demonstrate this systematically.

4.3 Talent Management Processes

This section describes the perspectives of Talent Management processes and the extent to which these processes are understood within the organisation. First, it outlines the talent management identification process. Second, the use of skills lists is examined. Third, the perceptions of succession planning processes are explained.

4.3.1 Talent Identification Processes

The participants were asked about the process of talent identification and the establishment of a talent pool. The evidence indicates a significant gap in talent identification, which results in the existence of an untapped pool of talent within MQA. This has been highlighted by various participant perspectives. Operational specialists acknowledged successful temporary utilisation without any clear process while Human Resource Specialists mentioned models like the nine-grid box.

The Operational Specialists and Human Resources Specialists were required to explain if the MQA has a talent pool, and if yes, how it was formed. One of the Operational Specialist officers stated that:

> *I think the MQA also uses you know, have an as has a sort of, it develops a pool, from intense to people who get absorbed into the organisation. Now, that is one of the things in this organisation, that has worked well, because if you look at people in this organisation, you can identify people, even at the senior management level, here but I should mention, the use of temps that also gets to be asset-related in the organisation and the development of that pool of people and understanding they assume positions within the organisation (OPMX3).*

The Operational Specialist response does not provide a clear answer on the practice or process in use in terms of the talent pool or identification. Similarly, the Human Resource Specialist response was inconclusive because it focused on the ideal scenario that MQAs use. Other responses from Human Resource Specialists stated that:

> *But then you use this one model, which is the nine-grid box model, saying who's the talent, who's the star is this person who's in, for me that it doesn't work because then Why did we hire people in the first?...Yes, there is a talent pool is influenced by these strategies that you already mentioned Those that are effective is to identifying the skills that are needed with that you will be able to see also what do you have in your talent pool, then you mentioned those, well, once you match the right skills, the right jobs, then you have a good mix for efficiency, and chances of success (HRSPB2).*

And once they are in, we say, but who's talented here? You get what I'm saying? So, and I think that's what the nine-grid box model does. It does the sifting when everybody is already inside the institution. Yeah, so this is a very key learning point (HRSPN4).

The above statements suggest that the nine-grid box model does not exist because people are hired in the organisation to be able to provide the required service. Another Human Resources Specialist presented a different view on talent identification and talent pool stated that:

So, your managers would identify your highfliers, all right, through your performance management system, so if you look at the outcome of the moderation process, you will get anybody who is over 4.5, those are your highfliers after the moderation process. So, you need to take the highflyers and see whether they are at their best place, do they need additional mentoring and coaching to be ready for the next level? Or what is it that you can do with it? (HRSPT3).

The above statement indicates a performance management process that is used as a tool to identify a talent pool. On the other end of the spectrum, the Beneficiaries are thought to be part of a talent pool, but even they are unaware because they have stated that they do not understand how the process works. These remarks were made by one of the Beneficiaries, who stated that:

Hence, I am saying maybe if they are doing them, they need to inform us to say, C… and A… and S…, they are in that talent pool, we have chosen them, so that we know. Maybe they are doing that, but now that it is not communicated, we do not know (BRAY3).

Where the policy says, let us have people that are going to take for talent pool, then when they have identified as an organisation, working with the managers should say we are selecting this and that you know. Then they will say, okay, we are taking them maybe to these courses, and they will assign them to

mentors so that as an individual, I know that I have a mentor, and I will go to Wits maybe doing a one-year course, you know, step by step (BRAY3).

One of the Operational Specialists made a controversial statement that the selection of this pool could be based on favoritism, and because a significant number of participants previously stated that there is an ad hoc approach to talent management, this statement could really indicate that this might be a possibility. One Operational Specialist stated that:

I wanted to use another word, they could be favorites, just if you feel as if you favor this person, regardless of whether their attitude is like this or like that. And as a result, when you manage that when you implement talent management (OPSMZ1)

These findings that suggest a critical gap in talent identification and pooling within MQA. Participants express varied perspectives on the existence and process of the talent pool. Operational specialists highlight the utilisation of temps as a successful approach but lack clarity on the formal process. Human Resource specialists mention models like the nine-grid box but provide inconclusive insights, emphasising ideal scenarios, and effective strategies without detailing current practices. The participants also mentioned the use of a performance management process to identify a talented individual. The lack of a standardized approach is evident, as managers seem to rely on personal discretion in identifying high performers. Moreover, concerns about potential favouritism in talent selection raise questions about the fairness and transparency of the process. The responses on talent pool composition revealed that the talent pool primarily consists of employees in acting roles and those on fixed-term contracts. However, the beneficiaries demonstrated a notable lack of awareness concerning the processes and functionality of this talent pool. In sum, the lack of standardisation underscores concerns regarding personal discretion when identifying high performers and potential favouritism.

4.3.2 Do skills lists exist?

The participants were also requested to indicate whether the organisation produces a list of critical skills. The participants mentioned that the organisation has a skill matrix. The main recommendation is for a scientific approach with updates and transparency from Human Resources to reflect job responsibilities accurately. This means having standardised profiles for every position highlighting key competencies necessary for talent management across the board while being aware of differing awareness levels about existing processes amongst participants overall.

Human Resource Specialists and Operational Specialists are the key drivers of talent management strategies. They were asked if they had a list of critical skills and shortages. The participants stated that:

> *…I am not sure where there is such a list exist, where there is a list that speaks specifically to any critical whether position is critical roles or position critical skills, or competencies or department. And I think there's where we also have a problem in then in that we… Now my question is, are my skills still relevant? There's the question of all the skills of my colleagues, whether we've got such a list', I cannot say I have not seen such a list. And it'll be good to see such a list. Secondly, to measure ourselves to see what our skills are still critical. We only find our skills are not critical. When we are faced with a challenge of the day, then we find that we lack those skills. And those lists are not being asked… (OPSML2).*

The OPSML2 participant went further to explain,

> *There must be an audit to determine whether this person fits within the needs of the organisation, whether you have a person that falls within the entire scope of the organisation, the needs of the organisation, or is the person just as simply because they want to have a job, or they have a job that you're working, and there's a problem that I'm having* (*OPSML2).*

Another Operational Specialist, on the other hand, suggested that there is a skill matrix in place that serves as an analysis of critical skill sets and existing shortages. He stated that:

> *A skills matrix is in place, which was designed to match the required competencies in different roles in the organisations and the available skills within the organisation. But that is one of the tools you can use to start the process of talent management because you need to know match the requirements, you know, for the different roles in the organisation, looking at the sets of skills that are required in those roles, and then match the people as to whether they have these. And so, evaluate what they have and what they do not have in terms of the requisite competencies or skills. So that you are able to identify if there are any gaps that exist, and what interventions to put in place to close the gaps, so that, you know, that your people make those* (*OPMX3).*

However, the OPMX3 did not state that a skill matrix is a tool used in organisations as a standard approach. It is worth noting that the Human Resource Specialists did not mention the skill matrix as one of the tools used to analyse critical skills and gaps in their response to the question. Instead, one Human Resource Specialist mentioned that the company is currently conducting an efficiency study to ensure that employees are properly placed based on their skill sets:

> *Well, there is, actually the efficiency studies to make sure that the right talent or the people are matched with the roles where they can best contribute, that is what it is all about. Those that are effective is to identify the skills that are needed with that you will be able to see also what do you have in your talent pool, then you mentioned those, well, once you match the right skills, the right jobs, then you have a good mix for efficiency, and chances of success (HRSPB2).*

Another Human Resource specialist became very critical as several questions were raised about the entire process. The participant stated that:

Now, where does this list come from? And who made the list? And is it still relevant? Is my question because this was done? Not recently? So, I would not, I would not even say that those are our critical roles and our skill sets. I am not sure. It has not been updated. This also is what I have noticed is that there is no scientific method behind determining these things. Just like, with this one was like, too close to full, it must be critical skills, like No, not necessarily. I think the MQA needs to really sit down and more on a scientific method to figure out what all those are, and it is doable. It is all it has to do with the responsibility of the role and how serious this role is, what decision-making ability this role has, meaning that if it is not full, can we carry on or not? So, these questions to ask these things to do? So, I will leave it at that the answer is yes, we do (HRSPY1).

The Human resources specialists provided different types of responses which seems to suggest that there is a standard documented process. The latter comment suggests that and the next comment by the Human Resources Specialist confirms this observation. The participant stated that:

Position within the organisation has a profile. So, it is profiled in terms of competencies and skill sets that are required for the performance of the functions assigned to the, to the role (HRSPT3).

The responses indicate that the organisation has a skill matrix and that each position within the organisation has a profile with specified competencies and skill sets. However, several participants indicated that there is no list of critical skills, and the process is unclear and not available. The specialists question the origin and relevance of the list while expressing uncertainty about its accuracy and currency. They highlight a lack of scientific methods in determining these skills' importance and critique assumptions based on proximity to full capacity indicating their necessity. Moreover, they mention a need for a systematic approach emphasising responsibility, seriousness, and decision-making authority associated with each role must be considered during this process.

4.3.3 Perceptions of Succession Planning Processes

The information gathered from the first and second aspects must now be used to develop action plans and programs. The study investigated another process, it looked at whether or not the organisation has a succession planning system in place, as well as how these systems are implemented.

4.3.3.1 Succession planning processes are not understood.

One of the Operational Specialists explained that there is a succession policy that has been recently approved but there was no training to explain it. However, the explanations fall short of demonstrating the organisational practice and approach. They stated that:

> *I have been recently made aware that there is something like that, but it has not been properly communicated. I think I did mention that a succession training policy has recently been approved, sitting in this position, as a manager I did not know a lot. But sitting in this position, because I can expose myself to what is being presented in HR Remco, I have seen that there was an action plan that was presented to HR Remco. And to say, the talent management list or something is being compiled. So, it is something that I am not sure how it was compiled (OPSMZ1).*

> *No, for development and future? You know, I know that MQA has that succession plan, but for me as individual, I have never seen it to say, okay, there's Chris, there's …, let us take them and they inform you to say you are in this program. And when you are in this program, we will put you in this program (BRAY3).*

These statements show that the succession planning process is not understood or followed by all managers. The Human Resource Specialist agrees with the Operational Specialist in that the policy is in place, however, the implementation has not yet taken off. The specialist explained,

Yes, the policy is in place and the processes are being developed. So, there is a systematic way of then identifying going forward and moving on. So, it is there, we just need to implement it (HRSPY1).

But I think the responsibility and the role of HR and management should be to ensure that we identify people, but through succession identifying performance, and people with potential performance even and develop them to that next level. And so being able to identify what the competencies are today, where I am standing now, and what I need to be in that position is going to take them six months, a year, two years, and then start developing accordingly to that (HRSPY1).

Despite the existing circumstances, a Human Resource Specialist raised a thought-provoking point suggesting that the implementation of a comprehensive succession system might face challenges due to legislative provisions and policy positions. This concern is articulated by Section 5 of the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995, which outlines the right to fair labour practices, ensuring adherence to fairness in both recruitment and employment practices. Section 186 of the same act defines unfair dismissals, encompassing aspects related to recruitment practices. This complexity is particularly pertinent for the MQA, which is a public entity bound by legislative frameworks. A Human Resources specialist stated,

*…although succession and promotion to a certain extent, because of those constraints of the employment equity, however, we would do have the only challenge is that promotion part. When you have done the succession, and now when it comes to approaching the individual they have now to compete on interviews for promotion (*HRSPB2).

Another Human Resource Specialist made an interesting comment specifically regarding planning for succession and putting all the necessary resources in place to ensure by the time talent is needed it becomes easily accessible. The Human Resource Specialist made the following comment,

…You look at if you say we want to transform the mining sector from its skillset base, then the employees at MQA I get in terms of you know, the right competencies that we, the type of performance rewards that would actually motivate employees, to do their best, the type of skill set that will pay MQA personnel or I would say resources, human capital resources to be prepared five years from now, so you're talking about planning ahead. And that would include the things that we are going to be talking about to say, if you are going to make sure that the competencies in the institution are prepared 10 or five or 10 years before we actually get to the point let's say 2035 Why human resources, systems? What human resources policies, and what human resources programs do we implement to make sure that employees would be ready by then (HRSPN4).

The study has delved into MQA's succession planning, revealing mixed perspectives among participants. Operational specialists acknowledge the existence of a recently approved policy but lack comprehensive understanding and training. Human Resource specialists confirm the policy's presence and emphasise ongoing process development, indicating a systematic approach. However, challenges emerge, with one specialist highlighting legislative constraints impacting promotions and another emphasising the need for long-term planning and aligning competencies with future organisational goals.

Despite policy existence, practical implementation challenges are evident, including a lack of clarity among managers, the necessity for proper communication, and potential conflicts with legislative frameworks. The study underscores the complexity of succession planning within MQA, emphasising the importance of aligning human resource strategies with long-term organisational objectives.

This reveals a gap in beneficiaries' awareness of succession planning and talent pool processes. In sum, this section concentrated on the processes and initiatives implemented by the MQA, with much of the emphasis on the perspectives of beneficiaries.

The examination of developmental programs at MQA reveals a significant gap in beneficiaries' awareness of succession planning and talent pool processes. While acting roles and fixed-term contracts dominate the talent pool, beneficiaries' express concerns about inadequate support and development, especially in the duration of training programs. Divergent views emerge on perceiving development as an individual initiative, emphasising the need for a structured talent management approach. Despite challenges, the study advocates for a scientific approach to identify critical skills and role responsibilities.

4.3.3.2 Individuals need to determine their developmental direction.

The concluding remark stresses that the MQA adopts a comprehensive, strategic, and commitment-driven talent management system, transcending mere training and focusing on effective development and promotion protocols.

The human resource specialists articulated various concerns and challenges, shedding light on the following issues, as one,

> *So, this is where I think there's just a bit of a difference that I think we could do it better, although we are doing it. We are aligned to tackle issues that are MQA related rather than issues that generic, like we would say training, of course, everyone trains but we don't know what are we training on? But if you go into this employee engagement service, they will tell you the type of training that employees will say We are begging for (HRSPN4)*

In addition to the Beneficiaries' viewpoints, the Operational Specialist believes that individuals determine the direction of their development and therefore must indicate interest, as one states,

> *So, when we do the individual will know themselves that I need to develop in this manner people will understand because when I sit with my subordinates, I will ask them, where do you think you are lacking? And where do you think you want to improve more for your own benefit and for the organisation? So, it should be aligned to my own needs to say as an individual, what is it that I*

need? I am not only confined to MQA, whenever I want to develop myself, I have to develop myself for inside as well, as well as my career path and my aspirations (OPSMZ1).

We authorise but they get involved in either external or internal training or coaching, that is meant to articulate in that particular financial year what the individual employee will specifically be focused on as a way of taking responsibility of his or her own development in that year (OPMX3).

Employee development systems and initiatives were also discussed with Human Resources Specialists and Operational Specialists. They stated that the developmental process begins with the development of individual plans that guide which areas of an employee require development, as seen in this comment,

First individual development plans, implementation of those individual development plans. So that is, that is one thing to have already indicated. I am one of the people who is passionate about, you know, people knowing what they are doing. So, developing their knowledge, skills, and as a result, we have a way in our unit plan, we have quarterly workshops, where we take people through, you know, requisite legislation, regulations, key topical issues, and changes (OPMX3).

4.3.3.3 The role of mentoring and coaching

Another aspect of the investigations is the mentoring and coaching provided to Beneficiaries. Operational Specialists observe mentoring and coaching as a process of preparing an employee for a senior role, a process that supervisors and managers must commit to, this is evidenced by comments by three of the Operational Specialists as they indicated,

…when your mentor is developing the skills of individuals and leading them or motivating them I think mentoring and coaching is, I want to put it in a simple English to say when I mentor someone is like taking them through like, you know, ensuring that they are ready to fill any other position or you know, taking

them baby steps and giving them the experience and the skills that you have imparting the knowledge that you have in coach In the person (OPSMZ1).

Coaching, for me, it's more performance driven, okay, that is the way the manager, coach a person in order to enhance the performance of a person to a mean, that person is already got a specific level of talent in you, you put an element of coaching to it, in order to improve the performance of that person in terms by means of coaching. The person is the level where they can be coaching, mentoring, on the other hand is more personal for me, coaching, mentoring is more personal (OPSML2).

So, what I could also mention is that as managers we are responsible for coaching and mentoring, we do not have to directly coach where there's other people who are supervising those individuals, but for those employees that report directly to me, I have a responsibility to ensure that there is direct coaching, because you make reference to competence and equipping employees to get the necessary competence. Now, competence is the formula for competence is that it is made of skill and knowledge (OPMX3).

On the other end of the Human Resources spectrum, there are strong views that mentoring and coaching are necessary processes, that require to be undertaken primarily by managers in various sections. In their comments, one Operational Specialist explained that:

Everybody deserves a mentor. Right? So even your executives require mentorship. So, at your executive level, you can outsource the function. Now you have mentors and coaches coming in to either give emotional or skills support to your executives, your managers have primarily a responsibility to mentor and coach there (HRSPT3).

However, another Operations Specialist explained that there is a structured system for mentoring in the organisation. They stated that:

I think I do not have a return strategy if that is what you are asking. But there is a culture of what I am teaching people. So, I have spoken in terms of coaching about direct coaching. Teaching people on the job ensures people know what they are supposed to do. I have spoken about embedding the knowledge behind what people have spoken about, ensuring that we have internal workshops on a quarterly basis, monthly meetings to share information. We do not have any specific mentoring approach that I am using in the division only if only for interns, where we have a program for interns, which is defined on a month-to-month basis, what will the interns be focused on signed off on but that we implement only for interns (*OPMX3).*

In closing, there is one Human Resources Specialist that sums up the situation of employee development, as well as the status of talent management in the organisation. This comment provides a critical analysis of the organisation's status and comes directly from Human Resources Specialist as the primary driver of the talent strategy, as he said,

So, what lies and what formal training, get people to get people thinking, that part of it, that works, and it works, because there was not me, but there is someone driving something. And they feel passionate about the subject, it can work. So, standing creates an atmosphere where people want to learn and want and understand that this development is for them. It is free of charge. It is commitment, number one from upstate, it is a commitment from the man because we should not have systems in place. Now the programs. This also is what I have noticed is that there is no scientific method behind determining these things (HRSPY1).

4.4 The Perspective and Experiences of Beneficiaries Regarding Organisational Practices

This section aims to provide the perspectives and experiences of beneficiaries regarding talent management practices. The primary objective is to collate evidence on whether the processes described earlier as explained by specialists truly reflect what beneficiaries go through.

4.4.1 Qualification function mismatches and discrepancies

The beneficiaries presented varying perspectives, with some indicating that their qualifications are aligned with the job. However, the majority of the beneficiaries disputed that their qualifications are aligned with the functions they perform daily. This is how they presented their perspectives and experiences,

> *Not at all, I feel like my current position is more administrative based rather than more practical and people management based… I feel there's no linkage at all…But when I get there, it has nothing to do with what I studied. And I am saying, I wondered how people with social sciences that even supposed to or why they even need graduates of social sciences, in this position (BRSI4)*

> *No, for sure. I mean, not all the way. But, I mean, there were certain modules that aligned to, to my job profile. I mean, like I said, I think I did not mention public management. So, there is a module with it, or that was the public management financial act. And having been exposed to that, and being in the space I am in now, you able to interpret certain things much more easily than individuals who were not exposed to that module would be, it could be more difficult for them to actually interpret it and implement it the way it is written down and expressed in the legislation* (*BRTBS1)*

> *For me, it is aligned because when I came in, I had the HR diploma and I see when they advertise, they also mentioned HR…It is my cry to say, as an organisation, why don't we have such workshop to say, Chris, you are in a specialist for you to be a manager, we need an honor whatever, so that you prepare yourself towards that (BRAY3).*

4.4.2 Opportunities for training and development are limited.

The researcher investigated whether the beneficiaries are exposed to further development and training to allow them to perform their tasks successfully. Some beneficiaries indicated that development is limited to them, while others indicated that

when they do receive opportunities to develop, it is mainly short courses. They stated that:

> *I am unfortunately unable to address those shortfalls. The MQA has policies that actually prevent certain employees from developing themselves. I do not know why. But there is a lot I would love to have done. But because of certain policies holding me back, I am unable to. I would have loved to do a short course in monitoring and evaluation Excel report writing as well. But like I said, unfortunately, I was unable to do those because I am a temp at the MQA* (*BRTBS1).*

> *It must not limit you with regard to the training that you can actually take part in. For instance, I mentioned the Sage VIP software, I know that I would be limited because I am not in the HR department. So, if I were to go (BRAY3)*

> *In a SETA and I'm in quality assurance, doesn't mean that I can't develop myself outside of that scope… Yes, you would also want them to expose you to other things as well, to broaden your horizons (BRSI4).*

The beneficiaries' present perspective suggests that they are somewhat limited to specific development programs. It would therefore appear that in the organisation individuals do not have enough say about their own training needs and development.

4.4.3 The silent approach to communication and employee engagement

The findings suggest that there is a lack of clear communication and guidance from HR and managers regarding training and development opportunities for employees. Participants mentioned that at times they were given conflicting instructions or not provided with specific goals to work towards.

> *Truly speaking we have never done that with HR, with our manager. When the HR sends the email to say, please do not forget to complete, it is a matter of the manager will say guys, do not forget to complete whatever course that you*

want to do. But it is, it is never discussed to say…you are lacking 123 and maybe this course will cover that or will help (BRAY3).

Um yes and no, because sometimes you will be told to listen to this, and then you leave it and are told to do something else. So, I believe there were blurred lines between what I am actually supposed to do and what I was told to do so um, but I believe I know exactly now (*BRTBS1).*

I mean, one of the most important things Chris is to set goals for not only the organisation but for yourselves as individuals. So, I mean, my unit was very great in that regard, because there were there were meetings, I think, monthly meetings, we had, just for us to go back and look back at the performance we have achieved thus far. And go into the future on how we will meet certain targets. So, I believe Yeah, no, our unit was very good in that regard (BRTBS1).

It is helping me because I know that by this time, I need to have closed these things. And at the end of this duration, I need to have closed the full expired contracts. So, there are certain goals in terms of the work that I am doing because you are given a budget and say that this is the budget, go and investigate and then come up with solutions. Then for those ones that are terminating action, everything for those, ones that need payment, pay those payments, and then at the end of the day, the main goal is that we reach zero (BRSI4).

4.4.5 Ad hoc guidance and support for mentoring, coaching, and development

Some beneficiaries have expressed concerns about the adequacy of support and development, highlighting constraints in training programs. While some acknowledged receiving necessary support, most believe that they don't receive the requisite help from their managers when it comes to training and development. They raised concerns regarding the inadequacy of these short-term programs for adequate skill acquisition. The beneficiaries emphasised a need for broader individual training plans while expressing frustration with policy restrictions hindering personal growth opportunities.

4.4.5.1 Progress in mentoring and coaching

Beneficiaries appear to view organisational development from a different perspective when it comes to mentoring and coaching. They believe that there isn't much progress in this area within the organisation. They stated that:

> *Maybe to a certain degree, I know, when you need certain support, like if you do not understand a policy or two, they are there but in terms of actively being mentors, I do not believe MQA really has the capacity for that. So, I do not believe I was exposed to active mentoring, so to speak (BRTBS1).*

> *I will say yes, under my daily duties, however, with our managers that LP for them when they are doing it, I do not think they even realise that it is mentoring and coaching. It is like it is their daily job but for me because I am benefiting it is like coaching and mentoring (BRAY3).*

> *I mean, having been an intern, you get a lot of assistance from your superiors with anything that I battle with, I make sure that I actually go to my superior whoever they may be, whether it is a specialist or the managers, I believe MQA has a lot of individuals and colleagues that are always willing to assist wherever they can. So, if I am stuck, and if there is anything, I am unable to actually understand I am free to actually go to whomever I feel this person may be able to actually assist me. So, I believe MK does have the necessary support (BRTBS1).*

However, it is also important to acknowledge some comments by the Beneficiaries who indicated that there is this on HR personnel who have taken the personal initiative to create a platform for mentoring. However, this program is only for a selected few interns in the organisation. These are their comments on the programme:

> *... Okay, there's …, who is our HR. I mean, she's been a great mentor, you can literally go knock by office and say, you know what I'm looking into doing this? And she literally guides you and says, okay, this is what you need to do. This is what you need to do… And then (BRSI4).*

I mean, I believe with the cohort of interns that I was blessed to be in we had a very active can I say, mentor in the HR business partner, I mean, she had put together a program for us, which would help out, help us in fulfilling our duties (BRTBS1).

The participants were then asked if they received the necessary support and development to ensure that their intended outcomes were achieved. A significant proportion of them agreed that they received the necessary support; however, they were much more concerned with the training and development constraints. They mentioned that:

… two things come to mind because when you work with this project, you focus more on accounting, and you also focus on people skills, leadership. So, as much as you might be a person whereby you are a natural born leader, but then you also need to be empowered as well to say that, okay, when such things are happening, how do you then tackle such a subordinate So, I think that one, and also the fact that we work so much with accounting, there should be training because they know, as an organisation, …in terms of people's individual training plans, they should allow people because now currently, with the current status of the organisation, if you are working under LP, when you say that you want to do finance related qualifications, then there's politics and yet they want people working on the LP to go and be seconded or be in acting positions whereby they have to be dealing with such so when they say that individual development plans, they should allow people to broaden their scope rather than for them to concentrate only on admin (BRPM2).

The MQA has policies that actually prevent certain employees from developing themselves. I do not know why. But there is a lot I would love to have done. But because of certain policies holding me back, I am unable to. I would have loved to do a short course in monitoring and evaluation Excel report writing as well. But like I said, unfortunately, I was unable to do those because I am a temp at the MQA… how can I say positions into what an employee is considered because an … at the MQA the duration is 24 months, Chris, some, some interns

could actually finish an advanced diploma, a higher certificate, you know, a diploma as well, if they finish the degree, but they already have access to that, because the policies again, the policies do not allow for that. And you have to ask (BRTBS1).

You know I told you about politics and so there are certain things whereby when you think about doing them, you just think that maybe I should do them in my own private time. Because if you go to HR, at times people think that you are trying to get their jobs elsewhere. And it is about my development. It is not about me, looking at your position, as Chris to say I want to overtake him (BRPM2)

The participants express satisfaction with the support they receive but highlight training and development constraints as a major concern. Despite adequate support in stakeholder interactions, temporary employees face policy restrictions hindering their personal development.

Beneficiaries expressed several concerns about development, but they also stated that they were developed and taken for training. What should be noted is that a significant proportion of these training programs were of a short duration.

I've been fortunate enough to attend four training courses. Let me mention them. The first one was the assessor program. Then I went to the ISO program, what it's literally how to comply in terms of your paperwork, how to file things, like literally just complying. Okay. And then there's there was business writing as well. And then there was excel basic as well. Just to mention, two, okay, actually, all of them are very relevant. We use excel on a daily basis (BRSI4).

What struck me as interesting from a number of these Beneficiaries is that they view development as an individual initiative. One of the Beneficiaries indicated the initiative was taken due to the lack of support for development:

There was no training, it was just me wanting to further my studies because when I came in, I had a diploma, then I was like let me do my BTech which I

just achieved late this year. So yes, but it was personal and to say let me further my studies this will help me in future (BRAY3).

Concerns have been raised about the lack of discussion and pursuit of specific training courses, indicating a gap in aligning individual development plans with organisational needs. Additionally, office politics are seen to influence HR support for personal development which emerges as a noteworthy challenge.

Divergent views emerged among beneficiaries regarding their perception of development as an individual initiative; some highlighting the absence of active mentorship and coaching opportunities from within the company itself. The perceived lack of or non-existence of formalised mentoring programs led participants to suggest establishing structured approaches to talent management across all levels at MQA, instead of the suggestions supported by Human Resources, which emphasise the importance of quarterly workshops alongside developing individuals` unique career progression.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter revealed that there is a complex and evolving nature of talent management within the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), offering valuable insights for organisations looking to refine their strategic talent management practices. By examining perspectives from different organisational levels, the chapter provided a comprehensive understanding of how talent management is conceptualised and implemented within the MQA. The chapter highlighted a shared definition of "talent" and "high performers," focusing on commitment, interest, and necessary competencies. Talent management emerged as a critical process, extending beyond mere training to include deliberate strategies such as succession planning. Participants unanimously recognised the importance of talent management in identifying high-potential individuals, enhancing organisational performance, and maintaining a competitive edge. However, concerns were raised about the lack of understanding of structured approaches to talent management within the MQA. Inconsistent talent management approaches among managers and a lack of

commitment from leadership were identified as significant challenges, underscoring the need for training and development in this area. The absence of a standardised organisational approach and clear leadership was linked to high staff turnover, emphasising the importance of a systematic and consistent approach to talent management.

Additionally, the study found that talent management strategies lacked clarity and confidence among participants, with doubts about their overall effectiveness and systematic application. Concerns about critical skills identification, discrepancies in using a skills matrix, and challenges in identifying a talent pool further highlighted the need for a more scientific approach. The absence of a transparent and systematic talent identification process also raised concerns about potential favouritism. Gaps in implementing and communicating succession policies were also uncovered, with legislative constraints and competitive interview processes posing significant challenges. Participants suggested a more structured approach to talent management, emphasising the importance of individual development plans, workshops, and coaching.

From the beneficiaries' perspective, challenges such as limited awareness of the talent pool and succession planning processes, constraints in training and development, and diverse views on mentoring and coaching were evident. Human resource specialists echoed these concerns, calling for a more strategic approach, including clearer promotion protocols, systematic role analysis, and scientific methods for identifying critical skills. Overall, the study identified a lack of necessary resources, insufficient qualified talent professionals, managerial commitment issues, and the absence of a strategic approach as key challenges. These findings underscore the importance of clear definitions, processes, and practices in developing human capital. Understanding what is happening within an organisation is crucial for fostering effective talent management and ensuring the organisation's long-term success.

5 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature around talent management within MQA. This chapter presents the discussion to answer the sub-research questions, which was to explore and analyse the conceptualisation of talent management within the MQA; to investigate the processes and strategies used by the MQA to identify, develop, and prepare its talent pool for current and future organisational needs; and to assess employees' experiences and perceptions regarding the effectiveness and impact of talent management practices within the MQA.

5.2 Reflection on the Conceptualisation of Talent Management

5.2.1 Differentiated perspective on defining talent.

The findings of this study acknowledge a persistent gap in understanding the precise meaning and implications of talent management, as evidenced by several academics (Cappelli & Keller, 2017; Collings et al., 2017; Gallardor-Gallardo et al., 2017; Gallardor-Gallardo, Nijs, & Gallo, 2015; Sparrow, 2019). The study recognises the absence of a singular approach to talent management definitions which coincides with the literature. However, the study discovered that conceptualisations of "talent" articulated by Al Aina and Atan (2020) find resonance in the perspectives offered by the participants. The study also discovered that, although participants agree that talent and high performance are similar, the distinguishing factor is that a high performer consistently puts in effort to achieve whereas a talented individual may not always do so.

However, it is also important to note a major discrepancy discovered in the study regarding how organisations perceive talent management. Similarly, the literature notes that there persists an idea of talent management being merely a group of HR-related activities with performance management serving as its cornerstone (Sparrow, 2019). Most of the definitions provided by participants link with existing literature.

However, participants presented an understanding which was more of a textbook comprehension of the concepts rather than an understanding referenced from a documented organisational context and perspective. It can, therefore, be concluded that the organisation does not have a clearly defined conceptualisation of what talent means in its context. This discovery is in line with Gallardor-Gallardo et al. (2020) argument on "context matters," specifically when it comes to understanding what talent means in an organisational setting.

5.3 Deficiencies of Structured Frameworks

5.3.1 Talent management systems and processes

It was discovered that organisational systems and processes critical to strategy and implementation are not clearly outlined. Most importantly, the study discovered that the identified risk of an absence of structured frameworks stems from the lack of conceptual clarity. Similar circumstances were also discovered by Anlesinya et al. (2019), who demonstrated that talent management is facing several challenges. These include and are not limited to inadequate resources for talent development lack of a strategic approach throughout the talent management process, insufficient investment in decision-making processes, and unfavourable working conditions. This deficiency may impede crucial aspects such as the identification, development, and nurturing of talent within organisations, emphasising the paramount importance of establishing clear definitions for robust frameworks. Based on these findings, the study therefore concludes that the MQA lacks the necessary systems and processes for effective and efficient talent management.

5.3.2 Uninformed practices and implementation are due to the lack of cross-functional approaches and management capacity in talent management.

Another area of concern, discovered in the findings, is how implementation was executed with uninformed practices and a lack of cross-functional strategic approach. Interestingly enough, the process owners and drivers responsible for talent management lacked the necessary knowledge and understanding. This was also discovered by Hitchcock and Willard-Holt (2019), who observed that some managers may lack the essential skills or motivation to invest time and effort in developing their

subordinates. Similarly, Anlesinya et al. (2019a), raised similar concerns of a scarcity of qualified professionals capable of designing and implementing strategic initiatives, managerial commitment, and insufficient investment in decision-making processes.

5.3.3 Challenges of Sourcing Top Talent Externally

It was also discovered that organisations are currently experiencing challenges in sourcing top talent externally, due to a scarcity of skilled professionals primarily driven by global influences and escalating demand. This was discovered by Mdletye and Hlongwane (2019b) who discovered that the challenge with externally recruiting top talent is due to talent shortages. This prevailing circumstance leaves organisations with no other option but to strengthen talent identification and subsequent nurturing of talent for the current and future.

5.3.4. Identification of a talent pool

It was also discovered that the identification and development of a talented pool is another area exposed to a lack of systematic approaches and processes. Similarly, Cascio and Aguinis (2014) discovered that the critical element is workforce planning, which entails identifying current employees' knowledge, abilities, skills, and experience. It was established that the process of identifying a talent pool was not clear, with inconclusive responses regarding its existence and processes. The participants displayed a lack of transparency, awareness, and understanding, further exacerbated by potential concerns of favouritism in pool selection. The absence of a clear process for talent identification and pooling was evident, hindering effective workforce planning. This finding aligns with Gallardor-Gallardo (2015) who discovered that talent identification is one of the key components of talent management and there are no systems in place to identify and select a talent pool.

5.3.5 Talent development as a critical success factor for succession planning

The study discovered that the ad-hoc and unstructured nature of talent development interventions within the organisation reveals a gap in the system. Despite having

Individual Development Plans (IDPs), their execution often becomes a mere formality, highlighting a misalignment between intended systematic, structured, and purposeful interventions compared to actual implementation. Participant concerns include specific advancement procedures lacking, and hindering supplementary developmental intervention due to protocol adherence, thus emphasising improvement is necessary. The effective management of talent, particularly in the face of potential shortages in skilled personnel was discovered to be associated with an aging workforce. It was discovered that while there is a succession policy that was recently approved, its implementation has however faced obstacles. These findings align with Erasmus et al. (2019), who discovered that talent development requires a structured approach guided by documented and strategic efforts. As similarly emphasised by McDonnell et al. (2017), preparing potential successors is crucial for organisational resilience and continuity. This aligns with the broader goal of addressing talent gaps resulting from demographic shifts and ensuring a seamless transition of key roles.

5.4 Perceptions and Experiences of Beneficiaries Regarding Organisational Practices

The study discovered the perspectives and experiences of beneficiaries regarding talent management practices in the organisation. The study discovered that although specialists acting in positions, contracted employees and interns form part of a talent pool list. There is no evidence of a documented list of critical skills and talent pool, and the process of selecting a talent pool is unclear and it is not understood by beneficiaries set to be forming part of the talent pool list in South Africa (Asmal et al., 2023; Sibiya, 2023). Additionally, according to some respondents, there are issues with training and development policies that limit the growth opportunities for employees. Despite this feedback, it is generally agreed upon that managers provide guidance and support throughout various stages within organisations across different levels or positions held therein; so that area is addressed separately when necessary, during future observation examinations.

5.4.1 Qualification function mismatches and discrepancies

The beneficiaries interviewed expressed how their qualifications align with the job they perform. Some felt that there was no linkage at all, while others found certain modules of their studies aligned with their job profile. One beneficiary suggested that the organisation should provide workshops or further education to help employees prepare for higher positions. Overall, it is clear that there is a disconnect between the qualifications employees have and the work they are expected to perform within the organisation. This finding is in line with the argument and critiques of Brown et al. (2020) on human capital development education singularly determines labor productivity and subsequent earnings as there are many variables at play in the labour markets. In this case, qualifications do not align with the jobs that employees perform, which could affect their productivity.

5.4.2 Opportunities for training and development are limited.

It was established that beneficiaries have limited access to training and development opportunities, with most of the courses being too short. The study observed that constructive training and development opportunities are only made available if they are aligned with the position of employment. The present perspective of the beneficiaries suggests that they are somewhat restricted to specific development programs. Therefore, it appears as though individuals within the organisation do not have enough say about their own training needs and development.

5.4.3 The silent approach to communication and employee engagement

The research study has shown that there is a silent approach to communication and employee engagement by the organisation. The findings suggest that there is a lack of clear communication and guidance from HR and managers regarding training and development opportunities for employees. Participants mentioned that they were given conflicting instructions or not provided with specific goals. These findings align with what was discovered by Almulaiki (2023), who discovered that setting clear objectives while having regular meetings to review performance progress can be

beneficial for both the organisation as well as individual employees. Having specific targets and deadlines can help keep employees focused on their tasks, increasing motivation in their work.

5.4.4 Progress in mentoring and coaching

Overall, beneficiaries of mentoring and coaching feel there is room for improvement regarding active mentorship and coaching. Although some individuals had positive experiences with HR personnel who initiated mentoring programs, these opportunities are only available to select interns. Several participants expressed that they received necessary support but expressed concerns about training and development constraints. There are restrictions on access to certain courses or programs due to organisational protocols leaving many frustrated because it conflicts with aligning an employee's developmental goals while fulfilling organisational needs.

5.5 Recommendations

The study's findings contribute to practical insights into the broader debate on talent management, offering guidance for organisations aiming to optimise their internal talent pool for sustained success and future resilience. The study recommends the following and some areas for future research: Organisations need to define what talent management means in their context, and what is the makeup of talented employees. This recommendation aligns with Gallardor-Gallardo et al. (2020) argument for the contextualisation of talent management within the organisational setting. Once the defining process is complete, organisations like MQA need to establish and develop a structured talent management framework of identification, development, and succession planning. On identification, the study recommends a framework by Cascio and Aguinis (2014) which proposes a three-fold approach to human capital planning, with three steps guiding the identification of the current skills, prediction of future needs, and preparing tangible action plans. Including the talent management pipeline framework by Armstrong and Taylor (2014) specifically focusing on talent planning. The study recommends that there is a need for more empirical studies focusing on

talent management within the organisation's contextual setting. Moreover, more empirical studies need to be explored within the talent management sphere.

5.6 Conclusion

This research report explored the conceptualisation of talent management within the Mining Qualifications Authority and delved into the practices associated with the identification and development of internal talent. It also explored the experiences and practices related to talent management. Talent Management Pipeline Framework and Caruso's nine-grid box were used to understand effective talent development and succession planning. It has demonstrated critical challenges within talent management, including issues of misalignment with organisational goals and deficiencies in evaluation systems. Notably, the study highlights the increasing reliance on informal development methods, emphasising the role of organisational context in comprehending the intricacies of talent dynamics. Despite positive progress, a critical gap exists in the Mining Qualifications Authority's talent management practices. Cascio and Aguinis' three-fold approach is suggested for aligning employee identification with broader organisational goals.

Therefore, the study concludes that there are limitations to solely relying on education in talent management, emphasising that a proficient employee exceeds mere educational qualifications. Lastly, the study proposes a paradigm shift in talent management strategies, advocating for a broader scope that includes learning, knowledge, talent, skill development, and dynamic skill sets beyond traditional educational boundaries. Embracing this holistic approach positions organisations for success in cultivating a workforce adaptable to the evolving demands of contemporary workplaces.

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APPENDIX 1: CEO Letter: Request for Permission

ANNEXURE 1B

15 Gloucester Road
Kenleaf
Brakpan
1541

Office of the Acting Chief Executive Officer
Mining Qualification Authority
07 Anerley Road
Parktown
Johannesburg

Dear Mr Bethuel Nemagovhani

My name is Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana and I am a Masters student registered with Wits University Education Campus (Centre for Researching Education and Labour). I am currently embarking on a study on Talent Management within the SETA landscape, and I intend to conduct a case study of the Mining Qualifications Authority. My topic is; **Talent Management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs): *A Case of the Mining Qualifications Authority***

The key aim of my proposed study is to investigate how your SETA, a part of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) develops employees as a critical success factor of talent management. More specifically, my study intends to delve deeper into talent management and explore your SETA's policies, practices, and strategies to gain insight into how talent management is conceptualised and implemented in the workplace context. As a consequence, my study will utilise talent management theories and conceptual frameworks to strengthen talent management practices and ensure proper employee development for its fitness for purpose within the SETA.

It is important to note that your organisation's involvement is critical to the study, as the study pursues a case study of your organisation. It is equally important to note that though this is the case, participation is strictly voluntary, and your organisation may at any particular point in time refuse to participate even during the research proceedings. However, should the institution provide permission to participate in this research, I would require your support regarding the selection of participants. My study will employ a purposeful sampling and 16 participants with in-depth knowledge and understanding of the subject will be chosen. I am proposing to interview these prospective participants; Executive Manager of Corporate Services (***Sample size 1)***; Human Resource Manager (***Sample size (1)***; Human Resource Business Partner (***Sample size 1)***; Managers ***(Sample size 5)***; Beneficiaries of the MQA talent management programme (***Sample size 5)***; and Union MQA branch chairperson (***Sample size 2)***.

You are welcome to suggest, recommend, and nominate employees that you identify as potential participants who will contribute meaningfully to the aim and objectives of the research. These various employees will participate in an interview which will approximately take 45 – 60 minutes. These interviews will take place during lunch breaks or after hours depending on the availability of the participants. The interviews will be transcribed and recorded on an audio tape and the privacy of participants will be highly maintained in all publications resulting from the study. The record will be kept for a period of 3-5 years, and they will be destroyed once this period has lapsed.

I furthermore request permission to get access to your workforce planning and employee development-related policies and documents. These documents include a strategic planning document; workforce planning and strategy; training and development policy; succession planning and any other document that might assist in responding to the research aim and purpose.

The information provided by participants will remain confidential and the information will be presented anonymously. The participant will not be identified by their names and position but they will be allocated code names. However, anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed. The record will be kept for a period of 3-5 years, and they will be destroyed once this period has lapsed.

As a consequence, the information gathered will be examined and the data collected will be analysed and documented in a research report. The findings will be strictly used for academic purposes which might also include publications, and presentations during academic gatherings. Upon completion of the study in 2021, a summary of the research report and findings will be made available to you electronically should you wish to receive them.

You are welcome to contact me should you require more information throughout the course of the research. These are my contact details 1869281@students.wits.ac.za, phone number: 082 325 9079 or you can contact my supervisor, Dr Presha Ramsarup presha.ramsarup@wits.ac.za, phone number: 082 906 3170.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours in human capital development

SIGNATURE

Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana
EMAIL: 1869281@students.wits.ac.za
Student No.: 1869281
Contact No.: 082 325 9079

Permission granted/Permission not granted

Acting Chief Executive Officer
Mr Bethuel Nemagovhani

APPENDIX 2: Management Information Letter

ANNEXURE 2A: Participants Information Sheet (Management)

Researcher: Christopher Ramcwana

My name is Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana, and I am a Masters student registered with Wits University School of Education (Centre for Researching Education and Labour). I am currently embarking on a study on Talent Management within the SETA landscape and my intension is to adopt a case study approach that involves Mining Qualifications Authority. My topic is **Talent Management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs): *A Case of the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA)***.

The key aim of my proposed study is to investigate how the MQA (as a SETA), under the auspices of Department of Higher Education Science and Technology (DHEST) implements talent management strategies as a critical success factor for improved employee performance and organisational productivity. More specifically, situated within relevant theoretical and conceptual framework, my study intends to delve deeper into talent management and explore the MQA strategies with respect to its policies, systems and procedures to gain insight on how talent management is conceptualised, implemented, monitored and evaluated, experienced and reported in the workplace.

It is important to note that your experience and insights is critical to this case study research. It is equally important to note that though this is the case, your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may at any particular point time refuse to participate even during the research proceedings withdraw.

However, I have identified you as one of the interviewees given that you are appointed in a strategic position. It is hoped that you can shed some light regarding aspects of your experience with the study. The interview will take approximately 45 – 60 minutes and will take place at a convenient time and place chosen by you. Should it be necessary, i might make a follow up after interview requesting you to clarify and verify

some of your responses. I will also afford you the opportunity raise any matter related to the study even after the interview is concluded.

The interviews will be recorded on an audiotape and transcribed. In the transcription process, your identity will be kept confidential. The information you provide will remain confidential and the information will be presented anonymously. You will not be identified by your names and position, but you will be allocated a code name. However, anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed. I do not anticipate any risks emanating from your participation in the study. The record will be kept for a period of 3-5 year, and they will be destroyed once this period has lapsed.

As a consequence, the information gathered will be examined and data collected will be analysed and documented in a research report. The findings will be strictly used for academic purposes which mighty also include publications, presentation during academic gatherings. Upon completion of the study in 2021, a summary of the research report and findings will be made available to you electronically should you wish to receive them.

My research report has been examined and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand School of Education. You are encouraged to complete the consent form provided, should it happen that you are comfortable to participate in the interview.

You are welcome to contact me should you require more information throughout the course of the research. These are my contact details 1869281@students.wits.ac.za, phone number: 082 325 9079 or you can contact my supervisor who is Dr Presha Ramsarup presha.ramsarup@wits.ac.za, phone number: 082 906 3170.

Thank you for taking time to go through this document.

ANNEXURE 2A: Participants Information Sheet (Beneficiary)

Researcher: Christopher Ramcwana

My name is Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana, and I am a Masters student registered with Wits University School of Education (Centre for Researching Education and Labour). I am currently embarking on a study on Talent Management within the SETA landscape and my intension is to adopt a case study approach that involves Mining Qualifications Authority. My topic is; **Talent Management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs): *A Case of the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA)***.

The key aim of my proposed study is to investigate how the MQA (as a SETA), under the auspices of Department of Higher Education Science and Technology (DHEST) implements talent management strategies as a critical success factor for improved employee performance and organisational productivity. More specifically, situated within relevant theoretical and conceptual framework, my study intends to delve deeper into talent management and explore the MQA strategies with respect to its policies, systems and procedures to gain insight on how talent management is conceptualised, implemented, monitored and evaluated, experienced and reported in the workplace.

It is important to note that your experience and insights is critical to this case study research. It is equally important to note that though this is the case, your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may at any particular point time refuse to participate even during the research proceedings withdraw.

However, I have identified you as one of the interviewees given that you are one of the beneficiaries of the MQA talent management initiatives. It is hoped that you can shed some light regarding aspects of your experience with the study. The interview will take approximately 45 – 60 minutes and will take place at a convenient time and place chosen by you. Should it be necessary, i might make a follow up after interview requesting you to clarify and verify some of your responses. I will also afford you the opportunity raise any matter related to the study even after the interview is concluded.

The interviews will be recorded on an audiotape and transcribed. In the transcription process, your identity will be kept confidential. The information you provide will remain confidential and the information will be presented anonymously. You will not be identified by your names and position, but you will be allocated a code name. However, anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed. I do not anticipate any risks emanating from your participation in the study. The record will be kept for a period of 3-5 year, and they will be destroyed once this period has lapsed.

As a consequence, the information gathered will be examined and data collected will be analysed and documented in a research report. The findings will be strictly used for academic purposes which mighty also include publications, presentation during academic gatherings. Upon completion of the study in 2021, a summary of the research report and findings will be made available to you electronically should you wish to receive them.

My research report has been examined and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand School of Education. You are encourage to complete the consent form provided, should it happen that you are comfortable to participate in the interview.

You are welcome to contact me should you require more information throughout the course of the research. These are my contact details 1869281@students.wits.ac.za, phone number: 082 325 9079 or you can contact my supervisor who is Dr Presha Ramsarup presha.ramsarup@wits.ac.za, phone number: 082 906 3170.

Thank you for taking time to go through this document.

APPENDIX 3: Organisation Consent Letter

ANNEXURE 3A: Consent Form (Organisation)

CONSENT FORM

Research report title: **Talent Management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs): *A Case of the Mining Qualifications Authority***

Researcher: Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana

This form seeks to acquire your consent and acknowledgement regarding permission requested to conduct my research at your organisation.

The organisation provides consent and acknowledgement that:

- Participation is voluntary and participants selected may decide not to partake or they may pull out of their consent any time should they need to and will not be subjected to any penalties.
- The interview with participating individuals will be recorded should the participants not have a problem with such an exercise.
- The participants will not be compensation for their participation.
- The presentation made in the report will not use the participant's names but a code name; and as a result, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed by the researcher;
- The researcher in his data collection process will not interfere with the daily operations of the organisation;
- The information gathered will be examined and data collected will be analysed and documented in a research report.
- The findings will be strictly used for academic purposes which mighty also include publications, presentation during academic gatherings.
- Upon completion of the study in 2021, a summary of the research report and findings will be made available to you electronically should you wish to receive them.
- I understand that I can contact Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana at any time.

I _____ (full names and surname of the head of the organisations) give my consent and I acknowledge the information provided above. Therefore, the organisation grants permission to Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana to conduct research at the Mining Qualifications Authority during the 2020 academic period.

Kindly provide the contact details should you wish to receive and electronic summary of the research findings.

Email address:_____.

Signature: _____. Date:_____.

ANNEXURE 3C: Consent Form (Management)

CONSENT FORM

Kindly complete your details below should you agree to participate in my research on:

Talent Management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs): *A Case of the Mining Qualifications Authority*.

Researcher: Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana

CONFIDENTIAL

Talent management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

My name is,……, hereby confirm that I have read and understood the information provided by Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana regarding the research which is being conducted. I was allowed to ask questions and clear up any misunderstanding regarding the research conducted and I am fulfilled with the responses provided.

By signing this form:

- I understand that I have the choice to be recorded or not to be recorded by the interview.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time, as well to withdraw any contribution I made through my participation in the study.
- I understand that there won't be any compensation for my participation.
- I understand that the presentation made in the report will not use my name but a code name.
- I understand that the researcher will use my position at the organisation, but not the name of the organisation, and as a result complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed by the researcher.

- I understand that the research in his data collection process will not interfere with the daily operations of my organisation;
- I understand that the results will be made public.
- I understand that I can contact Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana at any time.

Please tick or circle your chosen response.

I agree to participate in this research. YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded. YES NO

Participant signature _____

Date _____

Researcher signature _____

Date _____

Kindly provide your information should you wish to receive an electronic summary of the research outcomes. Email address: _____

ANNEXURE 3D: Consent Form (Beneficiaries)

CONSENT FORM

Kindly complete your details below should you agree to participate in my research on:

Talent Management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs): *A Case of the Mining Qualifications Authority*.

Researcher: Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana

CONFIDENTIAL

Talent management in the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

My name is,……, hereby confirm that I have read and understood the information provided by Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana regarding the research which is being conducted. I was allowed to ask questions and clear up any misunderstanding regarding the research conducted and I am satisfied with the responses provided.

By signing this form:

- I understand that I have the choice to be recorded or not to be recorded by the interview.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time, as well as withdraw any contribution I made through my participation in the study.
- I understand that there won't be any compensation for my participation.
- I understand that the presentation made in the report will not use my name but a code name.
- I understand that the researcher will use my position at the organisation, but not the name of the organisation, and as a result complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed by the researcher.

- I understand that the research in his data collection process will not interfere with the daily operations of my organisation;
- I understand that the results will be made public.
- I understand that I can contact Christopher Tebogo Ramcwana at any time.

Please tick or circle your chosen response.

I agree to participate in this research. YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded. YES NO

Participant signature _____

Date _____

Researcher signature _____

Date _____

Kindly provide your information should you wish to receive an electronic summary of the research outcomes. Email address: _____

APPENDIX 4: Individual Interview Questions

Researcher email address: cramcwana@yahoo.com

ANNEXURE 5C

Beneficiaries interview questions

Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

The key aim of my proposed study is to investigate how the MQA (as a SETA), under the auspices of Department of Higher Education Science and Technology (DHEST) implements talent management strategies as a critical success factor for improved employee performance and organisational productivity. More specifically, situated within relevant theoretical and conceptual framework, my study intends to delve deeper into talent management and explore the MQA strategies with respect to its policies, systems and procedures to gain insight on how talent management is conceptualised, implemented, monitored and evaluated, experienced and reported in the workplace.

The duration of the interview is about 45 – 60 minutes. You are welcomed to stop the interview at any time or decline to answer any question should you feel uncomfortable with the question. I will reserve time at the end of the interview, should you need to any issue you feel needs to be addressed.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research.

There are 17 (seventeen) main questions, but some have sub question. The question are mainly seeking to answer the segment of my research report that focuses specifically on SETAs and they are identified accordingly. It will be made clear to participants that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The intended purpose of the questions are for them to share their opinions, experience, insights and ideas on this specific topic. It will also be made clear to participants that they are free to interrupt or ask any question for clarity.

Questions;

1. **What are the core areas of your job?**
2. **Is there a match between your core areas and organisational objectives?**
3. **What kind of support are you getting from the employer in order to ensure that you are able to effectively and efficiently discharge duties in your line of work?**
4. **Do you know what's expected of you at work?**
5. **If you were given the opportunity to change you job would, do it? If yes, why**
6. **What excites you most in your work?**
7. **Are you effectively and efficiently developed and supported to achieve the job outcomes?**
8. **Is there anything preventing you from doing your job as well as you'd like?**
9. **Do you have skills that you aren't using often enough?**
10. **Do your organisational processes help or hinder your work?**
11. **Does your manager help you set effective goals?**
12. **Do you know how your work contributes to the company's overall objectives?**
13. **Does your manager provide you with additional assignments or are you only allowed to perform duties in your job description?**
14. **Does your manager provide you with the coaching and guidance you need?**
15. **Which training interventions have you gone through?**
    - **15.1 Was the training relevant to the work you do?**
    - **15.2 Did the training interventions help you improve in your work area?**
    - **15.3 Do you think that it will help progress to the next level in future.**
16. **Is there knowledge areas or skills you'd like to develop to help you be more effective?**

17. **How does your manager together with human resource department assist you with your individual developmental and career path plan?**
18. **Do you receive sufficient praise and recognition for your achievements?**
19. **Do you think the organisation is doing enough to develop and prepare you for future promotional positions?**
    - **19.1 If yes, why and if the answer is No, what do think they need to do?**

Researcher email address: cramcwana@yahoo.com

ANNEXURE 5B

Management interview questions (Human Resources Specialists)

Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

The key aim of my proposed study is to investigate how the MQA (as a SETA), under the auspices of the Department of Higher Education Science and Technology (DHEST) implements talent management strategies as a critical success factor for improved employee performance and organisational productivity. More specifically, situated within relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks, my study intends to delve deeper into talent management and explore the MQA strategies concerning its policies, systems, and procedures to gain insight into how talent management is conceptualised, implemented, monitored and evaluated, experienced and reported in the workplace.

The duration of the interview is about 45 – 60 minutes. You are welcome to stop the interview at any time or decline to answer any question should you feel uncomfortable with the question. I will reserve time at the end of the interview, should you need to any issue you feel needs to be addressed.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research.

There are 17 (seventeen) main questions, but some have sub-questions. The questions are mainly seeking to answer the segment of my research report that focuses specifically on SETAs, and they are identified accordingly. It will be made clear to participants that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The intended purpose of the questions is for them to share their opinions, experiences, insights, and ideas on this specific topic. It will also be made clear to participants that they are free to interrupt or ask any question for clarity.

Questions.

1. **What is the role of human resources in ensuring that employees are equipped with the necessary competency to effectively and efficiently discharge duties in their line of work?**
2. **What is your understanding of the following;**
   - **2.1 A talented individual,**
   - **2.2 a high performer; and**
   - **2.3 Talent management?**
3. **In your view why is talent management necessary within an organisation?**
4. **Which Strategies do you have in place to identify, categorise, and manage a talent pool?**
5. **Does your organisation have policies that govern talent management? Describe key issues covered by the above-mentioned policies.**
6. **How are talent management strategies implemented to optimise employee performance?**
   - **6.1 What are the measures adopted to ensure employee career progression?**
   - **6.2 What are the mechanisms used to identify and develop employees to fit into new roles (lateral, horizontal, and vertical)?**
7. **Which key talent development strategies do you think will best develop employees to perform optimally?**
8. **Do you have the means to align organisational design and career pathways on all levels of organisational design application?**
9. **Does the organisational career-based learning and development initiatives support succession and integrated talent development and management practices?**
10. **Does a list of critical roles/positions and a list of critical skill sets and/or competencies exist for the organisation?**
11. **Is there a match between organisational needs and individual aspirations?**
12. **Does your organisation apply a systematic approach toward the individual developmental plan?**
    - **12.1 Career path and progression**

12.2 Succession planning

13. **Is there a standard approach across managers toward the implementation of talent management initiatives and are manager's capacities?**
14. **What are the challenges experienced in the implementation of talent management?**
15. **What effective talent management practices do you think are working and why?**
16. **What can be done to improve talent development initiatives' effectiveness and efficiency?**
17. **In what ways are key learning points integrated into the broader issues of talent management.**

Researcher email address: cramcwana@yahoo.com

ANNEXURE 5B

Management interview questions (Operational Managers)

Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

The key aim of my proposed study is to investigate how the MQA (as a SETA), under the auspices of Department of Higher Education Science and Technology (DHEST) implements talent management strategies as a critical success factor for improved employee performance and organisational productivity. More specifically, situated within relevant theoretical and conceptual framework, my study intends to delve deeper into talent management and explore the MQA strategies with respect to its policies, systems and procedures to gain insight on how talent management is conceptualised, implemented, monitored and evaluated, experienced and reported in the workplace.

The duration of the interview is about 45 – 60 minutes. You are welcomed to stop the interview at any time or decline to answer any question should you feel

uncomfortable with the question. I will reserve time at the end of the interview, should you need to any issue you feel needs to be addressed.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research.

There are 15 (fifteen) main questions, but some have sub questions. The question is mainly seeking to answer the segment of my research report that focuses specifically on SETAs, and they are identified accordingly. It will be made clear to participants that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The intended purpose of the questions is for them to share their opinions, experience, insights and ideas on this specific topic. It will also be made clear to participants that they are free to interrupt or ask any question for clarity.

<u>Questions</u>;

1. **What is your role as a manager in ensuring that employees are equip with necessary competency to effectively and efficiently discharge duties in their line of work?**
2. **What is your understanding of the following?**
   - **2.1 A talented individual,**
   - **2.2 A high performer; and**
   - **2.3 Talent management?**
   - **2.4 Mentoring and coaching**
3. **In your view, what is the motivation behind talent management programme and why is talent management necessary within an organisation?**
4. **Is there a standard approach across managers toward implementation of talent management initiative and are manager's capacities?**
5. **Do you have a list of critical roles/positions and a list of critical skills sets and/or competencies exist for your department?**
6. **How do you implement talent management strategies to optimise employee performance in your department?**

6.1 What are the measures adopted to ensure employee career progression.

6.2 What are the mechanisms used to identifying and developing employees to fit into new roles (lateral, horizontal and vertical)?

7. How do you monitored employee's performance to ensure improvements?

7.1 Talent management Policies, procedures and systems applied.

7.2 Link to Career path and

7.3 Succession planning

8. Is there a match between organisational needs and individual aspirations?

9. How do you develop individual developmental plan and is it aligned to

9.1 Organisational needs

9.2 Career path and progression

9.3 Succession planning

10. Do you have a mentoring and coaching strategy?

11. Do you think that the duties of your employees are properly aligned to the organisations objectives in your department?

12. Do you expose your employees to other activities or assignments or are your employee only confined to their duties as per the job description?

13. What are your challenges regarding implementation of talent management practices and strategies.

14. What are the effective talent management practices which are working and why?

15. What can be done to improve talent management effectiveness?