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The perceived impact of digital technology on talent management in the Banking Sector

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The perceived impact of digital technology on talent management in the Banking Sector

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business

Johannesburg, 2024

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore how banks have used digital technologies to formulate talent strategies and manage talent that is agile and relevant to their businesses. The race for talent has become highly competitive as talent is one of the most critical resources required to win in today's competitive market and technology in Talent Management (TM) is helping organisations manage talent effectively (Ghate, 2022). As business competition intensifies in banking, the need to attract, develop, and retain talent that is relevant to and agile for digital business is fundamental. This study investigated the impact of digital technologies in TM within the banking sector to add other studies that have already been conducted on TM for a digital business.

The research questions formulated to investigate the impact of digital technologies in TM within the South African banking sector were 1) What digital technologies are used to manage talent? 2) How have these digital technologies been used to formulate TM strategies? What influence do digital technologies and TM strategies have on talent profiles.

The conceptual framework developed a combination of theoretical frameworks being the Metcalfe's Law theory and Talent Pipeline theory. Metcalfe's law theory was chosen because it closely aligns with the more digital technologies are being used efficiently and effectively in managing talent the more value can be created for organisations. Talent Pipeline theory was chosen because it is the closest theory to cover the element of this study on talent identification, development, and retention.

The data was collected from recorded online or face-to-face interviews by asking open-ended questions that are intended to elicit views and experiences. The profile of Participants were C-suite Executives, Managing Executives, and Senior Managers within the 5 largest South African banks. The C-Suite Executives are the owners of the Strategy formulation process and therefore are responsible for the digital technology and TM strategy. The Managing Executives are the implementers of the business strategy. Lastly, Senior Managers provided insights into their experiences as consumers of digital technologies and beneficiaries of

the different TM processes. Included in the Senior Managers were those who had been recently hired and provided insights, specifically into the recruitment experience. 10 Participants participated in the study.

The key findings from the study revealed that digital technologies such as Big data for talent analytics, Cloud computing, ERP systems, LMS, virtual classrooms, and social media are used to acquire, develop and retain talent.

The study further highlighted that these digital technologies are used to digitalise employee profiling, recruitment, learning, performance management, succession planning, and understanding employee sentiments. This digitalisation resulted in better decisions making on appropriate retention strategies, learning and development activities, succession plans, engagement drivers, and career growth opportunities for employees.

KEYWORDS

Digital technologies, digitalisation, talent, talent management, talent management strategies, banking

DECLARATION

I, **Mduduzi Sikhosiphi Kubheka**, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Mduduzi Sikhosiphi Kubheka Signature:

Signed at Barbeque Downs

On the 30th of September 2024

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research report to the following people:

To the almighty “Umkhuluwomkhulu uShembe” my angels and ancestors for walking this journey with me and making this possible. I see this research report to fulfil my purpose which is supported by what you have gifted me with.

To my late parents, Ntombimpela Doris Kubheka and Mafika Lesley Welcome Kubheka, and my late stepfather Mzwakhe Kubheka, I miss you every day. I am sure you would be very proud of me.

To my late grandmother, Beatrice Deliwe Khumalo, and my late aunt, Fikile Mary Khumalo for always pushing me to study and study hard from a young age. Words fail me of how forever grateful I’ll be. I am sure you hope I have made you super proud.

To my friend, Mpilo Mngxadi for introducing me to the Digital Business program for post grad diploma and convincing me to go further and register for a Masters. God bless you.

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To my supervisor, Dr Jenika Gobind. My ancestors chose you to guide me through this process. Thank you for instilling confidence in me that I can do this even though I suffered a lot of imposter syndrome in the beginning. I will never forget.

To my lovely family, my wife, Mbali Kubheka, and my daughters, Uthingolwenkosazana Kubheka and Zobuhle Kubheka. Thank you for bearing with me for all my absenteeism during moments that mattered to you. I love you all dearly.

To my friend and colleague, Tshepiso Mogari for always constantly checking in, and providing support whenever I was lost on how to structure the proposal or the research report. I won't forget. God bless you.

To my superhero friend and business partner, Mpfuxi Shibambo, thank you for allowing me the time and space to always prioritise this instead of making money. I'll forever owe you for this.

To my classmates and comrades, Upenyu Toma, Olebogeng Mataboge, Thabani Msibi, Matuma Mosidi and Lawrence Kanotsauka. It was great walking this journey with you.

Thank you to all the organisations and Participants for agreeing to participate in the study and trusting me with your time and confidential information.

The perceived impact of digital technology on talent management in the Banking Sector

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of purpose

This qualitative study explored the use of digital technologies by South African banks to formulate TM strategies and to manage talent to ensure talent remains agile and relevant.

1.2 Background of the study

Digital transformation has resulted in new business models developed by incumbent banks to remain competitive and drive sustainable growth and profitability. Standard Bank for instance announced its change in business model from being a traditional bank to being a platform business with the aim to compete and win towards its 2025 targets (Writer, 2021). One of critical factors to remaining competitive is to have the right talent (skills and competences) relevant to financial services sector. Digital technologies can assist financial services organisations to effectively attract, develop and retain such talent.

The race for talent has become more competitive as talent is one of the most critical resources required to win in today's competitive market and technology in TM is helping organisations manage talent effectively (Ghate, 2022).

The findings from a study exploring how banks have used digital technologies to formulate talent strategies and manage talent that is agile and relevant to its business could be beneficial to other banks of comparable sizes and digital maturity in Africa, and the Globe.

1.3 Research problem

Digital disruption is coming in thick and fast across all industries/sectors of the economy, including the banking sector. The advancing 4IR digital technologies have enabled the new entrants to the South African banking sector to disrupt incumbent banks (ABSA Bank, First Rand bank, Nedbank, and Standard Bank).

These new entrants include digital banks such as Bank Zero, Discovery Bank and Tyme, and Fintechs. This has therefore intensified competition with the banking sector. The incumbent banks have had to respond to the digital disruption by embarking on digital transformation journeys to remain competitive. These digital transformation journeys saw the incumbent banks pivoting to new business models that offer non-traditional banking products to remain competitive. Nedbank launched an open banking API marketplace that allows partners to the bank's data and financial capabilities to create innovative and disruptive solutions that put client experience first (Integrated Report, 2021). Standard Bank partnered with Salesforce (Salesforce, 2020) to enable the development of a platform business. As business competition intensifies in tanking, the need to attract, develop and, retain talent that is relevant to and agile for digital business is fundamental. This study sought to investigate the impact of digital technologies on TM within the banking sector to add to other studies that have already been conducted on TM for a digital business.

1.4 Research questions

The primary objective of the study was to explore how digital technologies have impacted the formulation of TM strategies to ensure agile and relevant talent in the banking sector. To answer this main questions, the following research questions were developed:

1.4.1 What type of digital technologies are used to manage talent?

1.4.2 How have these digital technologies been used to formulate TM strategies?

1.4.3 What influence do digital technologies and TM strategies have had on talent profiles?

1.5 Rationale

Interest in the topic

The researcher has been employed in the financial services industry for more than 10 years and has been part of digital transformation journeys in the banking sector. In addition, the researcher led various TM programmes including graduate programs, learnership, and leadership development programmes. It is because of these experiences that the interest on the topic developed.

Empirical Rationale

TM in the Banking Sector by Theodorsson et al. (2022b) which specifically focused on Iceland highlighted the renewed competition and the related need for banks to recruit and retain talented employees given the impact of Industry 5.0. The literature emphasised the need to move towards a strategic TM which is decided by a business strategy. In the suggestions for future studies, there is no suggestion on how digital technologies have impacted TM in the banking sector, instead majority of the suggestions focus on how TM affect specific parts of an organisation.

An additional study by Abhinanda and Muralidharan (2021), on TM which focused on the South African banking sector also highlighted the importance of TM for the benefit of the banks and employees. The study specifically focuses on 10 TM practices that must be done right to achieve organisational goals and retain top talent within the banking organisations. The practices being.

- Employee Work Potential
- Well-defined and Structured Employee Job-Description
- Employee Participation in Decision-Making
- Scope of Employee Personal and Professional Growth
- Well-planned Employee Career Path
- Upskilling of Employees
- Creativity and Innovation
- Strategic Objectives
- Proper job evaluation, employee diversity

- Employee Diversity in the Workplace

This study did not cover in-depth any impact of digital technologies on the ten practices mentioned above. Both studies, from an international and South African perspective, did not deep dive into or cover how digital technologies have enabled effective TM to ensure talent remains agile and relevant, and this is what this study focused on.

Contribution to literature

This study added to existing academic literature on how TM is understood, valued, and managed in the South African banking sector. This study then double-clicked on the degree to which TM was driven by digital technologies. This study conducted empirical research on how the big five South African banks have used digital technologies to develop TM strategies and manage talent to be agile and relevant. This was intended to identify further research possibilities on TM for a digital business.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

1.6.1 TM strategies and approaches that are not driven through digital technology but through traditional manual approaches.

1.6.2 Heads, Middle Managers, and non-managerial employees are delimitations as the study focused on C-suite Executives, Managing Executives, and Senior Managers.

1.6.3 Subsidiaries of these banks that are domiciled outside South Africa are delimitations as the sample of Participants were those Executives and Senior Managers who work in the South African operations of these banks.

1.7 Definition of terms

1.7.1 Digital Technologies: Digital technologies have to do with a diverse set of electronic tools, systems, devices, and resources that can be used to harness, create, generate, store and process data and information for the accomplishment of set goals in the organization. (What Is Digital Technologies | IGI Global, n.d.)

1.7.2 Talent: Talent is a special ability that potentially leads an individual to success in a workplace. It is a combination of natural inner qualities and acquired or learned qualities. (Marinaki, 2022)

1.7.3 Talent Management: Talent Management is an HR strategy that aims to develop and retain high-performing employees (Pavlou, 2023). Is a process of developing and retaining employees with skill and succession planning (Marinaki, 2022b).

1.7.4 Financial Services Sector: The financial sector covers diverse types of transactions in such areas as real estate, consumer finance, banking, and insurance. It also covers a broad spectrum of investment funding, including securities. (Finance and Development, 2011).

1.8 Assumptions

1.81. The Big Five banks made investments in technologies designed to manage talent.

1.82. The Participants had a thorough understanding of TM principles.

1.83. Talent is a combination of natural abilities and learned abilities and the big five banks followed an inclusive approach to developing talent i.e., everyone is regarded as a talent.

1.84. TM strategies are aligned with the business strategy.

1.85. The qualitative methodology (through face-to-face or virtual interviews) was going to enable the researcher to gain sufficient evidence to produce findings and gain deeper insights.

1.9 Chapter Outline

This research report consists of five chapters, including this introduction and the components listed below:

- The second chapter includes a literature review covering big data analytics, theoretical and empirical discussion, and research propositions.
- The third chapter outlines the research methodology, data sources and definitions, and analytical approaches to data analysis.
- The fourth chapter outlines the presentation of findings on the three research propositions.
- The fifth chapter discusses the findings covering the demographics of the Participants as well as the results about the three research propositions.
- The sixth chapter concludes the study regarding research questions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the use of digital technologies on TM (TM) both from a global perspective and a South African perspective. Drawing on a range of academic sources and industry reports, Firstly, the chapter looks at the type of digital technologies available to manage talent. Secondly, the chapter assesses existing literature TM strategies and approaches through a digital lens. Lastly, this chapter evaluated how strategy formulation has been impacted by digital technologies.

2.2 Definition of topic or background discussion

Digitization has transformed the way organizations operate; this includes transforming how talent is managed. The use of digital technologies has made it easier for organizations to attract candidates from a more extensive pool of talent, to provide training and development opportunities for employees regardless of their location, and to monitor and measure employee performance more accurately. The use of digital technologies has also increased employee engagement and productivity, leading to improved organizational performance.

2.3 Digital technologies for TM

Digital technologies have to do with a diverse set of electronic tools, systems, devices, and resources that can be used to harness, create, generate, store, and process data and information for the accomplishment of set goals in the organization (Salmons & Wilson, 2009). TM is a strategic approach to managing an organization's human resources to achieve its goals and objectives. It involves a range of activities, including talent acquisition, talent development, and talent retention. In the digital age, TM has become even more critical as organizations seek to leverage digital technologies to attract, develop, and retain their talent.

According to Pavlou (2023) TM is an HR strategy that aims to develop and retain high-performing employees. Whilst Marinaki (2022b), defines it as the process of developing and retaining employees with skill and succession planning.

This study examined the effect of digital technologies on TM strategies by organisations.

2.3.1 *Talent acquisition technologies*

Talent acquisition technologies refer to the digital tools and platforms used to attract and recruit candidates. These technologies include job boards, applicant tracking systems (ATS), candidate relationship management (CRM) systems, and social media platforms. Job boards allow organizations to post job vacancies and reach a broader pool of candidates. ATS enables recruiters to manage the recruitment process from start to finish, including resume screening, interview scheduling, and candidate communication. CRM systems allow recruiters to build and maintain relationships with potential candidates, even if they are not actively looking for a job. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter enable recruiters to reach out to candidates directly and build relationships with them. According to a study by DiRomualdo et al. (2018), there is a growing adoption of mobile access to manage job applications and AI and predictive tools are used to evaluate candidates. This increased usage of advanced analytics will assist in learning about candidates' experiences, the potential to learn quickly, alignment to organisational culture, and behaviours in line with available roles using Talent development technologies (Walford-Wright & Scott-Jackson, 2018).

2.3.2 *Talent development technologies*

Talent development technologies refer to the digital tools and platforms used to provide training and development opportunities for employees. These technologies include learning management systems (LMS), virtual classrooms, gamification, and microlearning. LMS provides employees with access to a range of training materials, such as videos, webinars, and e-learning courses. Virtual classrooms enable employees to attend training sessions remotely, regardless of

their location. Gamification involves incorporating game-like elements into the learning process to make it more engaging and interactive. Learning platforms such Salesforce use Trailblazer as a gamification approach to learning by assigning badges as candidates finish a module (*Trailhead* | *Trailblazer Ranks*, n.d.). According to a study by Martínez-Morán et al. (2021) Gamification is used by 40% of companies in Spain and half of the companies that employ gamification in training activities use quizzes and role-plays.

2.3.3 *Talent retention technologies*

Talent retention technologies refer to the digital tools and platforms used to foster employee engagement and retention. These technologies include employee engagement surveys, employee recognition platforms, and communication tools. Employee engagement surveys enable organizations to measure employee satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) is one of the methodologies to conduct employee engagement surveys (Contemporary Organisation and Management. Challenges and Trends, 2020). Employee recognition platforms allow organizations to recognize and reward employees for their contributions, thereby increasing employee engagement and motivation. Communication tools such as instant messaging and video conferencing enable employees to stay connected and collaborate effectively, regardless of their location.

2.3.4 *Talent analytics technologies*

Talent analytics technologies refer to the digital tools and platforms used to measure and analyse employee performance and potential. These technologies include performance management systems, predictive analytics, and workforce planning tools. Performance management systems enable organizations to set goals and objectives for employees and track their progress towards achieving them. Predictive analytics involves using data to predict future trends and outcomes, such as identifying employees who are at risk of leaving the organization. Workforce planning tools enable organizations to forecast their talent needs and plan accordingly. According to a study conducted by Guerra et

al. (2023), the use of digital work platforms arising from Big Data enhances TM by HR departments i.e., improves performance and reduces costs. This also improves the employer's performance and facilitates a more engaged, satisfied, and efficient employees as they progress in their careers.

2.3.5 *Proposition A:*

Digital technologies enable efficient and effective methods to attract, develop and retain talent.

2.4 TM Strategies

TM strategies to attract (recruit), develop (learning &development and performance management), retain (succession planning and employee engagement) are dependent on organisations choice of TM philosophy. According to a study conducted by Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014), organisations either take an exclusive or inclusive approach to TM...

2.4.1 *Exclusive approach*

According to Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014), the exclusive approach, on the other hand, considers talent as one or more elite subsets ('talent pools') of employees whose combination of human capital, attitudinal elements (such as engagement) and behaviour entails a high potential of current or future value and productivity to an organisation, in the context of both the individual's role, identity and profession and the organisation's specific requirements. According to Meyers and Van Woerkom (2014), an exclusive approach assumes talent is very rare and innate which can assist organisations gain sustained competitive advantage, optimise return in training investments, and transfer talent. This approach is effective in saving training costs, if the appropriate TM practices (such as workforce differentiation, talent retention, and potential development) are deployed appropriately.

2.4.1 *Inclusive approach*

The inclusive approach considers all employees as talent (notably based on the notion that it is systems and interactions of people that create long-term sustainable competitiveness. This approach assumes talent is universal based on either based on character strength or individual potential that needs to be developed. This approach can be effective in fostering a growth mindset and driving employee well-being, motivation, and eventually performance, provided employees' strengths are appropriately deployed and experienced-based development is elevated. According to another study conducted by Bhalla, Caye, Lovich, and Tollman (2018), talent is not about developing the 2% (i.e., stars) no matter how talented they are because for the 2% to be effective they will always need the help of those with skills they do not have.

2.4.2 *Hybrid approach*

According to a study conducted by Ulrich and Smallwood (2012b), organisations can apply a hybrid approach to TM. This approach segments all employees into talent pools, with some pools being identified as more critical or specialised but with a general ethos of good human resource management (HRM) applied to all (Boudreau, 2013; Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). This approach views talent on a continuum and groups talent into talent pools and measures talent based on performance and potential. Figure 2.1 below measures talent on a 9-box Grid developed by Ulrich and Smallwood (2012b). The grouping of talent into pools is effective in selecting appropriate talent development and retention strategies and deploying training funds effectively.

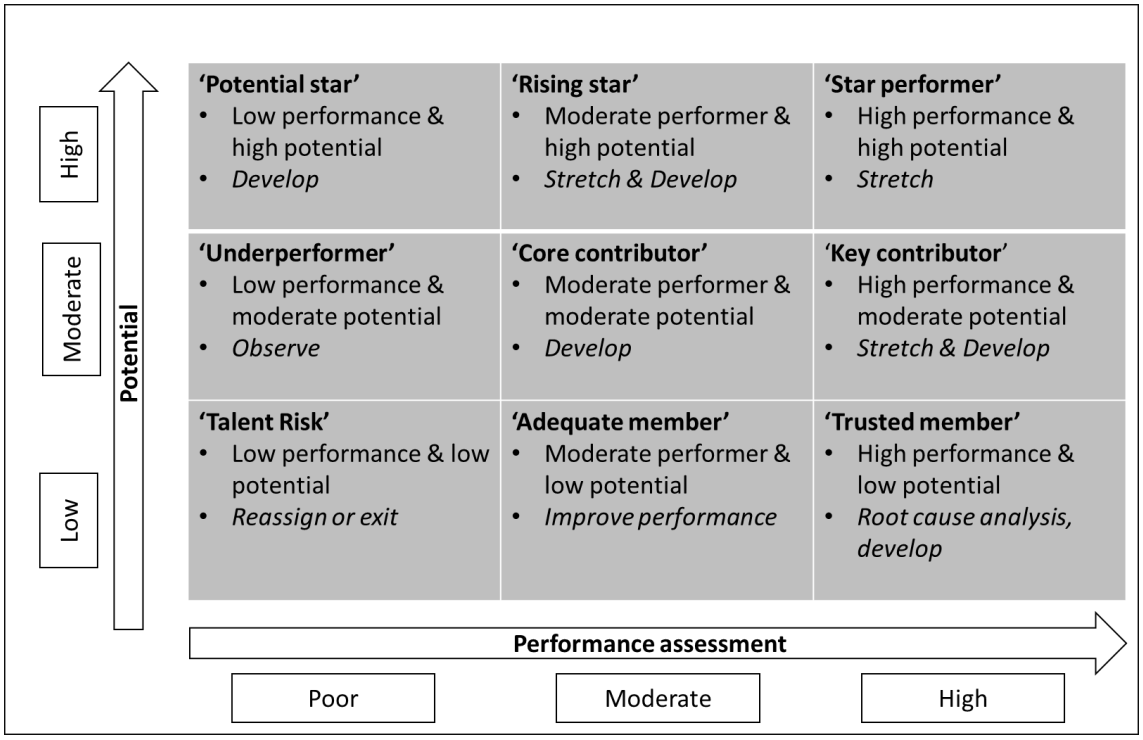

Figure 2.1: 9-Grid Matrix

Source: Ulrich and Smallwood (2012)

As the result of the above studies on TM and in relation to the research objectives of this study, the following proposition has been developed.

2.4.1 Proposition B

Different strategies can be applied to develop and retain employees in different talent pools (Potential stars, rising stars, star performers, core contributors and, key contributors)

2.5 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Metcalfe's Law: This law states that the value of a network is proportional to the square of the number of users in the network. Metcalfe's Law was conceived by George Gilder but is attributed to Robert Metcalfe, co-inventor of Ethernet (1980). It speaks to both the growth in the number of connections as well as the value (Techopedia, 2019). The concept is similar to the business concept of a "network effect" in that the value of a network provides both additional value and a

competitive advantage. Despite being formulated in the ‘80s, it is still relevant in the present day because it was recently cited by Alabi (2017) demonstrating that blockchain technology follows Metcalfe’s law. Alabi asserts that the models showed the growth in the value of the assets to be correlated to the growth in the number of daily unique addresses used on the network; data that is easily extracted from the blockchain.

2.5.1 *TM theories*

Talent Pipeline Theory: This theory suggests that an organization needs to develop a pipeline of talented employees to fill key positions as they become available (Thibodeau & Snider, 2023). Therefore, an organization needs to identify and develop its employees' skills and abilities to create a sustainable talent pool. This theory is still relevant as it was explored in the study of leadership strategies for Increasing Employee Productivity in the Banking Industry (Ward, 2019)

2.5.2 *Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework chosen for this study was a combination of Metcalfe’s Law theory and Talent Pipeline theory. The digital technologies theory chosen for this study is Metfalce’s Law because it was closely aligned with the more digital technologies are being used efficiently and effectively in managing talent the more value can be created for organisations. The chosen TM theory for this study was the talent pipeline strategy as it is the closest theory to cover the element of this study on talent identification, development, and retention.

2.5.3 *Conceptual Framework*

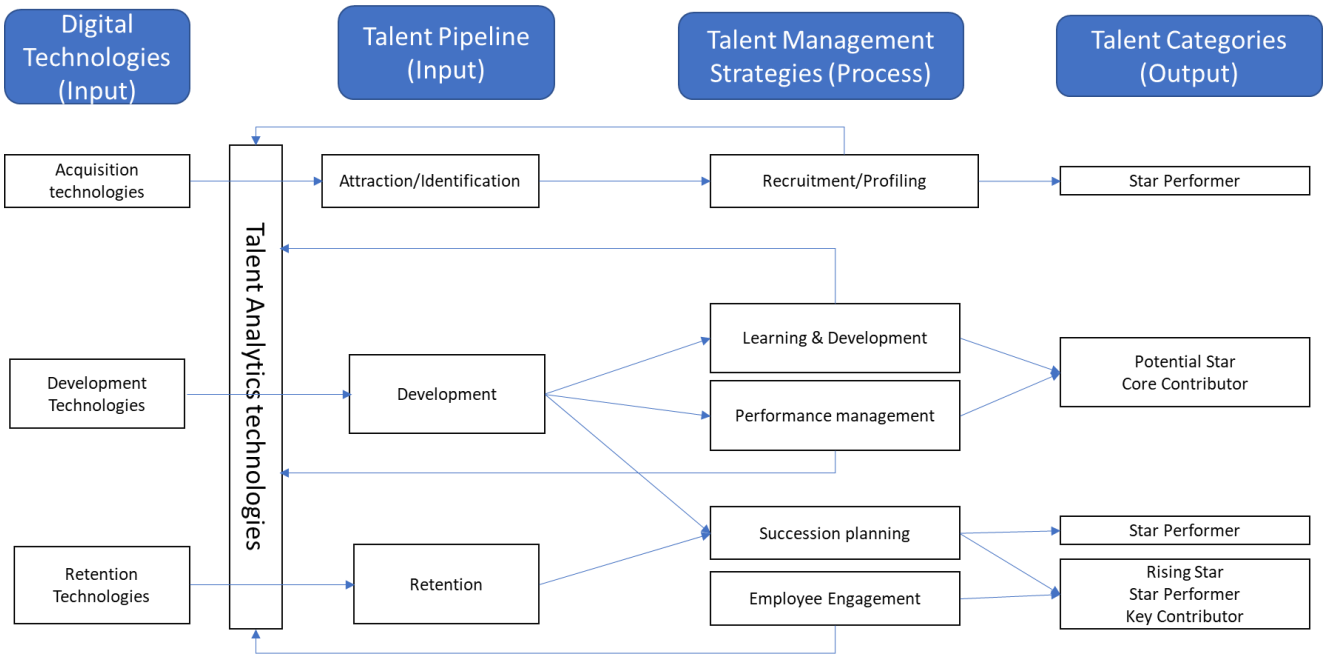

Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework 1

The conceptual framework (figure 2.2) demonstrates the relationship between the use of digital technologies and TM and the ultimate impact on the different talent profiles. Digital technologies, particularly talent analytics, play a crucial role in modern talent management strategies. These technologies help organisations attract, identify, develop, and retain talent effectively. Here's a brief overview of how they contribute to each aspect:

Attraction and Identification: Talent analytics can analyse vast amounts of data to identify potential candidates who fit the desired profiles (Walford-Wright & Scott-Jackson, 2018). This includes using AI to evaluate candidates (DiRomualdo et al. 2018), social media profiles, and other digital footprints e.g. ATS to find the best matches.

Development: Once talent is onboard, talent analytics can help in creating personalised development plans. By tracking performance data and learning preferences, organisations can tailor training programs to individual needs, ensuring continuous growth and skill enhancement.

Retention: Talent analytics can also predict which employees are at risk of leaving by analysing engagement levels and job satisfaction surveys such as eNPS (Contemporary Organisation and Management. Challenges and Trends, 2020). This allows organisations to take proactive measures to retain top talent.

By leveraging talent analytics, organisations can more accurately place employees within the 9-Grid Matrix (Figure 2.1), ensuring that everyone receives the appropriate development opportunities and career progression paths (Guerra et al. 2023).

2.6 Conclusion of Literature Review

Following the review of the literature on digital technologies in TM and their impact on TM strategies, the following proposition arose:

2.6.1 *Proposition A*

Digital technologies enable efficient and effective methods to attract, develop, and retain talent.

2.6.2 *Proposition B*

Different strategies can be applied to develop and retain employees in different talent pools (Potential stars, rising stars, star performers, core contributors and key contributors.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach

This study used the general qualitative research approach and focused on actual corporate practices in using digital technologies to manage talent as applied by humans (Flick, 2017). TM involves a lot of subjectiveness and because of that qualitative approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the perceived effect of digital technologies on TM.

3.2 Research design

To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of digital technologies on TM, a qualitative research methodology was adopted to support the propositions on digital technologies and TM from data collected through interviews from different Participants across different South African banks (Teherani et al., 2015). The benefits of interviews across different banks provided insights that are systemic about to the digitalisation of banking. Some of the disadvantages are that it took longer to analyse the data, and the researcher acknowledged the possible his own biases towards the research topic especially because the researcher is an employee within the banking sector. However, to eliminated bias, the researcher focused on the recurring consistent from the data collected.

3.3 Data collection methods

The data was collected from recorded online one-on-one interviews from asking open-ended questions that ware intended to elicit views and experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The recording allowed for ability to analyse the date post the interviews as well as for Quality Assurance purposes.

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 *Population*

The targeted population was C-suite Executives, Managing Executives and Senior Managers in the five big banks. The C-Suite Executives were part of the population because they are the owners of the Strategy formulation process and therefore are responsible for the digital technology and TM strategy. The Managing Executives were part of the population because they are the implementers of the business strategy and digital technologies. Lastly, the population also included Senior Managers who are consumers of digital technologies and beneficiaries of the TM strategies. Included in the Senior Managers was a mix of recent hires and medium to long term employees. The recent hires were able to provide insights specifically into the recruitment experience.

3.4.1 *Sample*

Several sample approaches could have been used in this qualitative research because they work well with almost all qualitative research designs. Convenience and purposeful sampling are the two most used sampling strategies within a qualitative dissertation. The target sample was 20 – 30 Participants, target sample was purposefully selected to be representative across the three different categories of Participants with a minimum of 4 people from one bank.

3.4.2 *Sampling method*

The sampling method was a non-probability purposive sample that was targeted to the 3 types of Participants mentioned in section 3.4.1 above.

3.5 The research instrument

The chosen research instrument for this study was interview-based and was split into two as follows:

Part A: Profile of the Participants in terms of name, designation, function, years of experience in financial services, and years of experience in banking.

Part B: Questions related to the study as shown in the research instrument.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

The research instrument was one-on-one interviews with the Participants. The C-Suite Executives, Managing Executives, and Senior Managers were asked 7, 15, and 13 questions respectively which were structured and adopted from David Rogers (2016). The questions were designed to cover the 3 objectives explored in the literature review section. The responses from the interviews assisted exploring how digital technologies have impacted TM strategies. The Participants were requested permission to participate before they were interviewed, and their responses were recorded via Microsoft Team.

3.7 Data analysis strategies and interpretation

Analysing qualitative research aims to discover and understand the big picture by using data to describe the phenomenon and what it means. (Halcomb, 2016). The collected data was winnowed by focusing on specific parts of the data in order to aggregate data into themes in line with the research propositions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The themes were then summarised into findings, and these were interpreted in line with the digital technologies and TM strategies theories either to support the theory or identify further areas of research.

3.8 Limitations and challenges of the study

1. Access to the C-Suite Executives given the title of the researcher and financial services are hierarchical.
2. Access to the Executives' diaries given their busy diaries across various organisations.
3. Participants were less than the ideal sample size. The minimum intended sample size was 20 at 4 participant per unit but the researcher was only

able to interview 10 participants at 2 participants per unit because of the limitations mentioned above. However, the data collected from the 10 participants revealed recurring themes and common patterns that enabled the researcher to extract insights that are translated to robust findings.

3.9 Quality Assurance

3.9.1 *Transferability*

To evaluate the transferability of a qualitative study, Tracy and Hinrichs (2017) assert that Resonance/Transferability is one of the criteria for the quality of the study. Resonance is achieved if qualitative researchers conduct deep analyses that take context and experiences into account in a way that readers can appreciate the findings and apply those findings their situations. This study will resonate if it is read by other Executives in another financial services organisation of a similar context, those Executives should be able to relate the findings from this research to their organisations and apply the findings and recommendations to their organisational context. Digital technologies are being leveraged in all financial services organisation that operate within a digital business context. The talent profiles sought after in financial services organisations are similar in terms of competencies, skills, and experience and everyone wants to attract and retain top talent. Also, if the research is read by Senior Managers in another financial services organisations of a similar context, they should feel as though the research findings overlap with their own because all employees want to be developed, recognised, and retained.

3.9.2 *Credibility*

Credibility can be achieved through applying thick description, crystallisation & triangulation, multivocality, and member reflections (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). Specifically applicable to this study is multivocality and member reflections that was applied to ensure credibility. Tracy and Hinrichs (2017) asserts that multivocality represents the inclusion of diverse voices within the research context. In addition to providing an empathic understanding, multivocality allows

for a variety of opinions. As the study focused on interviewing a combination of C-Suite Executives, managing Executives, and Senior Managers, the study focused on demonstrating to the readers that multiple viewpoints are fairly presented to ensure credibility.

3.9.3 *Dependability*

In a study conducted by Soroush et al. (2018), they describe dependability as being free of bias from the researcher and that the findings also do not represent the interest or bias of the researcher but a based on the Participant's responses. In this study, all stages of the study were described step-by-step so that it can be properly judged during an independent audit. The study is partly dependable in that the researcher followed the member reflection process mentioned above. Also, the process of conducting research can be applied in another financial services organisations of similar size and complexity.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher followed the guidelines of Wits University and ensured that he got a consent form and ethics clearance certificate from the University of Witwatersrand's ethics department and the confidentiality of the Participants was kept confidential in line with the POPIA act and stored in the Cloud. The researcher obtained consent from participants to participate in the study, he has the data stored in the private cloud that he only has access to. The contents of the interview outcomes have been kept anonymous and confidential and no individual names have been included in the research report.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings conducted from the qualitative research; the findings are presented about the research questions under each proposition. Qualitative data collected from one-on-one interviews was used to conduct a thematic analysis. The findings are presented into themes that emerged against research propositions discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

Three C-Suite Executives initially agreed to participate in the study. However, two of the Executives decided to opt out of the study, citing work-related challenges. The researcher however proceeded with the study and respected their decision because participation in the study was voluntary.

Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 below presents the code classifications used to identify Participants. Each Participant has been classified and labelled according to their participatory role. C-suite Executive were allocated a ‘C’ label (for C-suite), Managing Executives were allocated a ‘M’ label (for Managing), and Senior Managers were allocated a ‘S’ label (for Senior), and these were mapped to themes that emerged from the study. These are explained about to the proposition and related research questions.

4.2 Findings pertaining to Proposition A - – "Digital technologies enable efficient and effective methods to attract, develop and retain talent".

Table 1 Code Classification of Participants and emerging themes - A

Participants	Code Classification	Emerging Themes
C-Suite Executives		
Participant 1	C01	A. Talent Development and Retention
Managing Executive		
Participant 2	M01	
Participant 3	M02	
Participant 4	M03	
Senior Managers		
Participant 5	S01	B. Talent Acquisitions, Development, and Retention
Participant 6	S02	
Participant 7	S03	
Participant 8	S04	

Participant 9	S05	
Participant 10	S06	

The themes have been grouped into those that emerged from Executives separate from those that emerged from interviews with Senior Managers. The researcher did this to obtain insight and perspectives from the owners (i.e. Executives) of the TM technologies and from the users of those technologies (i.e. Senior Managers).

The following themes and related findings presented below are about to research question 1: **What type of digital technologies are used to manage talent?**

A. Talent Development and Retention – Executive Perspective.

4.2.1 *The Overall use of technology*

The essence of the findings was on the intersection of TM and digital technologies, which is where the majority of Participants' (Executives) views emanated. The findings to the question *"What informed your choices on digital technologies to invest in?*" suggest that Executives place a great deal on investing in technologies that will enable big data and analytics on talent as supported by the following statement:

> *I was just thinking, at the time it was we always talked about one customer, and it's the same also applied the next one to employees when you can open up a profile of an employee, and you can see absolutely everything of that individual. Yes. So that you can make data the decisions, right. And then not only the one employee or the one colleague, but also then, you know, the reporting and the analytics.,* (C01)

Additionally, according to Participant (C01), there was significant focus on investing in employee experience and digital tools for latent management as essential components for improving overall business performance, however, they cannot solely attribute the effective use of TM technologies to business

performance because business performance can be affected by various factors based on the following statements:

> *I just think there's too many other things that, that impact that, you know, you bring in a new CEO, and it can impact you. And that's why, you know, it's all hush hush when these decisions are made, because you don't want it to impact share price. You know, you still want to keep a positive outlook in the markets on the on the projected performances of your organisation. So I can't say overall business performance. .*

> *when COVID hit that changed everything when every time you know there's a change in the economy or the global economy Impacts business performance, so I wouldn't go as far as saying yes, it definitely has because I don't think that's the right question.*

The findings to the question *"What technologies are available to you to enable talent profiling of your teams?*" suggest that the integration of different technologies was key in TM strategies, specifically talent profiling, learning and development, succession planning, and performance management. Cloud and ERP technologies were the technologies for integration. The findings are supported by the statements below:

> *So at Absa the people system is workday. And workday has a TM module that we use, and of course, across the value chain of TM, from acquisition of talent through to development through to retention, we use workday. (M01)*

> *That's right. So, it's the same thing for performance for succession plans for development plans? (M01)*

> *The success factors are housed in a sub system. So in that system, that's where you've got your talent profiling, and you've got your employee profiling. But I think the question for you, it's around talent profiling. So, so, we it's on a sap SuccessFactors. So, so for Metallian profiling, this is to get one the Personnel Information of, of an employee. So kind of similar to LinkedIn profile, kind of similar to one CV. So it will have your personal*

information, Name, Surname, and all the other background question that has to do with an individual. So it will extend it include your educational background, which you then capture yourself.,

We were able to be able to see you, and also the achievements., so that talent profiling system houses all of that. (M02)

We do have a tool that allows us where we do capture things like our goals and the performance, it's a performance management tool. But within that performance management tool, it allows us then to also do other aspects of the individual related to the talent peace of the conversation. But a lot of our talent conversations, though, have really been built outside of the system in terms of manual spreadsheets, or manual documents that we carry, where we talk about succession planning and stuff, which are not necessarily built into that system. (M03)

4.2.2 *Talent Profiling Technologies*

The findings to the question *"What technologies are available to you to enable talent profiling of your teams"* suggest that Participants see the importance of having a comprehensive TM system. They specifically highlighted performance management and profiling technology as playing a key role in improving performance management as supported by the following statements form the Participants:

So at Absa the people system is workday. And workday has a TM module that we use, and of course, across the value chain of TM, from acquisition of talent through to development through to retention, we use workday. (M01)

That's right. So it's the same thing for performance for succession plans for development plans? (M01)

So what I add to as an employee profile, so the talent profile now that's where you have your performance, you will have from a talent perspective, you have you. You'll have your talent grids. Yes. So All that pulls from,

from a talent system. So it will give us the performance for the last three years. . So performance, talent, grids' they're all on the talent profile. (M02)

But a lot of our talent conversations, though, have really been built outside of the system in terms of manual spreadsheets, or manual documents that we carry, where we talk about succession planning and stuff, which are not necessarily built into that system. (M03)

4.2.3 *Learning and Development Technologies*

The findings to the question "*What technologies are available to you to enable learning and development of your teams?"* suggest that the same Cloud and ERP technologies used for talent profiling are also used to enable learning and development for internal learning activities. Participants also acknowledged the challenges associated with implementing these technologies, particularly i integration and tool selection. The findings also suggested there are benefits to integrating external learning tools such as LMS, Virtual Classrooms, and Social Media (e.g. LinkedIn Learning) with core technologies as evidenced by the following statements from Participant M03:

there's something we call decreed camp where we've got some of the L &D courses built in, but we also use was this LinkedIn learning? Can also another tool. And then obviously, you've got classroom-based type. .

4.2.4 *Succession Planning Technologies*

The findings to the question *"What technologies are available to you to capture succession plans?"* suggest that the same Cloud and ERP technologies used for talent profiling are also used to capture succession plans as supported by the following statements from the Participants:

So at Absa the people system is workday. And workday has a TM module that we use, and of course, across the value chain of TM, from acquisition of talent through to development through to retention, we use workday. (M01)

That's right. So it's the same thing for performance for succession plans for development plans? (M01)

So succession plans, also, they sit under the TM SuccessFactors... The good thing about the talent system is that if you choose successes, we are able to choose a successor that seats in another cluster. Ah, I see. Okay, so if you know the person, you just type primer to, to see your name is going to pop out and then you, you put that person in whatever pipeline, whether it's short term, medium term, or long term and then automatically gets saved. But the good thing about it, once the person gets nominated, and then it allows either the line manager to accept or decline the success, this nominated, nominated successor that applies only to the analytics it won't pull through, because he's not being vetted.. (M02)

But a lot of our talent conversations, though, have really been built outside of the system in terms of manual spreadsheets, or manual documents that we carry, where we talk about succession planning and stuff, which are not necessarily built into that system. (M03)

4.2.5 *Performance Management Technologies*

The findings to the question *"What technologies are available to you to manage and track performance?"* suggest that talent modules are built into the same Cloud or ERP system used for talent profiling as supported by the following statements from the Participants.

So at Absa the people system is workday. And workday has a TM module that we use, and of course, across the value chain of TM, from acquisition of talent through to development through to retention, we use workday. (M01)

That's right. So it's the same thing for performance for succession plans for development plans? (M01)

We do have a tool that allows us where we do capture things like our goals and the performance, it's a performance management tool. But within that performance management tool. (M03)

4.2.6 *Employee Engagement Technologies*

The findings to the question *"What technologies are available to you to conduct employee satisfaction surveys?"* suggest that data-enabled technologies are used to assess employees' sentiments and/or perceptions to measure their satisfaction levels. These technologies are however not integrated into the talent modules on the talent systems. This is evidenced by the following statements from the Participants:

We've got an in-house bespoke colleague engagement survey that we run at apps on an annual basis. And the platform that we use for it is contracts. In terms of the it's Qualtrics (M01)

we investigated another alternative, and the persevere also came up with, with more insights, etc, and more depth. And then so we thought we should adopt that one. to do it measures the, the culture of the organisation, you know, so it's the voice of the people. This insight, I'm telling you, is actually able to give us more insights about a whole lot of issues that we never used to have before. For instance, if you want to see the level of let's say, you know, diversity in the organisation, how happy are the employees, happy about that diversity in the organisation, maybe let's just go there, because it's a pain point for now..(MO2)

Perception ultimate software (M03)

According to Participant M01, the employee satisfaction surveys software was internally built whilst Participant M02 and M03 indicated that these are licensed from a third party as evidenced by the following statements:

So of course, you know, we have we have trained our internal people to do the dicing and all of those things. And, you know, you know, the staff,

you know, I mean, something to do with licensing and all. But, you know, obviously, they still run the engine from behind the scenes (M02)

I think it's licensed. (M03)

B. Talent Acquisitions, Development, and Retention – Senior Manager Perspective

4.2.7 *The Overall use of technology*

The Participant engaged in a discussion over the organisation's internal platforms and tools for employee development and performance management. They highlighted that these technologies made it efficient for them to capture employee profiles, find suitable roles, have a seamless recruitment experience, book internal training, capture and track progress against performance contracts, and complete surveys about their satisfaction level.

4.2.1 *Talent Profile Technologies*

The findings to the question *"What platform(s) do you use to capture your profile (experience, qualifications, career aspirations, and strengths)?"* suggest there is an integrated TM system that allows employees to capture their profiles, as evidenced by the following statements from the Participants:

So absolutely used workday to capture, you know, our skills, our qualifications, and I think, on an annual basis, or there would be a time where it's triggered to ask you if there are any updates to that. So that releases information used when sort of seeing where to plot you from a development perspective or TM processes. (S01)

Would be like what you call its workday. So basically worked out what it does you basically the role you put in your CV in a way and then But then like on top of your CV, you basically like profile yourself. So what it does is like, after you profile yourself, it will sort of like do an analysis on the profile to say okay, from this profile, what other roles can you move into anyway, this is the best possible area that I could go to. But it's not enough

to do is to just give you an idea of possible areas that you can move in. So that's like, from a profiling perspective at a TM level. (S02)

"I'm gonna we use something called workday, I think it's part of SAP, things because I think it's, it's, it's from SAP, so it's similar to what we have the right but here the whole thing is just called wet day. So it's got to you can do your profile, you know, you can see your payslips. You can put your experiences, you can put, you can even see your whole team, you can do live you, you know, that whole profile thing.. So in essence, if it's already like, aligned you to interest you already know, okay, from a mentee from a mental perspective and need to basically have the effect set as my meant, it was suggested for you, and then you can select it or deselect it. So it sort of like profiles you to in a way that instead of always applying, then you basically get all the required information about the organisation, in terms of where you want to go, it will give you that information. Even if there's roles in the in that team that you have an interest in, it will give you all the roles that are there. So in essence, that's what workday is basically connect to and currently.(S04)"

And may not be the right names, but the employee portal? Any we have been loading my profile data? And I'm not sure of the name of the system. I'm just trying to open it now. And see. And over, is it Hannah? The system is Hana. ERP Technologies , SAP HANA. SAP. (SO5)

Alright, so, I mean, I know that now we've got like a web-based platform. I don't know what it's based on. But I think also the set. So it's set. And then employee portal. I know it's web based, but I don't actually know what it's sitting on. (S06)

4.2.2 *Career Advancement Technologies*

In response to the question *"What platform(s) do you use to apply for internal vacancies?"* The Participant emphasised technology is driving career advancement transformation enabling the understanding of the end-to-end process and advocating for a personalised and efficient career advancement

opportunities. Furthermore, the Participant indicated that the digital platforms assist in identifying potential career opportunities and providing ongoing updates on available roles based on individual interests. These findings are evidenced by the following statements from the Participants:

> *So you basically apply on workday. So what let's say there's a vacancy in the desk that you want to go in. And also like send you like a prompt, like a message on your workday profile that these are the roles that are available on this on the on the on this team, then you basically just apply.. (S02)*

> *I mean, internally, you put everything on workday. And what's nice is that immediately when you join, they ask you in terms of what are your preferences to say okay, this is your current role, but what are your interests?. (S03)*

4.2.3 *Learning and Development Technologies*

The findings to the questions *"What platform(s) do you use to register/book for internal training (online or classroom)?"* suggest that the training modules are embedded within the integrated TM technology for internal training, however, there is no integration between the TM technology with external training platforms. These were supported by the following statements from the Participants:

> *So there was an internal system that was used, that we called check to remember that it was an internal system that was built, it was then linked to workday. It was an internal system that we used in order for us to book our trainings. So my training hours would only reflect the internal trainings that I've done, and where there's like a company where I'm doing something external, being like a Udemy, then I would manually capture those hours that I've done to sort of meet my CPD hours at the end of the day. So, it was an internal access system that was done for an entity. And then on top of that, whatever external training it that I wanted to be considered, I'd have to manually sort of capture (S01)*

So a lot of our trainings are through workday. So the bank has like specific training that they can offer internally. (S02)

So, I mean, internally, you put everything on workday (S03)

Microsoft teams/ Learning hub/ success factors (S04)

See, they've got the LPO Training Academy is on EPM. I'm not sure what this does. But it sounds still like henna. It's still henna. This is an intercept like a GIRA service management., ERP Technologies, it's full looks like some like henna. I mean, like SA (SO5).

4.2.4 *Performance Management Technologies*

The findings to the question *"What platform(s) do you use to capture your performance contract and track progress against those."* suggest that similar to the learning and development finding above, the performance management module is embedded within the integrated TM technology as evidenced by the following statements from the Participants:

for tracking and while for capturing lead by performance to say, okay, in terms of my PDF objectives, this is what I'm checking at half here. And this is how I've done at the end of the year, we used workday, because we contracted on workday. (S01)

So I think from a performance contract perspective, I'm not sure then if your, like your writing is shared with the, with the guys that you're applying to? All the stuff is captured on the system. And then you have to basically, make sure like you everything is up to date as per the system. And then, so your workday profile is as up to date as possible (S02)

It's still there. So basically, so basically, from an Absa perspective, right. So, I mean, internally, you put everything on workday. (S03)

Success Factors/SAP (S04)

Also, the GCC is on employee, employee portal. I think it's also separated me make sure. Yes, it's still sitting under SAP (S05)

it's all integrated, including the performance contracting, or tracking of performance. (S06)

4.2.5 *Employee Engagement Technologies*

Similar to the findings from 4.1.5 above that were from interviews with Executives, employees used data-enabled technologies (outside the integrated TM technology) to provide their sentiments and perceptions about the organisations they work for are used to assess employees' sentiments and/or perceptions to measure their satisfaction levels.

4.2.6 *Summation of Findings Related to Proposition A*

There is a correlation and conflict in findings from an Executive perspective and the employee's perspective. This means that all the Participants understand the technologies involved in managing talent efficiently and effectively. This is notwithstanding that there can always be areas to improve which are stated in Chapter 6 as recommendations.

4.3 Findings pertaining to Proposition B – "Different strategies can be applied to develop and retain employees in different talent pools (Potential stars, rising stars, star performers, core contributors, and key contributors"

Table 2 Code Classification of Participants and emerging themes – B

Participants	Code Classification	Emerging Themes
C-Suite Executives		A. Talent, Attraction, Acquisition, Development, and Retention
Participant 1	C01	
Managing Executives		
Participant 2	M01	
Participant 3	M02	
Participant 4	M03	
Senior Managers		
Participant 5	S01	
Participant 6	S02	
Participant 7	S03	

Participant 8	S04	B. Talent Acquisition, Development and Retention
Participant 9	S05	
Participant 10	S06	

The themes have been grouped into the themes that emerged from interviews with Executives separate from those that emerged from interviews with Senior Managers. The researcher did this to obtain insight from the developers and implementers i.e. Executives, of the TM strategies and from beneficiaries of those TM strategies i.e. Senior Managers.

The following themes and related findings presented below were about to the research questions 2 and 3:

- **How have these digital technologies been used to formulate TM strategies?**
- **What influence do digital technologies and TM strategies have had on talent profiles?**

A. Talent Attraction, Acquisition, Development, and Retention – Executive Perspective

4.3.1 *Talent Analytics*

The findings to the question *"Do you leverage data to formulate TM strategies?"* suggest that the investments made in TM technologies have enabled Executives to build talent-related analytics as it relates to talent profiling, performance management, and training. These findings are evidenced by the following statements from the Participants

> *I was just thinking, at the time, we always talked about one customer, and it's the same also applied the next one employee when you can open up a profile of an employee, and you can see absolutely everything of that*

individual. Yes. So that you can make data the decisions, right. And then not only the one employee or the one colleague, but also then, you know, the reporting and the analytics. (C01)

So all this stuff now is automated and pulls in in the backend, and obviously needs human intervention to capture in certain aspects, the most recent information that we'll use for that presiding period, you know, but it makes it so much easier. (M02)

Whilst the above findings suggest that data is being leveraged to enable efficient and effective TM, Participant C01 is of the view that the data quality aspect thereof still needs to improve as evidenced below:

A Management Maturity needs, needs to grow? Because you know, at any, any data that you put in a system is what you're going to get out of it. So we're not we're not there yet. The biggest thing that is. So I do believe that there is a correlation between having proper, you know, platforms to support proper time and decision making. Absolutely, yes. But like I said, our dependency is the data in piece that still that still needs to match up.

4.3.2 *Talent Profiling*

The findings to the question *"Have these technologies improved the quality of talent profiling*" suggest that the technology has assisted in improving the quality of talent profiling from a single view of an employee and efficiency point. However, there is a dependency on profiles being completed and the appropriate understanding of talent that makes it effective. These findings are supported by the Participants' statements below:

I was just thinking, at the time it was we always talked about one customer, and it's the same also applied the next one employee when you can open up a profile of an employee, and you can see absolutely everything of that individual. (C01).

It's interesting, because I wonder if a system can ever no matter how good it is, or how bad it is, and do if it can help. In terms of the question that you

ask, my sense is that TM and profiling has a lot to do with the understanding of talent. And the and the thinking around it in a desert system helped from an efficiency perspective, from a reporting perspective, from a data perspective. Absolutely. But I don't think intuitively it helps in terms of profiling. (M01)

it has, I think, as an organisation, I think we went on a drive to ensure that employees complete their inquiry profiles, you know, because it can be used or presented in different forums and committees. So second, we have seen improvements, I think it's the first of its kind in a bank, we've never had that everything was done manually. So if, if we had to discuss into Tuesday will pull his picture from the system, and then going to a back end and ask for his performance. What is his talent, crit and so forth. (M02)

yes, and no. And what I mean by that, yes, in that there is at least a framework in which we can consistently then identify Asia track and what we do with people that we view as talented where we've plotted, ya know, in the sense that it also becomes a bit of a tick box exercise, especially if it's outside of the system (M03)

4.3.3 *Talent Acquisition*

The findings to the question *"Have these technologies improved your recruitment process?* "suggest that the technology has been used to digitalisation of recruitment processes, especially for internal recruitments. Similar to the findings above on talent profiling, for this to be effective, it is dependent on the quality of profile data being complete and accurate. These are evidenced by the statements from the following Participants:

So what I do find this having the system available, where we use the system when we're doing a challenge management session, so we can see where we've planted somebody. So having the system and data available, really enhances it. So the system, as you know, is only as good as information that's been put into it. (M01)

I mean, if you want to recruit internally, you don't know who the employee a is, you know, on behalf his CV, you can easily go to his employee profile, depending if it's updated so you'll be able to see more of what Brian has done because they see we can give you so much that you don't have on the on the Employee Profile. So it helps, you know, to kind of help one to compare what's on the CV and what's on the employee profile to satisfy whether or not to call the candidate IE, you know, obviously, for external candidates, you don't have that you're dependent on one CV, but certainly from a recruitment internet, it helps. It helps also from a succession planning, it helps a lot. (M02)

In a nutshell, yes. (M03)

The findings to the *question "Have you seen improvement in the quality of recruits since the introduction/improvement of the technologies for TM?*" suggest that TM technologies have enhanced the talent attraction and the quality of the recruitment process itself. It has made the process efficient because it has mainly been digitalised as supported by the Participants' statements below:

I think we use technology to expand the footprint and the brand and the profiling of the organisation, I think. Absolutely. I think yes, we can reach a lot more candidates out there in the marketplace, to see what's available at Absa. So I think brand positioning EVP how people see an employer has got more to do than the system. I think what the system does, is that it says something about your brand. And yes, technology can give you very smooth, seamless, but it doesn't talk to the heart of the organisation. Right? You get no sense of who Absa is, if all you're doing is just dealing with the machine in the background, (M01)

Absolutely, I would say yes., definitely. There can always be improvement. Okay, you know, I mean, at this point in time, we are where we are, and so far, so good (M02)

I mean that recruitment, I think for me is very, is very broad. So, the system itself is to manage the recruitment process. So manager receiving a CV, choosing for interview, where you move into assessment and all that is just

managing the process, the inputs into smart recruited, the key is the recruitment people themselves, and where they source and where they go to try and source people who may not be in the market as well. How they also source people who are within the organisation who are being viewed as talent in other spaces within the organisation, and they bring those names forward. So I think the key is really the input, which is, which is the crude recruiter themselves, but also the person who's engaged the recruitment and giving the right criteria for the person or people that they're looking for. (M03)

4.3.4 *Learning and Development*

The findings to the question *"Have these technologies improved how learning and development activities are conducted?"* suggest that digital technologies have been used to conduct learning but also customise the learning to specific profiles from a talent point of view. The following statements are evidence of that:

I think it is improved immensely, also is housed within SAP. So we've got, we've got an LMS, which is a learning management system that is housed under SAP. It's more of your central repository for learning. management system. And then you also have a DLP system, which is a digital learning platform. This is where most of our learning courses are housed. And we link those courses to the, to the content providers. So this is where people find online courses, some accredited some not, you know, but if you want to do a course on leadership, for example, we can go into DLP. And, and, and, and do it online. So, we do have a tracking mechanism also on the same system, but also use a lot of the MS. MS teams online platform, you know, because you know, some of the trainings are online, you know, so we piggyback on it here. (M02)

Yes, from a capability perspective, and what I mean by that is that the tool it's got the learning pathways, etc, etc. It's up to the individuals not only in how you engage, but it's available. And you know that there's various pathways that people can use to engage with it. From a tracking

perspective, you need to then go and request whether you track how you track and measure trading. (M03)

According to Participant M01's views, whilst the capability exists for employees to access learning modules, it is not intuitive as supported by the following statement:

So it would be nice if there's a system that almost pings you to say, starting you're doing your objective setting, have you thought about from a learning and development perspective, as part of your talent profile, you know, what you'd like to include? So in brings it all together, as opposed to us having a learning module on the system, having a performance management module, and then TM is just in attacking things based on in a way you sit in the talent read? And then what do you want? In terms of, are you? Are you seen as top talent? Or, you know, in that box.

4.3.5 *Performance Management and succession planning*

The findings to the question *"Have these technologies improved the performance management process?*" suggest a mixed response on whether the technology has been used to manage performance efficiently and effectively. According to Participant M02, there has been improvement from an efficient point of view as supported by the statement below:

Greatly improved how we use to capture and track performance management in the organisation, because in the past, it was very manual. Alright. So we used to run around with a lot of paper him, and it was a lot we used to print and capture and sign off and keep records and file them and then send them for archiving, etc. So that was ridiculous. You know, I mean, since the implementation of SAP, now we have that, which is, which is now digital, at this point in time, But I think the most important thing is we have now overcome that idea of, of doing things manually.

However, Participant M02's view is that it is still not entirely efficient notwithstanding that the technology is easy to use:

There is still lack of understanding that we have on a system. And you know, people never know when to I actually do stage one stage through. And when to actually proceed to stage three, that type of a thing. There is still confusion around that one. I think the pain point will be the back and forth, you know, after you capture GCC, it must go to your manager for review must come back to you. You know, so everything was always the good thing about it must always pass through the manager, you know, for sign off, you know, but it's just the tedious process, you know, the back and forth.

According to Participant M03, his view is that the technology that was launched in recent years has not been efficient or effective because of poor handling of the management process as evidenced by the statement below:

The danger with a lot of technologies and tools is that once you introduce to a new tool that change management processes actually very important. So a lot of us, you get used to a tool to the point where it's just easy, user friendly, you know, where all the buttons are, you know, where all the links reside, once a new tool, there's always going to be resistance. And so, so tell them has a lot more functionality. But at the same time, then it becomes a bit of a, again, a tick box exercise on some of the other stuff that you do. And because you are used to a certain way of managing performance in terms of goals, measuring the goals, give people feedback around the goals, you don't really change the tool to its full capability.

In response to the question *"Have these technologies made it easier to articulate succession plans?* "Participant M03 was indifferent to whether the technology-enabled better articulation of succession plans as stated in the following paragraph:

It does. In in the sense that I guess technology is more the convenience piece sides and storage, but a reality in terms of higher driving the conversation in detail about succession, it's, it's, I think, whether it's on Excel, or it's in a tool, I think it for me, it doesn't make too much of a difference.

In response to the question *“Have you seen an improvement in the performance of potential stars, rising stars, and core contributors since the introduction/improvement of the learning and development, performance management, and employee engagement technologies”* Participant M02 was of the view that performance cannot be viewed in isolation in the statement below

> *I think it is what is also important from the talent that you don't only look at performance country, yes, yes, no. And there's an element around the potential, you know, where we'll look at, we've got four elements that we look at the weather, one can deal with ambiguity, they learn quickly, and apply the learnings better or quicker than their peers. They can deal with complexity, we've got good leadership and management skills, and then the manager through the current composition that will have you know, whether the one is the high potential, low potential or good potential. So if you, if you use choose one element, it's a high potential and one is exceeding and I think you're going to sit in a crate create one, you know, so we don't use only performance to determine whether one is a star performer. You know, performance is something else.*

4.3.6 *Employee Engagement*

In responding to the question *“Have these technologies made it efficient and effective to assess employee engagement levels?*” the Participant's sentiment were that because of data-enabled technologies, they can assess employee engagement levels. This finding is supported by the statement below:

> I'll tell you Qualtrics is a back-end system takes all the data, and it spews it out. There's a lot of, of technology being used now. But of course, yes. Because Can you imagine access got 38,000 people. But if we take away our contractors who don't complete the survey, at least 35,000 across the continent, we've got offices in the US in the UK, in a very similar to standard bank. And so aggregating that data, in terms of you know, what's being said, all of that stuff? I would say absolutely. You cannot do without technology, especially when you have such volumes that you're dealing with (M01)

I think they have. And the only, danger is that this multiple tools, and multiple ways that you're managing the individual, so for example, and things like your PDP, your professional development plan, some of us also manage that piece outside of the system, even though I think some systems have the capability for you to go in store that, but because it's supposed to the individuals ownership of their plan, during conversation, you know, when the person needs to say, say to their plan, they usually sending it by Excel, and you kind of managing it through there. So, you there's an abundance of tools out there, and capabilities that these tools whether it's effective in the management of the engagement of people, I think, yes, but to the extent that you engage in it (M03)

4.3.7 *Measuring success of the technologies*

In response to the questions *"How do you assess the internal adoption of the digital technologies in TM?" and "How do you assess the success of these digital technologies in managing talent?*" Participant C01 stated that data quality maturity has to be reached first before the success of the technologies invested in can be measured. This was the verbatim response:

if you look at TM, and if you apply maturity models, TM, okay. The highest level of maturity is when is, you know, when you've got a properly proper systemic sustainable solution that's working. And we not they do not deviate. So and that for us is a definition of success. Maybe for someone else a definition of success is your you know, what we've made a certain percentage of our of our hires came through, you know, succession slates. So I wouldn't say I'd say I would say we are getting there, but I won't. I won't go on one side. We've actually obviously succeeded, because like I said, the up to the last level of maturity from a data perspective, is that.

The findings to the question *"Have you seen an increase in the number of star performers since the introduction/improvement of the succession planning and employee engagement technologies?*" suggest that there are benefits to using these technologies for TM purposes as supported by the following statements:

So absolutely, adoption has gone up, I think whether through cohesion, or through, you know, absolute choice, it has gone up, because that's the way we work, and has the has the performance of teams. And here, I'm thinking us asking the performance in terms of how we perform to achieve our objectives and the ambitions of the organisation, right. Yes, I'm sure that's a tough one. I would think, again, intrinsically, everyone would want to do better. So there must be some value. Yes. So the answer would be yes. And again, I'm not using it based on quantitative information. I'm just thinking about the human psyche. And understanding that there must be efficiencies because we are using the systems. (M01)

4.3.8 *Business Performance*

In response to the question *"Has the combination of digital technologies and TM strategies improved business performance?"* Participant C01 mentioned that they have not built a measure to assess the impact of investment in digital technologies for talent on business performance. The Participant had the following to say

I just think there's too many other things that, that impact that, you know, you bring in a new CEO, and it can impact you. And that's why, you know, it's all hush hush when these decisions are made, because you don't want it to impact share price. You know, you still want to keep a positive outlook in the markets on the on the projected performances of your organisation. So I can't say overall business performance.

when COVID hit that changed everything when every time you know there's a change in the economy or the global economy Impacts business performance, so I wouldn't go as far as saying yes, it definitely has because I don't think that's the right question. . (C01)

B. Talent Acquisition, Development, and Retention – Senior Manager Perspective

4.3.9 *Recruitment*

External Candidates

The findings to the question "*Did technology make the recruitment process easier in terms of time, access to information and communication between you and your prospective employer"* suggested that digital recruitment and onboarding process created a delightful employee experience for external candidates as evidenced by the statement below from the Participants:

> *I'd say communicate, sorry, technology made it easy., I definitely see technology needed easy. So when at the psyche assessment phase, or it was at that actual onboarding. I think I had my interview on the 18th of September, then I signed my contract on the 25th of October. So I'd say I'd say a week or two. So, 40 days average type thing. (S01)*

> *"I think it did, right? Because I applied through LinkedIn, right? So immediately, they were able to pick up, then funnily enough. What was even interesting is that it will tell you for each stage exactly where they were, whether they were still, you know, Once I was appointed, then it went and it updated. On onboarding was very, very easy, I must say. I think from my side, it was quick, but I think the governance processes took a bit. I don't wanna say long, but I had a lot of governance processes to go through, you know, coming in as a, you know, for a head role, But the process was quite quick, because I think it took what, a month, a month and a half. (S03)*

> *From back when I started to now, things in the hiring process have changed drastically and it's been for the better both employer and employee. Less time and money spent on travel costs, setting up and hiring out test space etc. Psych tests are now done online, and results have also been made to remain on potential hires profile for 12months to avoid redoing the tests if they apply within the 12 months. (S04)*

> *The role of technology in that whole onboarding process?, I'd say it is seamless. I didn't have an issue with the technology, I think they both*

worked well together, the efficient use of technology and human interaction throughout the process. didn't make me feel like I'm just a number. So, that's, that's, that's how I'd answer that question. I think a bit of both, they would send me an email with a link to upload my information or whatever the case may be. But there was also then that that that communication that came directly from the team that was divorced from any form of technology. For example, I didn't have to go on a system to do what they wanted. So it was a bit of both come in and tick, tick. (SO05)

Internal Candidates

The findings to the question *"Did technology make the recruitment process easier in terms of time, access to information, and communication between you and your prospective employer"* suggested that digital recruitment and onboarding process did not create a delightful employee experience for internal candidates which contradicts the finding on external candidates. The findings are evidenced by the statement below from the Participants:

The application process, adding the application process was seamless, but then like in terms of like feedback, there was a lot of, like, follow up with the different people within the value chain. So but I think from an application perspective, it was easier, but then, like, from the feedback and also setting up of interviews, that's like human intervention where it's like, okay, you've applied and then we've agreed that okay, we have accepted your application, we'll inform you on the date of the interview. But then like, you find like, okay, a week goes by and then you haven't received any feedback. (S02)

The recruitment bit is a bit disintegrated. I struggle. And I think also, it's because maybe you don't look good all the time. But when you go, yeah, but, but again, if I go into the employee portal, I, that it's not intuitive, where you find that when you're recruiting, which should be easier, because it's something you do once in a blue moon. Yeah. I wouldn't say it's, I wouldn't say it was easy, because you're applying on the system, the system will respond to you, then your meeting is booked via email, right by somebody

else, and it does, it's prone to error. That the, there's a lot that happens outside the system. (S06)

4.3.10 *Learning, Development and performance*

The findings to the question *"Have you become better in managing your own learning and performance because of technology?"* mainly suggest that the technologies have enabled employees to self-manage their learning journeys:

Yes, definitely. Yes. So in terms of trainings, from a training perspective, we have you know, mandatory trainings. So I guess that does keep me on top of things in terms of making sure that my training are done on time. And I can actually sort of make sure I don't preach anything from a compliance perspective. So that was helpful, you know, that trigger, that also tells you that your training is due in the next week (S01).

Yeah, so I think yeah, the online course is really had to do it. I was also on an external course and an external one from was UCT. It's around like property file, property development, finance. (S02)

are definitely. Gees, I mean, the one thing which I also liked, you know, is that as an example, from a technology perspective, right, they have, let's say, a learning portal, right. So in that learning portal, every single training you do, whether it's compliance training, every single event you go through, which counts towards your CPE, every single, let's say, bootcamp, whatever, whatever you have accepted, and you have attended, it automatically records your hours, right. And then if you're doing outside training, you actually even you are allowed to record all those hours. (S03)

Performance

Yes, with the advancement over the years it has become easier to track learning activities and deadlines (S04)

you know, in terms of managing the performance, per se, but I think now with the update, it's easier to distinguish way I capture performance. I think it pulls through. Still very new do these updates. But I think now it's easier (S06)

The findings to the question "*Are you clear on what your development plans are"* suggested opposing views between employees who understand their development plans and career paths and those who do not as presented by the statements below from the Participants:

Yes, I was clear. I was very clear. On the workday system, you say that that's your next move. You feel like that. That's your next. So you're not surprised. So that helped (S01)

And that I mean, even that was even discussed. I think it was like a month when I joined it was like, because it's part of you creating your profile, right? In terms of remember what I was saying where they say, where do you want to be within, the first two, the first 12 months to five years, you know, and it's very clear, you know, where I said, You know what, first of all I want to settle into the role but my next interests in the next three to five years is that if I remain. (S03)

Yes, success factors provides a clear indication of what is requirement for your development and you can even add on to this with your personal growth plan. (S04)

No, I have had a couple of conversation or two about, in fact, I asked even in my interview, what is the career path for this role? And the answer, I got an interview stage and the answer I get now in the role, and not really speaking to each other. So that's a bit of a concern for me. (S05)

I think some of the development things I've got are broader than a development plan, then I choose what I want support from the bank and then I just capture what is important. (S06)

In response to the question *"Have you improved your performance from the feedback provided on the online platforms?"* Participant S02 and Participant S04) agreed that performance had improved and attributed that to learning as stated below:

> *Because by going through these courses, also, like it shapes how you look at into the transaction. So, these courses are there to fill up those gaps where you understand from end to end. (S02)*

> *Definitely. Learning is owned by the individual so, for as long as there's a platform the honours is on you to use it. (S04)*

However Participant S05 had a slightly differing view in response to the same question, the feedback captured on those platforms is not constructive and as a result does assist with improving performance. This is supported by the statement below from Participant S05:

> *So nedbank has this recognition, things, badges and stuff, and that stuff is all good, I would probably add a bit more constructive feedback to the system, not just to not, and I get that it's a culture thing, you know, people want to be nice. But we need that push. Like I said, there's blind spots, they can only see what you can see. And others can see what you can't see.*

4.3.11 *Career Growth*

The findings to the question "*has your career progressed since the introduction of these technologies"* suggest that some employees have made progress because of the introduction of the these technologies as state below:

> Yes, yes, this is definitely progressed. And it made conversations very easy for me in terms of my own line manager because I mean, she was even willing to support me to get my, my business stakeholders to consider me. (S01)

Yes, at much faster pace than before the introduction of success factors. (S04)

4.3.12 *Summation of Findings Related to Proposition B*

Executive Participants

The Participant in the discussion highlighted the importance of investing in employee experience and digital tools to enhance business performance. They suggested that by prioritising these investments, better performance could be achieved. However, the Participant also acknowledged that factors such as leadership decisions and global economic changes can have an impact on performance as well. Moreover, the Participant stressed the significance of maintaining personal connections and emotional ties within the organisation for optimal performance. The Participant emphasised the crucial role of leveraging technology to streamline TM processes, however also highlighted challenges and limitations involved in implementing these tools effectively. In addition, they discussed shared the benefits of utilising tools such as an LMS, Digital Learning Platforms to enhance learning.

Senior Manager Participant

The Participant shared insights about integrating performance management systems and linking development plans with performance contracts, highlighting the simplification of capturing engagements with the new system. They emphasised the t value of constructive feedback in performance management, expressing uncertainty about their career path, development, and professional growth. Furthermore, the Participant stressed the significance of personal development and performance in a digital business, underlining the importance of self-motivation and online training and also suggested enhancements to better align training with individual interests. Moreover, the Participant talked about using an online training platform for easy access to training records, CPD hours, and career development plans, acknowledging its positive impact on TM. Lastly, they highlighted the necessity of having a clear development plan and leveraging

technology for effective TM to promote talent retention and deliberate people management.

4.4 Summary of findings

The findings were presented, explained and grouped into themes related to the TM processes (Acquisition, Development and Retention) and were segmented into the Executives' perspectives and Senior Managers' perspectives. The themes were derived and from the data collected through one-on-one interviews. The use of technologies and TM strategies is similar from both the Executives' and Senior Managers' perspectives.

The chapter discussed various findings related to talent acquisition, development, and retention from both executive and senior manager perspectives. This included the importance of using digital technologies for talent analytics, talent profiling, recruitment, learning and development, performance management, succession planning, and employee engagement.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter goes into detail in analysing and explaining the findings about to the literature review and theoretical frameworks presented in chapter 2. The findings will be presented about to the core themes identified in the preceding chapter. These will be presented under each proposition.

5.2 Demographic profile of participants

The profiled Participants were C-suite Executives, Managing Executives and Senior Managers. The C-Suite Executives are the owners of the strategy formulation process and therefore are responsible for the digital technology and TM strategy. The Managing Executives are the implementers of the business strategy. Lastly, Senior Managers who are the beneficiaries of digital technologies and different TM processes provided insights into their experiences. Included in the Senior Managers were those who had been recently hired as external candidates and provided insights specifically into the recruitment experience.

Keeping with the structure of the previous chapter, the findings will be discussed under the two qualitative study propositions and under the two perspectives i.e. Executives and Senior Managers as shown in the table below:

Table 3 Participants and Emerging Themes

Participants	Emerging Themes
Executives	A. Talent Development and Retention
Senior Managers	B. Talent Acquisitions, Development, and Retention

5.3 Discussion pertaining to Proposition A - – "Digital technologies enable efficient and effective methods to attract, develop and retain talent"

A. Talent Development and Retention – Executive Perspective

5.3.1 *Talent Analytics Technologies*

Executives place a great deal on investing in technologies that will enable big data and analytics on talent as supported by the following statement. This finding is supported by the work of Guerra et al. (2023), which purports that the use of digital work platforms arising from Big Data enhances TM by HR departments i.e., improves performance and reduces costs. It is further corroborated by the work of Nocker and Sena (2019) in that benefits of talent analytics are clear in terms of value creation.

5.3.2 *TM Technologies (Profiling, Learning and Development, Succession planning and Performance management)*

A comprehensive TM system in place to capture talent profiles, build learning and development plans, capture succession plans and capture and monitor performance contracts is key to efficient and effective management of talent. These TM systems enable employees to capture their profiles. Could technology enable such systems (Kumar 2017) and ERP have full functionality that can cater to functionalities that support TM processes (Behera, 2019).

The finding further indicates one key insight from the understanding of the type of technologies available was the use of digital learning platforms outside the Cloud and ERP systems, there are additional investments and benefits in leveraging LMS, Virtual Classrooms and Social Media.

The finding on LSM is supported by the work of Ukušić et al. (2010) who he indicates that there is a cost-benefit to e-learning. This is further corroborated by the work of Liu et al. (2012) where articulates that cost, higher employee satisfaction, better opportunities for career growth and flexible learning for employees, increased innovation, and better operational efficiency.

The findings on Virtual Classrooms are supported by the work of Smith and Johnson (2020), where they outline that the interactive nature of virtual classrooms allows for real-time engagement and collaboration among employees, leading to improved knowledge retention and application in the workplace. Furthermore, the flexibility of virtual classrooms enables employees to access training materials at their convenience, promoting self-paced learning and accommodating diverse learning styles. This work by is further corroborated by Brown et al. (2019), it was found that the use of virtual classrooms significantly increased employee satisfaction with training programs. The researchers noted that virtual classrooms offer a cost-effective solution for organisations to provide ongoing learning opportunities to their employees, leading to enhanced skill development and increased job performance.

The finding on Social media such as LinkedIn learning is supported by Manca and Ranieri (2016) who argue that social media platforms facilitate professional

development by allowing individuals to participate in knowledge-sharing and network-based learning. LinkedIn, in particular, provides access to a vast array of professionals and experts across industries, which can enhance learning through exposure to real-world experiences and insights (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). Moreover, Tur & Marín (2015) highlight the role of LinkedIn in personal branding and identity construction, which is integral to professional learning. Users can curate a professional profile, join groups, and engage in discussions, which contributes to their professional growth and learning. Additionally, the social nature of these interactions can lead to increased motivation and engagement with learning content (Tur & Marín, 2015).

5.3.3 *Employee Engagement technologies*

Talent analytics driven by Big Data technologies are instrumental in assessing employees' sentiments and/or perceptions about the organisations they work for. This helps Executives better understand employees' satisfaction levels and identify areas of improvement and these are conducted through employee engagement surveys where data is collected for analysis.

The finding is supported by Shuck and Wollard (2010), who argue that engagement surveys can help managers identify the strengths and weaknesses within an organisation, enabling them to make informed decisions to foster a positive work environment. These surveys serve as a communication channel that allows employees to express their views anonymously, thereby promoting transparency and trust within the organisation (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

Moreover, Gallup (2017) highlighted the positive correlation between high employee engagement and performance outcomes across business units, including better customer engagement, higher productivity, better retention, fewer accidents, and higher profitability. By conducting regular engagement surveys, management can track progress and determine the effectiveness of implemented strategies, thus leading to continuous improvement and a sustainable competitive advantage (Gallup, 2017).

Effective Talent analytics is possible through data quality (accurate and complete) and without employees ensuring that they capture accurate and complete profiles, performing Talent analytics may be a challenge. This finding is supported by the work of Nocker and Sena (2019) who outline that if the quality of data and ease by which new data is acquired is a challenge, it can be a barrier to the use of talent analytics.

Employee recognition platforms are used to recognise and reward employees with the aim to increase employee engagement and motivation. This finding is supported by Biro (2016), who argues that employee recognition platforms provide a continuous and immediate way to acknowledge employees' achievements, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and loyalty. Recognition tied to core values and business objectives can reinforce desired behaviours, thereby promoting a culture of performance (Biro, 2016).

A study by Haufe (2015) supports Biro's view, indicating that employee recognition platforms can serve as a driver for engagement by offering a visible and scalable way to reward employees. When employees perceive that their efforts are valued and appreciated, there is a notable increase in engagement levels, which in turn can lead to improved performance and productivity across the organisation (Haufe, 2015).

B. Talent Acquisitions, Development and, Retention – Senior Manager Perspective

5.3.4 *The Overall use of technology*

An integrated TM system that is available to employees to seamlessly capture profiles, search for internal vacancies, book internal training, capture performance contracts and capture development plans is key to a key efficient and effective management of talent. This finding from a senior manager perspective who is the user of the different digital technology corroborates the finding above from an Executive perspective who is the owner of the of the digital technology.

5.3.5 *TM Technologies (Profiling, Development, Learning, Performance)*

The finding indicates that employees create visibility of their profiles to management by capturing their demographic information experience, qualifications, strengths and career interests on the TM systems. The same system is used to capture digital performance contracts, capture development plans and book internal learning activities that are embedded in the TM system. Furthermore, employees use these systems to apply for internal vacancies that align to their career interest. These TM systems are used by employees to track progress against their own performance, development activities, and learning activities. The progress against the status of internal vacancy applications is also tracked using the same systems. These TM systems are fundamentally supported by Cloud technology (Kumar 2017) and ERP functionality (Behera, 2019). Having an integrated management system enables employees to have an end-to-end view of all the different components that make up their career profile for the benefit of career advancement.

Due to the lack of integration between the Cloud and/or ERP technologies with external digital learning platforms, employees separately leverage external learning platforms such as LMS, Virtual Classroom and Social media such as LinkedIn.

5.3.6 *Employee Engagement technologies*

Employees share with management their sentiments and perceptions about the organisation and to what level are they satisfied with the experience and whether they promote the organisation brand and values to family and friends. The sentiments are obtained through conducting employee engagement surveys to measure employee satisfaction and identify areas of improvement. eNPS is one of the methodologies used to conduct employee engagement surveys (Contemporary Organisation and Management. Challenges and Trends, 2020). The eNPS methodology is based on two ultimate questions: *“On a scale of 1-10, would you recommend organisation X to friend and family? And Why?*”. According to Jones and Smith (2018), one common methodology used in conducting employee recognition surveys is the Likert scale, where employees

rate the effectiveness of recognition programs on a scale. This quantitative approach allows organisations to quantify employee perceptions and identify areas for improvement in their recognition strategies. In a study by Lee et al. (2020), a qualitative methodology involving open-ended survey questions was used to explore employees' perceptions of recognition practices in the workplace. The researchers found that qualitative surveys provide in-depth insights into employees' experiences with recognition, highlighting nuances and specific examples that may not be captured through quantitative surveys alone.

5.4 Discussion pertaining to Proposition B – "Different strategies can be applied to develop and retain employees in different talent pools (Potential stars, rising stars, star performers, core contributors and key contributors"

A. Talent Attraction, Acquisition, Development, and Retention – Executive Perspective

5.4.1 *Talent Analytics*

The findings indicate that the adoption of the different digital technologies to enable efficient and effective have been applied to different TM strategies and one of those strategies was to use talent analytics to profile employees, track consolidated performance and track training activities. The underlying data quality is the critical component that still needs to improve because, without the appropriate data quality, effective talent analytics will not materialise (Nocker & Sena, 2019).

5.4.2 *Talent Profiling*

Similar to having a single view of a customer through investing in the right technology, The findings indicate that talent profiling into a single view has been made possible by investing in these technologies. Most importantly the use of technology has improved the quality of those talent profiles and talent profiling is a foundation for effective tailoring of talent development, succession planning, performance management, talent retention, and talent analytics approaches.

The finding is supported by Smith and Johnson (2019), where they argue that the use of digital tools such as artificial intelligence and data analytics in talent profiling enables organisations to gather comprehensive insights into employees' skills, competencies, and potential for development. This data-driven approach enhances decision-making in talent acquisition, succession planning, and career development, leading to more strategic and effective workforce management.

This is further supported by a study by Brown et al. (2021), where it was found that digital technologies streamline the talent profiling process by automating data collection, analysis, and reporting. The researchers highlighted that digital platforms provide real-time access to talent data, facilitating proactive TM strategies and enabling organisations to respond swiftly to changing business needs and talent requirements.

The findings further indicate that the substance of talent profiling is more important than the form, which is ensuring profiles are captured on the system by employees. It is the substance that will affect the quality of TM activities downstream. The concept of "substance over form" in talent profiling emphasises the importance of focusing on the actual skills, competencies, and potential of individuals rather than just their outward appearance or characteristics.

This finding is supported by Jones and Smith (2020), who argue a substance-focused approach to talent profiling involves assessing employees based on their actual performance, achievements, and capabilities rather than relying solely on traditional metrics or superficial criteria. This approach ensures that talent decisions are based on objective data and evidence of skills and potential, leading to more accurate talent assessments and improved TM outcomes.

Lee et al. (2018) agrees with Jones and Smith (2020), in that that organisations that prioritise substance over form in talent profiling are more likely to make strategic talent decisions that align with business goals. The researchers highlighted the importance of using a holistic approach to talent profiling that considers both qualitative and quantitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of employees' capabilities and potential contributions.

5.4.3 *Talent Acquisition*

Recruitment processes have been digitalised through the creation of digital recruitment workflows from the findings of this study. This has made the recruitment process efficient in terms of speed and cost as there is limited manual human intervention in the recruitment process and has also improved the quality of the recruits/candidates that come through these processes.

The finding us supported by Smith and Johnson (2019), where they outline that the use of digital tools in recruitment streamlines the hiring process by automating administrative tasks such as resume screening, scheduling interviews, and communication with candidates. This efficiency allows HR professionals to focus on more strategic aspects of recruitment, such as candidate evaluation and engagement, leading to quicker hiring decisions and improved time-to-fill metrics.

In a study by Brown et al. (2021), it was found that digitising the onboarding process enhances new employee experiences by providing them with easy access to essential information, training materials, and company resources. Digital onboarding platforms also facilitate a smoother transition for new hires into their roles, helping them feel more engaged and productive from day one. Additionally, digital onboarding allows organisations to track and analyse onboarding metrics to identify areas for improvement and ensure a consistent onboarding experience across the organisation.

Digitising recruitment and onboarding processes not only benefits organisations but also improves the experience for candidates and new hires. By leveraging digital technologies, organisations can attract top talent, streamline administrative tasks, enhance the onboarding experience, and ultimately drive better retention and engagement among employees.

5.4.4 *Learning and Development*

The findings indicate that Learning and Development have been digitised and customised to a specific organisation, specific department, and specific talent profiles. Customisation is built inside TM systems (Cloud and ERP) through Digital Learning Platforms for internal training and it also built outside via external Learning Management System. This has improved how learning and development activities are defined, planned executed and monitored.

The finding is supported by the work of Jones and Smith (2020), who stipulate that digital learning platforms enable employees to access training materials anytime, anywhere, allowing for more flexible and self-directed learning experiences. This accessibility ensures that employees can engage in learning

activities at their own pace, leading to improved knowledge retention and application in the workplace.

The finding was further supported by Lee et al. (2019), where it was found that digitising learning and development programs allow organisations to scale their training initiatives efficiently to reach a larger audience. Digital platforms also enable organisations to personalise learning experiences based on individual employee needs, preferences, and learning styles, resulting in more targeted and effective training outcomes. Additionally, digital learning tools often reduce training costs associated with traditional classroom-based programs, making learning and development more cost-effective for organisations.

Digitising learning and development processes not only enhances the effectiveness of training programs but also contributes to employee engagement, skill development, and overall organisational performance.

5.4.5 *Performance Management and succession planning*

The findings indicate that Performance Management frameworks are defined and formalised, most importantly performance management processes have been digitalised and has created some efficiencies. The finding is supported by the work of Lee and Wang (2019), who stipulate that digital performance management tools streamline the process of goal setting, tracking progress, and providing feedback to employees. These tools enable real-time monitoring of performance metrics, facilitating continuous feedback and coaching to enhance employee performance and development. This is further supported by Smith et al. (2020), where they found that digitising performance management enhances transparency and accountability within organisations. Digital platforms centralise performance data, making it easier for managers and employees to access and review performance information. This transparency fosters open communication and a culture of accountability, leading to more objective performance evaluations and fairer reward decisions.

Digitising performance management processes not only improve the efficiency and effectiveness of performance evaluations but also contributes to employee engagement, motivation, and overall organisational success.

The succession plan frameworks have been formalised and succession plans are digitally captured and better articulated into the TM system, with the appropriate mapping of individuals to future roles. The finding further indicates that capturing on the system does not mean that the succession plans captured outside will not enable proper succession planning. The substance is more important than the form. The concept of "substance over form" in succession planning emphasises the importance of focusing on identifying and developing individuals based on their actual skills, competencies, and potential rather than superficial characteristics or traditional criteria. According to Jones and Smith (2019), a substance-focused approach to succession planning involves assessing employees based on their demonstrated performance, leadership capabilities, and readiness for key roles rather than relying solely on hierarchical positions or tenure. This approach ensures that succession decisions are based on merit and potential, leading to more effective talent development and strategic workforce planning. In a study by Lee et al. (2020), it was found that organisations that prioritise substance over form in succession planning are more likely to identify and nurture high-potential talent that aligns with the organisation's long-term goals and values. The researchers highlighted the importance of using a comprehensive and data-driven approach to succession planning that considers both quantitative and qualitative factors to ensure the right individuals are prepared for critical roles.

Additionally, the finding indicates that performance cannot be viewed in isolation without assessing potential on elements such as the employee’s ability to deal with ambiguity, learn quickly, apply the learning better than peers, and can deal with complexity. This finding is contracted by Jones and Smith (2018), who argue performance encompasses both individual and organisational effectiveness in terms of meeting expectations, delivering results, and contributing to overall success. Performance is often evaluated through various metrics, such as key performance indicators (KPIs), performance reviews, and goal achievement, to

assess the effectiveness and efficiency of employees in their roles. However, the finding is supported by Brown et al. (2020), who argues that performance is viewed as a multifaceted concept that involves not only achieving quantitative results but also demonstrating behaviours, competencies, and skills that align with organisational values and culture. The researchers emphasised the importance of considering both outcome-based and behavior-based measures when evaluating performance to provide a comprehensive assessment of individual contributions and potential development areas.

5.4.6 *Employee Engagement*

The finding indicates that the technologies have made it easier to assess employee engagement levels because of the wide audience of employees that the employee engagement surveys can reach. Also, applying data analytics on the data collected from the surveys provides better insight on areas of improvement that Executives can focus on. The finding further indicates that another opportunity to assess employee engagement is through the one-on-one Personal Development Plans discussion.

5.4.7 *Measuring success of the technologies*

The finding indicates that there is no formal measurement designed to assess how successful the digital technologies invested in have been because data quality maturity has not been yet. The finding further indicates that there are benefits in using these technologies because adoption has increased however there is no scientific evidence to support that.

5.4.8 *Business Performance*

The finding indicates that there is no formal measurement impact of investment on digital technologies for talent on business performance. There is still a lack of theoretical framework to assess the relationship between investment in TM technologies (Such as talent analytics) and business performance (Nocker & Sena, 2019)

B. Talent Acquisition, Development, and Retention – Senior Manager Perspective

5.4.9 *Recruitment*

This finding on the digitalised recruitment and onboarding processes resulted in differing views from external candidates versus internal candidates. External candidates found the digitalised recruitment and onboarding process to have created a delightful experience. The application process, document submission, communication, application tracking status, psychometric assess, offer generation and profile capturing was made seamless by technology with minimal human interaction. Internal candidates on the other hand found the process disintegrated from the existing systems and required extensive follow-up and human interaction.

The finding above for external candidates (new hires) is supported by Smith and Johnson (2019) and Brown et al. (2021), in their argument for seamless recruitment but the finding for internal candidates contracts the work by Brown et al. (2021). By leveraging digital technologies, organisations can attract top talent, streamline administrative tasks, enhance the onboarding experience, and ultimately drive better retention and engagement among employees.

5.4.10 *Learning, Development and performance*

The findings largely indicate that employees have become better in managing their learning, development and performance because of the introduction of or improvements to digital technology. They find it easier to access learning paths, capture development plans, and track own performance against what they have contracted at their own pace (Jones and Smith, 2020).

The findings indicate that development plans and career paths are clear for some Participants and are not for other Participants, meaning that for those that are not clear. The quality of performance feedback captured by line managers on the system is not constructive and the quality of the conversations between employees and line managers are not appropriate.

5.4.11 *Career Growth*

The findings indicate that the introduction of or improvements to digital technologies have enabled employees to progress their careers either through promotion or to different roles.: The finding is supported by Smith and Johnson (2019), where they argue that the implementation of TM technologies, such as performance management systems, learning platforms, and career development tools, can provide employees with greater visibility into available opportunities, personalised development plans, and access to resources for skill enhancement. These technologies enable employees to take ownership of their career development paths, identify growth opportunities within the organisation, and align their skills with future roles, ultimately leading to career advancement.

It is further supported by Brown et al. (2021), who found that TM technologies can facilitate better alignment between individual career goals and organisational objectives. By leveraging technologies for talent identification, succession planning, and skills mapping, organisations can identify high-potential employees, create tailored development plans, and provide opportunities for career progression. This alignment fosters a culture of continuous learning and development, empowering employees to grow their careers within the organisation.

Summation of proposition B

This chapter highlighted the importance of leveraging digital technologies to enhance TM strategies and improve organisational effectiveness in attracting, developing, and retaining talent.

Utilising digital technologies for talent analytics can help in profiling employees, tracking performance, and training activities. However, data quality remains a critical factor for effective talent analytics implementation. Investment in technology allows for a single view of employees, improving the quality of talent profiles. Talent profiling is essential for tailoring talent development, succession planning, and performance management strategies.

Digitalising recruitment workflows improves efficiency, speed, and quality of candidate selection by automating administrative tasks and streamlining the hiring process. Customising digital learning platforms within organisations enhances the planning, execution, and monitoring of learning activities, leading to improved knowledge retention and application in the workplace.

Digital tools streamline performance management processes, and enhance transparency, and accountability within organisations. Succession plans can be formalised and digitised to identify and nurture high-potential talent. Technologies enable the assessment of employee engagement levels through surveys and personalised development plans discussions. The lack of formal measurement frameworks to assess the impact of digital technologies on TM and business performance, highlighting the need for data quality maturity. There is a gap in understanding the relationship between investment in TM technologies and business performance due to the lack of a theoretical framework and empirical evidence.

Digital technologies empower employees to manage their own learning, development, and performance, providing visibility into career paths, personalised development plans, and opportunities for advancement within the organisation.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented findings from a qualitative research study that focused on how digital technologies are being used in TM within banking institutions. The findings were organized into tables based on research questions and categorized by respondent type (Executives, Senior Managers).

Under Proposition A, the study explored how digital technologies enable efficient TM practices. Different technologies such as Cloud, ERP, and analytics capabilities are used for TM processes like talent acquisition, development, and retention. The impact of these technologies on talent profiles, employee engagement, and decision-making processes was also discussed.

Proposition B examined how digital technologies are applied to develop and retain employees across different talent pools. Strategies include tailoring TM approaches, improving profile capturing rates, and providing access to learning opportunities. The study highlighted the importance of talent identification, development, and retention strategies for various talent pools within organizations.

Overall, the chapter outlined the role of digital technologies in enhancing TM practices, promoting employee engagement, and improving business performance within the banking sector. The use of advanced analytics, Cloud technologies, and learning management systems were identified as key tools for attracting, developing, and retaining talent effectively.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore how banks have used digital technologies to formulate talent strategies and manage talent that is agile and relevant to their business. The race for talent has become more competitive as talent is one of the most critical resources required to win in today's competitive market and technology in TM is helping organisations manage talent effectively (Ghate, 2022). As business competition intensifies in the banking sector, the need to attract, develop, and retain talent that is relevant to and agile for digital business is fundamental. This study investigated the impact of digital technologies in TM within the banking sector to add to other studies that have already been conducted on TM for a digital business.

The following three research question were therefore formulated in investigate the impact of digital technologies in TM within the south African banking sector:

6.2 Conclusions regarding research question 1

In responding to the research question *"What type of digital technologies are used to manage talent"* the study found that digital technologies such as Big data for talent analytics, Cloud computing, ERP systems, LMS, virtual classrooms, and social media are used for management of talent. The literature review focused on the different technologies to acquire, develop, and retain talent and the findings of this study supported the proposition that *digital technologies enable efficient and effective methods to attract, develop, and retain talent.*

6.3 Conclusions regarding research question 2 and 3

In responding to the research questions *"How have these digital technologies been used to formulate TM strategies?*" and *"What impact do these digital technologies and TM strategies have had on talent profiles?* , the study found that

these digital technologies have been used to digitalise employee profiling, recruitment, learning, performance management, succession planning, and understanding employee sentiments. The study also found that as a result of these digital technologies, the quality of talent profiles and quality of recruits has improved. This resulted in better decisions made on appropriate retention strategies, learning and development activities, succession plans, engagement drivers, and career growth for employees. The analytical framework in Chapter 2 was formulated by the literature review and the findings of this study supported the related proposition that, *Different strategies can be applied to develop and retain employees in different talent pools (Potential stars, rising stars, star performers, core contributors and key contributors.*

6.4 Limitations of the study

The sample size of 10 used in the study was lower than the target of 20-20 participant. This was driven by the availability of Executives given their busy schedules. Also, some Executives who did not want to participate citing that the researcher works for one of the banks and were concerned about sharing their Intellectual Property matters. The research was eventually based on three banks instead of five and Participants shared insights through the lens of their use of digital technology to manage talent.

6.5 Recommendations

Based on the discoveries of the study, the following are recommended to be explored by the different stakeholders.

6.5.1 C-Suite Executives

- Measure the impact of investments in digital technologies for talent on business performance.
- Measure adoption rates of the digital technologies for talent invested in.
- Define Talent Data Maturity Frameworks, Implement and Measure them.

- Formally benchmark against other banks locally on digital technologies invested on and related benefits.
- Invest a lot more in automation and AI, there is still a lot of human intervention in TM processes, especially in talent acquisition/recruitment process and L&D.

6.5.2 Managing Executives

- Focus on driving the quality of what is captured on the talent platforms (in line with the Talent Data Maturity Frameworks).
- Focus on driving the culture of quality conversation with talented people beyond capturing on systems. The technology is meant to enable quality conversations.

6.5.3 Senior Managers

- Ensure that profiles are always up to date, especially where organisation rely on those to profile employees into different talent pools.
- Ensure that profile information is accurate.

6.6 Suggestions for further research

6.6.1 The Pros and Cons of Using a Cloud-based Employee Engagement System.

6.6.2 Adoption of digital technology in attracting Gen Zs to the workplace.

6.6.3 Exploring Employee Engagement drivers for the 4IR world.

6.6.4 The use of digital technologies to improve employee well-being in the workplace.

6.6.5 The effective use of Employee recognition platforms to drive employee engagement.

6.7 Summary

The research addressed the purpose of the study by exploring the digital technologies used by banks, the formulation of those strategies using those technologies and the impact these have had in managing talent. The exploration was through in-depth interviews and analysis of insights from those interviews in line with the conceptual framework.

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APPENDIX A The Participant information sheet

Dear Participant

My name is Mduduzi Kubheka I am a Master student in Management studies of a Digital Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr Jenika Gobind. I am conducting a research study about Digital Technologies. The study title is “The Perceived impact of digital technologies on talent management in the Banking Sector.”

I am inviting you to take part in an interview. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about an hour The interview will take place online during working hours.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview. This data will be stored in a private Cloud and deleted after 5 years. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

During the research activity, I will need to ask for some personal information about you, including names, level of experience and designation. This data will be deleted as soon the research report is submitted to the university.

The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you. With your permission, other researchers may use the data collected from this research study, but your name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decided not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life / some of the questions asked may make you feel sad or upset. If this happens, I will stop the interview and continue another time.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Mduduzi Kubheka

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APPENDIX B The Participant agreement form

Title of project: The perceived impact of digital technology on talent management in the Banking Sector

Name of researcher: Mduduzi Kubheka

I, ……., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following (Please circle the relevant options below):

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report	YES	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES	NO

…… (signature)

…… (name of Participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature)

…… (name of researcher)

…… (date)

APPENDIX C Consistency Matrix

Main Objective: Consistency table: research questions, propositions, data collection and data analysis

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
1	**What type of digital technologies are used to manage talent?** *C- Suite Executives* 1. What investments have been made in digital technologies for talent management? 2. What informed your choices on digital technologies to invest on? *Managing Executives* 3. What technologies are available to you to enable talent profiling of your teams?	A	Digital technologies enable efficient and effective methods to attract, develop and retain talent.	Collected through recorded interviews and transcribed into written insights	Winnowing approach and translating themes into findings and interpreting findings about to the proposition

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
	4. What technologies are available to you to enable learning and development of your teams? 5. What technologies are available to you to capture succession plans? 6. What technologies are available to you to manage and track performance? 7. What technologies are available to you to conduct employee satisfaction surveys? 8. Were these technologies built in house or outsourced from a third party or a combination? *Senior Managers* 9. What platform(s) do you use to capture your profile (experience, qualifications, career aspirations, and strengths)?				

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
	10. What platform(s) do you use to apply for internal vacancies? 11. What platform(s) do you use register/book for internal training (online or classroom)? 12. What platform(s) do you use to capture your performance contract and track progress against those. 13. What platform(s) do you capture employee satisfaction survey responses on?				
2	**How have these digital technologies been used to formulate TM strategies?** *C- Suite Executives*	B	Different strategies can be applied to develop and retain employees in different talent pools (Potential stars, rising stars, star performers,	Collected through recorded interviews and transcribed into written insights	Winnowing approach and translating themes into findings and interpreting findings about to the proposition

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
	1. How do you assess the adoption of the digital technologies in talent management (2. Do you leverage data to formulate talent management strategies? *Managing Executives* 3. Have these technologies improved the quality of talent profiling? 4. Have these technologies improved your recruitment process in terms of speed, quality of candidates, cost? 5. Have these technologies improved how learning and development activities are conducted in terms of cost, relevance, and ease of access and monitoring? 6. Have these technologies improved the performance management process?		core contributors and key contributors.		

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
	7. Have these technologies made it easier to articulate succession plans? 8. Have these technologies made it easier and quicker to assess employee's engagement levels? *Senior Managers* 9. Did technology make the recruitment process easier in terms of time, access to information and communication between you and your prospective employer? – only for recent hires? 10. Has the technology made the application process easier for internal roles in terms of in terms of time, access to information and communication between you and current employer?				

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
	11. Have you become better in managing your own learning and performance because of technology?				
3	**What impact do these digital technologies and TM strategies have had on talent profiles?** *C- Suite Executives* 1. How do you assess the success of these digital technologies in managing talent 2. Has the combination of digital technologies and TM strategies improved employee engagement? 3. Has the combination of digital technologies and TM strategies improved performance?	B	Different strategies can be applied to develop and retain employees in different talent pools (Potential stars, rising stars, star performers, core contributors and key contributors.	Collected through recorded interviews and transcribed into written insights	Winnowing approach and translating themes into findings and interpreting findings about to the proposition

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
	Managing Executives 4. Have you seen improvement in quality of recruits since the introduction/improvement of the technologies for talent management? 5. Have you seen an increase in the number of star performers since the since the introduction/improvement of the succession planning and employee engagement technologies? 6. Have you seen an improvement in performance of potential stars, rising stars and core contributors since the introduction/improvement of the learning and development, performance management and employee engagement technologies?				

RQ #	Research Question	Proposition #	Proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
	Senior Managers 7. Have you improved your skills from attending training through the online platforms? 8. Have you improved your performance from the feedback provided on the online platforms? 9. Are you clear on what your development plans are? 10. Are you clear on what your career path is? 11. Has your career progressed since the introduction/improvement of these technologies?				